Analysing Cultural Elements in L2 Mandarin Textbooks for Malaysian Learners

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Culture is an important aspect of foreign or second language education as the teaching of foreign languages straddles two languages, the learner's first language and the target/foreign language, and the different cultures associated with them. Textbooks for the teaching of foreign languages must inevitably orient to cultural elements from at least two cultural practices and environments. In this study, cultural elements in four Mandarin as a second language textbooks written for Malaysian learners were examined using content analysis. Cultural elements and categorisations of types of culture were employed to investigate the extent to which cultural elements (knowledge-culture or communicative-culture) and types of culture (source, target, international cultures, or intercultural interaction) were represented in these textbooks. The study revealed that both knowledge-culture and communicative-culture were present in the sampled textbooks. Communicative-culture was found to be explicitly represented in the textbooks. For knowledge-culture, however, there was an imbalance in the representation of the Big 'C' and small 'c' elements. Further, the sampled textbooks placed more emphasis on target culture, and feature localisation rather than internationalisation. Regarding diversity, there was only a slight representation of learners' diverse cultural backgrounds. The findings of the study provide insight into how cultural elements are incorporated into L2 Mandarin textbooks for Malaysian learners and may contribute to wider issues concerning the use of appropriate learning materials for developing cultural competence for L2 learners in a multicultural context.

Keywords: cultural elements, types of culture, Mandarin textbook, teaching Mandarin as a second language, multicultural context, materials development, applied linguistics

Introduction

Culture has become an important aspect of foreign/second language (FL/L2) instruction (Brown, 2000). Culture cannot simply be regarded as an 'expandable' fifth skill tacked on to the teaching of listening, speaking, writing, and reading (Kramsch, 1993). Instead, if language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the core of language teaching to the extent that cultural awareness needs to be considered for enabling language proficiency (Kramsch, 1993, p. 8). As described by Baker (2011, p. 65), cultural awareness is "a conscious understanding of the role culture plays in language learning and communication (in both a first and foreign language)". Besides that, teaching about culture can "enhance students' overall language learning experience" (Vernier et al., 2008, p. 268). It is necessary for learners to foster what Kumaravadivelu (2008) calls global cultural consciousness through which learners learn to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. FL teachers, therefore, need to pay attention to how culture is presented and imparted to learners in language classes.

The importance of culture in L2 teaching has also been acknowledged in Chinese as a foreign or second language teaching (TCFL or TCSL). As stated by Hanban (2014, p. 5) in the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education report, the overall goal of TCSL is to equip learners with comprehensive language skills. Comprehensive language skills consist of four components: linguistic knowledge, linguistic skills, strategies, and cultural competence. Cultural competence covers cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, intercultural competence, and international perspectives. Cultural competence is seen to be an essential factor for enabling

learners to use Chinese language more appropriately. This overall goal of TCSL stresses the significant role of culture in teaching and learning Chinese as a second language.

Textbooks in FL education, as Cortazzi and Jin (1999) assert, play the role of a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a restrictor, and an ideology. Without a textbook, it is difficult for teachers to teach systematically (Ajideh & Panahi, 2016). Further, the textbook is an important input resource for learners to learn language and the cultural aspects of language use. In light of the importance of culture in FL instruction, there is a necessity to pay close attention to how culture is integrated in teaching materials such as textbooks.

Malaysia is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country that consists of Malays, Chinese, and Indians as the major ethnic groups, as well as the Dayaks (in the Borneo states) and various other minority groups. The Chinese language, or Mandarin, has been taught and learned as a second language since the 1960s in the country (Hoe, 2014a). All of the 20 Malaysian public universities offer Mandarin as a second language (L2 Mandarin) course for students (Hoe, 2014a; Ye, 2011). Based on statistics from 2011, there were 21,693 students enrolled in L2 Mandarin courses in each semester in Malaysian public universities (Hoe, 2014b, as cited in Chan et al., 2018, p. 67). However, there is no uniform teaching syllabus, assessment standard, or textbooks for the courses (Pan, 2011, as cited in Hoe, 2014a, p. 102). In Malaysian public universities, 63.2% of L2 Mandarin courses utilise textbooks that are written by Malaysian authors (Hoe, 2014a). The local L2 Mandarin textbooks are designed based on the authors' own teaching experience or adapted based on existing textbooks from China and Malaysia (Hoe, 2014a).

With regard to the local L2 Mandarin textbooks, most of the books focus mainly on developing learners' linguistic skills (Chan et al., 2018). Studies have shown that a range of locally grounded words and expressions were found in the textbooks, for example, 'Ma liu jia马六甲 (Melaka)', 'Yin du miao印度庙 (Hindu temple)', 'Basha巴刹 (market)', 'Ling ji令吉 (RM)', and 'Chong liang冲凉 (take a shower)' (Lam & Hoe, 2013; Yang, 2019; Ye & Wu, 2010). However, the majority of the textbooks still lack the integration of cultural information (Chan et al., 2018; Hoe, 2016, as cited in Chan et al., 2018). Cultural elements in past studies have been shown to be reflected mainly in illustrations (Ye & Wu, 2010) and lexis (Yang, 2019; Ye & Wu, 2010), while not much information can be found on the infusion of cultural elements in texts such as dialogues. Cultural elements in textbooks can be considered resources for cultural awareness-raising and reflection among FL learners (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). Among past works on cultural elements in FL learning materials, Chan et al.'s (2018) study appears to be the only one that has attempted to give detailed information on the integration of cultural elements related to the culture of the target language and intercultural elements in textbooks. The authors conclude that there is a need for more cultural and intercultural elements to be integrated into local L2 Mandarin textbooks. However, as in all of the previous studies conducted on culture in L2 Mandarin textbooks, attention on cultural elements in the learners' own culture and international culture appear to be lacking. In the unique multicultural and multi-ethnic context of Malaysia, language learners' cultural backgrounds are not monolithic and including references to the learners' cultures poses a huge challenge for textbook writers. In Chan et al.'s (2018) study, the multicultural character of learners' in Malaysia's culturally diverse context was not addressed.

The past studies discussed above have shed some light on cultural elements that are integrated into local L2 Mandarin textbooks and highlighted the limitations of some textbooks in their role to foster intercultural understanding. However, insufficient attention and discussion has been paid to identifying cultural elements in textbooks that represent a diversity of learners' cultural backgrounds. The present study sought to contribute to a better understanding of cultural representations in L2 textbooks written for learners in multicultural societies. L2 Mandarin textbooks written for Malaysian learners provide the opportunity to discover how the incorporation of cultural elements of culturally diverse learners has been addressed by textbook writers.

Theoretical Perspectives

This section describes the theoretical perspectives that inform the study, including cultural elements in FL/L2 teaching, cultural elements in TCSL, and types of culture in FL/L2 textbooks.

The term 'second language' (SL/L2) has been increasingly used for all kinds of non-native language learning in recent decades (Stern, 1983). The ordinal 'second' refers to 'the chronology of language learning' and can be

"any language acquired (or to be acquired) later than the native language" (Stern, 1983, p. 12). In the present study, Mandarin is learned as an 'L2' by speakers whose first language is not Mandarin in the Malaysian context.

Cultural Elements in FL/L2 Teaching

Various frameworks have been put forward for examining cultural elements in FL/L2 teaching. Prominent among them are the Big 'C' and small 'c' conceptions of culture. Chastain (1988), Paige et al. (1999), Pulverness (1995), and Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), conceptualised culture as having two aspects, which are Culture with a Big 'C' (or Capital 'C') and culture with a small 'c' (as cited in Dehbozorgi et al., 2014). Big 'C' Culture refers to a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, geography, history, education, customs, and festivals of a target language society (Lee, 2009). These are obvious to language learners. Small 'c' culture refers to the invisible and hidden aspects of a target language culture, that is, the mainstream sociocultural values, beliefs, and norms (Lee, 2009). The framework of Big 'C' and small 'c' cultures has been emphasised in the teaching of foreign language curriculum in Europe and North America (Chan et al., 2018).

Cultural Elements in TCSL

Scholars have highlighted the importance of teaching cultural awareness in TCSL (see for example Chen, 1992, 1997; Li, 2015; Liu, 2014; Liu, 2018; Zhang, 1990). Two kinds of cultural elements are said to comprise culture: knowledge-culture and communicative-culture (Zhang, 1990).

Zhang (1990) classifies culture into knowledge-culture and communicative-culture from the functional perspective of culture in FL teaching. Knowledge-culture (Kc) refers to cultural background knowledge, which does not affect the understanding and use of certain words or sentences when two people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other (Zhang, 1990). It contains knowledge of the literature and art, movies, music, beliefs and values, history, and geography of a particular country. Communicative-culture (Cc) refers to the cultural knowledge that directly influences the accuracy and effectiveness of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds (Zhang, 1990). Lack of the cultural knowledge associated with certain words, sentences, or non-verbal behaviour may result in misunderstandings (Zhang, 1990). For instance, in Chinese names, the surname precedes the given name. L2 Chinese learners may confuse the given names and surnames of Chinese people if they do not know the order of Chinese names.

Furthermore, Chen (1992, 1997) divides communicative-culture into three aspects: cultural elements in language structure (yu gou语构), semantics (yu yi语义), and pragmatics (yu yong语用). Cultural elements in language structure (Cc-i) are embodied in the structure of vocabulary, phrases, and sentences, and reflects cultural characteristics through grammatical structure (Chen, 1992). For instance, Chinese people show respect for their ancestors by giving precedence to the surname. In the structure of Chinese appellation, the phrase 'Li xiao jie李小姐 (Miss Li)' (Chan et al., 2018) puts the surname 'Li 李' first, contrary to English and Malay language structure in which the title 'Miss' appears before the surname.

Cultural elements in semantics (Cc-ii) are contained in lexis and idioms (Chen, 1997). They carry the unique meanings, concepts, and thoughts of the Chinese people (Chan et al., 2018; Chen, 1992, 1997). For example, the word 'Xin fang 新房' means new house, but can also mean wedding house in the context of getting married in China (Chen, 1997). The cultural elements in semantics may cause misunderstandings in communication if learners do not learn the cultural meaning of the lexis and idioms (Chen, 1997).

Cultural elements in pragmatics (Cc-iii) refer to the cultural norms or conventions in language use in a social context and in interpersonal relationships (Chen, 1992, 1997). They are embodied in the speech acts of greeting, leave-taking, praise, apology, appreciation, honorifics, and taboos in communication (Chan et al., 2018; Chen, 1992, 1997). For instance, 'Shang nar?上哪儿？' or 'Nar qu? 哪儿去？' (Where are you going?) is normally used in greetings among people familiar with each other; 'Zai jian再见' (goodbye) can be replaced with 'Man zou慢走' (walk slowly) and 'Lu shang dang xin路上当心' (take care) in leave taking to show care to visitors.

The framework recommended by Chen (1992) and Zhang (1990) is concerned with cultural elements in communication. Knowledge-culture emphasises the cultural knowledge at the non-linguistic level such as the arts (Zhao, 1989, as cited in Zhang, 1990, p.17). Communicative-culture emphasises accuracy in the use of words or sentences when exchanging information. Both knowledge-culture and communicative-culture are important in communication.

Figure 1
Cultural Elements in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign/Second Language
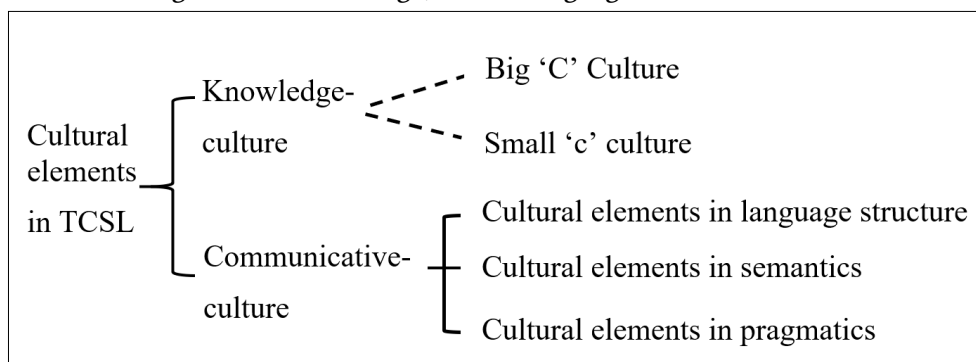
Note. The dotted line in the figure means 'subsumes'.

Based on the description above, it is clear that both Big 'C' and small 'c' elements are aspects of knowledge culture (Chan et al., 2018). Figure 1 shows these relationships.

Types of Culture in FL/L2 Textbooks

As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) explained, three basic types of cultural information can be included in textbooks. They are information related to the source culture, target culture, and international culture. Source culture (SC) refers to the learners' own culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). It is commonly regarded as equivalent to national culture (Byram, 1997; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). What is worth noting is that most nations nowadays contain different cultural groups within their boundaries, for instance, the United States, the U.K., Japan, and Malaysia. A source culture, therefore, may contain cultures of different cultural groups in different contexts. Target culture (TC) refers to the culture in which the target language is used as a first language (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). International culture (IC) refers to cultures that are neither a source culture nor a target culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). For example, there may be diverse cultures set in English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, where English is not a first or second language but is used as an international language. Another example of international culture is when textbooks in Malaysia have a topic such as 'travelling' to Japan and Thailand for English lessons. With reference to L2 Mandarin learners in Malaysia, source culture involves information that is based on Malaysian society and culture, covering the cultures of the diverse ethnic groups in the country; target culture involves information that is based on Malaysian-Chinese culture and Chinese culture of people in China, and international culture involves information that is based on the cultures of other countries apart from Malaysian culture and the Chinese culture of China.

Based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) work, Chao (2011) developed five categories for cultural information: source/local culture, target culture, international culture, intercultural interaction, and universality across culture. Intercultural interaction (ICI) refers to the comparison, reflection, or awareness of the similarities and differences between the source/local and the international or target culture through activities (Chao, 2011). These activities relate to problem-solving, case studies, and role play to help learners "develop knowledge, positive attitude, skills and awareness in intercultural communication" (Chao, 2011, p. 197). Universality across culture (UC) refers to general knowledge or content that is not specific to any particular country or culture. It is similar to the culturally neutral notion proposed by Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014). For instance, food can be considered a cultural theme; however, a food-related dialogue in a language textbook can be presented in such a way that it does not represent the cultural information of a source culture, target culture, or any other particular culture. Both Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Chao's (2011) frameworks on cultural information in textbooks provide a useful lens for examining cultural elements in textbooks with a focus on what is helpful for learners' intercultural communication. The present study is informed by these frameworks on types of culture.

A textbook that reflects different cultures has different perceived benefits (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). A textbook based on source culture can help learners talk to visitors and directly reinforce their own identity. A textbook based on target culture can help learners talk to visitors, be a visitor, develop knowledge and awareness of other cultures, as well as indirectly reinforce their own identity. Textbooks based on international culture can help learners talk to others, develop knowledge, awareness and skills of other cultures, and intercultural skills, as well as indirectly reinforce their own identity (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Thus, the importance of cultural

information in textbooks cannot be denied since textbooks determine what benefits learners can obtain to a certain extent.

Purpose of the Study

The present study aimed to examine cultures as represented by cultural elements depicted in L2 Mandarin textbooks for Malaysian learners that were written by local authors in Malaysia. It sought to answer the following questions: (1) What cultural elements (knowledge-culture or communicative-culture) and types of culture (source, target, international cultures or intercultural interaction) are present in the selected textbooks? and (2) To what extent are these categories of cultural elements and types of culture represented in the textbooks? Content analysis using a framework combining the categories of cultural elements (Chen, 1992; Zhang, 1990), classification of Big 'C' and small 'c' (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Pulverness, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993), and types of culture (Chao, 2011; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) was carried out to identify and describe the distribution of cultural elements in the textbook samples.

Methodology

Content Analysis

Content analysis as a research method "that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber, 1990, p. 117) is one of the most frequently used methods for analysing cultural content in FL textbooks (Sándorová, 2014). In the present study, content analysis was used to interpret and identify the cultural elements depicted in the textbooks. First, categories of cultural elements and types of culture were obtained from past related works and combined into an analytical framework. The categories of culture were then identified in the data, and frequencies and percentages were presented to illustrate the distribution of each category found in the data set. In the present study, qualitative content analysis, which is usually referred to as "latent level analysis because it concerns a second-level, interpretative analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 246), was used to identify the meanings of the text in the context of their use and link them to concepts of culture.

Sample

Four L2 Mandarin textbooks were purposively sampled for this study. The textbooks were all written by local authors and published in Malaysia. They are popular Mandarin textbooks currently in use at the university-level in Malaysia. Gateway to Mandarin Chinese 1 华语入门1 coded as TM1, was published by Xueer Publisher in 2015. Bahasa Mandarin (1) 华语1 coded as TM2, was published by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan Press in 2017. Mandarin for All (1) 华语1 coded as TM3, was published by Universiti Malaysia Pahang Publisher in 2018. Kick-start Mandarin Book 1一起来学华语1 coded as TM4, was published by UNIMAS Publisher in 2018. The textbooks were written for non-native speakers from different ethnic groups in Malaysia, namely the Malays, Indians, Iban, Kadazan, and various other minority ethnic groups. The target users are learners who do not know Mandarin and have no foundation knowledge of it. All the textbooks are currently being used in Malaysian public universities.

Defining the Categories

A categorisation scheme was created based on the works of several researchers. To examine the cultural elements in textbooks, the notions of knowledge-culture and communicative-culture (Chen, 1992; Zhang, 1990), as well as Big 'C' and small 'c' cultures (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Pulverness, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993) were used (see Table 1).

Table 1
Cultural Elements in Textbooks

Categories/Code	Sub-categories	Explanation	Themes or Examples
Knowledge-culture (Kc) (Zhang, 1990)	Big 'C' Culture (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Pulverness, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993)	A set of facts and statistics of a target speech society	Arts, literature, geography, history, education, religions, social customs, festivals, music, food, architecture, etc.
	Small 'c' culture (Lee, 2009; Paige et al., 1999; Pulverness, 1995; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993)	The invisible and hidden aspects of a target speech society	Social values, beliefs, and norms
Communicative-culture (Cc) (Chen, 1992; Zhang, 1990)	Cultural elements in language structure (Cc-i)	Cultural elements that are embodied in the structure of vocabulary, phrases and sentences	Forms of names, dates, and times, greetings in Chinese
	Cultural elements in semantics (Cc-ii)	Cultural elements that are contained in lexis and idioms	Family kinship titles in Chinese
	Culture elements in pragmatics (Cc-iii)	Cultural norms or conventions in language used in the social context and interpersonal relationships	Linguistic taboos of a particular country

To explore the selection of different types of culture and intercultural aspects presented in the textbooks, Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Chao's (2011) frameworks of source culture, target culture, international culture, and intercultural interaction were used (see Table 2).

Table 2
Types of Culture in Textbooks

Categories/Code (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Chao, 2011)	Explanation
Source Culture (SC)	It refers to the information related to Malaysian society, covering the cultures of different ethnic groups.
Target Culture (TC)	It refers to Malaysian-Chinese culture and Chinese culture of China.
International Culture (IC)	It refers to cultures that are neither a source culture nor a target culture. In this study, it consists of all cultures except for Malaysian culture and the Chinese culture of China.
Intercultural Interaction (ICI)	It refers to comparisons, reflections, or awareness of the similarities and differences between the source/local and the international/target culture.

Detailed explanations and examples of the categories are described in the theoretical perspective section of this paper.

Coding Procedure

It is necessary to establish the units before starting coding (Cohen et al., 2007). A unit in content analysis may contain sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text, as well as people or themes (Sándorová, 2014). The units for data analysis in this study consisted of two parts: (1) each unique theme in each textbook was counted as one unit and (2) the introduction and appendix sections in each textbook were counted as one unit as a whole. Thus, the total units for the study were 38 units, including 35 themes and three sections of introductions and appendices in four textbooks.

As observed by Adaskou et al. (1990, p. 5), "Almost everything in a language course is capable of carrying a cultural load of some sort." Thus, guided by the research questions, the following elements were given attention in the analysis: illustrations, lexis, idioms and sentences in dialogues (or reading passages), descriptive text material (or notes), and contextual practice. Based on the categories (see Tables 1 and 2), the content related to cultural elements and types of culture in the four sampled textbooks was coded using the Atlas.ti software. Atlas.ti is suitable for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis because of its utility in facilitating analysis of images, text, video, and audio data, creating co-occurrence trees, as well as calculating the frequency. After finishing the coding, the frequencies of cultural elements and types of culture in the textbooks were then

exported from Atlas.ti. Following the quantitative analysis, the details of cultural representation were then interpreted qualitatively highlighting specific examples from the texts.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a qualitative research study is important in evaluating its worth. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Trustworthiness is warranted based on the accurate reporting on the stability of the data, how the data are collected, the reliability of the analysis, and how the findings represent the range of realities (see Elo et al., 2014). These principles are adhered to in the study.

Credibility
The sample has been adequately described. In the present study, the sample comprises a collection of four textbooks. The books were selected based on explicit criteria: that they were L2 Mandarin textbooks written for Malaysian learners by Malaysian writers and were currently being used for elementary learners in Malaysian public universities. The learners in the universities comprise students of various ethnicities.

Dependability
The sample, being print materials, are stable over time, and available for scrutiny by other researchers. The titles and publishers of the books are provided to enable future researchers to reanalyse the data.

Conformability
The categorisation matrix was developed after the careful examination of published works on cultural elements in L2 Mandarin textbooks to ensure they are appropriate for a detailed identification of cultural representation in textbooks. The coding process was conducted by the first researcher. Ten percent of the data were re-coded by two postgraduate students after training. One of the coders was a Malaysian who was familiar with Malaysian cultural elements. The percentage of agreement between coders was found to be more than 90% among the three coders. For each category of culture identified, examples were drawn from the textbooks to illustrate their meanings in context.

Transferability
Transferability parallels external validity (Bryman, 2008), which shows that the findings have applicability in other similar contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). While most qualitative studies are not generalisable in the statistical sense, the findings may serve as a useful reference for similar future studies on other samples of L2 Mandarin textbooks for Malaysian learners, and possibly textbooks for multicultural learners in other contexts.

Results

The results related to the two research questions are presented in this section.

Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in Textbooks

The two aspects of culture were examined in the four L2 Mandarin textbooks that were coded TM1, TM2, TM3, and TM4. The four textbooks were all designed for one semester of an L2 Mandarin course. There was a total of 38 units in the four textbooks, which contained different themes such as self-introductions, family, occupations, and daily expressions. From the analysis of all 38 units across the four textbooks (see appendix for complete proofs), the results are presented in Table 3.

For cultural elements, knowledge-culture, which does not directly influence the accuracy of communication between people from different backgrounds, is explicitly presented in all four textbooks (see Table 3). It is identified in almost all of the units of TM1, TM2, and TM4, but is relatively lower in TM3. Additionally, Big 'C' culture is dominant in all four textbooks while small 'c' culture is limited. Likewise, communicative-culture is also reflected in all four textbooks. Cultural elements in language structure (Cc-i), semantics (Cc-ii), and pragmatics (Cc-iii) are all embodied in TM1, TM2, TM3, and TM4 to different extents.

Table 3

Percentage of Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in Sampled Textbooks

Sample	Total units	Cultural elements					Type of culture			
		Kc (%)		Cc (%)			SC (%)	TC (%)	IC (%)	ICI (%)
		Big 'C'	Small 'c'	Cc-i	Cc-ii	Cc-iii				
TM1	7	100 (7/7)	0 (0/7)	71.43 (5/7)	14.29 (1/7)	28.57 (2/7)	100 (7/7)	100 (7/7)	0 (0/7)	0 (0/7)
TM2	11	100 (11/11)	9.01 (1/11)	45.45 (5/11)	18.18 (2/11)	27.27 (3/11)	90.91 (10/11)	81.82 (9/11)	9.01 (1/11)	0 (0/11)
TM3	10	80 (8/10)	0 (0/10)	50 (5/10)	20 (2/10)	40 (4/10)	70 (7/10)	100 (10/10)	0 (0/10)	0 (0/10)
TM4	10	100 (10/10)	0 (0/10)	20 (2/10)	0 (0/10)	40 (4/10)	40 (4/10)	100 (10/10)	10 (1/10)	0 (0/10)
Total	38	94.74 (36/38)	2.63 (1/38)	44.74 (17/38)	13.16 (5/38)	34.21 (13/38)	76.32 (29/38)	94.74 (36/38)	5.26 (2/38)	0 (0/38)

Note. Percentage (%) is for the total units in the sampled textbooks.

In terms of types of culture, target culture is the most dominant compared to source culture, international culture, and intercultural interaction, as it is present in almost all 38 units across all four textbooks (see Table 3). It is followed by source culture, which accounts for 18.42% less than target culture. International culture is only integrated into one unit each in TM2 and TM4, and intercultural interaction cannot be found in any of the textbooks and is thus the most under-represented.

Tables 4 to 7 show the analysis of categories of culture and specific examples portraying them in individual textbooks. In TM1, both source and target cultures are represented by elements of knowledge-culture (see Table 4). For source culture, it seems that only Malay culture is depicted, including the use of characters from the Malay ethnic group and portrayal of the structure of a Malay family in illustrations and dialogues. Source culture is represented by depicting the map of Malaysia, making reference to local institutions or places ('Ma liu jia马六甲 Melaka', 'Ji long po吉隆坡 Kuala Lumpur'), as well as the Muslim practice of praying on Friday. There are also elements representing the target culture, for instance, making references to Chinese movies and music (see Table 4). Further, knowledge-culture in TM1 consists mainly of the Big 'C' culture, while small 'c' cultural elements can hardly be found.

Table 4

Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in TM1

Type of culture	Knowledge-culture (Kc)		Communicative-culture (Cc)
	Big 'C'	Small 'c'	
SC	Using Malay characters in dialogues (U1-6). Organization or structure of a Malay family (U2/6). Material conditions: phone numbers in Malaysia context (U3). Geography: map of Malaysia (U7*), names of local places and institutions (U3). Religion: Muslim praying activity (U5).	\	\
TC	Using Chinese characters in dialogues (U1-6). Jackie Chan's Movie (U6). Music: children's songs in Chinese, the 'Happy Birthday' song in a Chinese context (U7*).	\	Cc-i: Forms of Chinese names (U1), Chinese appellation (U1/4), dates and times (U3/5) and addresses (U3). Cc-ii: Symbolic plant words in Chinese and 12 symbolic animals in the Chinese zodiac (U7*). Cc-iii: Norms of greetings in formal situations and informal situations (U1), Chinese number gestures (U2).
IC	\	\	\
ICI	\	\	\

Note. U=unit, for instance, U1 refers to unit 1. U7* refers to the sections of introduction and appendix in TM1.

Elements of communicative-culture that are embedded in language structure, semantics, and pragmatics are used mainly to represent the target culture in TM1, for instance, forms of expressions of dates and times and addresses, as well as norms of greetings in formal or informal situations. In the expression of dates and times, for example, the order in Chinese is 'nian年 (year)-yue月 (month)-hao号 (date)', such as '2016年12月20号 (2016, December 20)'. This is different from time expression in English or Malay where the year would appear last.

For TM2 (see Table 5), few examples of international culture and intercultural interaction can be found. Knowledge cultural elements are present in both source and target cultures. Similar to TM1, the Big 'C' elements are more prominent than the small 'c' cultural elements. For instance, a famous Chinese song entitled 'Shi shang zhi you mama hao世上只有妈妈好 (Mum is the best in the world)', representing the value of a mother's love for her children is a common song in both Malaysia and China. In contrast, communicative cultural elements are found only in the target culture. At the level of pragmatics, for example, people are depicted as wishing 'Gong xi ni ya恭喜你呀! (Congratulations to you!)' to others when good things happen, which is the cultural norm of congratulations in Chinese.

Table 5
Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in TM2

Type of culture	Knowledge-culture (Kc)		Communicative-culture (Cc)
	Big 'C'	Small 'c'	
SC	Using Malay characters in illustrations (U7) and the text (U1-10). Organization or structure of a family (no ethnic group specified) in Malaysia (U4). Material conditions: phone numbers in Malaysian contexts (U3). Geography: names of local places (U4/11*) and institutions (U9).	\	\
TC	Using Chinese characters in dialogues (U1-10). Music of Chinese songs (U2/4/8/9/10).	Social value of maternal love (U4)	Cc-i: Forms of Chinese name (U2), appellation (U1/5), dates and times (U6/8). Cc-ii: Family kinship titles in Chinese (U4), and 12 symbolic animals in the Chinese zodiac (U5). Cc-iii: Norms of greeting in formal situations (U1), responses to someone's thanks and apology (U1), congratulation (U6); honorifics and self-abasing forms (U2).
IC	Music of English songs (U6).	\	\
ICI	\	\	\

Note. U11* refers to the section of appendix in TM2.

Similar to TM2, TM3 pays more attention to source and target cultures than international culture and intercultural interaction (see Table 6). Knowledge-culture is mainly Big 'C' elements and found in source culture, related to using Malaysian local characters in illustrations, describing the structure of the Malay family, showing the Malaysian map, portraying different Malaysian ethnic groups and showing the phone number in the Malaysian format. Also, information relating to Malaysian local fruits (eg. 'Liu lian榴莲durian', 'Hong mao dan红毛丹rambutan') can be found in TM3. Small 'c' cultural elements are also limited in TM3. For communicative-culture, both source and target cultures are found to contain cultural elements in language structure, semantics and pragmatics. For example at the semantics level, the culture-loaded word 'Ken zhi min 垦殖民settler (especially a Felda settler)' is found in the text, which relates to Malaysia's history (source culture).

Table 6
Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in TM3

Type of culture	Knowledge-culture (Kc)		Communicative-culture (Cc)
	Big 'C'	Small 'c'	
SC	Using Malays characters in illustrations (U2). Religion: Muslim praying activity (U7/8). Organization or structure of the Malay family (U2). Geography: map of Malaysia (U1), races/ethnic groups in Malaysia (U5), reference to local places (U1/2/7/10) and institutions (U2/3). Food: local fruits (U10). Material conditions: phone numbers in Malaysia context (U1).	\	Cc-ii: culture-loaded words (U3)
TC	Using Chinese characters in dialogues (U1-10). Music of Chinese song (U5).	\	Cc-i: Forms of Chinese name (U1/5), appellation (U1/5), date and time (U6/8/10). Cc-ii: Family kinship titles in Chinese (U2). Cc-iii: Norms of greeting in formal situation (U1/4/7), response to someone's thanks (U1) and praise (U4), bargaining in buying things (U10).
IC	\	\	\
ICI	\	\	\

Finally, similar to TM2 and TM3, source and target cultures are dominant in TM4 (see Table 7). Cultural elements in knowledge-culture are all Big 'C' culture, which represent source, target, and international cultures, including using the Malaysian phone number format, introducing the structure of a Malay family, and showing the Malaysian map. For instance, a Malay family in Malaysia can have more than two children, whereas Chinese couples may only have up to two children under China's population policy. Other than that, Malay, Indian, Chinese, and Western food or drinks are mentioned in the text. Elements of communicative-culture are only found in target culture, covering cultural elements of language structure and pragmatics. Taking cultural elements in pragmatics as an example, TM4 portrays characters using the honorific ('Nin您you') to show respect to someone and 'Bu ke qi/Bu xie不客气/不谢 (you are welcome)' to respond to someone's thanks in the Chinese language.

Table 7
Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in TM4

Type of culture	Knowledge-culture (Kc)		Communicative-culture (Cc)
	Big 'C'	Small 'c'	
SC	Material conditions: phone numbers in the Malaysian context (U1). Organization or structure of a Malay family (U6). Geography: map of Malaysia (U1), races/ethnic groups in Malaysia (U6/10*), local places (U6), and institutions (U5). Food: Malay and Indian food/drinks (U7).	\	\
TC	Chinese opera in illustrations (U1-10*). Introduction of Chinese characters (U1-10*). Reference to Chinese food and tea (U7).	\	Cc-i: Forms of appellation (U7), dates and times (U4/5). Cc-iii: Norms of greetings in formal situations (U1), response to someone's thanks (U1), making phone calls (U8), using honorifics (U1/8/9), and bargaining in buying things (U9).
IC	Reference to Western food (U7).	\	\
ICI	\	\	\

Note. U10* refers to the sections of introduction and appendix in TM4.

Discussion

The results from the qualitative content analysis are discussed in the following sections.

Knowledge and Communicative Cultural Elements in Textbooks

The results showed that elements of knowledge-culture and communicative-culture were present to different extents in the four sampled textbooks. This is consistent with Zhang's (1990) recommendation that both knowledge-culture and communicative-culture should be included in textbooks at the elementary level of language teaching. It is possible that the local writers of the newly published textbooks tried to stress the importance of the cultural elements of both knowledge-culture and communicative-culture.

Appropriate Representation of Big 'C' and Small 'c' Culture
The results also revealed that there were different attitudes towards Big 'C' and small 'c' culture in the sampled textbooks. Among the elements of knowledge-culture, the small 'c' culture in the selected textbooks was remarkably limited while the majority of the knowledge-culture were related to Big 'C' source-culture learning. Nearly all the selected textbooks failed to reflect sociocultural values, norms, and beliefs. This seems a clear indication that the textbook writers did not regard small 'c' culture as an important aspect for elementary-level language learners. In contrast, the attempt at integrating Big 'C' source-culture learning in the textbooks realised predominantly through illustrations and dialogues was more fruitful. The inclusion of Big 'C' source-culture elements can help learners develop their interest in learning and practising Mandarin. However, it is also necessary to pay more attention to the Big 'C' in target-culture, since it may indirectly affect communication between L2 learners and native Mandarin speakers. Knowledge cultural elements, including Big 'C' and small 'c' elements, should not be ignored because they are beneficial to the development of communication competence from a long-term perspective (Zhang, 1990). Hence, writers should consider including an appropriate balance of Big 'C' and small 'c' elements in textbooks for L2 Mandarin elementary-level learners.

Explicit Representation of Communicative Cultural Elements
Communicative cultural elements as proposed by Chen (1997), which included cultural elements in language structure, semantics, and pragmatics, were presented in the sampled textbooks. The present study revealed that communicative cultural elements were explicitly depicted in the textbooks, particularly in TM1 and TM2, where explanatory notes on cultural elements are provided. In comparison, there was not as much relevant communicative-culture material in TM3 and TM4. Explicit information or instruction on these elements is essential in textbooks (Byram, 1997; Lee, 2009). Knowledge of communicative-culture helps learners to avoid making assumptions or stereotypes based on their own cultural background or pre-existing cultural knowledge (Chan et al., 2018). Through this, learners can benefit from a better understanding of the target language and use it more appropriately (Zhang, 1990). Therefore, it is important that L2 Mandarin textbook writers place more emphasis on providing explicit explanations on communicative cultural elements in the textbooks.

Source, Target, International Cultures, and Intercultural Interaction in Textbooks

With regard to the types of culture, both target and source cultures were represented more prominently than international culture and intercultural interaction in all four textbooks. This confirms the tendency towards localisation rather than internationalisation in L2 Mandarin textbooks as asserted by previous researchers (Lam & Hoe, 2013; Tan, 2007). However, there were differences in the manner in which target culture and source culture were implemented in the textbooks examined in the present study.

Emphasis on Teaching Culture
The present study discovered that the textbooks emphasised the target culture in L2 Mandarin learning rather than focusing only on linguistic skills. The target culture was found to be represented in all four textbooks. Elementary-level textbooks are often the first point of contact for learners with regard to the target culture (Bewley, 2018). Knowledge of the target culture not only benefits learners in multicultural communication (Ye & Wu, 2010), it may also arouse the learners' interest in visiting China and developing their knowledge and awareness of Chinese culture. The results of this study suggest that writers of the textbooks regard culture as

an important aspect of L2 Mandarin education in Malaysia, consistent with the notion that teaching language entails teaching culture (Chan et al., 2018; Lam & Hoe, 2013).

Consideration of Learners' Diverse Cultural Backgrounds
The textbooks provided information on source culture such as Malaysian characters, places, food, maps, family structure, and religious beliefs. These cultural elements are different from what were reported in Chan et al.'s (2018) study. In the textbooks examined, source culture was oriented towards Malay culture. The Malay ethnic group was clearly represented in the textbooks whereas the Indian, Iban, Kadazan, and other ethnic groups were nearly absent. Only TM3 and TM4 had a slight mention of Indian food and the names of different ethnic groups. In contrast, Malay characters, food, family structure, and religious beliefs were dominantly represented. Lam and Hoe (2013) stated that although the target users of L2 Mandarin textbooks consisted of learners of various ethnicities, the Malay culture was put at the forefront possibly because the target users shared a common national language, Malay. However, considering the multicultural and multi-ethnic context in Malaysia, where different ethnic groups speak their own mother tongues and practice their unique cultures, regarding Malay culture as the learners' source culture would be unsuitable for the purpose of bridging learners' source culture, target culture, international culture, and intercultural interaction in FL teaching and learning. Other benefits of accurately representing learners' source culture include the reinforcement of learners' own identity (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) and promoting cultural exchange and understanding amongst different ethnic groups (Ye & Wu, 2010).

Representation of International Culture and Intercultural Interaction
Unlike the studies of Ye and Wu (2010) and Chan et al. (2018), this study showed that there were only a few references to international culture and intercultural interaction found in the textbooks. This finding is similar to that reported in Lam and Hoe's (2013) study. Only two of the textbooks depicted international culture. For instance, TM2 made reference to English songs and TM4 had information about Western food. The result suggests that internationalisation was not a major concern in the textbooks (Lam & Hoe, 2013). Low internationalisation in textbooks may be considered a shortcoming, as learning about other cultures aside from target and source cultures is beneficial for L2 learners. Textbooks with representations of international culture can act as a cultural and linguistic resource for learners to practice speaking with others and develop their intercultural skills (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Textbooks that highlight intercultural interaction can help the learners compare or reflect on the differences and similarities between the source culture and the target or international cultures (Chao, 2011). Thus, textbooks that integrate international culture and intercultural interaction can help learners acquire intercultural communication skills in an increasingly globalised world.

The findings of this study complement Lam and Hoe (2013), Tan (2007), Yang (2019), and Ye and Wu (2010) by combining the analysis of cultural elements with the types of culture represented in textbooks. The study also extends Chan et al.'s (2018) work investigating cultural and intercultural elements in a similar context by addressing the multicultural dimension of the source culture in Malaysia's culturally diverse context. The findings of this study are limited to four selected L2 Mandarin textbooks and are not representative all of those written for Malaysian learners. Future studies can expand the sample size to analyse cultural representation in textbooks.

Conclusion

Two aspects of culture were analysed in this study, namely, cultural elements and types of culture. The results of the present study showed that the selected textbooks contained the cultural elements of both knowledge-culture and communicative-culture to different extents. The knowledge cultural elements reflected the Big 'C' more than the small 'c' culture. The larger part of the Big 'C' cultural elements had to do with source culture. The source culture, in turn, was mainly depicted as Malay culture with weaker representation of the other ethnic groups. Finally, communicative cultural elements were present, but lacked explicit explanatory notes that could help learners understand the implicit meanings of these elements. Overall, the results of this study revealed that the target culture was the most dominant in the textbooks, followed by the source culture, while little attention was paid to international culture and intercultural interaction.

The findings of this study suggest that there is a need to appropriately increase the content for small 'c' culture in L2 Mandarin textbooks for elementary learners. It is also necessary to integrate more content related to Big 'C' target-culture. Increasing the quantity and quality of cultural elements representing the cultures of the diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia is also worth considering. The textbooks need to provide more information on explaining the cultural elements of communicative-culture. It is recommended that an appropriate balance of source, target, and international cultures and intercultural interaction be given serious thought and due consideration by textbook writers. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful in raising awareness for the need to integrate cultural knowledge into teaching materials that are balanced and meaningful to L2 learners, particularly among authors, editors, publishers of textbooks, and Mandarin teachers. Finally, future research should look into how a diversity of cultural elements can be more effectively integrated into L2 Mandarin textbooks with the aim of helping learners develop cultural competence, and more importantly, gain global cultural consciousness.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix

Coding Table of Cultural Elements and Types of Culture in Four Sampled Textbooks

Sample	Unit	Cultural Elements					Type of Culture			
		Kc		Cc			SC	TC	IC	ICI
		Big 'C'	Small 'c'	Cc-i	Cc-ii	Cc-iii				
TM1	1	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
	2	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
	3	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	4	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	5	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	6	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	7*	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
	Total	*7/7*	*0/7*	*5/7*	*1/7*	*2/7*	*7/7*	*7/7*	*0/7*	*0/7*
	F (%)	*100%*	*0%*	*71.43%*	*14.29%*	*28.57%*	*100%*	*100%*	*0%*	*0%*
TM2	1	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	-
	2	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
	3	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	4	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
	5	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
	6	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
	7	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	8	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	9	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	10	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	11*	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
	Total	*11/11*	*1/11*	*5/11*	*2/11*	*3/11*	*10/11*	*9/11*	*1/11*	*0/11*
	F (%)	*100%*	*9.01%*	*45.45%*	*18.18%*	*27.27%*	*90.91%*	*81.82%*	*9.01%*	*0%*
TM3	1	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
	2	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
	3	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-
	4	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
	5	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	6	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
	7	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
	8	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	9	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
	10	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
	Total	*8/10*	*0/10*	*5/10*	*2/10*	*4/10*	*7/10*	*10/10*	*0/10*	*0/10*
	F (%)	*80%*	*0%*	*50%*	*20%*	*40%*	*70%*	*100%*	*0%*	*0%*

Sample	Unit	Cultural Elements					Type of Culture			
		Kc		Cc			SC	TC	IC	ICI
		Big 'C'	Small 'c'	Cc-i	Cc-ii	Cc-iii				
TM4	1	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
	2	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
	3	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
	4	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-
	5	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
	6	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
	7	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
	8	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
	9	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
	10*	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
	Total	*10/10*	*0/10*	*2/10*	*0/10*	*4/10*	*4/10*	*10/10*	*1/10*	*0/10*
	F (%)	*100%*	*0%*	*20%*	*0%*	*40%*	*40%*	*100%*	*10%*	*0%*
TM1-4	*Total*	*36/38*	*1/38*	*17/38*	*5/38*	*13/38*	*29/38*	*36/38*	*2/38*	*0/38*
	F (%)	*94.74%*	*2.63%*	*44.74%*	*13.16%*	*34.21%*	*76.32%*	*94.74%*	*5.26%*	*0%*

Note. Kc refers to knowledge-culture, Cc refers to communicative-culture. Cc-i refers to cultural elements in language structure, Cc-ii refers to cultural elements in semantics, Cc-iii refers to cultural elements in pragmatics. SC refers to source culture, TC refers to target culture, IC refers to international culture, ICI refers to intercultural interaction. The asterisk (*) refers to the sections of introduction and appendix in textbooks.