

## *Original Paper*

# Images of the “Other” in English Textbooks for High School Education

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### ***Abstract***

*The goal of this paper is to analyze the ways in which the “other” is portrayed and formalized in compulsory schooling in an institutionalized manner. The research methodology used is qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the teaching material. Certain attitudes towards “other” cultures among societal groups are often the result of their conception of alterity, of their identity and the relation between them. These representations have become a culture on its own right, giving birth to a categorization of people within the same society and of peoples of the world. This paper will attempt to reveal the way this dichotomy between the “self” and the “other” operates and will analyze the way alterity is managed in the textbooks.*

### ***Keywords***

*the other, high school textbooks, English language, alterity*

## **1. Introduction**

The present study aims at examining the content of the English high school textbooks used in Greece, in order to register incidents that portray the image of the “other” and to perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of these incidents

Taking into consideration the major role school textbooks play in the teaching and learning process (Bonidis, 2004; Johnsen, 1993; Oates, 2014, p. 5; Pingel, 2009, p. 7) and that textbook research aims to “promote international understanding”, particularly when textbooks contain “one sided images” (Pingel, 2009, p. 8), it is of the utmost importance to study the “normative function” (ibid.) of English language textbooks in compulsory secondary education as they convey a global understanding of “the rules of society as well as norms of living with other people” (ibid., p. 7). In the case where there is only one

available for the teacher to use in class-as is the case in Greece-, it is evident that many ardent questions arise, such as: do the high school textbooks for teaching English in Greece cater for all students, such as immigrant, minority students, students with special abilities as well as disadvantaged students, both socially and financially, or for the needs of students that live in isolated agricultural communities far from the urban centers? Are these textbooks appropriate for all these diverse kinds of students? How do these textbooks deal with issues of alterity -national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, social (Cummins, 2003; Dimasi, 2002, pp. 55-56; Gkotovos, 2002, pp. 59-60)? What is their contribution towards a more intercultural treatment of the multicultural profile of the Greek classroom and its cultural diversity? Does the teaching that takes place in the Greek high schools take into consideration and focus on a) cultural knowledge (values, microculture and macroculture, habits, pop culture, arts etc.), b) social issues and people's attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices, and finally c) interpersonal relations between different ethnic, social, cultural groups? To what extent is the "other" visible in the texts and in what ways are the diverse cultures represented?

These questions have been a research field of great interest since published papers on the textbook series used for teaching English in primary school education proved that there was little integration of multicultural issues in the textbook content (Dimasi & Zafiri, 2009, p. 117; Zafeiriadou, 2010, p. 134). This paper analyzes the way textbook images and text language, both provide and limit knowledge of different people and societies. Text and images are considered a means of representation as they reflect the political discourse concerning what it is possible to think and say about people and societies in relation to people's attitudes towards the cultural or ethnic "other".

## **2. Issues of Alterity, the "Other" and the "Self"**

Before proceeding with the analysis of the textbooks it is required that certain clarifications should be made regarding the definition of the "other", the perception of the "self", "alterity" as a notion and the interaction between the "other" and the "self".

The "other", as defined in the dictionary, is "the 'additional or extra', or 'alternative', or 'different type of' (Note 1). It is closely linked to the notion of alterity which is "the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation" (Note 2) and this differentiation involves, among others, geographical areas and other cultures (Riboli, 2005, p. 145). Similarly, the "other" is "an individual who is perceived by the group as not belonging, as being different in some fundamental way" (ibid.). What is more, otherness "within our national geographical boundaries on the other hand requires a re-definition of national identity" (Byram, 1989, p. 26).

Alterity is considered a basic parameter of everyday life (Tsoukala, 2010, pp. 103-104) and is the result of constant change on a global level (Soulioti, 2005, p. 21). Its definition stems from its dialectical relation with something other, either conscious or unconscious (Gkotovos, 2002, p. 16) or with identity (Konstantopoulou et al., 2000, p. 11; Aravani, 2015, p. 3). Alterity is considered either internal (in the case of minorities sharing the same culture or the same country) or external (in the case of groups of

people from distant places carrying different cultures) (Rimpoli, 2006, p. 144).

In the case of the textbooks analysed, the “self” is seen in reference to Greece and Greek culture, it is perceived as the “we” and the “us” in the texts while the “other” is considered to refer to different nationalities, languages, and to religious, ethnic and cultural minorities, to people with special abilities or appearance.

### 3. Textbook Analysis

In this paper, textbook analysis has been carried out using a particular set of criteria that includes both texts and the visual images accompanying them as they are of equal importance for the teaching process (Theologou, 2017, pp. 462-463) and for the representation of alterity. Thus, qualitative and quantitative analysis has been made using the following set of criteria:

A) Qualitative:

- 1) Origin/ethnicity
- 2) Language/communication between people or students from different countries
- 3) Leisure, celebrations
- 4) Education

B) Quantitative: Number of references in

- 1) sketch
- 2) photo
- 3) word
- 4) phrase
- 5) text/literary text

The qualitative set of criteria refers to specific content elements present in the textbooks, while the quantitative set of criteria involves the numeric reference of the relevant text and image representations used in the textbooks.

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

The method used for this research is “content analysis” as it deals primarily with the content of the course books. Content analysis was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for the analysis of all text types as it poses questions which aim at a quantitative classification of the hypothesis and deals with a specific system of categories, which secure objectivity, systematisity, quantitivity and the generalization of the results (Ahllis, 1996, p. 23, p. 91; Vamvoukas, 1998, p. 264; Dimasi, 2002, pp. 60-61; Dimasi, 2012, pp. 35-36). The resulting categories of the analysis were utilized in a way which facilitated the interpretation and evaluation of textbook content.

#### 3.2 Research Hypothesis and Categorization

The hypothesis of this research is determined as follows: The textbooks used for teaching English as a foreign language in secondary compulsory education function both as tools which promote a particular image of the “other” and as determining factors in the formation of students’ perception of alterity.

Through the use of language and visual images, they introduce elements of the country in which the language is spoken and written -in this case the UK-but they also introduce elements of other cultures and languages. Since the textbooks are designated for use within the Greek educational system, they are expected to include cultural elements that refer to Greece as well. Also, it is expected that there would be reference to other countries around the world as the English language is considered a global tool for international communication, a global lingua franca (McKay, 2018, p. 9; Zhichang, 2018, p. 102). At the same time, the textbooks are expected to include reference to foreign, minority, immigrant students from the former USSR and the Balkans and to cultural elements related to their identities, as these students attend Greek schools and are part of the educational system (Note 3).

The paper aims to analyze how ethnic and cultural alterity is presented, i.e., what knowledge and facts about the “other” are portrayed in the textbooks so that conclusions can be drawn in relation to what norms and values about alterity are being communicated. How the “other”, which forms a permanent part of society in Greece, is reflected and handled in the textbooks used for teaching English as a foreign language at school.

The categories used to analyze the textbooks have been initially determined, to a certain extent, by the research hypothesis and were concluded upon by the study of the textbook material. Therefore, the process followed in the formation of the categories for the analysis is deductive. The findings were categorized in thematic areas and were presented in tables and graphs. The tables include the x axis and the y axis. The x axis is defined in terms of the cultural area studied while the y axis in terms of the type of reference encountered in the textbooks.

More specifically, the subcategories of the x axis are the following:

- a. *Origin-ethnicity*, which includes all reference to a particular national or ethnic origin including people’s names, names of countries, reference to cities or sights in different countries. Dress which reflects ethnic or cultural origin is also taken into consideration.
- b. *Languages*, which includes reference to people’s language
- c. *Leisure-celebrations-art*, which includes cultural elements such as culture-specific or country-specific religious or other festivals and the food associated with them, hobbies and habits as well as free-time activities, artistic and literary creation.
- d. *Education* includes the subjects of the curricula in different countries, students’ interests and activities at school, projects and all aspects of school life.

The subcategories of the y axis are: Sketch, Photo, Word, Phrase, Text (including literary text). *Sketch* includes those pictures in the illustration of the textbooks that are sketches and map drawings. *Photo* includes all pictures that are photographs. The *Word* subcategory includes all one-word phrases while *Phrase* includes references of two or more words. *Text* is longer than *Phrase* and includes the main texts of the units in the textbooks including literary texts, songs and poems.

A further categorization relates to the type of reference encountered in the textbooks. Reference to another culture, origin, ethnic group can be positive, neutral or negative. Positive reference accommodates for cultural inclusion and acceptance of alterity which is, thus, considered a cultural asset. Neutral reference is the unsigned “other”, the “other” without any evaluative connotations attached. Negative reference attaches a negative connotative value to the portrayal of the “other”, which is regarded as undesirable and marginalised (Cummins, 2005, p. 65).

#### 4. The Findings

The five textbooks used for teaching English in compulsory secondary education are called “Think Teen” and cater for different levels. There are two textbooks used for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, one for elementary and one for advanced level students, similarly, two for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, one for elementary and one for advanced students. For 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, the same book is used for both levels.

##### 4.1 Grade 1-Think Teen-Advanced Level

###### 4.1.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of grade one, advanced level textbook can be seen in Table 1. The textbook was studied in terms of elements that reflect alterity and relate to other cultures with the point of reference being the Greek culture.

**Table 1. “Think Teen” 1st Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Advanced**

x\y	Sketch	Photo	Word	Phrase	Text	Total
Origin, ethnicity	23	40	18	33	16	130
Language, communication	3	10	16	26	5	60
Leisure, celebrations, art	3	18	5	20	5	50
Education	34	27	3	36	17	117
TOTAL	63	95	42	115	43	

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

In terms of ethnicity and origin there are 130 references, 117 references to matters of education, 60 to language/communication and 50 to free-time activities, festivals and artistic creation as well as famous artists. The results show that the textbook includes a large number of references to different countries and their cultural elements.

#### 4.1.2 Qualitative Analysis

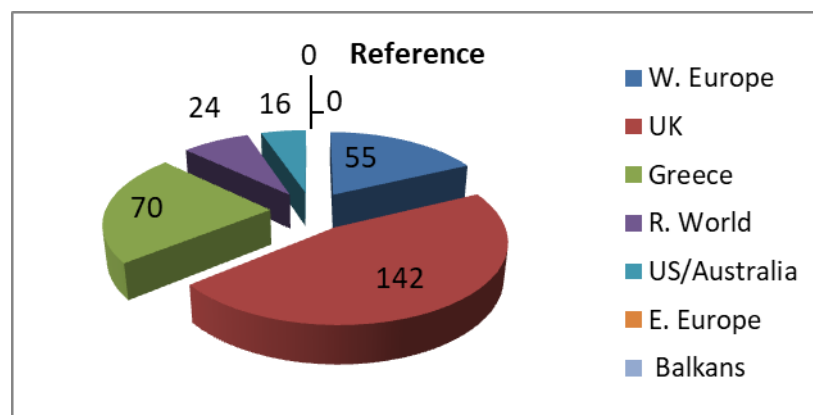
##### 4.1.2.1 Text

The vast majority of the texts (including words, phrases, and longer texts) refer to Greek children using very common Greek names such as Maria, Magda and Yiannis (p. 5, p. 49, p. 75) and to their everyday school reality and interests (p. 6). Alongside Greek children, living in metropolitan cities of the mainland such as Nafplio and Athens (p. 8, p. 59, pp. 93-94), there is an extended reference to the UK and English children (pp. 15-16, p. 27). In particular there is a whole lesson devoted to the UK (pp. 71-72) but there are also disperse references to English culture (p. 33, p. 45, p. 79, pp. 103-104), habits (p. 29, p. 35) and sights in the UK (p. 63, p. 110).

Greek children most often interact with children from the UK via mails (p. 9), common projects and activities such as magazine quizzes and school newspapers (p. 101, p. 117). Reference to Greek culture is made alongside English culture drawing conclusions on their cultural similarities and differences, regarding school timetables (p. 10, p. 17), museums (p. 64) or food (p. 29, p. 32), trips, clubs (pp. 15-16, p. 19), volunteering (pp. 89-90). Environmental issues (p. 54, pp. 83-84) and students' problems (p. 27, pp. 34-35) are presented in the form of "compare and contrast" between the two countries. Books and texts are written by English authors (pp. 20-21, p. 128).

American culture is quite present as well. The computer games mentioned are all related to mainstream American filmography (p. 37), some of the children involved in the activities are American and there is also reference to Hollywood, the Oscars, and American music awards (pp. 119-120), comic heroes (p. 43, p. 45).

Western European countries such as Italy (p. 28), France (p. 9), Germany (p. 20, p. 45, p. 127) are also frequently mentioned, mostly in relation to mail correspondence as children from Europe appear to be communicating with Greek children via e-mails (p. 9, p. 20, p. 103, p. 136). The country reference can be seen in Figure 1. where the majority of references (142) involve the UK, followed by Greece (70), although there is a significant numeric difference between them.



**Figure 1. Country Reference in Think Teen for Grade 1-Advanced Level**

As far as the rest of the world is concerned, there is scarce reference to Asian countries such as China (p. 32), Indonesia (p. 32, p. 37) -a girl, Silou, is from there- and poor villages in India (p. 14). There is little reference to South America as only Brazil is mentioned (p. 23).

Eastern European countries or to countries in the proximity of Greece are excluded, there is no reference to them. This is quite surprising if we take into consideration that the majority of students in multicultural classes in Greek schools actually come from these countries. Children from these countries are hardly present in the textbooks (Figure 1), or seen interacting with greek children in an intercultural or transnational setting, as is the case with children from western european countries or the UK. In other words, the emphasis in this book is on Greece and its culture with the UK as the significant, linguistically and culturally desired, other.

#### 4.1.2.2 Pictures

The children portrayed in the pictures (sketches and photos)-with few exceptions, such as a picture of an Indian child (p. 14), an Indonesian girl (p. 101) and another one of a Chinese child (p. 32) -are western European, mainly English and Greek (p. 1, p. 5, pp. 101-102, p. 106). There are pictures with Greek sights (pp. 96-97) and snapshots from everyday school and family life in Greece (p. 3, p. 27). UK and western European setting is predominant (p. 64, p. 74, p. 102) but there is reference to the US and Dubai (p. 56, p. 74).

#### 4.1.3 Conclusion

The “self” in the particular textbook is the student of Greek origin living in one of the urban centres in mainland Greece. The “eye” of the “I” is to the best part western European in terms of school activities, teen matters, habits and routines. What one can see in the book is Greek students interacting almost exclusively with other western European students. There is no reference to any other students that are part of the Greek educational system and the multicultural class setting, there is no reference to any other ethnic or minority group, to immigrant students. There are no instances that show social interaction with students of different cultures or ethnic origins that actually exist in Greek classes, there are no roles assigned to them and no reference to their habits, their everyday routines or to their teen reality.

**Table 2. “Think Teen” 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Advanced**

x\y	Neutral reference	Negative reference
Origin, ethnicity	130	1
Languages, communication	60	0
Education	117	2
Leisure, celebrations, art	71	0
Total	318	3

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

It is important to be noted, however, that almost all references to cultural elements of alterity is neutral as seen in Table 2. Reference to the “other” culture is not made on a discriminatory basis, students interact with each other as part of their everyday life even though they live in different countries. There is no implication of a lesser culture or ethnic group whenever these other cultures or groups are presented in the textbooks there are, however, implications of poor educational facilities in African countries.

#### 4.2 Grade 1-Think Teen-Elementary Level

##### 4.2.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of the grade one, elementary level textbook for teaching English in Greek high school can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. “Think Teen” 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Elementary**

x\y	Sketch	Photo	Word	Phrase	Text	Total
Origin, ethnicity	6	46	35	16	22	125
Languages, communication	8	6	35	38	6	93
Education	13	5	14	13	4	49
Leisure, celebrations, art	24	31	31	55	12	153
Total	51	88	115	122	44	

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

In terms of ethnicity and origin there are 125 references. There are 49 references to matters of education, 93 to languages and 153, which is the vast majority to free-time activities, celebration and art. The results show that the textbook includes a large number of references to countries other than Greece and their cultural elements.

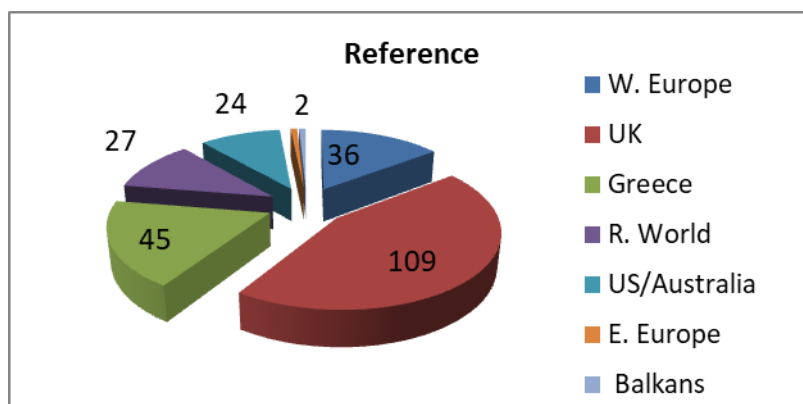
##### 4.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

###### 4.2.2.1 Text

The philosophy underlying the compilation of this book is similar to the advanced-level textbook for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The focus is either on Greek children or UK students (pp. 2-3), their everyday school activities (p. 5) and interests, such as music (p. 57) which is directly related to the UK, English songs (p. 66) and famous British rock bands such as the Beatles (p. 56). Students from western european countries send mails to UK students (p. 18, p. 46, pp. 53-54), organize common projects and activities such as recycling (p. 50), writing articles for their newspaper and surfing the net while reference to greek culture, particularly in relation to Athens, is made alongside english culture, such as english cooking (p. 35) or uniforms worn in UK schools (p. 73, p. 79). Greek students travel to London (p. 67) and visit the sights (p. 111) or write articles about natural sights in the UK (p. 88). English literary texts are part of the teaching material of the textbook (p. 14, pp. 103-105).



Reference to other English countries such as the US and Australia (p. 31) is limited (24 references) as seen in Figure 2 in comparison with the UK (109 references) and Greece (45). Renowned American films are mentioned (p. 91) and there is a text about NASA (pp. 97-98, p. 101). Western European countries, such as Italy, France (p. 27), Spain, and Portugal are the countries of origin of the students. Students from these countries appear to interact with Greek students and to organise joint activities (p. 127).



**Figure 2. Country Reference in Think Teen for Grade 1-Elementary Level**

As far as the rest of the world is concerned, there is a whole page in the book entitled “Friends from around the world” (p. 9), however, these friends are solely from western European countries such as Portugal (p. 9, p. 84), the UK and Italy. Reference to the rest of the world is limited to Israel, Egypt, Venezuela (p. 85), Argentina, the Bahamas and China (p. 12, p. 16). School uniforms are discussed in relation to Greece, the UK and other countries around the world, such as Japan, Canada, Australia (p. 80) and Indonesia. Indonesia is the non-European country that is most frequently mentioned in the textbooks. There is a case where an American and an Indonesian student communicate through e-mail with an English student (p. 57). The Indonesian student is mentioned occasionally in the textbook interacting with a Greek student (pp. 67-68, p. 109). It should be noted that it is not common for Indonesian students to attend Greek schools while students from eastern European countries or balkan countries are part of the Greek classrooms. It is clear that students of different cultural, social, ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds which inundate Greek schools are totally absent from this school textbook as well.

#### 4.2.2.2 Pictures

Pictures reflect everyday instances of teen students mainly in Greece. There are pictures showing sights and landmarks in the UK (p. 42, p. 70, p. 111) as well as famous paintings from Greek, English and western European artists (p. 45, pp. 128-131). There is also a picture of an Indonesian girl (p. 2, p. 69).

#### 4.2.3 Conclusion

The “self” in this particular textbook is the student of Greek origin living in a large Greek city such as Athens or Nafplio. Greek students are invited to interact with students from the UK with reference to Greek culture and habits either in the form of comparison or similar practice. An Indonesian student is also involved in their activities and shares their habits and culture. School issues, teen problems and habits reflect students’ lives in western Europe, such as Italy, France and Portugal, with the emphasis on Greece and the UK. Students with eastern European backgrounds or from the rest of the world are essentially non-existent.

What is more, there is no reference in the textbook to students that live in isolated agricultural communities and there are no pictures of them. The students that interact with each other live in cities and use technology and computers. They travel to the UK, particularly to London, read English books or watch American films. It could hardly be argued that the textbook favours multiculturalism or appreciates alterity, as even in the cases of the non-European students mentioned the point of reference is either english or greek culture.

Though the textbook includes references to other countries, cultures, peoples, the focus is on Greece, Greek education and culture as well as the UK, English culture and education. Students from these countries communicate, compare and contrast elements of their lives and realities. In these dialogue between the texts and the readers-writers of the texts no reference is made to expatriate students from the former USSR, immigrants from the Balkan countries, minority students (muslim, Rom), reference to their physical space or experience is absent although these students are present in Greek classrooms.

**Table 4. “Think Teen” 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Elementary**

x\y	Neutral reference	Negative reference
Origin, ethnicity	124	1
Languages, communication	93	0
Education	45	4
Leisure, celebrations, art	153	0
Total	415	5

*Note.* x: cultural elements/y: field of reference.

Almost all references are neutral as seen in Table 4, there are only three negative references and these involve poor educational facilities in African countries. Students are seen to interact with each other as part of their everyday life even though they live in different countries. There is no implication of a lesser culture or ethnic group whenever these other cultures or groups are presented in the textbooks.

### 4.3 Grade 2-Think Teen-Advanced Level

#### 4.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of the grade two, advanced level textbook can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5. “Think Teen” 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Advanced**

x\y	Sketch	Photo	Word	Phrase	Text	Total
Origin, ethnicity	44	39	17	30	28	158
Languages, communication	8	3	19	16	7	53
Education	1		4	5	1	11
Leisure, celebrations, art	18	29	15	13	11	86
TOTAL	71	71	55	64	47	

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

There are 158 references to ethnic origin, 49 references relate to matters of education, 93 to languages and 153, which is the vast majority, to free-time activities, celebrations and art. The results show that the textbook includes a large number of references to different cultural elements.

#### 4.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

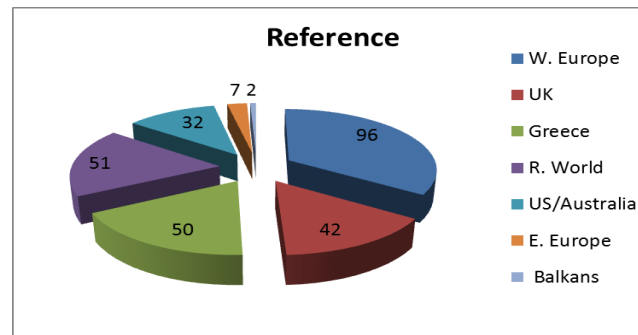
##### 4.3.2.1 Text

The 1<sup>st</sup> unit introduces students to diversity and encourages them to talk about people from different parts of the world such as China, France, Australia and Italy (pp. 9-10) and their differences in physical appearance in relation to the area of the world they live. There are two texts about a Japanese and a French student (p. 11). Also there are texts about landmarks from around the world such as Agia Sophia and Sydney Opera (pp. 20-21, p. 23). At the end of the unit there is a multicultural fair that involves people from around the world (Dubai Borneo, Brazil Mongolia, Saudi Arabia). Another unit is about ancient times so the focus is on ancient Greece, Rome and ancient Egypt (pp. 26-42).

Apart from these, all the other texts (including words, phrases, and longer texts) and their accompanying activities still involve western European students with the emphasis on the UK or Greece. Greek islands such as Crete and Skiathos (p. 44, p. 51) are frequently mentioned which marks a shift from Athens to smaller cities around Greece (p. 112). Greek students write letters or e-mails and postcards to students from the UK (p. 56, p. 141, p. 146, p. 148) and collaborate in joint ventures (p. 135). There are English journalists (p. 71), English teachers (p. 66), news sites (pp. 58-59), English theme parks (p. 53). The magazine or newspaper articles adapted for the reading comprehension activities are all from UK press such Eurosport UK (p. 59), or American press such as Reader’s Digest (p. 40, p. 77), NY Times (p. 70), People magazine (p. 124) and to a much lesser extent from greek press such as Kathimerini (p. 112). There is reference either to English or Greek literary tradition and artists such Shakespeare and Kavafis (pp. 94-98, p. 127, p. 149). The food described is English-specific,

introduced by the renowned English chef Jamie Oliver (pp. 104-105), or traditional Greek (p. 107) and even a project assigned to Australian students is about greek students' eating habits (p. 102).

Singapore and Brazil (p. 131) and school life in Finland is described in detail (p. 67) and that concludes the representation of other cultural and ethnic communities. Greek students are supposed to write e-mails to Swedish students to help them with their projects about Greece (p. 38). There is also a text about Beijing but in relation to the Olympic games which is an indirect reference to Greek culture (p. 59).



**Figure 3. Country Reference in Think Teen for Grade 2-Advanced Level**

As is seen in Figure 3 the vast majority of country reference (96 instances) involves western Europe followed by Greece (50 references) while in this textbook the UK comes third with 42 references which is a large number since the rest of the country reference involves continents or groups of countries.

#### 4.3.2.2 Pictures

As far as the pictures in the textbook are concerned, they portray elements of Greek or UK culture, mostly sights, famous people and teenagers from both countries. There are few pictures portraying people from different parts of the world. More specifically, there are pictures of Chinese, Indian and african students (pp. 9-10, pp. 12-13) but they are mostly limited to the first unit which is about diversity-apart from that there is only one picture showing an African school (p. 74). There are also pictures in the same unit showing world famous non-European landmarks (pp. 19-21), further than that only one other picture, showing a Japanese master structure, exists in the whole textbook (p. 54). The rest of the pictures in this textbook are related to western Europe, its people, landmarks and artistic creation.

#### 4.3.3 Conclusion

Thus, it is noted that the portrayal of the students in the Greek school textbooks for grade 2 advanced level remains the same as the one in the textbooks used for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The names used are Greek, for instance Markos, Lena, Myrto, Stefanos, or English ones, such as Jason and Claire from the UK respectively. Their interaction is almost exclusively carried on with their friends from the UK -there are no other European peers to do joint activities or exchange mails or children from any other part of the rest of the world either. The countries of interest are Greece as a point of reference, the UK as a

counterpart and on a marginal level Australia, China, Russia and Brazil. There is reference to eminent Greek artists, such as Elytis, Mytaras, Moralis, Kavafis and some others but with the exception of Stravinsky, there are only western European artists such as Picasso, Vivaldi, Millet, Beethoven and Shakespeare.

However, of the five textbooks used for teaching English in high school, the grade 2 advanced level Think Teen is the only one with a unit about diversity which includes reference to people and countries outside Europe and to non-european cultures and habits.

**Table 6. “Think Teen” 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Advanced**

x\y	Neutral reference	Negative reference
Origin, ethnicity	156	2
Languages, communication	53	0
Education	10	1
Leisure, celebrations, art	86	0
TOTAL	305	3

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

Almost all references to cultural elements of alterity is neutral as seen in Table 6, there are only three negative references and these involve African children that have to fetch water from the spring or that attend crowded classes with no space on their own. Reference to the other cultures is not made on a discriminatory basis. Students from different countries interact with each other as part of their everyday life, however, most communication involves greek and english students.

#### 4.4 Grade 2-Think Teen-Elementary Level

##### 4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of the grade two, elementary level textbook for teaching English in Greek high school can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7. “Think Teen” 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book Elementary**

x\y	Sketch	Photo	Word	Phrase	Text	Total
Origin, ethnicity	17	12	25	31	17	102
Languages, communication	33	5	31	25	4	98
Education	27	26	17	52	6	130
Leisure, celebrations, art	12	8	5	20	4	49
TOTAL	89	51	78	108	31	

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

Regarding ethnicity and origin, there are 102 references in this textbook. Education matters and school life have the majority of references, 130. There are 49 references to free time activities, the arts and festivals. The results show that the textbook includes a large number of references to countries other than Greece and their cultural elements.

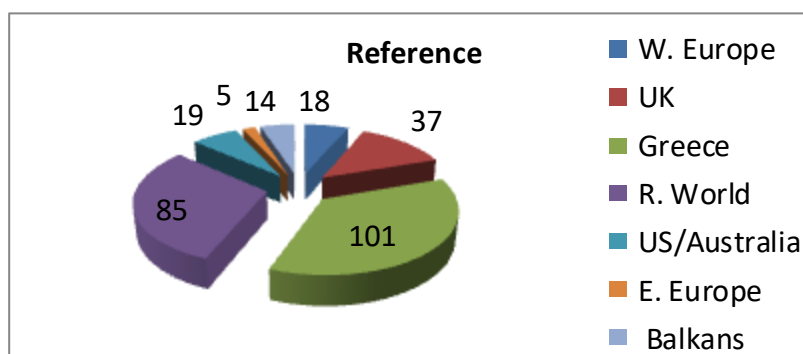
#### 4.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

##### 4.4.2.1 Text

Reference to the “outside”, non-european world is more evident in this book. The texts (including words, phrases, and longer texts) tackle with general interest topics and encyclopedic issues such as important historical figures (Unit 2, p. 13), technology (Unit 2, p. 25), the environment and pollution (Unit 6, p. 61), magnetism (Unit 7, p. 73), fashion (Unit 9, p. 97).

Interaction between Greek students and their UK peers is much more limited and there are fewer joint activities than in the previously mentioned textbooks. The names used are Eleni, Angelos, Gerasimos, Thanassis (p. 53) for the greek students and Clark, Andy, Donna (p. 57) for the students from the UK. Greek students send postcards to each other, for example Gerasimos to Maria (p. 53) and UK students send postcards to each other, for instance Erica to Donna (p. 57). In some cases, Greek students send mails to teens from other places in the world such as Africa (p. 9, p. 33).

The point of reference is Athens in Greece, explicitly or implicitly, as there is reference to the Acropolis and the Benaki museum in Athens (p. 57, p. 106), and the Tower London in the UK (p. 53).



**Figure 4. Country Reference in Think Teen for Grade 2-Elementary Level**

Greece is mentioned more than any other country as seen in Figure 4. There are 101 references to Greece and 37 references to the UK. Western Europe, the US and Australia are frequently mentioned in the textbook while the Balkans, which are the neighbouring countries of Greece, have only 14 references in the textbook. It is quite notable, however, that there are more references (85) to countries from around the world in this textbook than in any of the other four textbooks used for teaching English in high school (Figures 1, 2 and 3).

#### 4.4.2.2 Pictures

The first unit of the book includes representations of Asian, Indian and African students and snapshots of their everyday lives as well as life in the Amazon (p. 1, p. 3, pp. 9-10, pp. 12-13). These representations are limited to the first unit which is about diversity. Apart from that there are pictures showing an African school (p. 74), lack of transport in African countries (pp. 85-86, p. 94) and a girl's non-European attire (p. 46). An image of a muslim girl (p. 43) is the only reference made to a different religion and it is encountered solely in this textbook. There is picture of Easter Island (p. 118) and of a Japanese master structure (p. 54). The rest of the pictures in this textbook are related to western Europe -there is the map of central London (p. 55), its people and history (p. 18, p. 58), such as Stonehenge and the Acropolis (p. 59), scientific advancements and artistic creation (p. 14, p. 52, p. 76, p. 104).

#### 4.4.3. Conclusion

Grade 2 Think Teen elementary textbook includes reference to people and countries that are not confined to Europe. The rest of the world seems the main point of discussion in reading comprehension questions and writing activities. There is reference to African and Asian students, their spaces and realities.

**Table 8. "Think Teen" 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student's Book Elementary**

x\y	Neutral reference	Negative reference
Origin, ethnicity	102	0
Languages	98	0
Education	128	2
Leisure, celebrations, art	47	2
TOTAL	375	4

*Note.* x: cultural elements/y: field of reference.

Almost all references to different cultures are neutral, as seen in Table 8, however, reference to African countries, has negative connotations in the textbooks as it focuses on their poverty, hardships that relate to poverty (p. 74) and their lack of technological advancement (p. 33).

#### 4.5 Grade 3-Think Teen

##### 4.5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of the grade three textbook can be seen in Table 9.

**Table 9. “Think Teen” 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book**

x\y	Sketch	Photo	Word	Phrase	Text	Total
Origin, ethnicity	14	39	13	5	9	80
Languages, communication		34		3	16	71
Education	26	2		21	8	57
Leisure, celebrations, art	10	4	3	14		31
TOTAL	50	79	16	43	33	

*Note.* x: cultural elements of alterity/y: field of reference.

There are 80 references to ethnic origin, 57 to education and school life and 31 to leisure and art. The results show that the textbook includes a large number of references to countries other than Greece and their cultural elements.

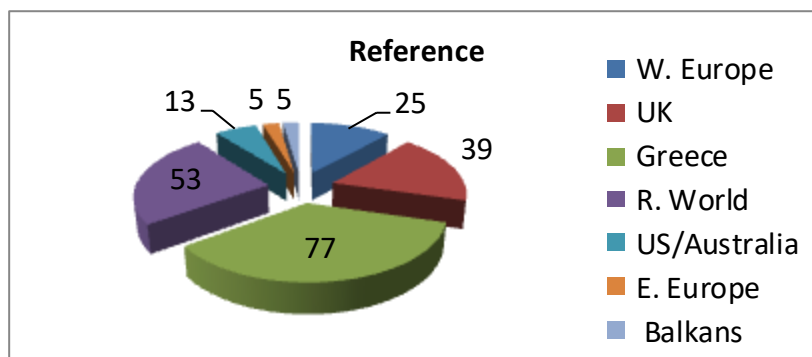
#### 4.5.2 Qualitative Analysis

##### 4.5.2.1 Text

The same book is used in the 3rd grade for both elementary and advanced level students. Regarding the general philosophy underlying its texts (including words, phrases, and longer texts), it does not deviate from that of the rest of the series and it is mainly centered around western-European culture, which in this case pertains to everyday routines particularly in reference to Greece, its food and customs (pp. 61-62) and history (p. 51, pp. 57-58) and myths (p. 53). The students are called George, Anna, Emily and Simon, which are either Greek or English names and there is less reference to the UK (p. 29, p. 40, p. 63, p. 67) and London (p. 93) than in the previously-mentioned textbooks. Other countries from around the world, such as Japan, China, India, Iceland (p. 69, p. 100), are used as instances of students’ knowledge of the world. American culture is centered around Hollywood stars, famous singers and athletes (pp. 14-16). Artistic creation is western European (pp. 85-86, p. 91) and literature is English (p. 19).

There is reference to Bulgaria which is the only country in the proximity of Greece and the only eastern-european country mentioned in all the five textbooks and a comparison between the two countries. Other than these, there are few activities involving students from different countries, very sparse communication between them and very little interaction.





**Figure 5. Country reference in Think Teen for Grade 3**

Greece is mentioned more than any other country as seen in Figure 5. There are 77 references to Greece and 39 references to the UK. Western Europe, the US and Australia are frequently mentioned in the textbook while the Balkans have only 5 references in the textbook. As far as the rest of the world is concerned there are only 53 to non-European countries.

#### 4.5.2.2 Pictures

The pictures in the textbook show landmarks in European capitals (pp. 2-3, p. 9) or Greek and English customs (pp. 61-63, pp. 68-69). There are also pictures related to India (p. 49, p. 69, p. 80) and Iran (p. 90). There are Greek archaeological artefacts (pp. 50-51, p. 57, p. 58), mythical figures from around the world (pp. 50-51) and exhibits from roman antiquity (p. 13, pp. 49-50) and Egyptian antiquity (p. 51, pp. 76-77). All pictures of famous paintings belong to European artists (pp. 66-67, p. 76, pp. 85-86, p. 91) and display instances of life in Europe.

#### 4.5.3 Conclusion

Similarly, this book falls short in the area of portraying and dealing with the multicultural reality of Greek schools and students of different backgrounds are left excluded from the aspects of the everyday reality mentioned in the book.

It is interesting to see that the idea of the world and of issues of the world in these books has as a starting point Greek students and the formal instruction they receive at school -the textbooks make cross-thematic reference to other school subjects they are taught in class such as literature and arts- and furthers on to reach out to students in the UK and their everyday school routine. What it is evident is that students in Greece share almost the same teen problems, activities and interests with students in the UK. At the same time Greek culture is seen mainly side by side with the UK (for instance we have Greek drama and Elizabethan drama). In this almost parallel juxtaposition of the two countries, their schools and realities, there are instances of similar realities from students and countries of Western Europe, France, Italy, Spain and Germany.

Most countries of the European Union are not included, there is scarce reference to the Scandinavian countries and no reference to countries from the former USSR which are currently EU members or to the Balkans. What is more, with the exception of China, reference to the rest of the world is made

almost exclusively in relation to english-speaking countries such as Australia and the US.

The classroom in formal education portrayed in the books is definitely not multicultural. There are no immigrant, minority, or other ethnic group students and no students with special abilities. There are no values, habits, issues that pertain to such groups of students which are an integral part of formal education (Note 4). There is no national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, social diversity apparent in the textbooks.

**Table 10. “Think Teen” 3rd Grade of Junior High School Student’s Book**

x\y	Neutral reference	Negative reference
Origin, ethnicity	78	2
Languages	70	0
Education	55	2
Leisure, celebrations, art	29	2
TOTAL	231	6

*Note.* x: cultural elements/y: field of reference.

Almost all references to cultural elements is neutral as seen in Table 10, there are only six negative references that relate to difficult everyday living conditions and homelessness in Asian countries like India.

## 5. Conclusion

The five textbooks used for teaching English in advanced and elementary levels in all three grades of high school do not value diversity. Although specific representations of the “other” exist, they do not include a multicultural or intercultural perspective. Cultural diversity is a reality in the school environment in Greece as many classes in Greek schools include students of other nationalities/ethnic origins and/or cultural background, language, religion. There are, also, minority and immigrant students. Reference to these “other” students and their corresponding culture is non-existent in the textbooks for teaching English. Greek culture seems to be the starting point—no minority, ethnic, national or any other cultural or social groups occupy significant amount of textbook space.

It seems that the teaching and learning situation created in the Greek foreign language classroom does not foster intercultural encounters. English in the textbooks is mostly used by UK and Greek students to communicate with each other. Europe is limited to western Europe, as east european countries are altogether absent. Interaction with the UK is predominant, other English-speaking countries such as the US and Australia are included but to a much lesser extent. The “self” does not include any of the following: immigrants from eastern European countries, cultural, ethnic minorities such as Rom or religious minorities. There is no portrayal of cultural plurality which could foster dialogue, appreciation

and acceptance of the “other”. The desired cultural-linguistic other is UK specific, it is a positive and desired image of the “other” but that means inadequate handling of issues of alterity and an apparent tendency towards the familiar culture, the western European. Experiencing a foreign culture entails crossing cultural and national boundaries (Brahim, 2011, p. 10), however, confinement within the binary Greek-English speech or discourse community does not allow such crossing.

Cultural diversity is a reality to be developed in the school environment, because cultural plurality means more than pleading for differences; it also means cultural dialogue, which shows that everyone must contribute to the development of human experience transforming a linguistic legitimacy and competence into a cultural one. The findings seem to corroborate Byram (1989, p. 26) who remarks that “otherness within our national geographical boundaries on the other hand requires a re-definition of national identity which can be painful and may therefore be ignored for as long as possible”.

Managing alterity in a particular society, in this case the Greek society, is inextricably linked to recognizing and becoming informative aware of alterity at school and that presupposes an educational process (Papadopoulou, 2000, p. 122). It is, thus, necessary to educate students to develop intercultural skills and enable them to adopt an open-minded attitude and active respect towards all instances of diversity, including cultural, ethnic, social or physical. Such education would serve as a tool towards eliminating prejudice and discriminatory behavior towards the “others” including minorities, which are, in some cases, viewed as a compromise to social cohesion (Konstantopoulou et al., 2002, p. 56). Allowing students to be aware of the existence of other viewpoints would entail different approaches to the “other”, and different interpretations of the “other’s” discourse.

Studying these textbooks and their representations of alterity contributes to the scientific dialogue towards content decision-making and the need to constantly reassess their role and their use. It can be argued that the portrayal of the “other” and of the “self” in the textbooks actually reflect social attitudes towards alterity which channel policy making decisions. Revisiting and revising this portrayal can help prevent and manage intolerant behavior towards diversity. They will, then, become tools of expression, reflection and a means at the service of language learning and communication.

According to the Unified Curriculum for Foreign Languages (EPS-XG) for compulsory education (2011, pp. 7-9, pp. 15-16) (Note 5), teaching and learning the English language will contribute substantially to shaping a multicultural conscience, which accepts and respects the different, and to an informed awareness of the “other”. Students are supposed to: 1) Recognize cultural particularities as well as the many dimensions of world culture in terms of human activity and expression, 2) To understand social behaviour different from theirs but equal and of the same value, 3) To know, comprehend and respect the culture of other people and regard it as something which enriches their psychological and mental abilities and contributes to the development of human experience. It is necessary, therefore, to have “a pedagogy that functions as a systematic apprenticeship of difference” (Kramsch, 2001, p. 235).

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## Notes

Note 1. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/other-others-the-other-or-another>

Note 2. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alterity>

Note 3. In 2015, 10.6% of the 15-year-old students at Greek schools were foreign, immigrant students and there were 150 minority schools in operation in the same year. <https://www.dikaiologitika.gr/eidhseis/paideia/100268/pano-apo-to-10-ton-mathiton-sta-ellinika-sxolei-a-einai-metanastes> Similarly, the Hellenic Statistical Authority has documented a large number of foreign and repatriated students until the school year 2010-2011. <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SED13/->

Note 4. For instance, of the 39250 students in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace 8836 are, according the general category they are classified in, “of different language”, that is students from the former USSR, Muslims and rom. Source: prefecture of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 2001-2012 <http://amaked-thrak.pde.sch.gr/index.php/2013-06-24-13-41-40/meionotika-sxoleia-amth>

Note 5. The EPS-XG is issued by the Greek ministry of education and is distributed to schools. Foreign language teachers are supposed to adapt their teaching to the mandates of the EPS-XG.