

Implementing the core Values in teaching English in the Algerian Middle Schools. a case Study

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Abstract :

Core values and language are inseparable in their essence; therefore, any textbook developed for foreign language teaching should take into consideration its values aspects. The current study aims at investigating the core values elements presented in the newly introduced English textbook designed for teaching ٤th grade Middle School learners. It's worth noting that the present investigation deals with national identity, national conscience, citizenship and openness to the world. A mixed method was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The results have shown the importance of integrating the core values in designing a textbook syllabus. The bias in favor of the source core values is obvious throughout the textbook in terms of the reading, writing and speaking input.

Key Words: Core values, EFL Textbook, Evaluation, bias .

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Introduction :

English is a lingua franca, and the first widely used language in the world, mainly because of globalization, technology and social media. Learners of English as a foreign language are motivated and enthusiastic to learn it. They expect to achieve a native like competency, so that they can express themselves effectively and communicate in different situations with different people. Successful communication and good mastery of English require core values of the target culture in order to achieve an intercultural competence (IC) in which they learn not only the structure of the language but also the native ways of life, traditions, history, beliefs and values. This knowledge leads them to appreciate and appraise learning the foreign language. Core values and language are strongly related in a way that they affect each other. Both are part of the cultural heritage of any society. Values are transmitted via language, they are interactively interwoven with each other. Consequently, effective language teaching is achieved through the integration of core values in the learning program in which core values are presented through different materials and techniques (Richards, ٢٠١٢). Therefore, it will create an enjoyable and pleasant environment that motivates students to engage enthusiastically in the learning process.

I. Statement of the Problem

The textbook is considered as the most useful teaching material that is used by teachers (Grant, ١٩٨٧); it presents learners with the language program. A textbook should integrate elements of core values within its content that should be exposed to learners effectively in order to develop students' intercultural competence and raise their awareness. The presence or absence of this dimension in the textbook has automatically an impact on the teaching learning process.

II. Aim of the Study

This study is conducted to get better insights into fourth year middle school textbook, in order to investigate the inclusion of the core values. It also examines the materials used and the techniques followed as well. This study seeks to evaluate learners core values knowledge and background they get from the textbook and their degree of achievement. The main focus hence is on the core values, their definition, the presence of the core values in the textbook and the relationship between the foreign language teaching and core values.

III. Definition of the Core Values

Many scientists, researchers, and academics from numerous disciplines and fields of study have examined the core values in various ways. Core values is an important part of a whole-person education that focuses on instilling positive values

and attitudes in students through the study and teaching of several Key Learning Areas/subjects as well as the provision of relevant learning experiences. On this foundation, students' ability to detect embedded values, analyze objectively, and make fair judgments about various issues they may experience at various developmental stages is being developed so that they can take appropriate action to deal with challenges in their future lives. "Perseverance," "Respect for Others," "Responsibility," "National Identity," "Commitment," "Integrity," "Care for Others," "Law-abidingness," "Empathy," and "Diligence" are priority values and attitudes that schools can develop through Values Education. Cultural values, according to Schwartz (٢٠١١), shape and influence behavior. Within any society, Individuals and groups develop ideas, activities, and ambitions and these are shaped and justified by cultural values. Schwartz adds that cultural ideals and bipolar dimensions of a culture indicate alternate answers to societal problems: In any case, there are several viewpoints on education and values. According to John Dewey (١٩٠٢), the school is an important element of the actual world, and students learn not only in classrooms but also across the campus. In a social system, students should be able to play their roles as members of society and take responsibility for their acts (Lovat, ٢٠٠٩).

Furthermore, individuals are expected to make decisions in this social setting that are based on values, which would push them to learn something in school (Billington, ٢٠٠٣) School, according to Stromquist (٢٠٠٧), is an important cultural context. Not just educators, but also the school environment, have an impact on kids in this setting. The qualities that are modeled by educational practices inside a center/school and formed in the practices of its pupils are referred to as core values. Core values are what we hope students will take with them into their future, in addition to academic abilities.

١. Foreign Language Teaching and Core Values

The link between language and core values is apparent. "No two ideas are more intimately related than language and values," Hall (٢٠٠٨) writes in describing the interrelationship between the two (p. ٤٥). Because it is primarily shared and taught by humans as members of a society, language is a component of values. Learning the essential values of the target language is a step ahead of good teaching-learning in the EFL context. Moreover, fundamental values awareness is as important as any other language ability for efficient communication.

According to Lusting and Koester (٢٠٠٣), the goal of teaching language is to make it easier to converse with people having different values. Teachers of languages must be enthusiastic about the subject of values, not out of a desire to instill the principles of other countries, but out of a national necessity. Teaching a language without first teaching the underlying values on which it is based is equivalent to teaching symbols with no meaning. EFL teachers must understand that dealing with life and people is difficult including ideas, attitudes, and social etiquette in addition to language personification of values.

٢. Core Values in EFL Textbooks

In order to communicate, people have always resorted to common language because of the absence of a shared mother tongue, and over the past forty years, there has been a dramatic decline in the use of other languages as English has become increasingly popular (Phillipson, ٢٠١٠).

The necessity to learning a foreign language goes far beyond learning grammar, syntax and phonetics. This allows students to learn the appropriate ways of interaction with new, different values. Therefore, a variety of materials is used in foreign language teaching. Tomlinson (٢٠١٢) defines materials as “anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language, including coursebooks, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, ... etc, though much of the literature focuses on printed materials” (p. ١٤٣) A textbook is a published book designed to function as a learning tool and a teaching material. Its main role is to help learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities. Textbooks are usually accompanied with other materials such as the teacher's book/ guide, manuscripts, etc. they occupy a crucial role in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) as most teachers depend on them to save time and financial resources.

A textbook is a book that has been published and is intended to be used as a learning tool and teaching resource. Its primary goal is to assist students in improving their linguistic and communication skills. Other materials to foster communication, the teacher's book/guide, manuscripts, and so on, are generally used homogeneously with textbooks. They play an important role in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), as most teachers rely on them to save time and money.

٣. Core Values Presented in ‘My Book of English ‘

The core values contained in the textbook are derived from the Law of Orientation ٠٤-٠٨ January ٢٣rd, ٢٠٠٨. According to the distribution of core values in this study, ‘my book of English ‘ has covered various areas of core values to some level. The dimension of products has the largest representation of core values. Places is a subcategory that appears fifteen times and accounts for more than half of the overall values. Although most themes offered in the dimensions represent primarily 'lives', the dimension 'practices' has the highest frequency with eighteen occurrences, which is the same frequency as the dimension Persons. With only eight instances, the dimension Communities has the lowest frequency. The book's products with the highest percentage of core values primarily deal with tourism attractions and figures. In a nutshell, the different dimensions fall in three main units called sequences.

Sequence one contains information about famous tourist landmarks such as Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, the Leaning Tower, and others, which are static features of the culture and do not provide insights into the deeper culture. This type of data remains constant and is easily observable in a sequence that opens vistas on famous sites and notable personalities, mostly from Europe, such as London's landmarks.

Examples of landmarks are The piazza and Leonardo DaVinci (Italy), Topkapi Palace and architect Sinan (Turkey), The Great Mosque of Tlemcen and Mohamed

Dib (Algeria). In addition, there is a writing assignment that encourages students to learn about Algeria's Roman heritage. The second sequence is about dreams, sensations, and memories of children from various ethnic groups (England, India, America, Palestine and Algeria). Moreover, J.K. Rowling, a well-known author, and Kateb Yacine are unexpectedly featured in the textbook. The first talks about her writing experience, while Kateb Yacine gives a lecture on Algerian history, national identity, and colonialism. The third sequence focuses on ideas and values such as generosity, compassion, and a thirst for learning, as well as freedom, justice, citizenship, and solidarity. Furthermore and unequivocally, the distribution of pictures is not balanced. The majority of the images featured are in the first page of the sequence. The most well-known tourist destinations and notable individuals are included in this part.

In the second sequence also, there were only four photographs, and in the third, there were none at all. In the distributions of the source values, there are three key basic ones that run through the textbook. The target textbook's sequences are discovered to have a common theme. These highlight linguistic knowledge and activities in relation to each sequence's subject. The textbook's most prominent values relate to 'products,' with a focus on 'places' and 'art forms.' It is crucial to notice the responsibility of presenting the core values information through the essential scripts and images for listening, and less tasks in reading, writing, and speaking. The first sequence's fundamental values content states that the student is intended to develop a comprehensive image of universal landmarks and notable persons mostly.

Algerian and European artists and authors are invited to participate and depict famous touristic regions that are significant because they provide learners with knowledge about the world around them. Furthermore, the student is expected to value travelling as a source of knowledge and to be aware of the importance of landmarks, figures, literature and arts as a vehicle for core identity. In relation to English language learning, students find it easier to learn a language through content which they are familiar with and interested in. The values content of the second sequence urges learners to value and appreciate human experiences and their role in shaping personality. It stresses the role played by national and historical figures in the fight against colonialism. The main input of this sequence aims at raising awareness of the importance of memory in shaping the national identity.

One of the curriculum's learning objectives is to develop learners' character; henceforth, the second sequence incorporates symbols of struggle that might help learners become more familiar with their own values, particularly in the middle school. The historical context of the country encourages students to participate in class as they find it intriguing to present national heroes and national history featured by the characters who appear in the stories. The incorporation of national heroes and the introduction of new ideas may raise students' awareness of the necessity of learning from them. Students are required to take these lessons and apply them as fundamental concepts in their lives, hence making a constructive contribution to their countries.

In the third sequence, the portrayal of values 'perspectives' was dominating. Its goal is to raise awareness about the issue. Indeed, the significance of charity and a sense of national unity are also present but there's a particular emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of Globalization, which is seen as a threat to national identity. However ; it is presented in a way to allow students gain a broader understanding of the world through numerous sorts of beliefs and ways of conduct and discipline. This falls in harmony with the curriculum's principal goal of training students of good character and behavior.

IV. Research Methodology

To carry out any research we need to develop a careful plan, follow a certain strategy and choose an appropriate method (Graves, ٢٠٠٢) . In our study, we opted for a mixed method relying on both quantitative and semi-qualitative methods of data collection using questionnaires and interviews to get a deeper and broader understanding of the phenomenon. This permits us to get more valid information about our topic and complete our research work. The quantitative method based on a questionnaire in which data are described, interpreted and analyzed via a textbook analysis. We also used interviews as a tool of gathering qualitative data. This is to get in touch directly with the participants and ask them detailed questions about their opinions and then describe their behaviors and attitudes toward the implementation

V. Research Questions

The questions that we ask are:

- Are core values present within the content of middle school textbook "My book of English"?
- How are core values presented in the content of fourth year middle school textbook "My book of English ٤"?
- Does the textbook develop learners' core values cultural awareness?

١. Research Hypothesis

We set one clear hypothesis for this study :

- If the Algerian fourth year middle school textbook "my book of English ٤" includes the core values elements within its content, students would develop their core values cultural awareness.

٢. Population and Sample

To investigate this study, both a questionnaire and two interviews are administrated to thirty (٣٧) teachers who have been randomly chosen from (١٥٠) population of teachers who teach ٤MS classes in Batna ٦ district. Their total number is ٣٧, divided in ٢٥ middle schools from urban, semi urban and rural areas, consisting of ٠٣ males and ٣٤ females. Since the purpose of the study is to investigate the implementation of the core values within the text book, teachers opinions are paramount in the study.

Data Gathering Tools

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, two instruments are used for data collection. As we have mentioned in the above, we opted for a mixed method including both a semi-qualitative and a quantitative method. Indeed, we opted for a questionnaire administered to our participants to get quantitative data, and an interview to obtain qualitative data. The aim of using two different instruments is to get more valid and reliable data in order to strengthen the validity of the results and to collect valid data on the implementation of the core values in “My Book of English ٤” textbook. Yet, the data gathered needs to be summarized, organized and analyzed. In fact, the quantitative data gathered by means of the questionnaires was analyzed using the computer software called “Google Forms”. Our data was displayed, relying on descriptive statistics. We also used interviews which are considered to be the key semi qualitative data collection tool. We have interviewed the head of the national curriculum board, the general secretary of the curriculum board and the head of the middle school writing team to investigate their points of view about the implementation of the core values in “My Book of English ٤”. Then, we discussed, analysed and interpreted the results in order to check the hypothesis, answer the research questions and draw up conclusions.

VI. Discussion of Findings

As it is mentioned above, this study aims to show the extent to which the national core values were faithfully included in the fourth middle school textbook which is entitled «My Book of English ٤». The study was conducted on a sample of ٣٧ teachers of English out of a population of ١٥٠ teachers, who belong to Batna District ٦. The results show that the majority of our sample are females with a number of ٣٤ teachers which represent (٩١,٩%) of the whole sample, while the minority are males which constitute only ٣ men, that is ٨,١% of the sample. These teachers were graduated from the university, either bachelors or master holders. However, some of them were graduated from ENS. They have at least ٥ years teaching experience.

The participants are divided into three sections depending on the area they teach in ; urban, rural or semi-rural. ٥١,٤% of the whole sample are teaching in urban areas. Meanwhile, ٣٥,١ % of the sample are teaching in semi-rural areas and the last remaining participants represent ١٣,٥% of the sample are teaching in rural areas. These teachers are using a mixture of various approaches in class, mainly the Competency Based Approach and the Communicative Teaching Approach. The majority of them believe that using the textbook is very useful to them for many reasons; First, it helps them to design their lessons as it is based on the Competency Based Approach. Second, the tasks designed in the textbook help the teacher to reach the objectives in a short time. Third, the textbook is varied in terms of tasks, so it is a good tool to use it for the homework activities. Finally, the texts in the textbook help in designing reading lessons.

On the other hand, the teachers who were against using the textbook in class justified their answers by saying that the instructions are too complicated and the texts are beyond the learners' level. In this regard, the ٤ MS middle school textbook was not designed only as a linguistic teaching tool. It has its social aspect as

well. According to ٤ MS teachers of English who answered our questionnaire, teaching English to ٤ MS classes requires teaching them social values. Therefore, the four core values which were designed in the national curriculum should be instilled and taught in class. Results showed that the majority of the teachers manage to teach equally all the four core values. Meanwhile ; they declared that they cannot deal with the four core values in class due to the lack of time, and so use a homework or extensive reading activities to fulfill the task. According to them, the ٤ MS textbook is very helpful to teach the four core values. At the same time, they raised concerns about not having received enough training on the best strategies to teach and instill these values in class. These teachers added that to teach the core values effectively, there's an urgent need for the use of video based activities, flashcards, stories and historic texts. The argument they have advanced is that this kind of strategies takes into consideration all the learning styles and multiple intelligences of learners.

Results show that the overloaded programme is the major problem that teachers face when teaching the core values to ٤ MS students. Due to COVID pandemic, the ministry of national education reduced English teaching hours from ٤ hours per week to ٢ hours. Though they adjusted the syllabus with exceptional learning plans but still it was not sufficient to cover the syllabus. On the other hand, we notice that ٢٤,٣% of the teachers think that for the ٤ MS classes a whole month is devoted to the BEM revision. Consequently, there is not enough time to focus on teaching the values to the students. Finally, time management and the students' less engagement are challenging the teachers when dealing with the core values as well.

Results also revealed that teaching the core values to the ٤ MS students is very important for many reasons; First, The core values allow the students to communicate in English about their own culture in comparison with other cultures. Second, they allow students to differentiate between their own national identities and other global values. Third, They allow students to develop their communicative competence to effectively communicate in culturally diverse situations. Fourth, they prepare students to be good citizens. Fifth, They develop in students a sense of acceptance to global diversities in cultural values and attitudes. Sixth, They allow students to understand and respect their own culture when learning English as a foreign language. Seventh, they prepare students not to judge people from other cultures by the standards of their own Algerian culture. Finally, the core values allow students to draw similarities and differences between national values and global values in the English and other speaking communities.

When coming to the analysis of "My Book of English ٤" textbook, we find that it contains three main sequences as mentioned earlier:

- Me, Universal Landmarks and Outstanding Figures in History, Literature and Art
- Me, My Personality and Life Experience
- Me, My Community and Citizenship

Each sequence contains six rubrics; I listen and Do, I Pronounce, I Practise, I Read and Do, I Learn to Integrate, I Think and Write. In fact, the position of the

four core values are easily spotted in each rubric in the three mentioned sequences. The following tables and explanations illustrate better and clearly these positions.

Table ٠١. Frequency of appearance of core values in tasks of sequence one

	National Identity	National conscience	Citizenship	Openness to the world
I listen and do	★			★
I pronounce			★	★
I practise		★	★	★
I read and do	★	★		★
I learn to integrate	★	★	★	★
I think and write	★	★	★	★

In sequence one, we clearly notice that it deals with valuing travelling as a source of knowledge, sharing universal landmarks as a world heritage, sharing literary and artistic creativity as a universal heritage, raising awareness of the importance of landmarks as a vehicle for cultural identity, raising awareness of the importance of outstanding figures in history, literature and arts as the custodians of cultural identity and values. The national identity is present in both receptive and productive skills. On the other hand, the national conscience (awareness) is presented in the reading text but it is not presented in the listening rubric. For citizenship, it is clearly presented in I pronounce, I practice, I learn to integrate and I think and write. However; we notice that openness to the world is presented in all the rubrics.

Table ٢. Frequency of appearance of core values in tasks of sequence two

	National Identity	National conscience	Citizenship	Openness to the world
I listen and do		★	★	★
I pronounce			★	★
I practise	★	★	★	★
I read and do	★	★	★	★
I learn to integrate	★	★	★	★
I think and write	★	★	★	

Sequence two deals with valuing human experience and its role in shaping character, personality and dreams, valuing a common historical heritage and a national collective memory of suffering and struggling against colonialism, valuing the role played by national historical figures in the fight against colonialism, raising awareness of the influence of other people on one's character, personality and dreams, raising awareness of the importance of memory in shaping the identity of a nation and raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding the national identity. Consequently, the four core values are present with the exception of the 'openness to the world' which is absent in the writing phase.

Table ٠٣. Frequency of appearance of core values in tasks of sequence three

	National Identity	National conscience	Citizenship	Openness to the world
I listen and do	★	★	★	★
I pronounce			★	★
I practise	★		★	★
I read and do	★	★	★	★
I learn to integrate	★	★	★	★
I think and write	★	★	★	

Sequence three deals with valuing critical thinking, valuing freedom of speech, valuing wise, helpful advice/recommendations, valuing national identity and culture, valuing human tolerance and understanding, raising awareness of the influence of other cultures on one's own, raising awareness of the importance of national solidarity, promoting a world culture based on mutual respect between nations. Hence, the four core values are represented in this sequence mainly the national identity and citizenship which are clearly dominant.

To conclude, according to our findings, the four core values are clearly represented in "My Book of English ٤". The textbook writers have succeeded to include faithfully these core values in the fourth year textbook. This has been clearly seen through the different rubrics, texts and activities.

Conclusion

Actually, the results of this study show that teachers are interested in teaching and instilling the national values to their learners mainly because acculturation is challenging nowadays. Therefore, as far as the national identity is concerned, the learners' behaviour and their life styles are targeted. Consequently, more teaching hours should be afforded to language classes in order to enable the language teachers to focus more on the learners' attitudes and behaviour rather than to teach the language only. Hence, the learners will develop the skills of accepting, respecting and understanding other cultures from an early age but, at the same time, respecting and valuing their own culture and being proud of it. The present study at hands investigates the extent to which the national values, that are designed in the national curriculum, are implemented in the fourth year textbook of English which is entitled «My Book of English ٤». Therefore, the present suggestions are directed to researchers who want to investigate this topic. Henceforth, to investigate whether or not the national values are implemented in the fourth middle school textbook, the study should not be restricted to one level, so different levels should be included and the sample size should be larger in order to get more reliable data and have the opportunity to generalize the findings for the whole population. Moreover, many studies have been conducted on the cultural dimension, but there are few that explore

the four national core values that were mentioned in the Algerian National new Curriculum. Therefore, further research should be conducted on this topic in order to show the impact of these national values on the learners' behaviour and attitudes.

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