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Employment of American and British first language textbooks as a foreign language resource in private schools in South Lebanon

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of research that examined how teachers employed first language textbooks to teach English as a foreign language and to develop the intercultural competences of their students. The research employed semi-structured phenomenological interviews and questionnaires with eight South Lebanese educators. The findings demonstrates how in relation to language learning, the employment of foreign textbooks produces successful results. The research though also details how teachers have to work hard to bridge the cultural gaps between their students and the 'alien' cultures detailed in the textbooks. Problematic, it would appear to the development of inter cultural competence is that in South Lebanon some cultures, noticeably that of Judaism, and some topics, such as sexuality, that schools, teachers but moreover parents control how and indeed if, students are inculcated into wider cultures and debates. The conclusion of the research details how in the development of intercultural competence that teachers are the key mediators of students' responses to cultures and practices other than their own.

Key words: textbooks, Lebanon, Education, Language learning, Teacher mediation