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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Recently, there is an increase in the amount of contacts of the Japanese people with the people of different cultures, and Japan is becoming multi-cultural and multi-lingual (Kanno, 2006). According to the surveys, there are increasing occasions for the Japanese people to encounter non-Japanese people even within Japanese contexts. The number of legal aliens in Japan has doubled in the two decades from 1980 to 2000 and the number of non-Japanese students studying in Japan has also increased consecutively from 1999 to 2003 (Ministry of Justice, 2004). The number of Japanese going abroad has increased from less than five million in 1985 to 18 million in 2000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003).

At the same time, there is a considerable number of Japanese overseas for different reasons. For example, in the world of global business, the number of Japanese expatriates from 149 private companies working in branches overseas has increased from 2003 to 2005 (Nihon Zaigai Kigyoo Kyookai [The Japan Overseas Enterprises Association], 2006). More than half of these expatriates take their families with them. This survey has revealed that the number of children of these corporate employees has also increased. More than half of these children are enrolled in K-12 and schools in institutions of higher education, and thus, must mix with people of their own age in school. Publicly and privately, people in Japan are increasingly exposed to people of other cultures.

### The Research Project Emerges

Since I<sup>1</sup> came to the United States in 1988 as a student, I have experienced a number of culture shocks. They have been a series of learning experiences. Some were pleasant, and some were overwhelming. Although I came of my own free will, I had to struggle to accept American ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the personal nature of some sections, this chapter is narrated from the first person's point of view. However, this rhetorical choice does not apply to the remainder of this dissertation.

I have seen students from other parts of the world experiencing similar culture shock. Not all of us were trying to adjust to the American culture or to each other's culture. It is very common and almost natural to see elements of others' cultures through the cultural lens of our own culture. After a while, I had no choice but to embrace the idea that everyone was different. These cultural confrontations have been occasions of learning and new cultural experiences for me.

English was another matter. There were striking differences depending on where someone studied English before coming to the United States. Communication with native English speakers and with students from other countries sometimes led to misinterpretation because what I meant was not always interpreted as such. There were even times when I thought I was understood but in reality I was not. I questioned my ten-year education in English in Japan.

When I came to Virginia, I could communicate well enough to take care of my basic needs such as asking questions at a grocery store but I knew little about anything else in the United States. It did not take long for me to realize that in spite of all the efforts I spent to learn English, I lacked knowledge on how to act normally in America. The fact of the matter is when we studied English with written materials, we translated. We did not read to learn from the text; we did not read to use the information later in life, and we did not read to prepare ourselves so that we could function as English speakers in an English-speaking country.

### Research Question

Sprouting from my personal experience, I wonder if I could have learned about American culture if our teachers had shown us different cultural perspectives with the given textbooks. Since the instruction of reading class was so form-focused, I do not even remember the contents of the passages. I wonder if culture was presented at all in the textbooks. If so, they could be a source to learn cultures of English-speaking countries. Based on the claims that authentic materials are a source of culture (Brown, 1987; Gilmore, 2004; Honeyfield, 1977; Kramsch, 1993; Lamie, 1998; McKay, 1982; Shrum & Glisan, 2005; Swaffar, 1985), I investigated how culture is presented in textbooks used in Japan. The research question that guides this study is: How is culture addressed in high school reading textbooks?

## Personal Account as an EFL student in Japan

### *First Encounter with English*

In Japan, English is one of the mandatory subjects from the 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Education beyond the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is optional. Therefore anyone who decides not to pursue the optional high school education for the 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades is no longer required to study English.

When I started my middle school education, part of the excitement came from the first experience of learning a foreign language. After my parents bought the textbooks of all subjects, I was in my room staring at the drawings and photographs in the English textbook without knowing what they were about. I assumed I would know much about America in three years while I subconsciously ignored the fact that no one around me did. For a while after the first semester started, I was not doing anything as homework assignments other than translating a reading passage in each chapter. I still did not realize that neither my classmates nor I knew similarities or differences between the United States and Japan. In my mind, being good in English was scoring high on quizzes and exams.

What we did in class was simply translate each sentence in the reading passage and then complete the exercise section that followed the reading. We usually finished the translation as a homework assignment and the next day the teacher had us read our translation sentence by sentence in class. The translation was so precise that there seemed to be only one Japanese word for each English word. Although the Japanese language does not use pronouns except for *I* and *we*, we started using pronouns such as *kanojo* [she] and *kare* [he] in translations. For example, these pronouns in Japanese usually mean ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend’ in Japanese contexts; however, they are understood to mean ‘she’ and ‘he’ only in English classes, most probably for the ease of literal translation.

The post-reading exercises consisted of recall questions such as fill-in-the-blanks and a couple of translations into English using the new grammar rules presented in the chapter. The translation exercise consisted of sentences that were not related to the contents of reading materials or context of the reading passages.

There was never any conversation practice in English class. The only time we said anything in English was when we read from our notebooks our answers to the questions and

when we read the English sentence we were going to translate. The teacher used the audio cassettes that accompanied the textbook from time to time. He played the tape for us to repeat each sentence and we tried to imitate the pronunciation.

The language of instruction in school was always Japanese. Although the questions were asked and answered in English, rather mechanically, nothing original was expected by the teachers. There was always only one correct answer to every question. Everything was very mechanical, but still, I was content with the experience of learning a foreign language.

Near the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I had voluntarily started listening to a daily 20-minute radio program at home in order to practice listening and speaking in English. This program was broadcast by a Japanese company with a Japanese college professor and two native English speakers. Since I had missed the first nine months of the program, at first I could not keep up to speed when a native speaker read the dialogue on the radio. Although each sentence was only about 10 words long, I could not finish repeating all of it within the given pause. Still, I kept listening to the radio program every day.

Shortly after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade began, my grade in English started to deteriorate. We were supposed to understand all the grammar rules and know them by name. Among many other things, I did not even know why or when English distinguishes singular from plural because the Japanese language does not do this. I tried to improve my grades with a workbook only to discover that a workbook did not help, and I was falling behind more and more. Strangely, even the students with good grades in English were not becoming bilingual or culturally knowledgeable.

After a while, the dark cloud in my head started disappearing unexpectedly. I still could not name all those grammar rules but somehow all of a sudden I started applying those rules without thinking about it. My vocabulary size was bigger than my classmates with the input from the radio program and my pronunciation and fluency made progress. All the input from the radio program probably provoked this sudden change. My grades at school improved and I passed two optional national standardized English proficiency tests with perfect scores before finishing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Following classroom instructions loyally, studying textbooks and workbooks never worked to improve my English proficiency but what I learned from the radio program started making sense after a year. There were other students who did well in English class but still, after

three years of translation work, no one in my school was bilingual or had superior knowledge of the United States. My pronunciation and listening skills were above average but I was not fluent or familiar with American culture at all.

### *Tests and Exams*

Even after I was admitted to a high school where they offered an intensive curriculum in English, my classmates and I spent most of our time studying for the tests. There were quizzes constantly, but we had a larger goal: preparing for an entrance exam for admittance to a college or university. In Japan, mandatory education ends after 9<sup>th</sup> grade with middle school graduation. In order to continue onto high school and then college, each student must pass the entrance examination. The subjects for public high school entrance exams are the same in each school district, but the level of difficulty of the tests varies by school. Private schools select their own test subjects and prepare their own entrance exams.

The tests for locally and nationally funded colleges and universities are two-fold. Each applicant must first take a nationally administered Center Test to earn points to add to the score of the second test administered by each college or university s/he is applying for. For private college/university admission, applicants take only the test that each college/university has prepared. If a student selects a private university the student takes only that test. If a student applies for public or federal college or universities, a second test is taken in order to add points to the first test. The competition was so fierce that I do not remember thinking about anything other than the entrance examinations during the 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, the last years in elementary, middle, and high school. Since I went to a private middle school, I even had to spend my 6<sup>th</sup> grade preparing for the examination.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) reports that 58.8% of new graduates from high schools, those who graduated a year or more ago and those with high school equivalency apply for institutions of higher education (2007). Out of those who qualify, 53.7% are admitted. 97.7% of middle school graduates are admitted to high schools. Private middle schools are fewer in quantity and concentrate more in highly populated prefectures such as Tokyo and Osaka. In and around Tokyo, 15.4% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders took entrance examinations for private middle schools. In areas surrounding Osaka, 27.3% did.

Knowledge of a foreign language is mandatory for high school and college entrance exams. By a wide margin, English is the foreign language that the most of the applicants choose. The National Center for University Center Examinations reports the statistics for the foreign language subjects that examinees selected for the Center Examinations in 2006 (Table 1).

**Table 1 Foreign language subject selected for Center University Exam in 2006**

Section	Language	Number of Examinees	(%)
Writing	English	499,630	99.83
	German	106	0.04
	French	141	0.05
	Chinese	397	0.13
	Korean	189	0.06
Listening	English	294,555	100.00

Looking back, I only remember spending hours translating short English passages into Japanese and answering questions about the text I had just translated. I do not remember summarizing, rephrasing, or reacting to the contents of the passages. In summary, the contents or my reaction did not matter. I clearly remember when one of my high school English teachers, asked the class what we thought about the content of the chapter we had just finished translating. I could not say a word because no one had ever asked such a question. Neither my classmates nor I had to do any free thinking or create anything from scratch using the knowledge of English that we had spent years to learn. There are reports over a span of two decades with similar findings on how English has been taught in Japan (O'Donnell, 2005; Research Group, 1983; Sato, 2002). To each question asked in class, there has to be only one answer. Questions that possibly solicit a variety of responses were usually never asked. We as English learners were rarely enlightened by the contents of what we read because all we did was replace the surface of the matter, the language, from English to Japanese. Naturally I do not remember much of what I read in middle school or high school textbooks. Even to this day, I wonder why English is taught that way because in real life we use a language for communication. I learned how to translate

words, not how to talk, read, write, or communicate with English speakers. All I knew was vocabulary and grammar, not the people or their culture.

It is unknown how unique or general my personal experience was, comparing to other millions of students in the world who are required to study foreign languages in compulsory education. The claimed needs for teaching culture in foreign language classes are introduced in the next section.

### Purpose of the Study

The importance of teaching culture in foreign language classes has been claimed for decades (Allen, 1985; Brooks, 1960; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984; Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1993; Lange & Paige, 2003; Nostrand, 1978; Seelye, 1976, 1993; Stern, 1983). Culture has been presented separately from other language skills in foreign language courses partly due to the difficulty in teaching it along with the linear curriculum and itemized linguistic objectives. The position of culture in foreign language education has not been changed in spite of the assertions by these professionals as well as American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2005).

On a personal level as a foreign language instructor and life-long learner of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), I know that teaching and learning languages and culture requires endless effort. As a learner, I had to learn from experience by making mistakes until I finally realized that people had different ways of living. As an instructor, I do not know how many times I have wanted textbook material that incorporates the language and culture together as a unit.

Although ultimately I hoped to contribute to EFL education in Japan, it was not the aim of this study to propose a system that would include more cultural elements in a reading passage or to offer a better measurement tool to assess how “cultured” a learner has become after using the textbooks to review in this research. More specifically, by examining the reading passages and the exercise sections that precede and follow the reading passages, I hoped to determine if and how current textbook were designed to give Japanese high school students an understanding of other cultures. Pedagogy and other factors such as the emphasis on the entrance exams have

definite effects on the acquisition of English but as a student of English who has been through the system of formal foreign language education in Japan and as a foreign language educator, I was curious to find how the textbooks were designed. Using descriptive and quantitative procedures, I explored the contents of high school textbooks.

### Statement of the Problem

Presumably all textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) have been designed to reflect the ministry's goal to learn about other cultures and to become capable of communication in foreign languages, as well as to model correct forms and structures of English. However, in the past the form and structures of the English language were emphasized more in order to prepare the students for entrance examinations for colleges and universities. This emphasis placed the content and meaning secondary. The textbooks to be analyzed in this study were used for reading courses in Japanese senior high schools. All of these textbooks were approved by MEXT.

There have been claims to teach culture in foreign language classes. In my personal experience in learning EFL, the undocumented but apparent goal was not to learn how to communicate but to pass the entrance examinations and to score high in the tests. I did not read any of my textbooks but translated them. The content and the meaning were of secondary importance compared to memorization of grammar and vocabulary.

### Justification

Cultural diversity within Japan is one of the justifiable reasons for this study. Since Japan is significantly smaller than the United States, the assumption could be that there is less cultural diversity in Japan. However, there are indigenous peoples, immigrants, descendants of immigrants, students from abroad, and social outcasts. Historically, there were people from other countries who migrated to Japan, on occasion by force, without an opportunity granted to return to their homelands. Also, there are social outcasts in the present day Japan, *burakumin*, who are the descendants of those in the lowest social rank in the former caste system. They were coerced to live in restricted areas in the communities and to engage in the duties that involve slaughtering animals for consumption. Even in modern Japan, the descendants of *burakumin* face

discrimination in some way or another. Along with the non-Japanese people in Japan whether legally or illegally, they contribute to the socio-cultural diversity in Japan.

In addition, since the end of World War II, as Japan has become more industrialized, the need for English has increased. Because Japan is not rich in natural resources, the Japanese must purchase raw material from abroad, make products, and then trade these products in the worldwide market. In such an international economy, the fact that the Japanese people lack both proficiency in English and knowledge of other cultures has been a critical problem. As an example, the scores of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) of the Japanese rank near the bottom (Bronner, 2000) and poor performance by the Japanese in foreign languages has been reported by Clark (2000), Mulvey (1999), and Tolbert (2000). Reflecting the need for improvement in language proficiency and cultural competence, the latest national curriculum lists the promotion of international understanding and communicative competence as two of the objectives of EFL education (MEXT, 2002).

There have been studies and a newspaper report (Dale, 1986; Hayes, 1979; “Japan Failing”, 2005; Kramsch, 1997) that describe the possible reasons why the Japanese people experience great difficulty in learning a foreign language. Dale (1986) and Kramsch (1997) suggest that the very culture of Japan surrounds itself with a thick wall that prevents becoming culturally open-minded. For example it is indicated that the Japanese tend to view their language as unique. This attitude creates a psychological distance from other languages. Secondly, supporting this claim from a different angle, *Taipei Times* (2005) reports that UN officials pointed out upon their visit to Japan that the lack of efforts by the Japanese government results in its citizens’ disregard for the ethnic variation in the nation. Because the multiple ethnic origins are not brought to their awareness, the Japanese people tend to disregard the existence of people of other ethnic origins.. Third, more than two decades ago, Hayes (1979) pointed out motivation to study a foreign language as another reason for the low foreign language proficiency of the Japanese people and that passing a test is an unrealistic goal to learn a foreign language.

In the midst of internationalization and in view of the Japanese proven poor performance in language and culture, my research might make a contribution. Culture shock is not a pleasant surprise but instead, it is often frustrating and even infuriating. It is not possible to turn the clock backwards because Japan is no longer under an Isolation Policy (1633-1854), under which the

trade with non-Japanese countries was limited to China and Holland and that a port in Nagasaki was open to these countries. People with different values come and interact with the Japanese people. The Japanese visit other countries where people live quite differently. In order to make the interaction smooth and pleasant, the Japanese people have to be prepared for such transactions.

From a different angle, a study such as this that analyzed reading textbooks for high schools in Japan might contribute to the curriculum of EFL education in Japan. Analyses of the textbooks for subjects such as English I and Oral communications have been published. However, no studies of high school reading textbooks have been found that explored the cultural contents in the reading passages and the exercise sections in depths in a single study.

#### Assumption

This study examined how EFL textbooks used in Japan presented culture and whether or not the current pre-reading and post-reading exercise sections asked the EFL learners questions that reflected on their own culture (C1) in order to arrive at a better understanding of other cultures (C2).

The reason why reading textbooks were selected for this study rather than other EFL textbooks was that others such as grammar textbooks seemed to have little relevance to the students' daily lives (Kanda, 2003). She claims that there are no meaningful interactions between a user and the text in grammar textbooks in Japan because the focus is exclusively on forms rather than meanings. Secondly, reading textbooks were selected because reading material, especially when they were written by native English speakers for English-speaking audience, presents authentic cultures.

#### Limitation

Since this study examined how the cultural information was presented in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading textbooks used exclusively in Japan, the generalizability of the results to other populations is limited.

## Delimitation

This study approached the stated research problem only in the area of teaching materials. Other issues such as entrance examinations, the grammar-translation method, insufficient training of Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and Assistant English teachers (AETs) are presented in the literature review briefly but they were not explored any further. Pedagogy is problematic but the fact that it is so closely connected and indirectly controlled by the nation-wide entrance exams lead me to believe that there would little contribution to be made by this study in terms of calling for a change in pedagogy.

The focus of this study was on textbooks because they were the only constant in high school EFL classes throughout Japan. Teaching methods and the level and amount of training that the teachers have vary considerably, and because college and university entrance examinations are different from school to school. Faculty are not authorized to choose a teaching material at their discretion.

This study explored only reading textbooks approved by MEXT. Thus, the results and implications from this study may not be applicable to other EFL textbooks such as grammar. The details of cultural contents specified by MEXT in the area of English courses are presented in the following chapter.

## Concluding Remarks

Historically, a knowledge of culture has been one of the major skill categories to acquire in foreign language education not only in Japan but in other parts of the world. During my school years the culture presented in Japanese teaching materials was not closely related to the daily lives of C2. Often referred to as ‘Big C’, the culture presented in textbooks belongs in museums. The knowledge of “Big C” includes that of social, political, and economic institutions, history, literature, arts and sciences. The “small c” includes the aspects of daily living, housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all patterns of behavior that are shared by the majority within a cultural group (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 1996). Since communicative competence became one of the goals of foreign language education in Japan, the kind of culture taught in foreign language classes has centered on things, events, and ideas more common in C2, which is referred to as ‘small c’.

The latest and more prevalent categorization of culture in the field of foreign language pedagogy is advocated in ACTFL *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 2005). In the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (SFL), a culture is divided into “Three Ps” that are perspectives, products and practices. Perspectives are “traditional ideas and attitudes...beliefs and values”, practices are “the knowledge of what to do when and where”, and products are “tangible” and “intangible” manifestations that reflect the perspectives of the culture (SFL, 2005). The relationship among the three is described as that both practices and products reflect perspectives of a culture.

Regardless of the approaches, no major shift in teaching culture has been observed yet. In Japan presentation of cultural information has remained discrete superficial pieces of information that are easily forgotten. The goal of this study was to determine if any efforts were being made to (1) present the culture as is and (2) relate the culture to the readers’ lives so that the knowledge may be meaningful enough to be retained and utilized further.

With increasing exposure to other cultures in and out of Japan, it is apparent that the nation needs to change its attitude toward cultures in general. The Japanese people have been criticized for their closed mind-set and the treatment of other culture bearers (Dale, 1986; Kramsch, 1997). The national curriculum acknowledges the importance of cultures in foreign language education. The curriculum attempts to reflect this acknowledgement in the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme and supposedly in the content of the textbooks. The fact that there are more American Assistant English Teachers (AETs) than other nationals limits the variety of cultures presented in classrooms. American teaching assistants come with different educational backgrounds and they may not be experienced or trained to teach EFL. Since Japanese teachers may not always be reliable references for other cultures, the textbooks commonly required in a reading course must be dependable sources of cultural information and facilitate Japanese open societies.

A student’s success or failure in learning culture then is, to some extent, the responsibility of the learning materials. It is difficult for anyone to adjust to an unfamiliar culture without proper instruction and sufficient input. It was hoped that the analysis and suggestions to be made in this study would help the textbook writers and classroom instructors to take the steps

necessary to succeed. Careful textbook selection, along with delivery and evaluation, would allow the teachers to guide the students on a precise and accurate path.

These factors, united with language learning theory, provide a powerful basis for helping students succeed. The key, however, is making students and instructors aware of the importance and necessity of cultural knowledge through the evaluation used in this study. Once teachers are made aware of the importance and necessity of cultural knowledge, they may begin planning powerful lessons based on culture.

### Organization

Chapter two is a review of the literature concerning the major categories of previous research in EFL education: MEXT's goals, and textbooks. It is also explained how this proposed research will contribute to the studies done in the past. Chapter two will also describe how culture has been defined and taught in foreign language education. The suggestions made on how culture should be taught will be introduced.

Chapter three contains research design and methodology. It consists of two sections, one section for describing the reading passages in each textbook and the other section for a study of the pre-reading and post-reading exercise sections following each reading passage.

Chapter four reports the findings and results of the data collected. Detailed description of the results found in this study is presented.

Chapter five summarizes and discusses the findings and the results. It also presents the recommendations for future research and implications for teaching.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to situate my study in literature and in theory. This chapter contextualizes the study providing a rationale for exploring and describing the contents and organization of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in high schools in Japan. Because this study is exploratory and descriptive in nature, some aspects of the review of literature emerges later in the study as the data are collected, describing the contents of the textbooks.

In this chapter the goals of foreign language education are presented as recommended by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the difficulties in achieving these goals, and a review of the literature on EFL education in Japan. Second, the literature is reviewed on culture in foreign language education especially where it pertains to these concepts:

- how the definition of culture has changed since the beginning of audiolingualism with which came the shift in emphasis in foreign language education from reading canonical literature to more communicative purposes;
- various approaches to teaching culture in foreign language education, reflecting the different definitions, categorizations of culture;
- presentation of cultural information.

Then, the researcher's stance is described on how this study contributes to the teaching of culture in foreign language education, reflecting on the following: goals of teaching culture, suggested methods to teach culture, and the two principles of teaching culture that are (1) critical thinking to compare and contrast C1 and C2, and (2) the use of authentic material. These two principles are deduced from the previous theories and studies, and will be the guiding lights of this research.

## MEXT's Goals and EFL education in Japan

In this section, MEXT's role is defined in the light of foreign language education in Japan. The goals of foreign language education in the 2002 Course of Study and its 2003 Action Plan are described. Also, the existing difficulties that prevent the goals from being met, the possible reasons for these difficulties, the examinations, and Japanese culture, will be described accordingly.

### *MEXT's Goals and Existing Difficulties*

MEXT prepares the curriculum of education to be used nationwide, based on research and the needs of Japanese society and its relation to the world. The latest Course of Study was published in 2002 with the 2003 Action Plan as a guideline to implement the Course of Study. For example, the Course of Study includes plans such as the following: (1) adding a listening section in the entrance exams, (2) comparing the entrance exams to standardized tests such as TOEFL, (3) assisting teachers to score at least 550 on the TOEFL exam, and (4) sending 10,000 high school students on an annual study abroad program.

However, for these plans, no specific schedules are provided to realize these goals. It is difficult to deduce one underlying philosophy of the four plans above but it is apparent that both the Course of Study and the Action Plan disregard the importance of input. Krashen (2004) warns that it is necessary to train receptive skills such as reading and listening instead of just the accurate translation of sentences. Increase in the amount of input as well as the exposure to proper usages of the target language aides language skills to improve.

In Japan, the Course of Study (1983) for foreign language education for lower and upper secondary schools concretely defined the objectives and activities for the four major linguistic skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, while mentioning little about cultural study. The items that could be interpreted as culture are found under the heading "Foreign Affairs" in the Course of Study for upper secondary schools. Included in the contents of Foreign Affairs are 1) daily life, 2) manners and customs, 3) geography, 4) history, 5) other topics related to foreign affairs (p. 180). No usable texts, exercises, or activities for concrete practice in the classroom are mentioned under these subheadings; how these concepts are presented and studied is left to each classroom teacher. It is assumed that these were appropriate for the time.

Nearly two decades after the 1983 edition, the overall objectives in the latest Course of Study (MEXT, 2002) are “To develop students’ practical communication abilities such as understanding information and the speaker’s or writer’s intentions, and expressing their own ideas, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.” Later in the Course of Study, instruction is given to cover “topics that relate to the daily lives, manners and customs, stories, geography, history, etc. of Japanese people and the peoples of the world...” The criteria for material selection are 1) to enhance the understanding of various cultural perspectives and the ability to make impartial judgments; 2) to deepen the learners’ interests in the languages and cultures of the world including Japanese; 3) to deepen an international understanding from a broad perspective and to heighten the students’ awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community and to cultivate a spirit of international cooperation.

If these goals are met, deeper and more global perspectives should be possible to achieve through reading. However, these criteria are not narrowed specifically in the instructions for the Reading section in the Course of Study (2002). Mention is made of the need to grasp both the information and the writers’ intentions from the reading material, but the Course of Study never describes how each culture is reflected differently by writers.

The Course of Study (2002) lists six separate courses under “Foreign Languages”: Aural/Oral Communication I, II, English I, II, Reading, and Writing. Under the heading “Treatment of the Contents” of each subject, the Course of Study instructs the teacher to integrate the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Nothing is mentioned about how culture is mirrored in each linguistic skill. The overall objective lacks the vital link between each subject matter in EFL education and teaching culture, and each specific goal has resulted in teaching linguistic skills without deepening cultural understanding.

#### *Reasons*

Possible reasons why MEXT’s goals are difficult to realize are the restrictions against the material available in the market, the lack of guideline to the classroom teachers how to attain the goals, the Japanese culture, and the prevalent grammar-translation method. Ultimately the MEXT Course of Study appears to allow classroom teachers liberty in their selection of activities and materials. However, schools must choose textbooks from the list of approved materials

(MEXT, n.d.), and the Japanese culture does not recommend that teachers do anything that is not specifically described in the course of study (H. Ashida, personal communication, August 9, 1995). Similarly, Matsumura says that faculty in elementary, middle, and high schools in Japan are not allowed to use any teaching material that is not approved by MEXT (A. Matsumura, personal communication, November 2, 2007). Supporting Ashida's and Matsumura's comments, Hino (1988) and Sakui (2004) provide a sociocultural reason that Japanese culture both inside and outside of school does not allow teachers to try freely what might work better than the current practice. Teachers must abide by the authority of MEXT. Conscientious teachers must wonder why students' communicative skills do not improve after both teachers and students spend so much time translating. The teachers might do research and consider trying different materials available in the market but not approved by MEXT. However, the use of outside material will reduce the amount of time to spend on the given material.

Carter, Goold, and Madeley (1993) report that the curriculum prepared by MEXT includes terms such as "culture" and "oral communication" in an effort to implement them. This curriculum also suggests specific activities such as discussion, recitation, and debate to promote oral activities. However, it does not mention anything specifically about how culture is learned through these activities. Although culture becomes a determinant factor in how these suggested activities are practiced (Barnlund, 1975), culture and these oral activities are not adequately integrated in the curriculum for the teachers to use in their classes. Communication happens in an interactional setting where content and meanings are more important than form and structure.

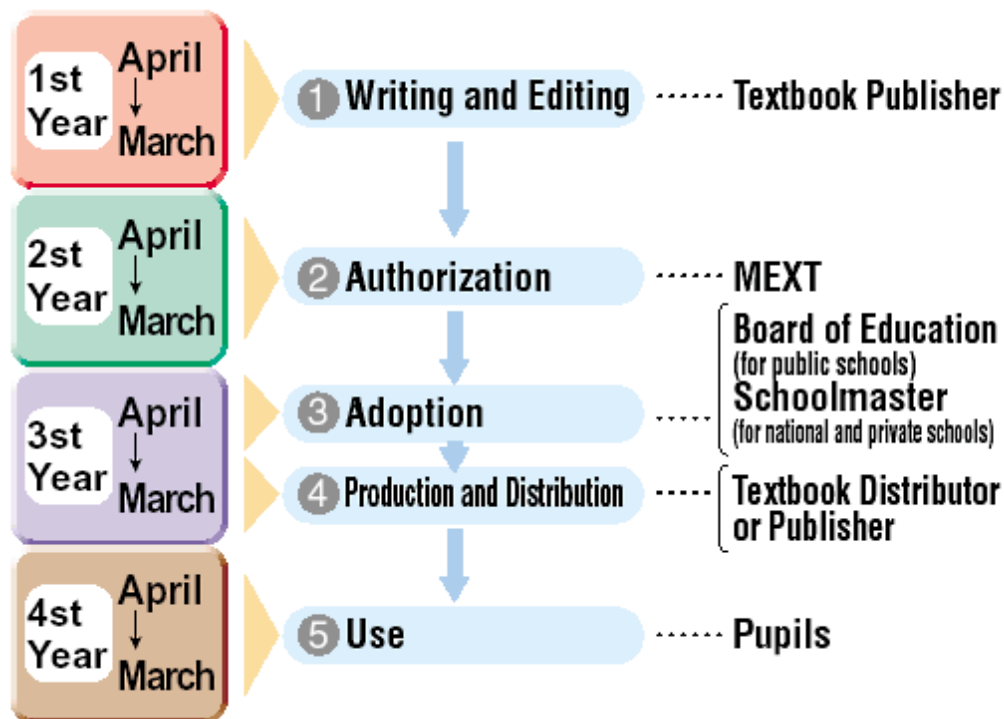
One thing worth noting is the dilemma in applying this type of activity in the Japanese cultural context. Socially, Japan is a collective society where individual opinions are secondary to the groups' opinion. Traditionally, the Japanese avoid discussion or debate in their efforts to submerge differences in opinions (Barnlund, 1975). Secondly, the subjective opinions of the Japanese readers toward a reading passage should vary considerably. However, personal reflections would not be considered of much value in Japanese high schools, especially when it is more important to answer questions correctly. Weeks (1996) reported that no opportunities were provided in the classroom for the students to reflect on the contents of a reading passage. The students were not used to answering any questions from outside the textbooks.

The teaching method that does not allow the learners an option of different responses is the grammar-translation method. It has been reported (O'Donnell, 2005; Sato, 2002) that the grammar-translation method is still widely used nationwide, and post-reading questions in textbooks are assumed to be more literal than inference questions. Literal questions rely more on memory rather than on comprehension. For example, the post-reading questions in an introductory lesson in *Encounter: Reading Course* (Watanabe, Ikeda, Tajima, Haisa, Takeoka, Cheetham, & Harrell, 2005, pp. 19-20) ask the students to retrieve information by recalling the contents of the preceding reading section. This implies that MEXT considers inference questions less critical for achieving communicative goals than recalling details, rearranging discrete pieces of information, and organizing elements of sentences.

#### The EFL Textbooks in Japan

As stated below, all high schools are required to use a textbook that is approved by MEXT (n.d.):

The School Education Law stipulates that pupils and students at all ... upper secondary schools ... are required to use textbooks, either authorized by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, or whose copyright MEXT owns, then, determined which authorized textbooks to be adopted and used at each school in the locality. (MEXT, n.d.)



**Table 2** *Until a textbook is actually used (Mext, n.d.) (sic)*

One of MEXT’s (2002) goals is to foster intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and communicative skills in the English curriculum. When the entrance examinations for post-secondary education require a higher level of reading skills than is taught, there is a serious dilemma with the government’s objectives to foster intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and communicative skills through EFL education. It would be interesting to find out how and if the textbooks for reading comprehension are designed to accommodate both needs, first, to improve reading skills needed for passing the exams and the second to promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking and communicative skills.

*New Trend*

The guidelines for selecting teaching materials state that the materials selected should be “... useful in enhancing the understanding of various ways of seeing and thinking, cultivating a rich sensibility, and enhancing the ability to make impartial judgments... in deepening the

understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan and the rest of the world, raising interest in language and culture, and developing respectful attitudes to these elements... in deepening international understanding from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community, and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation" (MEXT, 2002). Also, textbooks have been revised to a certain extent, as in the recent introduction of topics such as global issues so that the books supposedly present more cultural information now compared to the past (Nakabachi, 1992); the same trend in the topic selection is reflected in the topics used for the entrance exams (Peaty, 1995; Sawada, 1991).

As for the variety of countries included in the textbooks, Watanabe (1989), who analyzed five series of EFL textbooks for junior high schools in Japan, found countries like the United States, England, Australia, Singapore, Kenya, Canada, countries in South America, Thailand, Japan, Cambodia, Spain, France, Niger, Korea, and Papua New Guinea. She stated that this was a fairly new approach to include all these other English-speaking countries compared to the view in the past where there was a British-American supremacy as English-speaking countries. The intention of MEXT to expose Japanese students to more countries in the world rather than two exclusively English-speaking nations was reflected in this approach. However, in later analyses of high school textbooks, Iwata et al. (2001) and Yamanaka (2006) found an increase of information provided regarding the United States and Britain.

### *Limited Exposure to C2*

When much importance is still placed on passing the entrance examinations, the textbooks must emphasize all the more the students' needs to acquire both grammar and meaning. Regarding the cultural information, learning EFL in Japan is quite different from learning ESL in the United States where English is a primary means of communication. In a case like Japan where English is not a designated official language, the textbooks approved by MEXT are in most cases the only access and the only exposure to the culture of the communities that use the target language (Brosh, 1997). Despite the presence of people like Assistant English Teachers (AETs) from English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries who are selected by the Japanese government to teach English in schools in Japan, majority of the information on cultures of English-speaking countries usually is delivered by the media in Japan. Under the

circumstances, the quality, intensity and quantity of textbook information has a formative impact on the students' personal views as well as their political orientations (Brosh, 1997).

### *Critical Thinking*

In the grammar-translation method, a critical or reflective reading of a passage is rather secondary compared to decoding each word and sentence. Interpreting the background of a reading passage is hardly existent. When this method is applied, the textbooks written by authors are translated by students and teachers so that the content in English superficially matches that of the Japanese language.

Under such circumstances where studying is often driven by examinations, the faculty should find this kind of textbook easier to use if they clearly present vocabulary and grammar and provide questions with only one possible answer. Those textbooks that instigate critical thinking are usually not preferred because such a book does not provide one clear solution to the problem presented. The preferred world knowledge in the reading passages includes specific pieces of information from history or philosophy such as names of people and places and historical incidents in the past. However, this type of information will not necessarily guarantee fostering open minds toward the differences among the cultures of the world because specific information without relevance to the learners' lives less likely to be retained.

### *Textbook Characteristics and the Ill Effects*

Specific problems of textbooks reported in research studies are (1) edited reading passages for correct grammar, (2) artificial simplification of the vocabulary of reading passages, (3) a lack of information on cultural contents, (4) more literal than inference questions, and (5) various other problems. Since accredited schools are required to select a textbook from the list of teaching materials approved by MEXT, students are exposed to these problems regularly. Bowles (2001a, 2001b) and McCarthy and Carter (1994) report the unnatural use of English in the textbooks in Japan.

#### *Editing for grammar correctness*

Bowles concludes this is due to the selection of less frequently used vocabulary for syntactic or structural simplicity. McCarthy and Carter (1994) report a similar situation with the use of grammatically correct English with no performance errors. However, no major problems

in the treatment of English grammar have been found in any of the approved texts. Gilmore (2004) presents an example of an unnatural dialogue (Appendix A) from an EFL textbook used in Japanese secondary schools. It is perfect in grammar but the dialogue lacks the features that are commonly observed in an authentic interaction such as hesitation, repetition, or false starts. Material such as this is easy to translate but it does not present the reality of English usage. He also claims that authentic material is completely rewritten by Japanese editors so that the contents would fit in the curricular frame. Iwata et al. (2001) also asserts that the information, if not cultural, is presented in decontextualized settings for correct grammar.

#### *Artificial simplification*

Secondly, compared with the authentic use of language, artificial simplification supposedly for improving reading fluency, is reported to counteract fluent reading (Oh, 2001; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991). Kikuchi (2006) expresses a concern that the entrance examination might be too difficult for the Japanese high school students who are educated with simplified English. It is elaboration, such as rephrasing, rewording and additional explanation that actually helps comprehension. When people try to make themselves understood, they elaborate more and add explanations in detail. They do not delete. Leedham (1991) and Templin (1997) report similar findings. Templin (1997), who analyzed the high school textbooks for the course, Oral Communications, reports that they foster translation and low-content grammar exercises, present an out-of-date, stereotyped view of English-speaking nationalities, and occasionally they even provide misinformation. In his study, the Japanese teachers and students who use these textbooks are reported to mention that MEXT-approved textbooks are boring, impractical, too difficult, and they lack authentic language and communicative activities, and contain too many stereotypes. The students complain that the EFL texts, whose main author is usually a Japanese professor or higher education, contain too many words and the content is too difficult to comprehend.

From the perspective of sociolinguistics, Bachman (1990) believes that sensitivity is required for cultural references, register, naturalness, and variety. An appropriate use of a language is determined by the social norms. Being grammatically correct is not the only criterion. Depending on who participates in a communication, grammatical correctness can become secondary.

example 1: If it **were** a fine day today, I could have come to class by bike.

example 2: If it **was** a fine day today, I could have come to class by bike.

The difference between the two examples above is grammatical correctness.

Grammatically speaking, example 1 is correct; however, even someone who works in a highly educational setting would not always correct a coworker's mistake such as in example 2. A lack of both an authentic and practical usage of the language for grammatical correctness is at the extreme opposite end of Bachman's claim (1990). To prove Bachman's point, Templin (1997) describe some problems in the dialogues in the Japanese EFL texts as unnatural and that there are similar problems with sociolinguistics in other texts. For example, the following is a short conversation between a high school teacher and a new student in a textbook, *Select*.

Ken: Hello. My name is Ken. What is your name, please?

Ms. Brown: Mary Brown. Hello, Ken.

Ken: I like horoscopes. What is your sign?

Templin points out that Ken's question to the teacher on the first day is inappropriate from a socio-linguistic standpoint.

There are reports on problems involving the use of edited English that it consequently loses its unique tone and style becomes plain, simple, boring, forced, choppy, and unnatural (Blau, 1982; Hall, 1977; Honeyfield, 1977; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Yano et al., 1991; Yorio, 1985). Editing eliminates the unique linguistic features that learners eventually should know. Furthermore, the end product may become even harder to comprehend than the original because simplification often leaves the relationship between ideas and concepts in a text unclear (Young, 1999). MEXT's contemporary standard English is actually something no one uses because no language remains perfectly grammatical in its authentic use.

### *Lack of culture*

Third, textbooks have been analyzed also by cultural contents (Browning, Kawagishi, & Seto, 1999; Iwata, et al. 2001; Kitao, 1979, 1988). Kitao (1979) analyzed twenty English textbooks for seventh through twelfth graders with the Joiner's (1974) evaluation form. Kitao concluded that these textbooks were linguistically, not culturally, oriented. He found a lack of any important cultural information, and the few cultural facts that were presented, were presented inaccurately. In the following year, interviews with thirty-one Japanese teenagers who

had been in the U.S. for a year as exchange students at University of Kansas, indicated that the little amount of American culture taught in English classes in Japan prevents the Japanese students from communicating adequately with Americans (Kitao, 1980). Japanese high school English education was perceived to be weak in the area of cross-cultural training. In analyzing seven English textbooks for high school programs, Kitao (1988) concluded that American culture is not addressed extensively over a wide range or depth of topics, in spite of the fact that the amount of material that presented culture has increased in the past ten years. He calls for further research and effort as necessary to improve the quality of cultural information in EFL textbooks. He concluded in two of his studies (1979, 1988) that cultural information lacked accuracy, and that textbooks still remained linguistically rather than culturally oriented.

Two decades after Kitao's study (1979), Browning, Kawagishi and Seto (1999) report that textbooks present cultural information such as festivals and annual events, which are categorized as Big C. Similarly, Iwata et al. (2001) in their analysis of topics of culture have found that there is more information on 'Big C, i.e., achievement culture' than on 'small c, i.e. behavioral culture'. Although *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2005) advocated the 3Ps-products, practices, and perspectives-Iwata et al. (2001) used the categorization of Big C and small c, making a reference to Yoshida's (1995) research. His definition of Big C is the abstract and comprehensive value system in a culture that does not easily change with time. On the other hand, small c refers to the aspect of a culture that varies by time, location, and individual, that is closely related to daily lives. They further note that there is less information in the national curriculum for Japanese high school in the subjects, Reading and Writing textbooks than in Oral Communications and English I courses. Both studies by Iwata et al. (2001) and Yamanaka (2006) report that information regarding English-speaking countries such as the United States and Britain is included more often than that of other nations. Regarding the superficial content of cultural information, unless efforts are made to make these superficial contents relevant to the students' lives, the discrete pieces of information are unlikely to be retained to culturally enrich the readers. When faculty are not always a reliable source of input on culture due to the varied backgrounds, the teaching material must present enough information to satisfy the deficit.

*More literal than inferential questions*

A fourth problem is that post-reading exercises tend to ask more literal questions rather than inference questions, even though the latter is more important to reading comprehension (Frederiksen, 1975; Kintsch, 1974). Literal questions ask the readers to retrieve more discrete pieces of information from a reading passage such as who, what, when, and where. On the other hand, inference questions require the readers to guess, judge, and logically reason with the available information in the passage. An example of an inference question would be to write an alternative ending to a story. Readers are required to use all the information presented in the reading passage so that the final product is logical.

Literal questions often do not require an overall comprehension of the text because they tend to focus on details or on the superficial aspects of the language such as words, phrases, and sentences. Although the act of reading for overall comprehension requires the balanced use of specific details from passages and the readers' background knowledge, Japanese EFL education has traditionally utilized the details more than the background knowledge because it is more effective to acquire vocabulary and grammar. When overall contents and meaning are less emphasized than details, cultural background knowledge is not necessary to answer literal questions because the cultural background of the reading selection is reflected equally in overall content as well as in bits and pieces of separate words and phrases.

As seen in the grammar-translation approach, grasping the main theme of a passage is secondary to translating each sentence. Fluent reading does not involve decoding each letter (Smith, 2004). Sentences and paragraphs are interconnected and support each other. The importance of each sentence or paragraph is different depending on how each supports the main theme. However, when a reader is made to focus on letters by a method, s/he fails to recognize this relationship between larger units such as sentences, and paragraphs in a text. This method is less concerned with how each paragraph is related to the others, among the paragraphs, or with the topic statement rather than with other more meaning and content-based approaches.

In reality, smooth reading requires a lot of inference utilizing the information in the passage and the reader's existing knowledge. Since reading is an interactive process of these two clusters of information, the more extensive the reader's background knowledge is, the easier reading should become. When a passage is written by someone outside the reader's culture, inference is usually more difficult. Stating it another way, the lack of cultural background

knowledge inhibits inference (Davies, 1997). Since cultural differences between the writer and the reader slow down the reading process, Swaffar (1985) suggests that teachers provide pre-reading instructions on discourse markers, logic development, environment or stage setting, and information on the writer's intent.

On the other hand, in order to achieve the goal of fostering critical thinking skills, MEXT (2002) suggests that students read, talk, and write about their personal reflections based upon reading. This suggestion should serve to prove Kramersch's (1993), Kolb's (1984), Byrnes' (1990), and NSFLEP (2005) point that better cultural understanding would be possible by relating the readers' culture with the writer's. However, this suggested move from rote memorization to more analytical thinking and task-based skills has become more difficult to support with the content of traditional Japanese textbooks (Mulvey, 2001).

#### *Other problems*

Several studies point out other problems (Kanamaru, 1998; Yoshihara, 2005). For example, the word *man* is still interpreted as if he were not people in general. Many women in reading passages take the role of a mother, and the majority of the authors of reading passages are male. Also the honorary prefix Ms, is hardly used (Kanamaru, 1998). Yoshihara (2005) points out that sensitive feminism issues such as violence against women and sexual harassment are rarely mentioned in EFL textbooks. She further points out how textbooks have potentially contributed to the stereotyped images of women in the western culture as somewhat more civilized and advanced, compared to those in Asia. There are stereotyped images seen in ESL textbooks, also. In the United States, Carroll and Kowitz (1994) report that women in ESL textbooks are typically busy, tall, and beautiful and men are either poor, young, strong and tall or rich, old, strong, and fat.

#### *Suggested Use of Authentic Reading Materials*

As a resource for culture, authentic material has been proposed by several studies (Brown, 1987; Gilmore, 2004; Honeyfield, 1977; Kramersch, 1993; Lamie, 1998; McKay, 1982; Shrum & Glisan, 2005; Swaffar, 1985). Authentic texts are defined as "those written and oral communications produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group" (Galloway, 1998). Authentic materials as pointed out by Honeyfield

(1977) and McKay (1982) are useful in preparing students for reading in the real world. Authentic texts also allow for the different linguistic practices in a society and thus cultural varieties within a language. There are unique features in English languages depending on where it is a designated official language. It is these unique characteristics that allow a language to be culturally distinctive from another.

MEXT (2002) selects the contemporary standard English to be taught. Among the English languages officially used in multiple countries in the world, MEXT does not specify in which country or culture the contemporary standard English is used in speech or in writing. If MEXT implies that there is a common vocabulary and grammar among all varieties of the English languages, whatever is unique in each would have to be eliminated both in content and in form.

The forms of authentic material include speeches, television and radio broadcasts, social interaction, discussion, popular and canonical literary texts, ads, periodicals, comics, songs, and poems, etc. Lamie (1998) claims that in Japan, in spite of the accessibility to western pop culture in the form of songs, magazines, and movies, these are rarely used in English lessons. Among the proposals to use unedited authentic materials, literary works in particular have proven to improve reading ability (Carter & McCarthy, 1995; McCarthy & Carter, 1994; Schofer, 2002). Authentic materials have their own unique characteristics that actually make reading easier than edited passages with perfectly correct grammar. The edited passages look clean at first glance but they are artificial, sanitized, and unnatural. The unique characteristics in authentic passages make up the very essence of culture that distinguishes itself from other cultures.

It would be interesting to find how reading textbooks reflect MEXT's goals such as "contemporary standard English" while there are researches and theories that suggest using authentic materials. Considering the theory that language *is* culture, the end product of contemporary standard English must be reduced to only the common English lexicon shared by the English-speaking nations. This lexicon may indeed be what MEXT defines as "contemporary standard English". What, if at all, is left as common culture among all English-speaking countries? The relationship between a culture and its language use is discussed later in the chapter.

The goals of foreign language education and the suggested characteristics of teaching materials described in MEXT's curriculum (2002) lead the researcher of this study to believe that MEXT is aware of the importance of teaching culture in foreign language education. The fact that the recent textbooks were published based on this curriculum, and have been approved by the government agencies is a sufficient evidence to indicate that MEXT believes the textbooks in use are designed to serve the goals. The problems and the suggestions reported regarding the EFL textbooks in Japan are laid out in Figure 1.

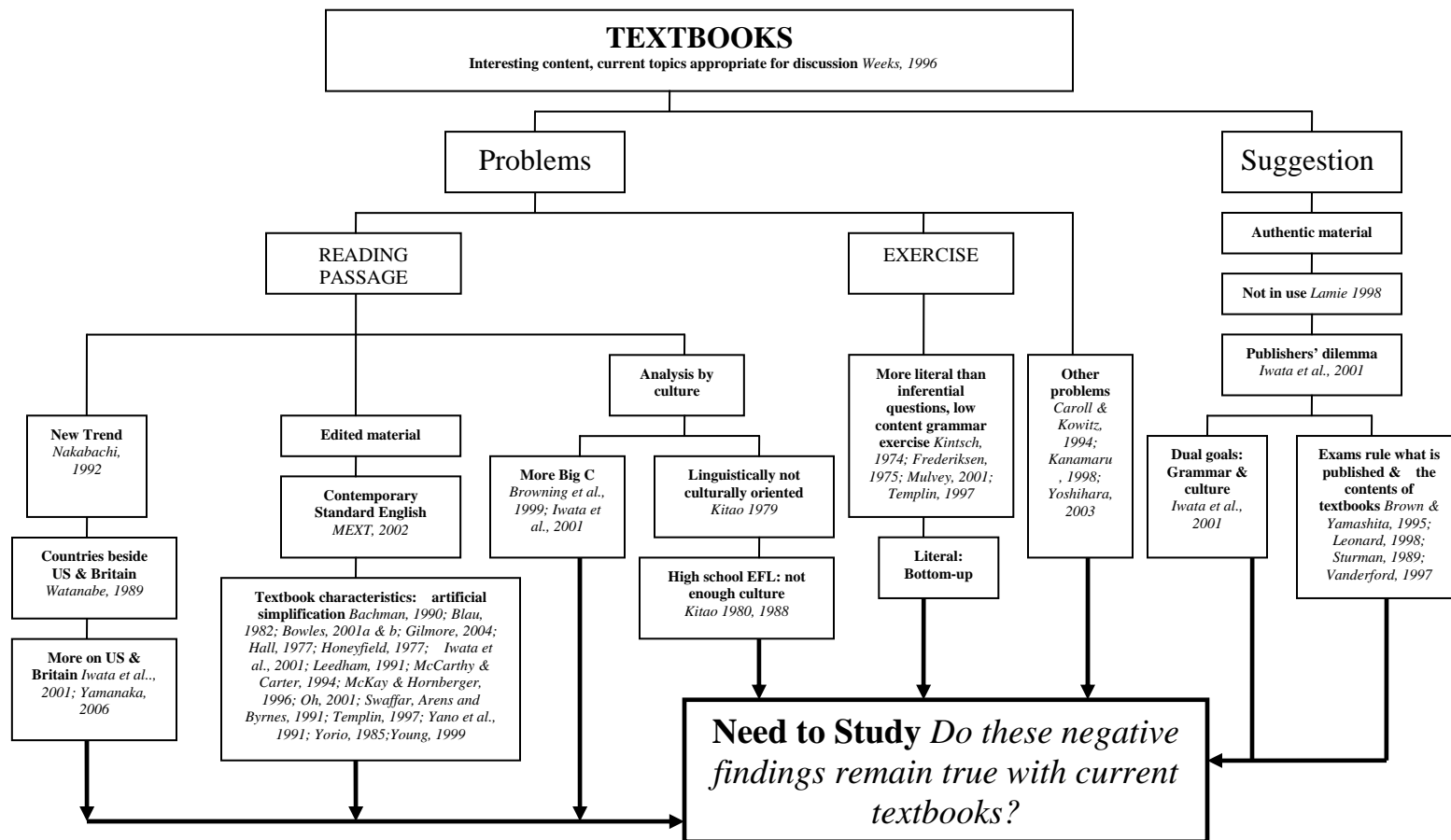


Figure 1 Literature Map: Textbooks

## Culture in Foreign Language Education

### *Definition of Culture*

The term culture has been used to refer to groups of people who were more developed in their way of life and less primitive than the tribal people in many parts of the world (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994). Culture in this sense includes the major accomplishments of a given civilization such as art, music, literature, geography, folklore, sociology, political system, and history. It means the conventional ideal of individual refinement which encompasses the non-economic spheres of human activities (Sapir, 1949). Prior to the 1960s, this definition was prevalent and culture was synonymous with civilization.

The definition of culture has changed its boundary since early in the 20th century from simply referring to the formal aspects of civilization to everything, both material and spiritual, related to human beings or that has made that species human. There is a difference, however, with respect to the definition that culture includes material and physical aspects of human life (Goodenough, 1971; Herskovits, 1948; Keesing, 1982; Nida, 1954; Young, 1972). Linton (1940) tends to emphasize physical aspects less.

The attributes common to most of the definitions of culture are behaviors, both observable and non-observable, traditions, habits, customs, perspectives, values, beliefs, interpretations, evaluations, and perceptions (Banks, 1994; Boas, 1940; Brooks, 1968; Goodenough, 1987; Johnson, 1992; Keesing, 1981; Nida, 1954; Ochs, 1979; Rosaldo, 1989; Saville-Troike, 1989; Seelye, 1993; Swaffar et al, 1991). In their definitions, these behavioral aspects are historically and socially transmitted within a group of people either by instruction or imitation. Culture does not exist apart from people or in individuals, but between people. Cultural traits are shared by the members of a group and learned by individuals while growing up in that group (Banks, 1994; Goodenough, 1987; Hall, 1959 & 1977; Johnson, 1992; Linton, 1940; Ochs, 1979; Saville-Troike, 1989; Storti, 1989). People are not born **with** but **into** a culture, the elements of which are later discovered by every individual. As a result, there is some variation within any culture.

Based on a body of knowledge or beliefs shared by the members of a society, these members operate their behaviors in an acceptable manner to their society (Goodenough, 1957; Storti, 1989). Specifically, by intellectual, moral, and aesthetic norms or standards, one decides

where to live, how family members are to be classified, how deference is to be expressed and so on. Just like a computer operates by means of a program consisting of a set of rules that prescribe what actions are to be taken under various conditions, an individual can be seen as operating by means of a cultural program.

Hall (1959) and Cortazzi and Jin (1999) provide similar definitions of culture as a mold that controls our daily lives and which identifies the meaning and significance of each experience of a group member. Culture is a common spiritual sphere shared by all members and used to interpret the participants' actions, words, and patterns of thinking.

This major shift in the definition of culture from major accomplishments of a civilization to a system that controls our daily lives is reflected in foreign language education. When culture was defined as civilization, cultural topics used to be introduced as supplemental information at the end of each instructional unit. Since the new definition of culture as a system that controls our daily lives became more prevalent, it is often recommended that culture be fully integrated into foreign language teaching based on the idea that language is inseparable from culture and that language shapes the reality in a culture (Barnlund, 1975). Language is not a mirror, which reflects the reality of a culture, but it is rather a necessity to adjust to the reality of a culture.

In spite of the shift in the definitions of culture, an agreement has not been reached how a culture should be defined in a foreign language curriculum (Schulz, 2007). For the ease of presenting specific goals of learning foreign languages, culture has been categorized. Some of them are: 1) the Hammerlian (1986) model that divides culture into three categories of achievement, information, and behavior; 2) the dual concepts of 'Big C,' achievement culture, and 'small c,' behavioral culture; 3) and the three Ps of cultural perspectives, products, and practices of a group of people by the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFL) (2005).

Critiquing the three Ps by SFL (1996), Tang (2006) proposed to divide a culture into only two categories, combining 'products' and 'practices' and leaving 'perspectives' as is. The reason for this claim is that products and practices are the same in their essence because they are manifested forms of underlying values and beliefs of a cultural group. Products take a form of tangible items to display these values, and practices are behaviors and conducts that are controlled by cultural norms. Perspectives are considered separate because they are the values, beliefs and the cultural norms from which the products and practices are manifested.

In summary, the definition of culture shifted from civilization to everything that pertains to human life. Along with this shift, the treatment of culture in foreign language classes has changed, and the importance of teaching culture has been emphasized. Although there has been different categorization of culture in foreign language education, there has not yet been a consensus on one definition of culture.

### *Various Approaches to Teaching Culture*

Although language teachers have come to understand the importance of culture instruction in foreign language classes, they have been criticized for their inadequate treatment of culture. In reality cultural study may either encircle language learning or come after language learning. Fischer (1996) defines these methods as the tourist approach, in which learners acquire only linguistic forms and tangible cultural facts. According to Ito (2002), the increase in the number of English-speaking countries presented in the textbooks has resulted in the superficial treatment of the cultures of these countries. The efforts to include many different cultures resulted in eliminating the unique characteristics of each culture and thus what remained in the course contents are the few common traits of all cultures. As a result, what is presented as culture is far from any real culture of any people. Galloway (1985) lists four common approaches to teaching culture.

1. The Frankenstein Approach: A taco from here, a flamenco dancer from there, a gaucho from here, a bullfight from there
2. The 4-F Approach: Folk dance, festivals, fairs, and food
3. The Tour Guide Approach: The identification of monuments, rivers, and cities
4. The “By-the-Way” Approach: Sporadic lectures or bits of behavior selected indiscriminantly to emphasize sharp contrasts

The effort to present a variety of cultures often results in brief descriptions of multiple cultures mostly due to time restrictions and a lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers.

Since the language teaching profession embraced proficiency guidelines and testing in the mid 1980s, communicative competence has been emphasized, and language and culture have been considered together as a unit. Language taught without culture emphasizes correct grammatical forms, which indeed helps learners convey superficial messages, but such language

study does not help the students carry out intercultural communication. With pragmatic instruction, where language is taught in cultural contexts, the learners acquire the knowledge of socially appropriate uses of that language. This human dimension of language enables the learners to communicate in real-life situations (Hinkel, 1992).

However, when superficial cultural traits were taught in foreign language classes, the cultural component was separated from language instruction. One dimension of culture, the underlying values of a society, has been ignored until recently. The various reasons for this are that the qualities of the underlying values are not concrete enough for writers of language textbooks to clearly define them; language instructors are not willing to make the changes due to constraints such as the profession's traditional nature, time, and budgetary constraints (Bragger & Rice, 2000; Morain, 1986, 1997). Morain points out the difficulties in teaching cultural perspectives in foreign language classrooms: Customs change with time; the reflected values in daily lives are not distinct; attitudes are mutable; and paralinguistic cues are subtle.

Teaching culture in foreign language classes has been criticized for its manner of bottom-up presentations, with a list of facts to commit to memory. Sapir (1966) criticizes this by saying culture does not consist of separate pieces but that everything is connected like leaves and twigs of a tree. Tedick, Walker, Lange, Paige and Jorstad's (1993) criticism is from a different angle. They attribute the prejudice against C2 to that fact that culture is presented with discrete facts. Hall stresses the importance of providing a "mold" or background of the culture bearers (Hall, p. 49). Tang echoes this view by suggesting "a general theme" (Tang, p. 88) so that the discrete facts can be understood based on the common underlying rules. Facts or superficial aspects of culture that change with time can never serve as a "mold". What the students need for a better understanding of culture is the mold itself, not its contents.

There have been suggestions to relate the contents of reading material to the readers' personal lives. Specifically, the Reader Response Approach (Rosenblatt, 1995) is seemingly effective in this regard (Liaw, 2001; McKay, 1982; Oster, 1989). In this approach, students may judge and analyze events in a reading passage based on whether that event would be culturally appropriate in their culture. Any response would be acceptable. The readers' responses differ from culture to culture. While learners respond to the contents of a passage, they should be instructed on how to respond differently to the culture about which the passage was written.

Liaw (2001) describes the advantages of this approach in EFL classes. Personal connection such as this would enhance comprehension, and creative and critical thinking are only possible when there is no threat or compulsion to learn correct answer or compete for the best interpretation, which are the typical characteristics of entrance examinations in Japan. Not only is the Reader Response Approach an effective tool for language teaching but, as Liaw (2001) claims, it also enhances cultural understanding. Kramersch's theory (1985, 1993) to make the content personally relevant is common to this Reader Response Approach in that the learners are instructed to approach the reading material on a more personal level instead of memorizing discrete facts.

Teachers as well as approaches have been criticized for their lack of appropriate training. Their training has been on how to teach a language, not a culture (Kramersch, Cain & Murphy-Lejune, 1996). Also, they are not comfortable enough with their limited knowledge in culture to supply their classes with appropriate cultural information (Allen, 1985; Arries, 1994; Bragaw, 1991; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984 & 1987; Lafayette, 1988; Nunan, 2003; Hadley, 1993; Sakui, 2004; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999).

Reported twice in one of the major newspaper, *Yomiuri*<sup>1</sup>, in 2003, teacher training is more concerned with language proficiency such as raising TOEFL scores. Culture is known as one of the crucial elements in EFL education but according to these newspaper reports, the actual programs to provide more training English teachers in Japan are seemingly geared to improve only their linguistic abilities.

### *Presentation of Cultural Information*

In spite of the major changes in methodology in the 1950s and 1960s and of the concerns for the integration of culture in language teaching, it is still questionable that foreign language textbooks present appropriate cultural reality. The role of hundreds of native speakers of English, invited to Japan by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), remains rather that of an entertainer in the classroom. Their relationship to the Japanese teachers of core subject is rather like that of an assistant. In addition, culture is not presented as necessary information to learn but as separate supplemental or enrichment material.

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<sup>1</sup> "Long Summer" (2003) and "Kagawa Pref" (2003)

Ramirez and Hall (1990) note in their analysis of Spanish textbooks, "language and culture are presented in a linear model" (p.64). Defined by Wilkins (1976) and Banathy and Lange (1972), the linear model is based on pre-established objectives that are reduced to learning tasks. The mastery of these tasks eventually contributes to the mastery of the language. In this model, culture is treated as an outside element and is parallel to language learning. As early as 1984, Crawford-Lange and Lange criticized that this manner of description does not prepare students to recognize and understand cultural changes over time. Some potential results from such a practice would be the neglect of cultural variations within a culture, stereotyping, and a generalized bias toward the target culture. The culture is closed, final, and complete; therefore, its characteristics at a particular time may be correctly identified. However, instead of acquiring a fair attitude toward other cultures, students may possibly get stereotyped ideas and obtain fixed images about other cultures. In addition, they say that this manner of presentation does not relate linguistic aspects to social situations, and that cultural aspects are scattered in the textbooks as separate information rather than being integrated with the language study. Culture is not a body of characteristics on a fixed stage but rather a process of changes that the participants in a culture bring about as they live and work. Despite that, culture is taught like a shopping list.

This manner of presentation of culture may have resulted in the pattern of exercises that one finds in EFL reading textbooks: questions in the exercise sections tend to encourage recalling facts as if reading meant memorizing, despite the fact that inference questions are reported more helpful to retaining information and to integrating background knowledge with the contents of the material (Aslanian, 1983). Seelye claims, "most culture tests unfortunately measure superficial knowledge rather than intercultural skill development" (1993, p. 207). Although Kramersch claimed (1983) that while language teaching has moved away from audiolingualism, from "rote learning and imitation drills, that is, away from a stimulus-response approach, ... textbooks still use mostly stimulus-response methods of presenting culture" (p. 437).

Classifying culture has started a trend in foreign language education. For example, Kramersch (2003) says that, due to the view that the improvement in assessment was considered as the improvement in education, testing students' cultural proficiency has resulted in defining specifically what to teach. However it does not concern how to teach it. Factual information such

as history and the sociocultural views, and routines and etiquettes may be assessed with a pencil and paper test or an oral proficiency test. However, they do not deal with “general sociolinguistic competence or with social awareness across cultures” (Kramsch, 2003, pp. 20-21). Because discrete itemized culture is presented during the teaching process, it has been tested as such. This trend has failed to teach how students should use a foreign language in a socially appropriate manner. It also has not helped the students to acknowledge that their own use of the language reflects their own culture.

In addition, Tang (2006) argues that categorizing culture has resulted in ignoring the holistic nature of a culture and emphasizing instead a superficial, discrete manner of teaching culture. Culture has been categorized in foreign language education in order to propose better teaching methods. Major categorizations include the binary concepts such as “Big C,” achievement culture, and the other, more behavioral “small c”. Furthermore, in the US, Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFL) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (NSFLEP, 1999) cultural instruction is divided into the “Three Ps,” cultural perspectives, products and practices. With these categorizations, to be familiar with the target culture has been interpreted as knowing how to respond to the stimuli in each category. In her claim, Tang says that each category is interconnected to others and is not functional apart from others.

Whether it is ‘Big C,’ and ‘small c’ or ‘3Ps’, the efforts made are common in that culture is divided in some way or another. In consideration of these divisions of cultures, foreign language textbooks have been analyzed and studied according to their cultural elements (Iwata et al. 2001; Joiner, 1974; Kitao, 1979, 1988) and the countries that the cultures represent (Yamanaka, 2006).

### My Stance on Culture in Textbooks

In research studies on teaching culture in foreign language classes, they described which cultural information or country was included and what was not. Based on the findings, suggestions have been made to include different categories of cultures such as ‘small c’ or different cultural ‘Perspectives’.

However, in reality, it is probably impossible to include all these culture categories. In any foreign language course taught in any school, there is a limit to the amount of time available

to teach and the amount of material to cover in the given time frame. If one thing is selected to be included in the course material, other areas have to be excluded. Although different criteria for this process of selection have been suggested, the researches by Iwata et al (2001), Joiner (1974), Kitao (1979, 1988), and Yamanaka (2006) show that these studies followed the same routine. Reviewing literature has revealed that more ways to suggest how to feed the students with fish, instead of teaching them how to fish. Providing specific cultural information may help a learner at a certain point in time and place but due to the changing nature of culture, it may not help him at all in other places. What would be of help to a learner is to equip him to be ready for cultural differences in general.

It is impossible to include all aspects of all cultures in the world in one textbook or a series of textbooks because, first, it is impossible to identify all of them. Second, culture changes with time. These changes are especially rapid in the superficial elements such as food, clothing, and housing. Even covert underlying values shared by members of a culture change for convenience or influence from other cultures. Assuming it is indeed impossible to learn everything about all cultures, MEXT's goals have been explored of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms.

#### *MEXT's Goals of Teaching Culture*

The goals of teaching culture according to the MEXT (2002) are to enhance the students' understanding of different values, to develop respectful and impartial attitudes toward various cultures including Japanese, to deepen international understanding, and to heighten one's awareness as a Japanese citizen in a global community. In foreign language education in general, the importance of teaching culture in the classroom has been proclaimed since the 1970s (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Guthrie & Hall, 1981; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Hadley, 1986; Seelye, 1984). The SFLL proclaim the need for an awareness toward the ways how people of other cultures view the world (NSFLEP, 1999).

Second/foreign language educators are being asked to facilitate the development of the learners' intercultural communicative competence (Dirven & Putz, 1993) and the students' awareness of global issues (Hanvey, 1975; Peaty, 2004). English-as-a-foreign-language educators in Japan should play the key role in providing opportunities for students in Japan to

become more aware of the existing cultural diversity within their own nation. In a society such as Japan, Creighton (1997) points out that people tend to define themselves as being mono cultural and mono racial. People in these societies tend to ignore the existing ethnic variety, which for Japan includes Korean, Ainu, Okinawan and other people. A newspaper article<sup>1</sup> reports that an independent investigator for the UN Human Rights Commission, was sent to Japan for a nine-day tour, and that minority groups suffered from social and economic discrimination. The investigator further pointed out in the article the lack of efforts by the Japanese government to eliminate the discrimination. By presenting authentic EFJ materials that reflect the three Ps in the target countries, students are possibly exposed to unfamiliar customs and traditions abroad, and thus become aware of the existence of different views in a society.

Hanvey (1975) states that the ultimate goal of teaching culture is global awareness of: world situations, the choices people make, international relationships, alternative world views, and cross-cultural differences. Brown (1991) interprets the use of current affairs, such as peace initiatives and environmental issues, as topics in a textbook which reflect the trend toward global awareness. Cates (1997) also points out the potential of global issues to enhance language learning. Global issues could be stimulating enough for students to want to use the target language. A primary objective of learning a foreign language should be to foster cooperation with people of different cultures in order to solve problems together.

Since communicative competence became a goal of foreign language learning (MEXT, 2002), the learning contents have shifted from rather heavy topics such as arts and literature to more common daily topics such as global issues (Peaty, 1995; Sawada, 1991) in high school textbooks (Nakabachi, 1992) in Japan. Global issues for example are the type of topics to which the students are exposed frequently on a daily basis through the media such as newspaper and television programs. An environmental event, such as the global warming, is much more relevant and easier to relate to the students' personal lives compared to a story behind a famous painting in a museum that they may never visit. As a pre-reading activity, the students must be given an opportunity to relate the subject more closely to their lives. For example, with a question about what they should do to recycle, it would be easy for them to relate to the subject because the

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<sup>1</sup> "Japan Failing" (2005)

teacher could provide, compare and contrast the statistics on the percentage and amount of material that is recycled by the country.

The importance of a knowledge of culture is realized outside the schools' curriculum, too. Some researchers even go so far as to elevate culture above language in importance for business employees. D'Agruma and Hardy (1997) and Vande Berg (1997) report survey results in Ohio that a knowledge of target culture is regarded as more important than the language for American expatriates transferred to overseas branches of private corporations. Also Grosse (2004) in another study reports that 89% of alumni of one school report that the cultural information as well as the language helped them in international business, whereas 82% reported that language instruction alone was sufficient.

In summary, there are studies (Brown, 1991; Cates, 1997; Hanvey, 1975) that suggest global awareness and a knowledge of global issues as goals of teaching culture. What they propose is to look at the globe as a unit, instead of looking at specific countries or cultures. As a result, the culture of non-English-speaking countries has been presented in junior high school textbooks (Watanabe, 1989) and the global issues have been suggested (Cates, 1997) and used in high school material (Brown, 1991; Nakabachi, 1992) and in questions in entrance examinations (Peaty, 1995; Sawada, 1991).

Despite the suggestions above, the global issues may feed another topic to a debate whether they present the underlying values and beliefs or the superficial aspects of a culture, depending on how global issues are presented in a foreign language classes. Reading content matters such as global issues is in essence separate from whether the reading passage reflects the author's culture. The culture reflected in the daily, authentic, language used by native speakers is one facet of culture. In other words, depending on how a topic is presented in the teaching material, it is possible for the topic to remain just another superficial description of culture. Global issues have been one of the most current international topics in many countries in many languages. Unless these issues are presented to Japanese students in a way that reflects the views of different cultural approaches in different languages, the end result of dealing with these issues in EFL classes is unlikely to change.

### *Suggested Methods to Teach Culture*

Beside the topics such as global issues, there are two proposed methods for teaching culture: (1) critical thinking about the contents of the teaching material and the students' personal involvement are the necessary factors that makes a difference in understanding cultures (Birckbichler & Muyskens, 1980; Byrnes, 1990; Carrell, 1984; Day, 2003; Fischer, 1996; Hall, 1959, 1966, 1977; Henning, 1993; Kolb, 1984; Kramersch, 1985, 1993; Lange, 1999; Peety, 1995; Ricoeur, 1976; Seelye, 1993); (2) reading material that is comprised of an authentic use of the language is recommended over the edited, simplified forms used for presenting correct grammar (Bachman, 1990; Blau, 1982; Bowles, 2001a, 2001b; Gilmore, 2004; Hall, 1977; Honeyfield, 1977; Iwata et al., 2001; Kikuchi 2006; Liaw, 2001; McCarthy and Carter, 1994; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Oh, 2001; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991; Templin, 1997; Yano et al., 1991; Yorio, 1985; Young, 1999).

#### *Critical Thinking and C1, C2, C3*

##### *Definitions of C1 and C2 for C3.*

As far as how to present foreign cultures is concerned, Kramersch's (1993), Byrnes' (1990), and Kolb's (1984) theories may be applied. By Kramersch's concept (1993) the learners' native culture is the first culture, C1, and the culture where the target language is used is the second culture, C2, and the third culture, C3, is the place where the students of foreign languages learn to be in order to look at both C1 and C2 comparatively and objectively. Rather than presenting a list of cultural traits with superficial elements as it has always been done, Kramersch recommends creating a third place for the learners to bridge the contents of the learning materials, i.e., C2, and where they are, C1. Byrnes' (1990) and Kolb's (1984) stance is similar in this respect that two cultures should be made visible for an active involvement of the learners.

Similarly, SFL (2005) reflects these theories as it lists comparisons as one of the five goal areas of foreign language education that are Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Specifically, the goal of comparisons is to realize the similarities and differences between the learners' native language and culture, and those of the targets'.

*Rationale: Comparison of C1 and C2 for C3.*

The rationale for applying Byrnes', Kramsch's, and Kolb's stances is as follows. As Matsuda (2003) says, English as a global language or world Englishes has been promoted while at the same time it has become more difficult to choose one English-speaking culture as C2. The fundamental reason for the same criticism against how culture is taught lies in selecting specific cultures. It is not a question of which culture to teach but rather how to inspire the learners so that they realize that there are people who live differently from how they live. In order to know different ways of living, learners must know theirs first for comparative analysis. The goal of this learning process is to create C3 where one can see both C1 and C2 objectively. For example, as Yoshihara (2005) points out that there is a lack of topics in EFL textbooks in Japan that concern feminism. She emphasizes the importance of teaching about the status and treatment of women in the Japanese culture. In order to compensate a lack such as this, topics such as the social statuses of single mothers in Japan and in any English-speaking countries may be introduced. Presenting both in front of the learners' eyes, the differences and similarities become visible and available for comparisons.

*C1 and C2 for C3: SFLL's case.*

SFLL (2005) defines one of the five goals, Cultures, as an understanding of the relationships of perspectives to products and practices, i.e., 3Ps: How cultural perspectives are reflected in the products and the practices in the culture studied. Using the same example as above of the social status of a single mother, ideas and values attached to a woman, i.e., Perspectives, may be concretely exemplified in how she is treated in a society, i.e., Practice. For instance, benefits provided by the government and the support from private organizations, i.e., Products, may differ from culture to culture. By comparing and contrasting these 3Ps between the learners' native culture and the targets', the learners are provided with the opportunities to view both cultures more objectively. If a single mother in one culture does not receive as good public or private support in raising a child as in another culture, a learner is then provided with an opportunity to realize that the society views childrearing by a single female parent as less valuable. Comparing and contrasting 3Ps in C1 and C2, learners are expected to reach C3, where they are able to view both cultures more objectively.

### *Why C1 and C2 for C3?*

Kramersch (1993) suggests that questions should be asked on the reading texts to shed light on how the culture of the author is, similar to the ethnographers' field work. More specifically, the cultures of the learners', C1, and of the speakers' of the target language, C2, should be presented more evidently than leaving the learners figure out on their own. One technique proposed (Kramersch, 1985, 1993) is that students rewrite parts of a literary work or provide a rationale for an act in a story and compare their version to the original so that the students' expectation of logical development is contrasted with the writer's of a different culture. The parts to be rewritten can be the introduction or conclusion, or a new part may be inserted in the form of a letter or a diary written from one of the characters' point of view. These proposed activities will necessarily require an understanding of the rest of the story and reflect the students' cultural perspectives.

To attain a deep understanding of meanings calls for a high degree of involvement of students. The skills necessary to make the transition from a tourist to an explorer requires the students to bring their own experiences into the learning situation. Instead of limiting the students' learning to the classroom or the textbook, the students need an opportunity to relate the academic content to the reality in their lives.

Deep cognitive involvement and critical thinking in learning a second language and the second culture help learners see the concepts and viewpoints that are non-existent in their native language and culture. This cognitive involvement and critical thinking allow the learners to become critics of their own language and culture. Kramersch (1998) contends that the ability to see L1 and C1 critically enriches themselves in return because learners who have little knowledge of any other language and culture are usually unaware of their own. Brooks (1968), Hickey (1980), and Kramersch (1983) claim students are exposed to another culture passively on a tourist level as long as they are provided only with the facts of the target culture. They are not able to evaluate fairly either the target culture or their native one. Students reading about a target culture are not given a chance to become an active participant of that culture when only discrete facts are described objectively in textbooks. In order to foster a fair view toward one's own culture and that of others, learners must be given an opportunity to look critically at the native and foreign cultures.

### *Use of Authentic Material*

With the oppositions to use the edited passages (Bachman, 1990; Blau, 1982; Bowles, 2001a, 2001b; Gilmore, 2004; Hall, 1977; Honeyfield, 1977; Kikuchi 2006; Iwata et al., 2001; McCarthy & Carter, 1994; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Oh, 2001; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991; Templin, 1997; Yano et al., 1991; Yorio, 1985; Young, 1999), the use of authentic material has gained popularity for various reasons (Allen, 1956; Brumfit & Cater, 1991; Constantino, 1994; Handel & Goldsmith, 1990; Headle-Tylor, 1989; Krashen, 1989; McConochie, 1985; McKay, 1982; Povey, 1972; Preston, 1982; Sharp, 1991; Smallwood, 1991, 1992; Spack, 1985, all cited in Liaw, 2001). When a passage is simplified and edited for correct grammar, it actually becomes harder to read and different from the natural use of the language. There are cues in the authentic use of a language that helps comprehension. Editing and simplifying often removes these cues.

#### *Disadvantages of edited materials.*

McDonald (1987) has proven the importance of massive exposure to the second language during the acquisition of these cues in the authentic language use that are different between L1 and L2. By editing authentic materials, these cues of L2 may be eliminated. Authentic reading material presents the language as it is used in its cultural context. The problems that Yorio (1985) points out in edited materials are that not only syntax and vocabulary but also the styles and tones become inevitably simple; as a result, the material turns plain, simplistic, boring, forced and unnatural. Blau (1982) describes edited reading materials as choppy and unnatural. McKay and Hornberger (1996) claims that simplification of the original reduces the variation within a language. This variation comes from the different ethnicity, social class, gender, geographical regions, etc. Depending on the audience and the purpose, the writers' assumptions and the context of the writing change.

Another harm from editing is the elimination of all potentially unfamiliar linguistic items. This elimination prevents exposure to items that learners eventually should know (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994). Honeyfield (1977) asserts that simplifying the language possibly induces learners to develop reading strategies that are inappropriate for unsimplified target language materials and

that simplified passages may lack cohesion because the process of simplification often leaves the relationship between pieces of information unclear.

*Advantages of authentic materials: Reflection of culture in language.*

Concerning the relationship between culture and language, language proficiency is necessary to adjust to the social reality of each culture (Barnlund, 1975; Fischer, 1996; Sapir, 1949; Volosinov, 1973). Sapir says, “No matter how sophisticated our modes of interpretation become, we never really get beyond the projection and continuous transfer of relations suggested by the forms of our speech.” (1966, p. 8) His point is that reality cannot be expressed without the means of a language. Ideas are not communicable until they are put into a language. The reality or the ideas cannot be anything more or less than what a language depicts.

However, Sapir indicates that culture and language are not in a causal relationship. The culture of a group of people does not develop as a result of its linguistic development or a language of cultural development. One language does not correspond to one cultural area, and culture and language do not necessarily develop in a parallel fashion. Nevertheless, language and culture do not exist separately but they are related only on a superficial level, the level of vocabulary (Sapir, 1949). As an example of this superficial relationship, Eskimos are known to have seven words for “snow” in order to describe the different conditions of snow. Another example is the Japanese use of words such as “anata”, “kimi”, “omae”, “anta”, and many more for the second person pronoun. Both of these examples of Eskimo and Japanese vocabulary are the cultural results from the necessity to distinguish the constituents of one category.

The physical environment is one of the determining cultural factors of how people make a living, and this variation in words in the Eskimo and the Japanese languages reveal differences in the physical environment, food consumption, diet, and the economy. People’s communication is partly based on the demands of local environmental conditions. Different uses of words, such as those of the Eskimos and Japanese which differ from the use of these words in American English, reveal which cultural group a person is from.

Thus, culture is reflected in the contents of a language (Sapir, 1949): The cultural attitudes of language users are shown in the semantic groups of vocabulary they use. An analysis of the degree of specialization in a semantic domain reveals the cultural attitudes of that

language group. The more specialized the vocabulary, the more crucial the items are to that culture, such as snow and personal pronouns. For example, Sapir (1963) in his comparison of geographical terms in English and in Paiute, a native American language, reveals that there are numerous topographical terms for types of land in the Paiute language and that English lacks separate words for each type of terrain. Because the criteria for classification is culturally different, the classification of animals and colors, and kinship terms would also reveal the cultural attitudes of the language users, depending on the economic use of the land, the consumptive value of an animal, and the social values attached to relationships between relatives. In summary, Sapirian notions of language and culture are referred to here to demonstrate the relationship between language and culture.

Sapir concludes that thought is shaped by language within a particular language. The degree of specialization in a category of vocabulary reflects the significance of that category in the culture. He demonstrates three points: First, the typical belief that the more advanced “civilized” cultures have an equally advanced language neglects the basic universal needs of humans. Secondly, the language of “primitive,” “simpler” culture is equally complex. Third, the culture is even satisfying because it exhibits coherence for the individuals suiting to the overall social goals.

Thus Sapir presents how culture is so lucidly reflected in the language and thus in authentic materials. Language is an integral part of culture and a vehicle for expressing oneself, including culturally specific ideas and thoughts (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Scovel, 1991; Valdes, 1986). A knowledge of the target culture, including culturally specific ideas and commonly shared beliefs, is reflected in the unique expressions in the language.

## Reading

### *Pre-Reading Activities*

In applying the theory that questions and activities should provide a framework for readers to the acquisition of cultural knowledge (Carrell, 1984; Kramsch, 1985; Swaffar, 1985; Swaffar et al., 1991; Young, 1999), the students’ schema in C1 has to be activated in the pre-reading activities so that whatever information presented on C2 in the reading passages

would be compared and contrasted. Whenever a new piece of information is related to the existing schema, it is retained better by the learner.

When readers are given a frame of reference of some clear direction of what meaning is to be grasped from a written passage, their comprehension improves (Carrell, 1984; Kramersch, 1985; Swaffar, 1985; Swaffar et al., 1991; Young, 1999). Complementing these claims, Carrell (1988) asserts that the key to successful reading is to employ both top-down and bottom-up processes. Based on these contentions, what a reader needs is a direction and skills to decode the printed material in order to succeed in reading. It helps the reader to activate in advance which piece of background knowledge, or the readers' existing schema, to use, and to build on it. Specifically this pre-reading activity or question has to clarify the author's intent and the environment of the reading (Swaffar, 1985) for the readers: what is written and on what stage it is being set.

#### *Better Retention of Details*

Another advantage of providing a framework with pre-reading activities is that details are retained better when one reads focusing on the meaning (Swaffar et al., 1991). Based on the theory above, the type of pre-reading activities that helps the readers is inferential. Inferential questions or activities recall the learners' personal knowledge in advance to relate it with the reading passage they are to face in the chapter. On the contrary, literal activities, such as providing a list of new vocabulary to be introduced in the passages, are not recommended (Carrell, 1984).

However, an overall theme provided prior to reading the passage may not fit the readers' development of logic regarding the theme due to cultural differences on the part of the authors (Carrell, 1984; Kramersch, 1985; Young, 1999). Another pre-reading activity might help the readers to follow a different logic. Kramersch (1985) suggests a brainstorming activity in class which helps to visualize the differences between the author and the students' cultures, where the readers guess how the story develops and then they compare their guess to the actual outcome. Based on the precept above that activating the students' schema helps reading comprehension and retention of details, the pre-reading activities for the 88 chapters chosen previously for this study were analyzed in order to determine if any consideration had been given to the cultural differences between the authors and the Japanese high school students. As Kramersch (1993) and

National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2005) claim, the foreign language learners need to be made aware of C1 so that the differences from C2 will be evident. When the students are not exposed to other cultures constantly, it is natural to disregard the fact that there are people who think and live differently.

### *Post-Reading Activities*

Next, post-reading activities were examined. It was found that overall comprehension could be assessed more appropriately by inference activities or inference questions than by literal questions. Reviewing Adams and Collins (1977), Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), Kramsch (1985), Hadley (1986), and Swaffar et al. (1991), a common theme for comprehension assessment is an activity to explore the students' thinking. More specifically, this thematic concept is divided into two parts: (1) readers are able to tell the relationship between the whole and its parts and the relationship between those parts, and (2) readers are able to distinguish between meanings and also to relate meaning in written texts to their own background knowledge or schema. In addition, if the pre-reading instructions establish any goal prior to the reading of the work, then the post-reading should assess whether or not the goal has been met. Applying these two rules to the acquisition of cultural knowledge, the students have to demonstrate an understanding of culture: (1)' which cultural norm results in which superficial cultural behaviors; and (2)' being able to tell the differences and the similarities between other's culture, i.e., C2, and the students' native culture, i.e., C1. In addition, the questions asked prior to reading should be answered after the reading.

First, the post-reading activities must reveal the students' perceptions of the organization of the text, and they should be able to identify the main theme and the supporting ideas. Secondly, activities must enable the readers to demonstrate how a new schema has been constructed integrating the text meaning and the students' existing schema, that is how the readers logically support, interpret, and construct the conclusion drawn in the text. During this process, the readers must be able to distinguish their opinions and impressions from the meanings provided by the text. As Swaffar et al. (1991) claim, incompetent readers are not able to use both top-down and bottom-up processes in a well-balanced manner integrating their background knowledge and textual meaning. They tend to make mistakes confusing their ideas and the ideas of others. This principle of distinguishing one's own knowledge from the meaning

in the text indirectly reflects Byrnes (1990), Kolb (1984), Kramsch's (1993) and National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2005) theories to compare and contrast C1 and C2 in order to be able to view them objectively.

### *Inference Questions*

As examples of post-reading activities/questions, the following are presented as possible strategies: open-ended questions, to probe for inferences from the text, to ask students to justify answers to more direct questions (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1988); open discussion and negotiation of meanings (Kramsch, 1985); connecting parts of a text with conjunctions, writing a summary in L1, drawing idea maps, and reporting the students' hypothesis or comments (Swaffar et al., 1991). One common characteristic of these activities is that there is no single correct answer. As long as the students' response is logically structured, the response is considered correct.

### *Literal Questions*

On the other hand, literal questions are recommended, if at all, in post-reading rather than in pre-reading activities (Swaffar et al., 1991). However, it has been cautioned not to mix them with inference questions because the main goal of an activity should not be combined with other goals. For example, it should be decided whether the post-reading assessment is on content or form. Questions and activities such as the following are recommended for activities to assess language acquisition, not content comprehension (Hadley, 1986; Swaffar et al., 1991): fill-in-the-blanks, matching, cloze, short answer questions, multiple choices, questions on specific details of meaning in the text, a single-sentence format of questions without a context, discrete point items emphasizing vocabulary more than drawing conclusions or making inferences. Based on the suggested activities described above, post-reading questions/activities were categorized into inference or literal questions in this study. Next, the inference questions/activities were further divided whether they compared and contrasted C1 and C2.

## Summary

Current language theory points to a number of issues relevant to EFL instruction in Japan. One of these issues is to teach culture and to prepare students to pass entrance examinations at the same time. Since the definition of culture has changed with sociolinguistics and other linguistic theories, teaching culture has become one of the major issues in foreign

language education. Unfortunately, it seems that intercultural understanding and communicative competence have been emphasized less. To read to understand the target culture requires more than just conveying superficial meaning in a reading passage. Nevertheless, the importance of culture in language instruction has been secondary to other things such as the entrance exams even though there has been a claim to teaching culture for decades.

One piece of evidence that culture remains secondary is the way cultural information is presented in teaching materials. These materials have presented the language in the form of perfect grammar, disregarding the claim that culture is reflected in the language. The values of a culture are eliminated by editing for grammatical correctness. Despite the claim that culture is in the language use, the main focus of the EFL course remains the acquisition of linguistic skills. As a consequence, the students' attitudes toward the target culture do not change and remain similar to those of tourists. They are and will be passive spectators as long as they are provided with the edited material for translation and are not provided the opportunity to relate the contents to their lives.

In spite of the claims and research findings to support the teaching of culture in EFL classes, there are some hurdles such as entrance examinations and pedagogy that may make it difficult to teach culture or to reflect these claims in textbooks. Even without those hurdles it must be very difficult for the teachers to teach about target cultures in EFL classes when their own EFL education was limited by the philosophy of their educational system. Given that, if textbooks are designed with integrative and interactive pre- and post-reading activities, the students might be provided with an opportunity to integrate their perspectives (Kramsch, 1993), and consequently, critical thinking about the reading passages should become an attainable goal.

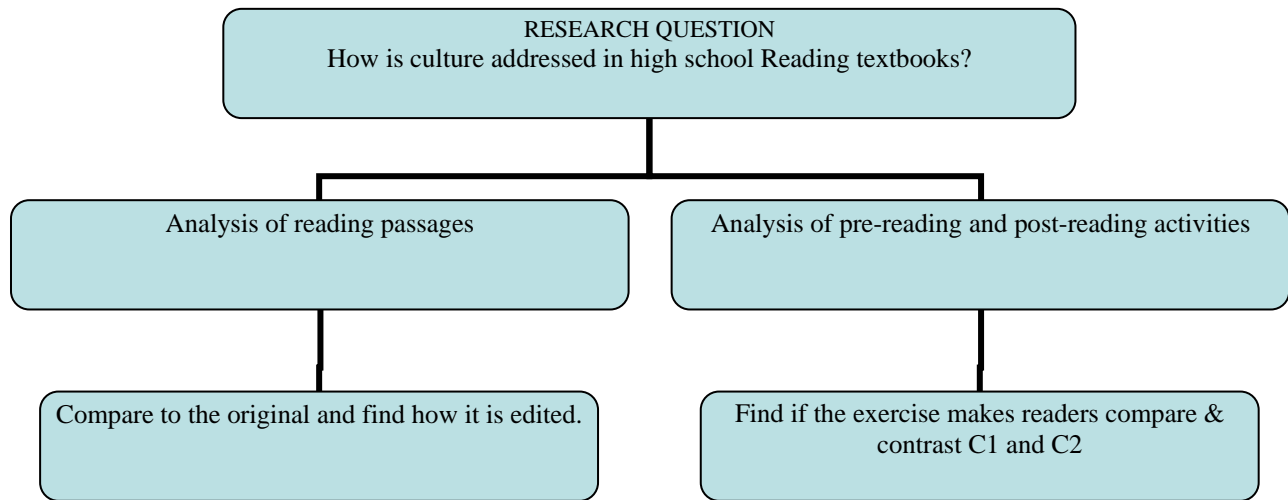
Also, there are many students who seek an educational opportunity abroad, whose lack of knowledge in the target culture is too serious a problem to ignore. Besides students, there are a number of employees of private corporations who are transferred to the overseas branches. In a survey conducted in 2005, more than half of these employees had their families accompany them. Also, comparing the results to the survey conducted two years earlier, the numbers of employees who had their families and children accompany them increased (Nihon Zaigai Kigyoo Kyookai, 2005).

As more Japanese have the opportunity to go overseas, problems both on international and interpersonal levels increase due to cultural differences. There are several kinds of problems that Japan has to overcome. Japan has become one of the members of the industrialized nations over the decades, during the course of which youths have been trained to gain knowledge and skills from other countries. However, the coming generations are now expected to apply their schooling in solving problems that exist in other parts on the globe such as global warming and terrorism through international cooperation with other industrialized nations. However, culturally, people in a collectivist society such as Japan feel more comfortable following a leader than taking initiatives and actually perform better that way (French, 2001; “Nurturing Japan’s”, 2003). Leaders have to be able to observe the situations, analyze the possible causes, prepare solutions and estimate the consequences accurately. Doing so requires wisdom and also the knowledge of cultural differences among other leaders so that they can work together to attain agreeable goals. These qualities are quite difficult to cultivate in Japan when people are more used to follow a leader than making their own decisions. Japan is a difficult environment in which to raise critical thinkers.

Yoneyama (1999) summarizes the characteristics of education in Japan: It means raising children not to be critical thinkers; learning is merely memorizing; many high school students realize that the way they are expected to learn is quite useless; Japan Exchange Teaching Programme (JET) inviting teachers of English from abroad, aiming to expose the youths in Japan is never main-stream but rather marginal; MEXT has exclusive control on the contents and methods of instruction. These traits contribute quite negatively for anyone to become equipped with critical thinking skills.

As Japan becomes more internationalized on the world stage, communication across cultures is a must. Dealing with foreign cultures is one of the biggest challenges for those learning English in Japan to prepare themselves for an international role in business, school, and also tourism. Both inside and outside the nation, the Japanese people are constantly exposed to the cultures other than their own. They have to be made aware of the cultural diversity within the nation and abroad so that they are prepared against the possible conflict between their own culture and that of others.

In this chapter, literature on the textbooks has been reviewed. Also, although brief, the issues surrounding the textbooks, such as the entrance examinations, and teaching culture in foreign language education, were reviewed through their relationships to the textbooks. Using the two theories as a backbone, an analysis was conducted of EFL reading textbooks in high schools in Japan. The two theories are: (1) Authentic material presents the culture in the language use; (2) comparing and contrasting C1 and C2 fosters improved understanding of the target culture. The course of this proposed study is described in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** *Course of this Study*

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

The purpose of this study is to find the characteristics among the EFL reading textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), that emerged as the data were collected. The primary research question is: How is culture addressed in high school reading textbooks? This question was answered by looking into the following sub-questions.

- (1) Are passages edited? If so, how?
- (2) Do pre-reading and post-reading exercises relate C1 and C2?

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to study the broad issue of culture as presented in EFL textbooks in Japan. As Creswell (2003) describes the characteristics of a qualitative method, the data are collected on multiple levels to deduce a hidden rule. In a qualitative study “the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon (p. 20),” “it begins with a broad survey in order to generalize results (p. 21),” and “qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine (p. 22).” He also points that approaches emerge as the research progresses. In applying these descriptions, this study compared and contrasted the original works and the edited reading passages in Japanese EFL reading textbooks. In chapters four and five, the findings are described, discussed, and interpreted as part of the prelude to further studies.

As for the quantitative method, Creswell (2003) describes that a quantitative method uses close-ended, pre-determined questions. Both the first and the second phases of this study used questions pre-determined by the researcher. Below are those questions for phases one and two.

- Are reading passages edited? If so, how?
- Do pre-reading and post-reading exercises relate C1 and C2?

The theories that guided this study are: 1) Authentic material presents the culture in the language use, 2) culture is in vocabulary, and 3) comparisons and contrasts between the students’ backgrounds and perspectives (C1), if integrated with the new cultural information in the textbook (C2), result in better comprehension and retention. With the methods described above, this study examined what textbooks provided and how they did it in terms of these three theories.

### Material Selection: Textbooks

The fourteen textbooks analyzed in this study were those approved by the MEXT in

Table 3. Table 3 presents information such as the list the titles and the acronyms of textbooks analyzed in this study, total number of chapters in each textbook, and those selected from outside sources. There were no other reading textbooks approved by the Ministry when this study was conducted. Accredited high schools are required to choose one of them as the primary teaching material for the reading course. The designated grade level of these textbooks is either the second or the third year in high school.

The number of reading passages in total of all fourteen textbooks is 263, out of which 163 were selected from English sources such as journal articles and monographs written by native English speakers for English-speaking audiences. These 163 chapters were the subject for analysis in this research.

Because some chapters were originally written by Japanese for the Japanese audience, they were not included in this study. Because the study examines texts for English learners, authentic texts would have to be those written in English for native English speakers. Texts that were translated into English by Japanese writers were excluded. One of the guiding theories used for the first phase of this study is that culture is reflected in the vocabulary of the language (Sapir, 1949). In Japan, Japanese is the only officially designated language.

**Table 3 Reading textbooks**

Titles (codes)*	Authors/Editors		No. of Readings			Chpts selected from other sources	Japanese Original	Total chapters to analyze	
	Main	Others	chpts	suppl.	Total				
		JPN** Non- JPN***							
Encounter (ENW)	Watanabe	4	2	8	1	9	9	0	9
Genius (GEO)	Okada	4	1	12	1	13	13	1	12
Milestone (MIO)	Okuma	5	2	11	1	12	11	1	10
New Stage (NET)	Tanioka	1	1	46	0	46	13	0	13
One World (ONT)	Takahashi	4	1	12	5	17	11	2	9
Orbit (ORT)	Takanashi	2	1	25	0	25	15	5	10
Planet Blue (PLN)	Negishi	4	0	27	0	27	27	1	26
Polestar (POM)	Murakami	9	2	12	2	14	11	1	10
Prominence (PRU)	Uechi	5	1	11	2	13	11	1	10
Pro-vision (PRS)	Shiozawa	6	1	16	4	20	16	2	14
Sunshin (SUK)	Kuzumi	3	0	12	1	13	11	1	10
Unicorn (UNI)	Ichikawa	4	1	15	1	16	13	0	13
Vivid (VIM)	Minamimura	10	1	20	0	20	7	1	6
Voyager (VOO)	Okihara	11	1	18	0	18	11	0	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>72</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>163</b>

\* Codes (Appendix) are used, with the first two letters in the title and the initial of the primary author

\*\* Japanese authors: other Japanese authors beside the main authors

\*\*\* Non-Japanese: other non-Japanese authors

## Data Collection and Analysis

### *First Phase: Analysis of Reading Passages*

#### *Chapter Selection*

Table 3 shows the names of the primary authors, number of other authors, both Japanese and non-Japanese, the numbers of chapters, those of supplemental reading chapters, and those of chapters and supplemental readings selected from outside sources. The authors of the textbooks wrote some chapters by themselves, selected some from outside reading materials such as journals and monographs, or translated articles and books to English from Japanese. When all the reading passages were selected from outside sources, the authors of the textbook were editors because they were not the original authors. Those chapters that were not selected from other sources were the authors' original writings in English. These chapters were written by the Japanese authors as EFL textbook materials, and thus not considered authentic.

The majority of authors and editors are Japanese. Everyone involved in writing and editing these textbooks is a college or university faculty member, except for the employees of each publisher. It is not known what tasks they performed. Participation of each publisher in writing the textbooks is indicated either Y or N because a specific number of the publisher's employees is unknown.

The number of chapters ranges from nine to forty-six per book (Table 3). For example, *Encounter Reading Course* (Watanabe et al., 2004) has eight chapters plus one supplemental reading chapter and *New Stage English Reading* (Tanioka et al., 2004) has forty-six chapters, thirty of which are the Japanese authors' writings for the textbook. The percentage of authentic reading passages varies from 35% to 100%. The length of these chapters varies also because the number of classes allocated for reading to finish these textbooks is ninety class meetings per school year. Depending on the authors, the perceived importance in authentic materials may be reflected in how many chapters they decided to select from authentic reading materials.

Following the claim that materials edited and simplified for correct grammar do not present the natural use of the language in a culture, the chapters in each textbook are divided into two groups: 1) those written by the Japanese authors of each textbook and those selected from other ESL/EFL textbooks, 2) those selected from authentic English sources written for an audience that speaks the target language (L2). The first group is excluded from this study

because these reading passages were written as EFL teaching materials and hence are not authentic. Also, based on the theory that culture is reflected in the authentic use of the language, sixteen chapters whose original works were written by Japanese authors and then translated for an English-speaking audience, will be excluded from this study. In examining the reading passages, chapters that are the Japanese authors' original writings were excluded because the English passages written by Japanese authors for the Japanese students did not fit the definition of authentic material for this study, "those written and oral communications produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group" (Galloway, 1998).

### *Editing Categories*

Next, the original works were located, the sections in the original works selected for the EFL textbooks were identified, and the edited details were sorted into five types and coded accordingly: Lexical (L), Simplification (S), Grammatical (G), Alteration (A), and Elaboration (E). *Lexical editing* refers to a word or phrase replaced by one with an identical or similar meaning. In order to judge the degree of similarity in a meaning of a word or phrase between the original and the textbook, Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus (2007-2008) was used. *Simplification* is the deletion of words, phrases, or sentences. Simplification makes the section in the Japanese textbook shorter. This category varied in quantity. It is applied to words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and to pages and chapters of a book. The counts of *Simplifications*, deleting complete sentences or more was separated from the counts of fragments of a complete sentence in this study because, although it was yet considered editing, this study was led by a theory that culture is present in the use of vocabulary. The intended focus was to investigate how vocabulary usages in the original were edited by the authors of the reading textbooks. Deleting an entire sentence or more was no longer a change into something else but rather it included editing of multiple processes such as simultaneous editing of *Simplification* and *Grammar*. Thus deleting a complete sentence or more was excluded from the count.

*Grammatical* editing includes changes in voice from passive to active and vice versa, or changes in mood, tense, etc. This type of editing includes clerical changes as well as punctuation changes. Although a different grammar rule was applied, the event or situation described was not affected. *Grammatical* editing included both the correction of informal use of the language into

correct grammatical usages and those resulting from other types of editing. For instance, when one sentence was divided into two short independent sentences, the beginning of the second sentence was capitalized. Capitalization in this case was an inevitable result of other type of editing.

*Alteration* is editing that resulted in a purposeful revision in meaning. The revision might be due to other types of editing, but alteration was selected only when the meaning was changed after editing. Even when the edited word or phrase appeared similar in meaning to the researcher's eyes, it was counted as *Alteration* if it was not listed in Merriam-Webster's Thesaurus.

Not all *Alteration* was within the same syntactic units such as from a word to another word, from a phrase to another phrase, from a sentence to another sentence. *Alteration* included changing fairly lengthy section to a short summarizing sentence, a sentence to a clause, a phrase to a clause, etc. Alteration of this type required further comparison and analysis of elements in the sections altered. Wherever possible, altered sections were dissected into the smallest units for comparison to the original.

*Elaboration* is editing by adding words or phrases. As a result, the equivalent section in the textbook increases in the number of words. This category also includes the necessary additions resulting from simplifying a previous section of the reading passage. For example, when a paragraph was eliminated (Simplification), it might be necessary to make an adjustment for a smooth transition to the next paragraph. This adjustment was coded *Elaboration*. The flow of tasks for the First Phase of the study is described on the next page (Figure 3). Chapters selected from outside sources were compared to the original works to determine what type of editing had been applied: lexical, simplification, grammatical, alteration, and elaboration. The originals and edited words, phrases, and sentences were compared side-by-side and then coded (Appendix C).

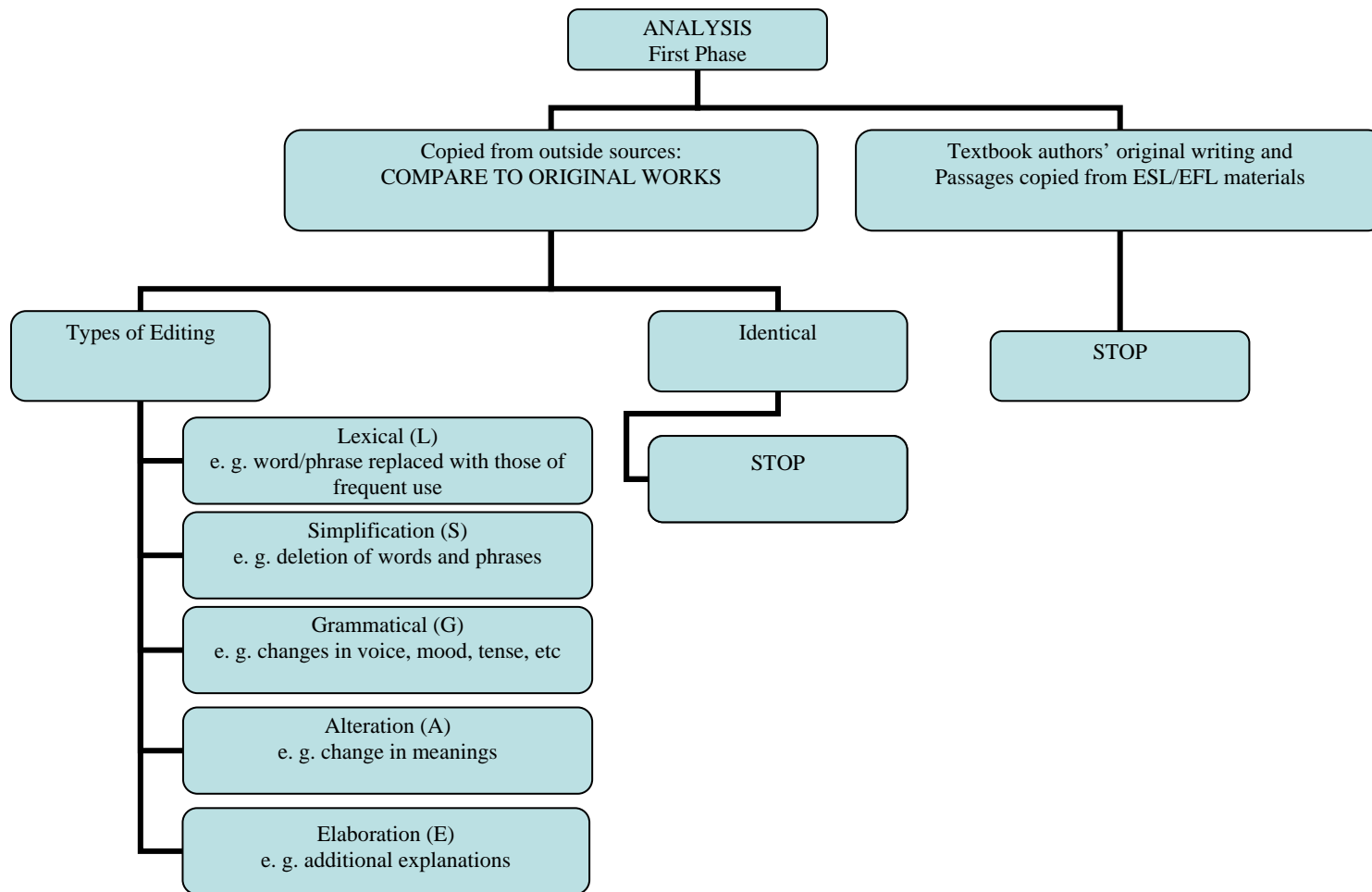


Figure 3 Flow Chart: How the reading passages are analyzed

### *Rationale for Coding Categories*

Young's (1999) study is referenced for the first phase of the study. Specifically, Young compared the effectiveness of edited vs. authentic materials and concluded that edited material is not necessarily more effective. Based on the survey results (Hague & Scott, 1994; Young, 1999) that second language reading materials have been pedagogically edited to prepare the students to read authentic materials, her research study has tested the actual effectiveness of edited materials that have been used in foreign language classes. The results show that the edited materials are not superior to the authentic ones.

In Young's study, literature on various simplifying and modifying techniques is reviewed. The types of simplification are to shorten sentences, to delete or rephrase idioms to avoid specialized or low frequency vocabulary, and to revise complex syntax by using simpler sentence structures (Long & Ross, 1993), to make shorter texts such as a magazine or newspaper article or a literary work, and to eliminate paragraphs or sections of it (Shook, 1997), "glossing words or phrases (Young, 1999, p. 351)." These techniques are rather purely linguistic simplification. Generally, after these techniques are applied, a reading text becomes shorter and simpler than the original works.

In addition, Young (1999) reports recent research that distinguishes linguistic simplifications from cognitive processing modifications and elaborations (Long & Ross, 1993; Ross, Long, & Yano, 1991). These techniques clarify, elaborate, explain, and provide motivation for important information and make connections explicit (Beck, McKeown, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1991).

The distinction between these two types of editing is similar to the distinction between bottom-up and top-down processing. The first group is more concerned with the written text itself by simplifying words, phrases, and structures of a reading passage, expecting a less involving processing of the passage than the original work as a result. On the other hand, the second group, cognitive processing modifications and elaborations, is concerned with the ease of processing, not by eliminating the elements or by shortening the written passage, but by elaborating and rephrasing, and thus adding more so that it activates more background knowledge of the readers.

Summarizing the commonalities of the first group of editing techniques, editing in the reading passages for this study was categorized into five types, (1) lexical, e.g. replacing words or phrases with other words and phrases; (2) simplification, e. g. deleting any needless accumulation of words and; (3) grammatical, e. g. changing voice from active to passive, etc.; (4) elaboration. Adjustments of meaning might become necessary at times as a result of lexical, grammatical, or elaborative techniques so that the passage would stay coherent and consistent. Therefore, a fifth category was added, (5) an alteration to original meaning.

### *Second phase: Pre-reading and post-reading activities*

#### *Pre-Reading Activities*

##### *Providing a framework for reading.*

For the second phase of this study, an analysis of the pre-reading and post-reading activities was conducted. Questions and activities in the pre-reading sections were examined to determine if they provided a frame or a goal and activated the readers' schema (Carrell, 1984; Kramersch, 1985; Swaffar, 1985; Swaffar et al., 1991; Young, 1999).

#### *Post-Reading Activities*

Next, post-reading activities were examined. First, they were divided into two categories, inferential or literal. The former examines the understanding of them and the supporting details and the relationships among them. The latter examines more superficial aspects of the language such as grammar and vocabulary. Upon dividing the activities, all the inferential activities were examined further to see if they compared or contrasted C1 and C2.

### *Validity and Reliability*

To control the rater drift, twelve passages were selected randomly of all the textbooks and coded twice by the researcher, once at the beginning and once at the end of the coding process. The coding results were compared between the first and the second times. The percentage of agreement was 98.2%.

For inter-rater reliability, two criterion observers were requested to code the data. These criterion observers are a Ph.D. candidate in foreign language pedagogy at a mid-eastern university and a Ph.D. holder in foreign language pedagogy from a southern state university.

They have taught a foreign language or English as a Second Language (ESL) full-time for over a decade and done book reviews and comparative studies among foreign language textbook series. In order to familiarize the criterion observers, the researcher provided them a description on the coding process with sample words, phrases, and sentences from outside the textbooks used for this study. The explanation included the meanings of five codes, lexical (L), simplification (S), grammar (G), alteration (A), and elaboration (E). Then, they were provided with a set of samples to code for practice. Any disagreements between the researcher and the criterion observers were discussed and agreed.

The percentage of agreement in coding between the researcher and the criterion observers was 96% and 94.8%. Upon completion of coding by the criterion observers, the researcher of this study examined their coding of the selected samples that did not agree. Some of the disagreements were that the criterion observers did not code the following as grammatical (G), 'relocating any part of a sentence to different places of a sentence or passage.' The criterion observers required more explanation of what the grammatical category meant and it was clarified for the researcher's own understanding.

In this chapter, the research method was described in details. In chapter four, results of passage and activity analysis are reported, and in chapter five, those results are discussed, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations for future research are made.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

This chapter reports the findings obtained from the analysis and examination of reading passages and pre-reading and post-reading exercises of high school EFL reading textbooks in Japan. The findings are summarized and details are described.

#### Summary of the Study

The primary research question addressed in this study was:

How is culture addressed in Japanese high school EFL reading textbooks?

The key objective of the study was to find how culture in the original reading passages was presented in the high school reading textbooks used in Japan. As the original journal articles and monographs in English were retrieved, the availability was limited largely due to the incorrect bibliographical information in each textbook. For example, the list of references did not present all information of the original works necessary to locate them: Author names, years of publication, the original titles, location and name of publishers. The researcher of this study tried possible alternatives, e.g., Internet websites, search engines, authors of the textbooks and the originals, publishers, etc. Since the first phase of this study required the comparison of the original works to those versions in the textbooks to describe how the passages had been edited, those chapters that the originals were not located had to be excluded from this study. Subsequently, 88 chapters in fourteen textbooks were analyzed. The entire process of the first phase of the study is described below.

#### Results of the Study

The analysis of data obtained from two sources, edit categories and the examination of pre-reading and post-reading activities, revealed that the culture in the original English passages was either omitted or changed during the editing processes. Additionally, neither pre-reading nor post-reading activities were designed to compare or contrast the students' culture to the cultures

portrayed in the original passages. The learners were not provided with the opportunity to become aware of the similarities and differences between two cultures. A detailed description of the findings follows.

### Results for the Primary Research Question

This section describes the findings related to the primary research question regarding the manner in which culture is addressed in Japanese EFL reading textbooks. Two sets of analysis were conducted in separate phases in order to answer the primary research question.

#### *Results: First Phase – Passage Analysis*

In order to answer the first secondary questions “Are reading passages edited? If so, how?” the types of editing applied to the English language in the original passages were categorized into five groups: (L) lexical, (S) simplification, (G) grammatical, (A) alteration, and (E) elaboration (Appendix A).

The purpose of this reading passage analysis was to find how the language used in the original English passages was edited for use in the reading textbooks. Based on the claim by Sapir (1949) that culture is reflected in the vocabulary, the sections that were different between the originals and the textbooks were categorized into five kinds of editing: Lexical (L), simplification (S), alteration (A), grammar (G), and elaboration (E). Table 5 *Chi-square on editing strategies* presents the overall counts. The entire coding counts are presented in Appendix B. Samples of passage analysis are presented in Appendix C.

As a statistical analysis, chi-square was run to see if textbook authors were biased with any editing categories. The results are presented in Table 5. As they indicate, there was no association between the editing processes and the textbook authors. No textbook had strong preference over any editing category.

**Table 4** *Summary of Editing*

	L	S	G	A	E	Total
Counts	741	1741	1554	2166	1072	7274
%	10.19%	23.93%	21.36%	29.78%	14.74%	100.00%

**Table 5** *Chi-square on editing strategies*

	L	S	G	A	E
$\chi^2$	1.429	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.429
df	11	13	13	13	11
P-value	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Alteration, changes in meanings, was the editing strategy used most frequently by the authors (29.78%). Simplification, deletion, was second most frequently used with 23.93%. As examples of alteration, ‘inauspicious’ and ‘guy’ were replaced with ‘unsuccessful’ and ‘person’ in lesson one of ENW (Watanabe et al., 2003, p. 12). Merriam-Webster’s Thesaurus does not enter them as synonyms. An expression such as “made my debut as” (King, 1994, p. 24) was found replaced with “became” (Watanabe et al., 2003, p. 15). There was an example of changing “brothers” (Gersh, 1962) to “sisters” (Takanashi et al., 2004, p. 114). The rationale for this replacement of male to female siblings is unknown. As for the examples of simplification, phrases such as “I hasten to add” (King, 1994, p. 26) and “or into the basement, or use the time when you’re driving your car” (King, 1994, p. 27) were removed.

Third highest was Grammar, 21.36%. For example, “clicks” (Dougherty, 2001, p. 54) was changed to “clicking” (Negishi et al., 2004, p. 22).

The fourth was Elaboration, 14.74%, added to clarify the original material. Lexical editing, which replaces words with synonyms, turned out to be the lowest in frequency, 10.19%. An example that included both Elaboration and Lexical was a change from “hung around” (King, 1994, p. 23) to “stayed close” (Watanabe et al., 2003, p. 13). For example, the Merriam-Webster’s Thesaurus defines “hang around” and “stay” as synonyms, and thus these counted as one Lexical change. “Close” was counted as one Elaboration.

The fact that Lexical changes were the lowest in frequency indicates that words used to replace those in the original wording were not synonyms. Although there were many words that

looked similar at first glance, if the word was not listed as a synonym in Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus, it was categorized as an alteration.

Another point worth mentioning is that the results of the passage analysis support the reported characteristic of EFL textbooks that the language is simplified for grammatical correctness. Simplification and Grammar editing consist 45.29%, nearly half of all editing.

Table 6 below presents the number of words in the original and that in the textbook plus the percentage of addition or deletion in order to provide a better idea about how much was added or deleted. Overall 51,320 words that equals to 42.54% of total counts of words were deleted, and thus the chapters in the textbooks were generally shorter.

**Table 6** *Decrease in number of words from editing*

Textbook	Chapter	Number of words		Deduction	Deduction (%)
		original	textbook		
TOTAL		120652	69332	51320	42.54%

The reduction rate among the chapters varied from 0.09% to 26.99%. For example, lesson ten in UNI (2003), as a result of a 26.99% reduction and other editing, left few similarities with the original wording. Kikuchi (2006), Oh (2001), Swaffar, Arens and Byrnes (1991) presents an argument that simplified English hinders fluent reading. Their point is that it is elaboration that helps comprehension. When an idea needs to be clarified, it is rephrased and reworded. It is not deleted. The original for lesson ten in UNI (Ichikawa et al, 2003) is an article from Newsweek (Cowley, 2001). The word count was reduced by 51.70% from 909 to 439. First, 458 (50.38%) words were eliminated in complete sentences or more. Then, as a result of editing, the total count of words in the textbook became 439. The editing involved four Lexical, eight Simplification, ten Grammar, forty-one Alteration, and fourteen Elaboration. The rationale for a reduction of this size is unknown.

Grammar editing was 3<sup>rd</sup> highest, 21.36%, made in 1554 places. Of all editing, this category included those changes resulting from other editing. For example, when a subject of a sentence was changed from 'they' to 'he,' the present tense verb had to change from 'run' to 'runs.' In a case like this, the latter editing was categorized as grammar, not as alteration.

Therefore, this category included those edits that were inevitable. Below is an example of an inevitable grammar change. Using the same lesson ten of UNI (Ichikawa et al, 2003), “deteriorated at the same average rate” (“The New”, 2001) was changed to “continued to get worse” (Ichikawa et al, 2003, p. 93).

**Table 7 Coding sample**

original	textbook	codes
deteriorated	to get worse	LG
at the same average rate	continued	A

“Deteriorate” and “get worse” are as synonyms, Lexical, but “at the same average rate” and “continued” are not, and thus Alteration. Here the Grammar change from past tense of “deteriorated” to infinitive “to get worse” was inevitable because the textbook authors chose to change a prepositional phrase “at the same average rate” to a verb “continued.”

Excluding the grammar editing, due to its resultant nature from other editing, simplification with 23.93%, alteration with 29.78%, and elaboration with 14.74% consisted 68.45%, which constitute major changes as a result of the editing processes. This means that the language in the original English passages was either shortened by deleting words, changing to words with a different meaning, and adding words written by non-native speakers. This result answers in a clear manner the research question, “Are reading passages edited? If so, how?” The answer is yes. The reading passages have been edited mostly by deleting, changing, and adding words and phrases.

The editing process of elaboration, i.e., adding, is a form of changes to the original. Elaboration usually reduces the difficulty of the reading material but from a cultural standpoint, it is a deliberate change made by non-native speakers to the original works that were written by native English speakers for English-speaking audiences. In this study, elaboration consisted of 14.74%. Since the researcher of this study takes the position that any work written by non-native speakers is unauthentic, the added parts of the passages may be categorized as another form of cultural changes for the same reason.

This study applies Sapir's claim (1949) that culture is reflected in the vocabulary through the analysis of the reading passages. When 64.85% of the editing was either deleting, altering, or adding vocabulary, it is justifiable to conclude that culture in the original passages is not presented in the same manner as when the passages were published to the intended target audience.

*Results: Second Phase – Analysis of Pre-reading & Post-reading Activities*

*Pre-Reading Activities*

The pre-reading activities were analyzed in order to answer the second question: Do the pre-reading and post-reading exercises relate C1 and C2? The purpose of the analyses of pre-reading activities was to find out if they were designed to provide the EFL learners with a better understanding of C2. In an attempt to analyze the questions and activities in the pre-reading sections, the following three theories were applied:

1. The pre-reading activities should provide a frame or a goal and activate the readers' schema (Carrell, 1984; Kramersch, 1985; Swaffar, 1985; Swaffar et al., 1991; Young, 1999);
2. The details are retained better if an activity focuses on meanings through inferential activities, rather than from literal activities (Swaffar et al. 1991);
3. Foreign language learners need to be made aware of their own culture (C1) so that the differences with C2 will be evident (Kramersch, 1993; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2005).

Inferential activities measure the understanding of the contents. These types of questions/activities require the use of readers' background knowledge. They ask questions or instruct the learners to activate their schema. Literal questions/activities measure the understanding of the language forms. These types of activity requires recalling facts from the reading passage.

From the three perspectives above, the pre-reading section of each lesson was analyzed. The results are summarized as follows:

**Table 8 Pre-Reading Activities**

I		II		III	
Does the pre-reading activity activate schema?		Is the activity/question inferential or literal?		Does the activity/question make the difference between C1 and C2 evident?	
Yes	No	Inferential	Literal or no activity	Yes	No
51 (54.84%)	42 (45.16%)	38 (50.00%)	38 (50.00%)	1 (1.43%)	69 (98.57%)

As for question I “Does the pre-reading activity activate schema?” more than half, 54.84%, of pre-reading activities activate the readers’ schema, e.g., by asking direct questions to the readers to recall their personal experiences. As for question II, the counts of inference and literal activities/questions were 38 each. Compared to these two results, the result for the third question “Does the activity/question make the difference between C1 and C2 evident?” was 98.57% negative. There was only one pre-reading activity in Lesson 5 of UNI (2003) that compared and contrasted C1 and C2. This activity presented how differently sushi was prepared at restaurants in the United States. More specifically, the textbook presented several *sushi* dishes that either used different ingredients or were served in such a manner that was not common at *sushi* restaurants in Japan (Ichikawa et al., 2003). Among all the questions and activities provided in all the chapters of all the textbooks, this is the only one that activated the readers’ schema in culture.

### *Post-Reading Activities*

Another secondary question of this study was “Do the pre-reading and post-reading exercise sections ask questions that relate the readers’ culture to other cultures?” This question intended to ascertain whether the students were made aware of C1 so that the differences and similarities between C1 and C2 would be more evident for comparing and contrasting purposes.

Post-reading activities were divided first into two groups: inferential and literal questions/activities. Some of the examples of inferential questions/activities were debate and

discussions. As long as the students' responses are logically developed based on the contents, there is not one correct answer. ENW (2003) was the only textbook that had inferential questions/activities that compared and contrasted C1 and C2. The following questions were from Lesson 4:

II. THINK AND SPEAK OUT... 2. Col. Paul Tibbets does not feel sorry for dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and says that he has never lost a single night's sleep about it. What do you think about his attitude? 3. On August 1, 1999, *Asahi Shimbun* published an article by an American who says that the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were necessary to end the war quickly. What do you think about his opinion? (Watanabe, 2004, p. 56)

These two questions ask the learners' opinions. Since the Pacific War was fought between Japan and the United States, it is likely that its history has been taught differently in the two countries. For example, Okamoto (2004) describes the increasing sentiment from the viewpoints of victims in the MEXT-approved history textbooks of Japan regarding the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. He claims that the description of these incidents in history has changed over time since immediately after the World War II through 1994 edition of the history textbooks used in Japan. If Japanese students are taught with the textbook whose narrative reflects more subjective views of the victims, the comments made by Colonel Paul Tibbets in question 2 and an unnamed American in question 3 may agitate the Japanese high school students. However, despite these questions instigate a personal reaction from the Japanese students, they make the students think and form their opinions toward the fact that there are people in culture outside Japan who view a historical event differently.

On the other hand, literal questions measure the understanding of the language forms. This type of activity requires recalling facts from the reading passage. In the next step, those categorized as inferential questions/activities were examined as to whether they instructed specifically to compare and contrast the C2 that was presented in the reading passages. The results are in Table 9.

**Table 9 Post-Reading Activities**

I		II	
Is the activity/question inferential or literal?		Does the inferential activity/question compare and contrast C1 and C2?	
INFERENTIAL	LITERAL	YES	NO
58 (10.96%)	471 (89.04%)	3 (3.37%)	86 (96.63%)

Literal questions in post-reading activities or questions, 89.04%, focused on language forms compared to the inferential ones, 10.96%. Among the inferential activities/questions, which occur 10.96% of the time, there were only three questions, 3.37%, that somewhat lead the readers to compare and contrast C1 and C2.

As this result indicates, upon finishing each reading passage, the learners are expected to master almost exclusively the linguistic aspect of the language instead of understanding the content. However, the fifty-eight inferential questions/activities could have been used effectively for understanding both C1 and C2 because many of them ask the students' personal opinions, which would reflect the students' native culture. If the questions/activities had presented the authors' culture specifically to compare and contrast them to the students' culture, then the students would be made more aware of the similarities and the differences between the two cultures.

When nearly 90% of the post-reading activities are geared toward the mastery of mechanical aspects of the language, it is assumed the students' expectation and assumption about the importance of learning culture from the reading passages is likely to be low. The answer to the research question "Do the pre-reading and post-reading exercises relate C1 and C2?" would be negative.

#### *Summary of Findings Related to the Presentation of Culture in Reading Textbooks*

Based on the outcomes of the passage analyses, and the examination of pre-reading and post-reading activities/questions, it can be summarized that understanding other cultures is not the primary goal of EFL reading courses in Japanese high schools. The vocabulary in most reading passages was either reduced or altered in more than half the editing processes.

The majority of the pre-reading activities/questions were not designed to prepare the students to learn the differences and similarities between C1 and C2 because they did not activate students' cultural schema. Most of the pre-reading activities instructed the readers to look for a certain piece of information from a passage. Copying certain sections directly from the passages always sufficed to answer those questions. With only one exception in Lesson 5 of UNI, the readers were not specifically asked to reflect on a particular aspect of their culture prior to reading so that they could compare their culture with what they were about to read.

The post-reading activities/questions were primarily geared toward the mastery of the language, not the culture. Despite the inferential questions that ask the readers' opinions and facts about C1, the questions or activities would need to go one step further to compare and contrast C1 and C2.

Summarizing the findings above, to answer the primary research question, "How is culture addressed in high school reading textbooks?" it would be sufficient to say that culture is not presented as in the original form. It has been altered by deleting, replacing vocabulary, or adding to the original vocabulary chosen by the authors. Secondly, activities before and after reading were not designed to point the students' attention toward learning about other cultures. Judging from the types of questions, mostly literal, these reading textbooks were intended to teach the mechanical aspects of the English language, not the cultures of the authors of the works cited.

### Overall Findings of the Study

Considering the findings obtained from the analysis of high school reading textbooks used in Japan, these textbooks could be described as being remarkably similar to each other in their design. Despite the differences in the length of reading passages and the numbers of lessons included in a textbook, the overall structure of the readers was strikingly similar.

Each lesson begins with a brief statement or question to activate the learners' schema, instructs them to read an edited passage and answer questions about the reading passage. These post-reading questions are mostly literal and designed for an analysis of the grammar and vocabulary of the English language. The students would not need to be creative in answering these questions but rather are directed to find the exact phrase or part of a passage that answers

the question most accurately. In the following chapter, these findings are discussed further, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations for future research are made.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes, discusses, and concludes this study. It also provides recommendations for future research and implications for teaching.

#### Summary of the Study

The primary research question was: How is culture addressed in high school reading textbooks?

Two secondary questions must first be answered in order to respond to the primary questions. These secondary questions are:

- A. Are reading passages edited? If so, how?
- B. Do the pre-reading and post-reading exercises relate C1 and C2?

These questions were answered based on the data collected from high school reading textbooks. The answer was yes to the first secondary question, “Are reading passages edited?” The passages were edited in such ways that the meanings in the original passages were changed. The answer was “no” to the second question, “Do the pre-reading and post-reading exercise sections ask questions that relate the readers’ culture to other cultures?”

Based on the answers to the two secondary questions, the answer to the primary question was that culture was not addressed in Japanese high school EFL reading textbooks by the original authors as intended.

#### Discussion of Results

##### *Reading Passage*

Following Sapir’s claim (1949) that culture is reflected in vocabulary, it was concluded that culture in the original passages had been eliminated mostly through the editing processes of simplification, alteration, and elaboration. The authors of the original works selected the vocabulary to communicate their messages in such a way that the meaning would appear significant to the intended audience. The language selected for any authentic reading material

varies depending on the social norms of the intended audiences. These norms include age, gender, ethnicity, geography, etc. that are all essential aspects of culture. The variety within a language depending on the different audience adds color to the language. It makes the language uniquely meaningful to the readers. Deleting, altering, and adding to any part of that language for any reason would decrease or even eliminate the anticipated effects intended by the authors.

Two kinds of editing are reported in Young's study (1999). One is the kind of editing that is applied in the textbooks that were analyzed for this study. This type of editing simplifies and shortens the language. The other type of editing involves modifying and elaborating the language for ease in comprehending the reading passages. Since this type of editing adds more, it activates the readers' schema and thus it is easier for the readers to relate personally to the contents.

More specifically, the first type of editing eliminates idiomatic expressions, specialized or low frequency vocabulary, and complicated syntax (Long & Ross, 1993). These purely linguistically simplified readings do not prove to be superior second-language reading materials (Young, 1999). Quite the contrary, they do not prepare the readers to improve their proficiency in reading and cultural understandings.

The idiomatic expressions, specialized or low frequency vocabulary, and complicated syntax of readings are selected by the authors based on cultural norms. They make each reading unique and thus easier and more interesting for the targeted audiences. Reading materials such as a machine's operating manual and a journal carry their own characteristics that make them a manual and a journal. Removing these characteristics in order to shorten and simplify the language makes them less distinctive from each other and flat.

Overall, the editing of Japanese high school EFL reading textbooks has removed unique characteristics from the original works that would have made reading comprehension easier, that would have equipped the learners with better reading skills in English for life outside the classrooms, and that would have realized MEXT's goal of intercultural understanding.

### *Pre-Reading Activities*

Pre-reading activities and questions were analyzed on the basis of three theories:

1. Pre-reading activities should provide a framework or a goal and activate the readers' schema (Carrell, 1984; Kramsch, 1985; Swaffar, 1985; Swaffar et al., 1991; Young, 1999);

2. The details of a reading are retained better if an activity focuses on understanding meanings through inferential activities, rather than through literal activities (Swaffar et al. 1991);

3. Foreign language learners need to be made aware of C1 so that the differences from C2 will be evident (Kramersch, 1993; NSFLEP, 2005).

As for theories 1 and 2, more than half of the pre-reading activities, 54.84%, do activate the learners' schema, and 50% of the pre-reading activities and questions are inferential. What is suggested by these results is that the pre-reading sections were not all literal, i.e. linguistically-oriented. To some degree, they do prepare the learners for the content they are about to read.

However, in applying the third theory, if the activity/question makes evident the difference between C1 and C2, the results were negative. There was only one activity that answered this question positively, while 69 activities/questions did not.

Summarizing these results, the pre-reading activities did relate the learners' schema to the contents of the reading materials to some extent, but not specifically with the cultural schema. Apparently, understanding the content information and retention of details are the intended goals of pre-reading activities, but not cultural understanding.

### *Post-reading Activities*

Post-reading sections were examined by applying two of three theories used for the analysis of pre-reading.

1. The details are retained better if an activity focuses on meanings through inferential activities, rather than from literal activities (Swaffar et al. 1991);
2. Foreign language learners need to be made aware of C1 so that the differences from C2 will be evident (Kramersch, 1993; NSFLEP, 2005).

In applying the first theory, each post-reading section was divided into literal and inferential questions/activities. Inferential questions measure the overall understanding of contents using learners' schema. The learners are required to generate their own answers logically with the information presented in the reading passage. On the other hand, literal questions measure one's understanding of the language forms. They require recalling facts from the reading passage. After sorting all post-reading questions/activities, it was noted that 10.96%

are inferential and 89.04% are literal questions. Then, the inferential questions/activities were examined in light of the second theory to see if these questions/activities compared and contrasted C1 and C2. Among the eighty-nine inferential questions/activities, three questions, 3.37%, were found that required comparing and contrasting C1 and C2. The statistics show that the post-reading sections were heavily geared toward the mastery of linguistic aspects of the passage. An activity/question requires a learner only to copy an exact word or phrase to answer it.

Adams and Collins (1977), Carrell and Eisterhold (1988), Kramsch (1985), Hadley (1986), and Swaffar, Arens and Byrnes (1991) claim that comprehension is assessed via an activity that explores the students' process of thinking. Stating their claim in different terms, a good reader can perform the following two tasks: (1) tells the relationship between the whole and its parts and the relationship between those parts, and (2) distinguishes between meanings and also relates meaning in written texts to their own background knowledge or schema.

What the learners need to do to answer the post-reading questions correctly did not amount to either of the two above-mentioned tasks. When it is not necessary to understand the theme or supporting details in a reading passage or to integrate their personal and cultural knowledge, the learners' mastery of the teaching material is inevitably limited to the surface level of the English language, instead of how ideas are organized within the passage. On the other hand, inference questions and activities would require the learners to bring in their schema that necessarily reflects C1. If a reading is heavily loaded with C2, the differences and similarities between C1 and C2 should become more apparent.

### Conclusions

This section presents a discussion, integrating the results of this study and the attainment of the Japanese government's goals. The overall objectives in foreign language education for high schools in Japan are "To develop the students' practical communication skills, such as understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, to express their own ideas, to deepen one's understanding of language and culture, and to foster a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages (MEXT, 2002)." The results of this study suggested

that it would be difficult to achieve these objectives had difficulties if one was to achieve them with the current reading textbooks.

Specifically, there are four goals stated: (1) understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, (2) expressing their own ideas, (3) deepening one's understanding of language and culture, and (4) fostering a positive attitude toward communication. Goal one refers to an understanding of the contents of the reading passages. Students may achieve an understanding to some extent via verbatim translation but their understanding is not confirmed or reinforced with the given post-reading activities. Goal two, expressing their own ideas, is not given an opportunity to be practiced before or after the reading because the overwhelming majority of practice exercises are devoted to the mastery of the superficial language with literal activities and questions.

Goal three seemingly requires more discussion. Deepening the understanding of language and culture, appears to be difficult to achieve based on the following claims. First, following the assertion that the authentic use of a language reflects the writer's culture (Brown, 1987; Byrnes, 1990; Gilmore, 2004; Honeyfield, 1977; Kramsch, 1993; Lamie, 1998; McKay, 1982; Shrum & Glisan, 2005; Swaffar, 1985), it is concluded that the cultural aspects have been erased through editing.

The second reason why goal three is seemingly difficult to achieve is that the language used in the reading passages has been revised mostly through editing. Compared with the authentic use of language, artificial simplification supposedly for improving reading fluency, is reported to counteract fluent reading (Oh, 2001; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991). Edited reading passages are claimed to be ineffective not only as resources for the writers' cultures but also as teaching materials for reading proficiency.

Third reason is that reading material that is comprised of an authentic use of the language is recommended over the edited, simplified forms used for presenting correct grammar (Bachman, 1990; Blau, 1982; Bowles, 2001a, 2001b; Gilmore, 2004; Hall, 1977; Honeyfield, 1977; Iwata et al., 2001; Kikuchi 2006; Liaw, 2001; McCarthy and Carter, 1994; McKay & Hornberger, 1996; Oh, 2001; Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991; Templin, 1997; Yano et al., 1991; Yorio, 1985; Young, 1999). In spite of the claim that an authentic use of the language is endorsed, instead of over-edited and simplified forms of a language, the language used in the

reading textbooks was edited and simplified. It is assumed that the edited and simplified English is the MEXT's curricular goal to teach contemporary standard English.

Lastly regarding the third goal, editing has resulted in eliminating C2 on another level. In some cases, rather superficial information has been eliminated through editing, e.g., Barbie dolls to "pretty dolls" (Negishi et al., 2004 p. 49). Historically, Japanese EFL textbooks have been claimed to present superficial aspects instead of the beliefs and values of the people in the C2 (Iwata, Ogawa, Wen, Sakamoto, Takarada, Horio, Muto, & Mogi, 2001 Kitao 1979, 1988). Words such as 'pretty' are so subjective a term as to trigger socio-culturally different images and ideas. For instance, Barbie in the United States is not merely a toy but it has had considerable influence on social issues such as eating disorder<sup>1</sup>. It has a potential for comparing the culturally different images of an ideal female physique by presenting vocabulary such as Barbie as is and by equipping classroom instructors with guidelines on how to utilize an example such as this.

Goal four, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, is rather an obscure goal to achieve with the given materials. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines communication "the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings." Given that the activities are focused more on the acquisition of correct grammar and vocabulary and that the reading passages are cleansed of cultural flavors, it is unknown how MEXT planned to foster a positive attitude through correct English grammar and vocabulary without presenting a culture unique to each author. It is necessary to increase inferential questions and to train to interact with the contents of the reading passages personally with the schema.

Citing authentic reading materials in the textbooks is a very healthy step to take. However, due to editing, the culture that was present in the original works has been erased. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of the activities are linguistically oriented. Presenting authentic materials in edited forms with few activities to reinforce the learners' understanding or retention of cultural information never guarantees intercultural understanding on the learners' part. Awareness of other cultures does not automatically happen without proper resources, instruction, or activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved on March 24, 2008, [http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/041118/i\\_ins.01.html](http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/041118/i_ins.01.html)

## Recommendations

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

This study is by no means complete as an analysis of textbooks. If at all, it can only be a preliminary step for multiple studies along the same line of topics, i.e., the effects of editing on culture. Below are the possible research studies that stem from this study.

First, analysis of those textbooks that have been disapproved by MEXT might show if there was more authentic culture from outside sources present in their reading passages. Since it is evident that MEXT is more concerned with presenting linguistically oriented materials, then the reading material in those textbooks that have been rejected may possibly be truer to the originals.

Secondly, this study does not analyze the qualities or characteristics of words and sections deleted from the original works. An interesting research question might be: What negative effects are caused exactly by each type of editing and by how much in terms of acquisition of culture. For example, the writers of the original articles and the monographs and their editors must have their own criteria for choosing the vocabulary, elaborating any sections of their writings, and not elaborating but rather leaving the readers figure out what they meant to say. These criteria were considered unquestionably appropriate for the target audience. Deliberately altering what was considered appropriate by the professional, native writers and editors in applying them to EFL teaching materials must have specific effects for those who read them. A study that defines these effects, whether they are positive or negative, would probably complete this research.

Third, it would be intriguing to study which of the five editing categories, Lexical, Simplification, Grammar, Alteration, and Elaboration, would have more negative effects in learning culture. Further research from different angles with different tools would be necessary but the results would make a substantial contribution to designing reading textbooks in foreign languages.

Fourth, a study would be interesting to find if there is any association between the genres of the originals and the editing categories. Depending on the genre such as journal articles and essays, there may be differences in the degree of grammaticality, of lexical replacements or of

elaboration. As indicated by the results in the second phase of analysis of pre-reading and post-reading activities/questions, the authors' and MEXT's interests were linguistically-oriented. If this tendency is reflected similarly in the reading passages, the originals such as personal narratives or dialogues may have received more editing compared to an article in a science journal.

Fifth, a differently designed analysis could reveal what MEXT considers to be cultural information. If one of MEXT's goals is to deepen cultural understanding, the approved textbooks should present culture from that viewpoint. Despite the conclusion drawn from this study that culture is not present, a different study may apply different theories to prove otherwise. From the same perspective, future research may consider interviews or surveys of MEXT officials to probe their rationale on how to realize this goal through readings in EFL textbooks. The fact that they have approved the textbooks analyzed in this study has made the researcher believe that MEXT considers that culture is indeed present in spite of the two major findings of this study. These two findings were:

- culture that is reflected in vocabulary (Sapir, 1949) has been changed by Simplification, Alteration, and Elaboration, and
- there are few or no activities or questions that would make the learners understand and retain the cultural information.

Sixth, it would be interesting as part of the post-reading activities, to develop a tool to measure the degree of cultural understanding achieved since it is one of the stated goals. Although Schulz (2007) points out that there has not been an agreement on how cultural understanding should be assessed, applying specific theories such as Kramersch's (1993) and NSFLEP (2005), i.e., that the learners must be made aware of the differences between C1 and C2, a variety of measurement tools should be made available for the different goals.

Although the examinations of the pre-reading and post-reading activities/questions have revealed that they are more linguistically-oriented, it would be most interesting to compare two groups of students, one that is taught with the currently approved EFL reading textbooks and the other taught with authentic reading materials. This would be one way of seeing if there are any significant improvements in cultural understanding in the latter group.

Above all, there is a need to know MEXT's definition of culture. It is defined in several different ways in the curriculum but there were questions cast on their definition in chapter two. Since a deeper cultural understanding is one of the stated goals of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Japan, the process used to realize this goal must be clearly defined on a sound theoretical foundation and applied to the materials and methods that the instructors and the students use on a daily basis. This research sprouted from the researcher's personal interests in teaching and learning culture through foreign language education. There are endless possible research topics emerging from the findings of this study. There may be researchers who are conducting studies of similar interests.

### Epilogue

Culture must have been an area of foreign language education that both teachers and students enjoy and yet it is the hardest to address. It is vague. It is fun but at the same time it can be annoying and shocking. It is entertaining but difficult to incorporate in classroom activities. The researcher of this study started writing this dissertation hoping to obtain a clear idea of what a culture is and how to teach it in foreign language classes. However, nearing the end, the degree of ambiguity has not subsided. There have been a variety of definitions of culture. Due to the variety, proposals on how to teach culture in foreign language classes equally vary. There has not been a single well-developed tool that everyone can use in order to assess the mastery of target cultures. The ambiguity felt at the beginning of this study still lingers, and it probably will.