

## **Analysis of Grade Ten English Textbook from Cultural Perspective**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main aim of the study on “An Analysis of Grade ten English Textbook from Cultural Perspective” is to explore the cultural aspects that includes in newly revised Compulsory English textbook. This study mainly focuses on cultural aspects that includes on this book such as religions, celebrations, customs, rituals, genders, castes, clothes, food items, arts and literary genres. The primary source of this study was the newly revised textbook of class ten. The collected data were observed, analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. The study found that the textbook writers have included various contents concerning to the cultures from the world. The study found that the textbook includes the new technologies as well as religions, customs, rituals etc. However, the textbook is not seem completely justifiable regarding the inclusion of female writers, representation of minority and marginalized group of people and their languages and other activities concerning to their cultures.*

**Keywords:** *Criticism, culture, English language, perspective, textbook,*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Textbooks are one of the most important source materials for teaching English as a second language context. Textbook makes English language teaching more effective, easy, productive, meaningful and fruitful. In this regard Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) said that textbooks are the main source of teaching and learning English language. It is because textbook provides

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the real guidelines through various texts, images and examples regarding the subject matter. It also facilitates both teachers and students to achieve the goal of the curriculum. So, text book becomes the main teaching and learning materials for achieving the goal of specified curriculum by providing hard and soft copy in the market. Textbook contains different reading resources and various genres of language like stories, essays, poems, drama, review of various books and novels etc. The contents are also present in a systematic and well organized manner.

Textbooks are the mostly useful and important materials as they are regularly used in the classroom teaching and learning. In this regard, Sadker et al. (2009) claimed that students spend almost eighty to ninety percent time of classroom using textbook. Most of the teachers also teach based on the textbooks. It means that most of the teachers also depend on textbook for their classroom teaching. Likewise, Romanowski (1996, p. 69) said that the content and ideas includes on textbook have such a valuable and authoritative power that every teachers and students believe and no one arise questions regarding the contents and illustrations that includes in the textbooks. In the similar vein, Brugeilles and Cronmer (2009) claimed that textbooks are the most easily available and useful materials for teaching and learning. Textbook are also the materials which are easy to carry and use in the classroom teaching.

Textbooks are mostly used by both teachers and students as they are easily accessible and core teaching and learning materials especially in classroom teaching and learning. Most of the teachers and students are fully depends on textbook for their teaching and learning to achieve the learning goals. In this regard, Chung (2000), argued that textbooks are the most important and essential things to achieved the educational goals. Textbooks help the students for their self-learning and also help them for socialization. It is also important to present various cultures exist in the society.

Textbooks are the important reading materials for teachers and students. Students can use textbook as one of the most important and useful self-reading materials. Teachers can also use textbooks to prepare themselves for their classroom teaching as well as sources of knowledge. In this regard, Ruddick (2010) said that textbooks are one of the most widely used educational tools in classroom teaching and learning. Both teachers and students are equally used textbook beyond the classroom. Students use textbook beyond the classroom for doing their home assignment and preparation for examination as well. And the teachers use textbooks to prepare their class presentation and expand the knowledge regarding content. Similarly, Sadkar and Zittleman (2009) mentioned, "The time students spend on textbooks accounts 80-90% of classroom time". Regarding his view, most of the time both teachers and

students spend by using textbook in the classroom. While talking about the use of textbook in our Nepalese context, most of the teachers and students use textbook as one of the most reliable materials for their teaching and learning. Both teachers and students believe that the contents that included in the textbook are absolutely right. However, sometimes there might have wrong information in the textbook as well. So, while using textbook as a core and authentic reading materials it is equally important to consult other reference materials as well.

There are various arguments regarding the use and nature of textbooks. Most of the scholars claim that a good textbook should be acceptable in the global market. Preparing textbook globally acceptable, there should be the inclusion of various culture, tradition, norm, values and the content should be globally appropriate. A good textbook should design in such a manner which is globally acceptable. Regarding this view, Gray (2002), claims that ELT books publishers should provide the guidelines for writing and inclusion of content in the book. The textbooks should be inclusive and appropriate to the concerned markets and the academic level. He further said that the book writers should follow the theory of inclusivity and inappropriacy. The theory of inclusivity said that text book should be culturally acceptable and all the culture of target society should be included and the theory of inappropriacy said that the inappropriate and culturally offensive and sensible content should exclude from the textbook. So, textbooks should not create tension in both teachers and learners while they are using it. Instead it should create the feeling of ownership and close attachment with the textbooks. For creating such attachment and closeness the textbook should focus on the integrative approach regarding the inclusion of content, exercises and cultures.

Nepal is a diverse cultural and multiethnic country. There are various cultures, caste, religions, languages and so on. A good textbook should address all these cultural, religious and ethical values in the textbook. Regarding the Nepalese context, classrooms are also full of heterogeneous group of students. Students are from various culture, religion, caste, and ethnic group. The authority of nations also attempts to formulate various policies to make the inclusive education system in the nation. For inclusive educational system, textbook should include different cultures that exist not only in a single nation but also all over the world. So, inclusion of various cultures in the textbook is essential to develop the feelings of ownership and positive vibes towards that textbook.

Textbook is one of the mostly useful teaching and learning materials in Nepalese context. Both teachers and students have been using textbook as one of the core resource for teaching and learning. As it is mostly useful materials for both teachers and students, it is

also essential to include various cultures in the textbook. In the context of Nepal, inclusion of various cultures is most important. It is because Nepal is full of diverse culture. So, it is essential to analyze the textbook from cultural perspectives. Regarding the important of inclusion of culture in textbook, I felt it is necessary to analyze the newly revised class ten English textbook from cultural perspectives. The study aims to elucidate the cultural aspects of the textbook specially the compulsory English textbook of grade ten. Further the study intends to make aware to concerned stakeholders about the influence of culture in the various aspects of the textbook.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

This study is mainly conducted by using secondary sources, consequently consulting library, newspapers, books, articles, journals, theses, policies, websites, online were consulted for the literature related to the cultural aspects that includes in the textbook. This study uses the impressionistic method of study as it analyzes the textbook materials by observing rather carefully at the representative features of the textbook. This study does not intend to seek for in-depth information about the course book. The study is based on thematic and described briefly with supporting theories of the experts in the field. As a qualitative research design, the study is descriptive, and the discussion is made positioning on the themes. The area of this study was the class ten English language textbook in which cultural aspects were mainly focused.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

Textbooks are most useful teaching and learning materials for both teachers and students as it provides details information regarding the targeted content and subject-matter. So there should be detail and careful investigation while selecting textbook for specific purposes. In this regard, Sheldon (1988, p.76) mentioned, “A textbook can be referred to as a published materials especially designed to help language learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities. The use of ESL published materials is more widespread than ever before since textbook provided ESL teachers with guidelines syllabi, teaching methodologies and materials to be learnt.”

Therefore, textbooks should be designed based on the target group of readers. The main aim of ESL textbooks is to focus on improving language aspects such as; grammar, vocabulary, language function and language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Textbooks are written and designed based on the specified curriculum. So, a teacher can also use it to broaden their knowledge and use as one of the best materials for classroom teaching and learning.

### **Types of Textbooks**

As mention by Grant (1987) there are mainly two types of textbooks.

#### **Traditional Textbooks**

The textbooks which are designed and written on the behaviorist approach are called traditional textbooks. This type of textbooks believes that language learning is a kind of habit formation. It also believes that learning language and other skills like swimming, driving etc. are the similar process. This types of textbooks focuses on the grammar of the target language and it also focuses on learning grammar. These types of textbook also believe that when the language learners learn grammar then they also correctly and appropriately use such language in the real-life situation. These types of textbook also believe that written form of language is the correct and absolutely superior form of that language. And the teachers are regarded as the superior and control of the classroom. Regarding this Grant (1987, p.14-16) mentions the following characteristics of the traditional textbooks:

- Traditional textbooks focus on the use of learners' first languages.
- These types of textbooks are based on the specified syllabus and written from examination point of view.
- These types of textbook mainly focuses on the reading and writing skills of language and neglecting the listening and speaking skills which are also important skills of language.
- These types of textbooks focus on accuracy rather than fluency.
- These types of textbooks focus on the structure of language rather than its use in the appropriate context.

#### **Communicative Textbook**

Those textbooks which are designed for focusing on the communicative competence are called communicative textbooks. The main goal of these types of textbook is to develop communicative competence on the learners. It helps the students to use the target language in their real life communication. It believes that language is a means for communication. So learning language means learning for communication and the teachers play the role of facilitators rather than the dictatorship. In this regard, Grant (1987) presents the main characteristics of communicative textbooks as following:

- Communicative textbooks focus on fluency rather than accuracy.
- They focus on the use of language rather than to learn about the language.
- They are designed based on the needs, interest and level of students.
- They focus on the communicative functions rather than grammatical function of language.
- There is well balance among the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

So, this types of books based on communicative competence. Communicative competence means the ability to use language both in contextually appropriate and grammatically correct form. So, communicative textbooks focus on fluent and accurate use of the language in their real life situations.

### **Cultural Context of Nepal**

Culture means the way of life in the society. It includes arts, belief, religion, laws, moral, customs norms and all the social factors that corned with human life. Regarding this, Tylor (1920), said; “In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”

Nepal is a small in geography but big in terms of culture. Here are various cultural norms, values, beliefs, faith and so on. Nepal is geographically small but full of cultural diversity. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 declares Nepal as a secular state and the constitution of Nepal has also recognized all the languages spoken in Nepal are the language of nation. Nepali language is an official language and lingua franca among the other languages. Regarding the existence of various languages in ancient Nepal, there is various languages exist. Some of the mostly popular language of Nepal in ancient period is Sanskrit, Kirat, Pali etc. The Sanskrit language seems to the most prominent language in ancient Nepal. When Jayasthiti Malla rose in the history of Nepal in Medieval period, there was the popularity of Sanskrit, Maithili, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Abadhi and Nepali languages. Now, according the Central Bureau Statistics 2077, here are 123 languages are spoken in Nepal. Therefore, Nepal is rich in language and culture. Regarding the cultural diversity of language Pandey, (2007) said; “Nepal is the country of four races and thirty-six classes.”

Nepalese society is full of cultural diversity. Here, the followers of Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, Christians, Kirat religions etc. live in a good harmony. Within a single community

different religious people live together happily. There is not any discrimination regarding their religion, caste and ethnicity. Nepal is a rich country regarding the diversity of culture, language and religions. So, it is essential to include the culture of all community and people in the academic curriculum. A group of individuals made a family, a group of different family made a society and the combination of various society and community made a nation. And school is such a place where all the heterogeneous group of people meet together. Therefore, curriculum and textbook needs to include all the language items, cultures, religions etc. in the designed textbook.

### **Language, Culture and Textbook**

Culture can be defined as a group of “values, traditions, social and political relationships, and world view created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class or religion” (Nieto, 1996 as cited in Amara 2018, p. 104). Language can be defined as a system of verbal and non-verbal signs which are connected and embody cultural reality and social identities.

Language and culture are inter-related to each other. They are intertwined and closely connected to each other. Language and culture cannot remain separate. Regarding the relation between language and culture Brown (2007 p.189) claimed; “a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either culture” (p. 189). Similarly, regarding the relation between language and culture Alptekin, (2002 p.58) said; “as a kind of enculturation, when one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers and learners who assimilate to a new culture.” So, based on the above definition, it can be said that learning a new language means learning new culture.

### **Review of Grade Ten English Textbook**

The present Grade ten English textbook is published by Curriculum Development Center (CDC) under Ministry of Education. The curriculum decides what is necessary to fulfill the goal and objectives of national education. And a textbook includes all the necessary contents prescribed by curriculum. So, textbook is a tool to provide necessary content as mentioned in curriculum. The Grade ten textbook is developed and designed to achieve the main objectives of Secondary level English Curriculum 2078 which is designed based on the National

Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2076 BS.

This textbook was prepared by a team of Mr. Nim Prakash Singh Rathaur, Mr. Ananda Dhungana, Mr. Pashupati Pandya and Ramesh Dhakal. Director General Mr. Baikuntha Prasad Arayal, Subject committee Chairperson; Prof., Dr. Bal Mukunda Bhandari, subject committee members Dr. Bamdev Adhikari, Dr. Netra Prasad Sharma, Mr. Tukaraj Adhikari, Mr. Basanta Raj Dhakal and Mr. Nawaraj Sapkota also has great contribution on the development of this book. Ms. Kunti Adhikari and Mr. Nabin Kumar Karki edit the language and content of the book. The illustrations in the book were done by Ms. Shaili Malla and Mr. Kushal Karki. Mr. Shreehari Shrestha edits the book in four colors. This book includes more authentic materials so that students can learn in a natural way. It also includes authentic audio materials as well.

The contents of the book are arranged focusing on communicative competence. Each unit contains activities regarding listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and three aspects of language i.e. vocabulary, grammar and language function are included in each units so that students can learn language in natural order. The contents and activities are includes based on the level of students. All the contents include in the textbook are equally important. Students can use this textbook as a self reading materials and teachers can use it a reliable resource for classroom teaching and learning activities. This book also encourage teachers to explore other related reference materials so that classroom teaching become more objectives and fruitful.

This textbook contains eighteen units. Each unit deals with four language skills and aspects of language. To make the textbook more attractive and interesting each units includes pictures and illustrations. Each unit has listening, speaking, reading and writing exercise. The main aim of the present secondary level English textbook is to develop communicative competence in the students. So each unit has various activities focusing to develop language skills and aspects. This book seems to be prepared by focusing on communicative competence. Glossary is also included at the end of the textbook so that teachers and students can consult meaning while they feel difficulty during teaching and learning.

The physical aspects of the book do not seem good. The cover page seems in medium quality and the binding is not good. It can easily come out after the use in short time. The layout of the textbook is colorful but not thick and strong enough. The cover page contains the picture of ancient and cultural types of houses that remind the ancient tradition of housing in Nepalese society. The price is not mention in the book. Overall, the textbook is appropriate in terms of language skills and aspects though it has not good and strong paper quality.



## **Content Analysis of Grade Ten Book from Cultural Perspectives**

As a Ph.D. scholar and English language teacher of grade ten, I have done this analysis deeply through each lesson. Altogether, this book has eighteen units. Each unit has grammatical items as well as listening, speaking, reading, writing and project works are also included in an integrative way. The main aim of this textbook is to develop communicative competence in the students. The first unit is about Current affairs and issues on the basis of how driverless cars will change our world, open letter to UN Secretary General, reporting, description of pollution in the world, reported speech, writing a newspaper article and collecting news items from the newspaper. The picture included in the initial shows the artificial intelligent (AI), online information technologies and the protection and care of the earth. Regarding the grammatical items it includes the reported speech and also includes the types of reading in terms of skimming, scanning, extensive reading and intensive reading as well. Almost all the exercises included in the text deals with different AI and information technologies on the basis of above-mentioned parameters. In writing task students are asked to write a letter to the mayor of their municipality or Chairperson of their rural municipality which is part of every culture in requesting formally.

In unit two is about Festivals and Celebrations which includes Battle of the Orange, and Thank giving around the world. This unit has raised the cultural awareness of the students. The Battle of Orange represents the traditional culture which mostly started to celebrate when the slaves were freed during roman times. The Thanksgiving around the world represent the thanks giving culture of USA, South Korea, Brazil, Liberia, Ghana and Iran. So, this unit mainly focuses on the cultural aspects of various countries of the world. It shows how people give thanks according to their own cultures.

Likewise, unit three concerns with Health and Welfare. There is one story ‘A Letter from a Patient’ which represents the bitter experience and dissatisfaction of the patient’s caretaker as the hospital doctor and nurses have not the good culture regarding the care of patients. Another lesson is A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life’ represents how we be healthy and how people maintain their health by following some rules regarding their health. Regarding the writing exercise this unit encourages the students to write a apology letter from the health care workers’ point of view. The fourth unit is regarding the topic ‘Work and Leisure’ in which Cabbage White represent the culture to utilize leisure time and there is an exercise regarding vacancy announcement and ‘Leave this Chanting and Singing’ which chant represent the culture of farming. In writing exercise there is a lesson ‘Rules and Regulations for the Visitors’

regarding the culture of Chitwan National Park and the rules and culture that a visitor should follow.

The fifth unit deals with Science and Experiment. The first reading text 'Yes, You can Boil Water at Room Temperature' concerns with how people boil water in the normal room temperature. Next lesson is 'The Voice of the Rain' a poem which is a conversation between the poet and the rain. When the poet asks the identity of the drizzle, she replies that she is the poem of the earth. The rain expresses that it gives happiness to mother earth. Regarding the writing exercise it concerns with the letter to the editor of a national daily complaining about the shortage of water in Kathmandu.

In unit six, the author focuses on Food and Cuisine culture of world. There is a reading text on 'Strange Food from Around the World' which describes the food culture in Scotland, Japan, China, Australia, Thailand, France and Vietnam. The second reading text is on 'You Inspire Others by Learning not by Teaching' focuses on the teaching and learning culture from a perspective of a Master Chef. Regarding the written exercise it focuses on how the Nepalese' current trend to prefer fast food like noodles, pizza, burger, etc to typical Nepali food and how they have an adverse effects on their health.

The unit seven dealing with Cyber Security and this unit includes the lesson topic 'Parents' where the writer talks about how the today's teenager are affected by online media and also the teenager's culture is represent under it. Next reading text under this unit is Cyber Security and Basic Internet Safety Tips' under which the author concerns about the online trend and culture and tells how to safe our online portal. Unit eight focus on different hobbies and interests in which it talks about Common Hobbies and how to choose appropriate hobbies.

Unit nine focuses on History and Culture. In this unit the author includes some picture that represents Nepali history and culture. This unit mainly focuses on the cultural aspects. In the lesson 'Flowers in Russian Culture' the writer talks about how Russian people symbolize and use the different flowers. Unit ten focuses on Games and Sports where the writer talks about different culture of sports and include 'The First Olympic Games' and the Olympic game culture began. Next essay on 'Popularity of Different Sports in the World' includes the reason behind the popularity of different games in the different European and Asian countries.

Unit eleven focuses on Ethics and Morality where the story on 'Wisdom of Little Girl' and 'World Record' are includes. These stories also focus on the different culture of the sports. In unit twelve there is a text on "Kathmandu-Terai/Madhesh Fast Track: A Project of National Pride' and a poem on 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802'. These both

texts focus on the cultural aspects of Nepalese especially to conduct developmental works and how westerner perceives the natural scenario and how they destroy the natural beauty. Unit thirteen focuses on Population and Migration and how the migration impact on their culture.

Unit fourteen deals with 'Travel and Adventure'. Under this unit 'Expect and Unexpected' a story includes. In this text the writer talks about different cultural aspects of Kathmandu Chitwan and Pokhara. And in the poem 'Weathers' the writer talks about the weathers that like and dislike from the birds point of view.

Unit fifteen dealing with People and Places and it includes the text 'Me at the Beginning of Life' and 'Sugarloaf Mountain: 5 Interesting Facts' where the writer talks about the life story of Jhamak Kumari Ghimire and how Nepalese culture treats the physically different people. In unit sixteen there are the two texts focusing on 'Success and Celebration'. They are Walt Disney: An Example of Struggle and Success' and another is a poem 'If'. So, these units also deal important from cultural point of view.

Unit seventeen deals with Countries and Towns where the author talks about London vs. Paris and 'The Country Mouse and the City Mouse'. The writer tries to explore the cultural diversities of different cities and also the culture of town and the village.

The last unit eighteen deals with Media and Entertainment. There are two stories Hachi: A Dog's Tale and Interesting Social Media Stories. Under these two texts the author focuses on various cultural things as well as stories representing different cultures.

Through the in-depth observation, it is found that most of the authors are male. The names of the characters are also male. So it seems to dominate by male tradition. Most of the names, character, religious sites, values and customs, food, clothing, celebrations, art and literature are from foreign language communities. It also seems that most of the contains of the book are directly or indirectly influence by the western cultures. There is representation of minority language community and developing and poor countries. However most of the texts are dominated by western culture.

## CONCLUSION

The study "An Analysis of Grade ten English Textbook from Cultural Perspective" aims to explore the cultural identity that includes in the textbook. This study mainly focuses on to find out in what and how the cultural aspects are included in the textbook. The researcher conducted the in-depth study of the textbook by using checklist. The checklist was designed by including different cultural parameters. The cultural parameters includes in terms of religions,

celebrations, customs, rituals, genders, castes, clothes, food items, arts and literary genres that represented in Nepalese context and other countries. The main objectives of the grade ten English textbook is to develop communicative competence in the students. So, this English textbook seems to be helpful to develop the students to tackle and competed in global market. The researcher has made some generalization based on his own reflection as he himself also an English language teacher at secondary level. This textbook could not include all Nepalese students' culture in lesson but it tries to include in exercises section so that students could practice and teacher will support them. Therefore, the textbook is prepared with the mixture of various cultures from different countries regarding their clothes, traditional activities, online portal and so on. Thus, overall textbook seem to revise and updated with collecting necessary feedbacks and comments from the previous version.

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