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Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

**Research Article**

# Representation of Self and Other in Two Tunisian EFL Textbooks: An Appraisal Perspective

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**Abstract**

This study investigates how two Tunisian EFL textbooks portray Self and Other by analyzing the attitudes expressed by Tunisian and British characters (including the authors) toward their own and each other's cultures. The analysis draws on the Attitude System of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), operationalized through a system network in UAM CorpusTool that incorporates Attitude sub-systems, Polarity, and the identities of Appraiser and Appraised. The findings reveal an imbalance in the frequency distribution of evaluative resources: Appreciation of cultural attributes predominates, while the interpersonal dimension is underrepresented. Most appraisals are positive, suggesting an unrealistic portrayal of cultures and people. Self-Appraisal predominates, with British characters and culture evaluated more frequently, reflecting the dominance of the native speaker. These results indicate that the imbalance in appraisal corresponds to an imbalance in cultural representation. The study highlights the role of Appraisal Theory in empowering research on cultural representation in EFL.

***Keywords:*** Intercultural Communicative Competence; Attitudes; Appraisal; Tunisian EFL Textbooks; Self; Other.

## 1. Introduction

With the intercultural turn in foreign language education, culture teaching has been promoted to prepare learners for effective intercultural communication. Intercultural Communicative Competence (henceforth ICC) has been widely acknowledged as a key model and an objective of curricula in various foreign language contexts (Byram, 2021; Risager, 2018). To achieve this goal, the incorporation of an intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching practices, techniques and materials has been emphasized for the benefits it offers to the development of linguistic and intercultural skills (Byram, 2021; Murtazina et al., 2023; Sagitova et al., 2023). As a common type of teaching materials, foreign language textbooks offer an indirect contact with foreign culture(s) through their content, in which representations of the learners' culture and the target language culture are constructed (Dervin, 2016; Zarate, 2004). The way cultures are depicted in textbooks is considered crucial for the development of ICC. This can be achieved by including content that reflects the lived reality of people (Byram, 2021; Sercu, 2000). According to Sercu (2000), realism in textbooks means a comprehensive and balanced portrayal of cultural content. This includes representing diverse cultures, such as the learners' own culture and international issues, and incorporating both positive and negative aspects.

Research on EFL textbooks' representation of culture has used varied analytical frameworks such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Kamran, et al., 2019; Roohani & Tanbakoei, 2012) and Content Analysis (Abid, 2012; Abid, 2021; Ariawan et al., 2022; Arshad et al., 2020; Bose & Gao, 2022; Dahmareh & Kim, 2021; Ghasedi & Azizi, 2022; Putra et al., 2020; Roohani, et al., 2013; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). CDA is employed to examine the ideologies

and power relations underlying the representation of cultures in textbooks. Content Analysis, however, is employed to examine the representation of culture and identity construction in foreign language textbooks' texts and conversations with a focus on the learners' culture, the target language culture, as well as the interaction between them (Abid, 2021; Abid & Moalla, 2020; Moalla et al., 2025; Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). These studies reveal oversimplified and imbalanced intercultural interactions and representations (Abid & Moalla, 2020; Moalla et al., 2025). The main methodological weakness in this direction of research is that the representation of cultures is modelled against fixed categories offering little interaction between cultures or characters from different cultures.

The present study proposes to examine attitudes as a vehicle of cultural representation in EFL textbooks using the Attitude System of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) as an alternative methodological framework. Attitude analysis counters the fixedness of content categories through providing a more interactive model of cultural representation. This analysis focuses on how speakers from the two cultural backgrounds evaluate Self (understood as persons and things in their own culture) and Other (understood as persons and things in the opposite culture). The accumulation of the evaluative resources can reveal how cultures are represented. An attitude analysis can also be expanded to different types of texts (narrative texts and conversations).

This paper aims to determine the extent to which English as Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks present a balanced and realistic cultural representation. This can be achieved by analyzing the attitudes expressed by characters from different cultural backgrounds as they evaluate themselves and each other. Our analytical framework is the Attitude System of the Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), which provides a deeper understanding of cultural representation by focusing on evaluative language. It helps us identify the Appraiser (the one expressing the attitude) and the Appraised (the person, thing, or action being evaluated), a distinction that is crucial for understanding the direction and roles of evaluation in the text. The Attitude System offers a comprehensive typology of attitudes that includes Affect (evaluations related to emotional responses), Appreciation (judgements about the value of things) and Judgement (assessments of human behavior and character), which themselves are further classified into types. This framework allows the performance of a thorough analysis of how characters evaluate both their own cultural attributes and behaviors and those of others. Furthermore, the Polarity dimension of this system helps the classification of these attitudes as either positive or negative, providing a clear picture of the cultural portrayals within the textbooks.

Based on the relevance of the Attitude System of the Appraisal Theory to this study, the present paper seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do Tunisian and British Appraisers generally evaluate Self and Other across the Attitude sub-systems?
2. How are Self and Other appraised across the different types of each Attitude sub-system?

## 2. Literature Review

This section introduces the theoretical background within which this study is conducted. It reviews literature on the representation of culture in foreign language textbooks, and Appraisal Theory as a tool to study textbooks' cultural representations.

### 2.1. Representation of Culture in EFL Textbooks

The integration of a cultural component in foreign language textbooks is crucial for preparing learners for effective intercultural communication. As "windows to the world" (Risager, 2020, p. 22), textbooks serve as a primary medium for cultural representation, offering learners curated knowledge and particular worldviews. Representation is defined as the verbal and visual ways in which the world is depicted, often perceived as real by the reader (Canale, 2021). The problematic aspect of representation is its tendency to transmit, establish, and reinforce simplistic, biased, and stereotypical images of the world (Canale, 2016). Canale (2021) argues that the study of representation in foreign language textbooks is considered fundamental "since what is (verbally, visually) included and excluded in the textbook plays a role in how ideas, conceptions, and cosmogonies about the target language, society, and culture are virtually transmitted" (p. 113-114). A Textbook's representation of culture should, therefore, be balanced and comprehensive, including (a) the learners' culture, other cultures, and their mutual representation (Byram, 2021; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Sercu, 2000), (b)

both positive and negative aspects of the foreign language and culture (Risager, 1991; Sercu, 2000), (c) different perspectives on culture, and (d) equal participation in intercultural interactions (Byram, 2021; Sercu, 2000).

Given the central role of textbooks in teaching languages for intercultural communication, research in Applied Linguistics has increasingly focused on their analysis and evaluation with regard to cultural representation. Textbook analysis is an interdisciplinary form of teaching material evaluation (Weninger, 2018) that draws on a variety of analytical approaches. Weninger (2018) identifies three main strands of textbook research: Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Multimodality. Among these, Content Analysis is one of the most widely used approaches that typically involves counting units such as words, themes, or topics and coding them into categories to identify and compare recurrent themes. By interpreting the frequency and distribution of cultural themes, this approach provides factual insights into which cultures are represented in textbooks and how their defining features are constructed.

The second line of research, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), offers a distinct perspective on cultural representation in textbooks. It views foreign language textbooks as expressions of the power and ideologies of dominant social groups (Risager, 2022; Weninger, 2018). CDA empowers researchers to uncover the power relations and inequalities embedded within textbook discourse. It also helps teachers and students understand how textbooks legitimize power and inequality through their representations. CDA is eclectic in its methodological approach, drawing on a variety of tools and theories. These include the analysis of discursive strategies, lexical and grammatical choices, content analysis, and pragmatics. The third strand of research on textbook analysis is Multimodality. It is concerned with the analysis of textbooks' visuals in terms of their representation of people and places and the interaction between viewers and visual meaning (Weninger, 2018).

The next section will review previous research from all three areas: Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Multimodality.

### 2.2. Research on EFL Textbooks' Representation of Culture

A substantial body of research on cultural representation in foreign language textbooks conducted through Content Analysis has focused on the frequency and distribution of cultural elements within Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework of source culture (learners' culture), target culture(s), and international cultures (Abid, 2012; Arshad et al., 2020; Ariawan, 2020; Ghasedi & Azizi, 2022; Putra et al., 2020; Bose & Gao, 2022; Dahmareh & Kim, 2021; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). Most of these studies reveal an imbalanced representation, typically marked by the dominance of either the target culture or the source culture. For example, Abid (2012), Arshad et al. (2020), and Bose and Gao (2022) have examined English language textbooks locally produced in Tunisia, Pakistan and India, respectively, in terms of their portrayal of cultural elements such as school life, family life, depictions of British people, and social relationships. These studies demonstrate the predominance of the target culture—specifically, British culture. Abid (2012) further notes that all cultural representations are overwhelmingly positive. These findings generally underscore the adoption of the native speakers as the dominant model for language and cultural learning.

Other research has shown that the source culture tends to dominate English textbooks' content in contexts such as Indonesia (Ariwan, 2022) and Iran (Ghasedi & Azizi, 2022; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014; Putra et al., 2020). For example, Ghasedi and Azizi (2022) have found that Iranian EFL textbooks largely represent learners' own culture or include culture-free content—through themes such as countries, characters, social life, and political issues. Similarly, Putra et al. (2020) have reported that Indonesian textbooks place strong emphasis on local cultural products and practices, while offering limited exposure to cultural diversity. These studies suggest that such monoperspectival representation limits opportunities for intercultural comparison and exchange and a balanced inclusion of source, target, and international cultures is needed to foster not only linguistic competence but also tolerance, intercultural awareness, and skills of relating, interpreting, discovery, and interaction (Byram, 2021). Such monoperspectival representations, as these studies suggest, restrict opportunities for intercultural comparison and dialogue.

To develop intercultural interaction skills, researchers such as Sercu (2000) and Abid and Moalla (2020, 2022) stress the need for incorporating contact situations, including conversations and dialogues, into textbook content. However, studies reveal that these interactions are often imbalanced, with British characters frequently depicted as the sole or dominant participants (Abid & Moalla, 2022). The content of these dialogues is also problematic. Topics are typically infrequent, superficial, or culture-free (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014), and at times, are limited exclusively

to the target culture (Abid & Moalla, 2020, 2022). Furthermore, the mutual cultural representation presented is often simplistic and stereotypical, relying on overly positive framings that reflect a tourist's perspective rather than lived reality (Abid & Moalla, 2020; Abid & Moalla, 2020, 2022).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has revealed significant imbalances in the cultural representation of EFL textbooks. For instance, Alzubi et al. (2023) have examined Saudi EFL textbooks and found limited references to Saudi national identity and culture in areas such as social interaction, political institutions, stereotyping, and national history and geography. This underrepresentation, they argue, limits learners' ability to compare their own culture with others, thereby weakening critical cultural awareness essential for communication. Supporting this view, Yurievna et al. (2023) emphasize that incorporating regional and local linguistic and cultural content into English language classes can strengthen learners' linguistic, communicative, and cultural competences.

Kamran's analysis of English textbooks in Punjab has revealed an overemphasis on nationally-oriented representations of Punjabi culture. These textbooks have glorified the nation and Islamic traditions while depicting the West negatively, particularly through anti-Christian discourses. The study highlights the need for more inclusive cultural representations to reduce social and religious divisions in Punjab. In a different context, Maghsoudi (2020) has examined locally produced EFL textbooks in Iran and India. The analysis has revealed a tendency to prioritize local cultures while intentionally avoiding representations of Western cultures, a policy intended to protect learners from cultural imperialism. However, Maghsoudi (2020) argues that this approach is problematic given the role of English as an international language and its potential to expose learners to diverse cultures. Overall, the findings suggest that whether the national culture or the target culture is overrepresented, a balanced integration of cultural perspectives is essential to foster intercultural understanding.

Multimodal analyses have produced similar findings regarding cultural representation in foreign language textbooks. In Tunisia, for instance, Moalla et al. (2025) have examined the same textbooks as the present study, focusing on visuals and related texts in dialogue balloons and illustrated dialogues. Using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) system of represented participants, the study has analyzed roles and process types (actions and states) performed by characters from the learners' and target cultures. The results reveal that the visuals depicting direct intercultural interactions are limited and imbalanced, with the target culture characters portrayed as more articulate, performing more transactional process types and assuming more actor roles than their Tunisian counterparts. Moreover, the visuals primarily encode only basic aspects of these interactions - such as emotional states (e.g., happiness) and the encounter's setting- offering little depth in intercultural representation.

### 2.3. Appraisal Theory and EFL Textbooks

Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) is a framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that accounts for interpersonal meaning through evaluative language. It examines "the means by which writers/speakers positively or negatively evaluate the entities, happenings and states-of-affairs with which their texts are concerned" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 2). The theory comprises three semantic sub-systems: Attitude (the focus of this study), Engagement, and Graduation.

According to Martin and White (2005), the Attitude System is about "evaluating things, people's character and their feelings" (p. 26). The system is divided into three semantic areas: Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. The Affect sub-system deals with emotions, i.e., expressing positive and negative feelings. The Judgement sub-system focuses on the moral assessment of behavior- what one should and should not do- and includes positive and negative Judgement such as admiring, criticizing, praising, and condemning. The Appreciation sub-system involves aesthetic evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena considering how they are valued in a given context. The Attitude System, with its three sub-systems, can be classified by Polarity (positive or negative). A detailed description of the components of each sub-system is provided in Table 1:

This system has been applied to diverse educational discourses, including book prefaces (Hashemi & Mahdavirad, 2022), virtual interactions (Belz, 2003; Vinagre Corral, 2018, 2019), student-teacher interactions (Badklang & Srinon, 2018), and textbooks' narrative texts (Magfiroh et al., 2021). Appraisal Theory has enabled researchers to identify differences in the expression of attitudes by native and non-native writers of hard sciences book prefaces (Hashemi & Mahdavirad, 2022), understand teacher-student relationship building during classroom interaction (Badklang

& Srinion, 2018), track students' development of attitudinal dimension of ICC (Belz, 2003), and relationship building through narrative texts (Magfiroh et al., 2021) and in virtual exchanges (Vinagre & Corral, 2017, 2018). These studies are concerned with the implementation of Attitude System in the analysis of a variety of educational texts. A study focusing particularly on English language textbooks is conducted in the domain of Multimodality by Chen (2022). It has examined the complementarity and co-instantiation of text and visuals in the encoding of attitudes (Affect, Judgement and Appreciation) in portraits, photographs, cartoons and related texts in Chinese EFL textbooks. The results of this study indicate the prevalence of Affect-related meanings inscribed in image forms. The study also points out the growing presence of images invoking Appreciation and judgement.

Table 1. *The Attitude System (Based on Martin and White, 2005)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude | Affect | (un)Happiness | happy, sad |
| | | (in)Security | confident, anxious |
| | | (dis)Satisfaction | pleased, angry |
| | | (dis)Inclination | desire, fear |
| | Judgement | Normality | fortunate, hapless |
| | | Capacity | powerful, weak |
| | | Tenacity | resolute, reckless |
| | | Veracity | truthful, dishonest |
| | | Propriety | ethical, immoral |
| | Appreciation | Reaction | exciting, good, tedious, nasty |
| | | Composition | unified, simple, discordant, simplistic |
| | | Valuation | profound, shallow |

To conclude this review of the literature, it can be noted that despite the differences in their methodologies, Content Analysis, CDA and Multimodality reveal similar results about textbooks' cultural representation. The analysis of textbooks' content indicates imbalance and inequality in the characters' participation and role, with the dominance of the native speaker as the major participant and actor. This imbalance can be an impediment to the development of ICC.

Content analysis has been useful for identifying imbalances in cultural representations and providing insights into the target culture. However, it often treats culture as a set of distinct, static, and loosely connected elements. CDA provides another perspective to the analysis of textbooks' cultural representation aiming to uncover power relations in texts representing source, target, and international cultures. Nevertheless, CDA has tended to focus more on political and social issues—such as racism, prejudice, social injustice, and immigration (van Dijk, 2010)—than on cultural representation itself. As for the third research strand, a few studies have used Multimodality to analyse textbooks' cultural representation. The visual representation of intercultural encounters reported by the literature points out the limitation of visual analysis to provide a deep understanding of how culture is negotiated and represented by characters during intercultural encounters.

Appraisal Theory has recently been applied as an analytical approach in educational discourse, including the study of textbooks. However, little research has specifically employed the Attitude System to analyze stance in foreign language textbooks. Addressing this theoretical and methodological gap, we propose that the attitudes expressed by textbook characters can reveal particular representations of culture. Accordingly, this study applies the Attitude sub-system of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) to analyze two Tunisian EFL textbooks, focusing on how characters evaluate their own culture and that of others. An intercultural orientation is adopted by classifying attitudes according to the cultural background of both Appraiser and Appraised.

## 3. Methodology

This section describes the Tunisian EFL textbooks and introduces the system network based on the Attitude System used for the analysis of the corpus. It ends with explaining the procedures of the analysis.

### 3.1. Corpus

The two Tunisian EFL textbooks selected for analysis are *Let's Learn English* and *Let's Discover More English* and are addressed to 7th and 8th grade Basic Education pupils, respectively. These textbooks are the main teaching material

used by Tunisian EFL teachers across the country and are written by senior teachers and teacher trainers. These textbooks are particularly chosen because they include interactions between Tunisian and British characters.

*Let's Learn English* is about Peter, a British character, who visited the Soltan family in Djerba, a Tunisian tourist attraction island. *Let's discover More English* is about Imene, a Tunisian girl, who visited the Brown family in London. The two characters' descriptions of the host countries as well as their interactions with the natives provide opportunities to discover textbooks' representation of culture through the attitudes that characters express towards themselves and the host country, people and culture. The texts analyzed include conversations, letters that characters sent to their families, diaries and texts about events and places narrated by the textbooks' writers.

### 3.2. Appraisal Theory as an Analytic Tool

This paper uses Appraisal Theory to study how Self and Other are perceived by the Tunisian and British characters in the two Tunisian EFL textbooks. The theory perceives language as an interpersonal means of evaluation, and offers a characterisation that can be applied to the present corpus to identify the attitudes of the speakers towards their own Self and the others'. The Attitude System of Appraisal Theory is adopted to analyse how characters express their emotions (Affect), how they assess behaviours (Judgement) and phenomena (Appreciation). Furthermore, the Attitude System can show whether the evaluation is positive or negative, through the Polarity sub-system. By applying this system to the texts extracted from the two EFL textbooks, it is possible to identify how Self and Other are perceived by the different characters (Tunisian versus British).

### 3.3. Procedure

To analyse the utterances extracted from the two textbooks, a system network was built in UAM CorpusTool, following Martin and White's System of Attitude (2005) presented in Table 1. The utterances are annotated according to the type of Attitude, Polarity and the identity of Appraiser and Appraised. A total of 382 utterances were annotated following the system presented in Figure 1.

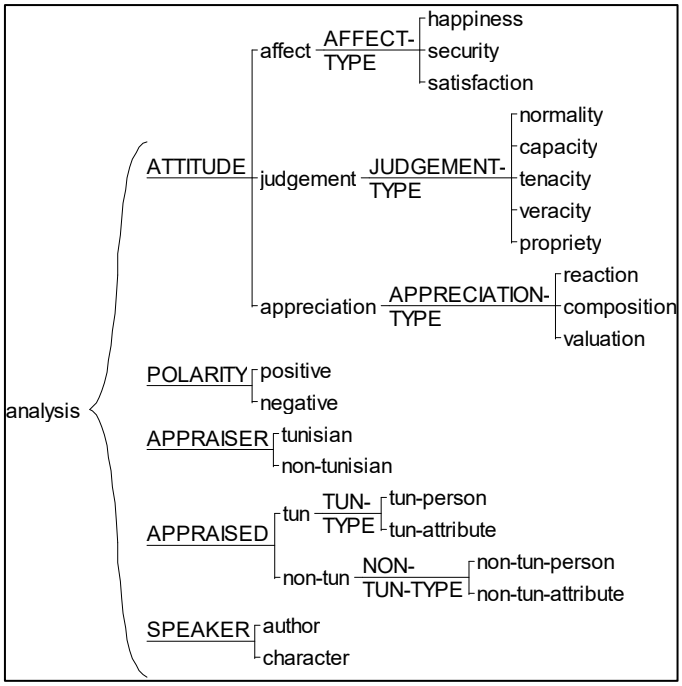



*Figure 1*. System Network for Attitudes

According to the system network presented in Figure 1, the utterances are first annotated according to the type of Attitude (small caps), which can be either Affect, Judgement or Appreciation. In the corpus, cases of Affect are attributed to expressions of emotions, whether negative or positive and are classified into Happiness, Security and Satisfaction. For instance, the expression "*very pleased*" in the utterance "We are *very pleased* to invite you to our quiet

island" (*Let's Learn English,* p. 42) is annotated as a case of Affect, as Aly is expressing his Happiness towards inviting Peter to Djerba.

Additionally, cases of Judgement are attributed to expressions about judging a person's behaviour, according to Normality, Capacity, Tenacity, Veracity and Propriety. In the following example, "People are very *friendly and helpful*." (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 12), the expression "*friendly and helpful*" is annotated as expressing Propriety of behaviour. Furthermore, cases of Appreciation are attributed to descriptions of phenomena such as schools, as presented in the following utterance: "Our prep school is *small*, but it is *very nice*." (*Let's Learn English*, p. 157). The adjectives "*small*" and "*very nice*" describe the Reaction of the Tunisian pupil to the prep school, thus revealing his/her Appreciation of this Appraised entity. This evaluation is also annotated as being positive in the Polarity sub-system.

In addition to the Attitude sub-system, the utterances are annotated for Appraiser and Appraised. The Appraiser, or the person who expresses his/her own evaluation, and the Appraised is the target of Appraisal. In the utterance "our prep school is small", the Appraisal is an instance of Self-Appraisal where the Appraiser is a Tunisian character and the Appraised is a Tunisian attribute. The expression "*friendly and helpful*" is annotated as an instance of Other-Appraisal where the British character appraises Tunisian persons.

To annotate the 382 utterances, the authors first worked on a pilot set representing 20 percent of all the examples (around 70 cases). After cross checking this sample, the first author finished the annotation, while maintaining discussions of challenging cases. The frequency distribution obtained from the analysis of evaluative resources of the system network was calculated yielding descriptive and Chi-square statistics, which helped to determine the association between the identity of the Appraiser and the frequency of the use of the Attitude sub-systems and types, Polarity and the identity of the Appraised.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, a selection of examples illustrating each sub-system and types were qualitatively analyzed to provide deeper insights into how the evaluative resources were chosen to realize the Attitude subsystem and types according to the direction of Appraisal, that is Self-Appraisal and Other-Appraisal.

## 4. Results

The results section first presents the results of the quantitative analysis based on the Appraisal system network outlined in Figure 1 and then proceeds to a qualitative analysis of selected examples that illustrate the different attitude subtypes.

### 4.1. Appraisal of Self and Other Across Attitude Sub-systems and Polarity

This section presents the general frequency distribution of evaluative resources across Attitude sub-systems and Polarity in the corpus (Table 2). It, then, outlines the overall frequency distribution of the sub-systems and Polarity in Self-appraisal (Table 3) and in Other-Appraisal (Table 4).

Table 2. *General Distribution of Appraisals According to Attitude Sub-Systems and Polarity*

| | Affect | Appreciation | Judgement | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 97<br>(72.93) | 149<br>(84.65) | 54<br>(73.97) | 300<br>(78.54) |
| Negative | 36<br>(27.06) | 27<br>(15.34) | 19<br>(26.02) | 82<br>(21.46) |
| Total | 133<br>(34.82) | 176<br>(46.07) | 73<br>(19.11) | 382<br>(100) |

* The items in parentheses refer to the percentages of positive and negative appraisals.

The results reported in Table 2 show that the three attitude sub-systems are present in the corpus with varying frequencies. Appreciation is the most frequent, with 149 occurrences out of a total of 300 followed by Affect with 97 occurrences, while Judgement is the least frequent with 54 occurrences. Across all the three sub-systems, appraisals are predominantly positive accounting for 78.54% of cases, compared to 21.46% negative ones. The predominance of Appreciation and Affect highlights the textbooks' emphasis on the material dimensions of culture as well as on emotions and feelings, respectively. By contrast, the limited number of Judgement tokens suggests that Tunisian and British characters rarely evaluate each other's behavior and engage in relationship-building through Judgement.

Table 3 presents the frequency distribution of Self-Appraisal, defined as the evaluation of one's own affect, attributes and behavior.

Table 3. *Frequency Distribution of Attitude Sub-Systems and Polarity in Self-Appraisal*

| | Affect (N=89) | | Appreciation (N= 74) | | Judgement (N=56) | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Tunisian | British | Tunisian | British | Tunisian | British | |
| Positive | 10 (4.56) | 46 (21) | 26 (11.87) | 34 (15.52) | 8 (3.65) | 31 (14.15) | 155 (70.77) |
| Negative | 7 (3.19) | 26 (11.87) | 7 (3.19) | 7 (3.19) | 6 (2.73) | 11 (5.02) | 64 (29.22) |
| Total | 17 (7.76) | 72 (32.87) | 33 (15.06) | 41 (18.72) | 14 (6.39) | 42 (19.17) | 219 (100) |

* The items in parentheses indicate the percentage of each category out of the total number of self-appraisals.

Overall, Affect is more frequent than Appreciation and Judgement, with 89 occurrences out of a total of 219. The British are more articulate at the three subsystems than their Tunisian counterparts, using 72 instances of Affect compared to 17, 41 instances of Appreciation versus 33, and 42 instances of Judgement compared to 14. These results indicate that the native speaker is the center of appraisal, whose language and culture are established as a dominant model in the textbooks.

The British characters express more Affect than Appreciation and Judgement, with Affect tokens counting 32.87% of the total instances of Self-appraisal. By contrast, the Appreciation and Judgement tokens are almost equally distributed, representing 18.72% and 19.17 % of Self-appraisals respectively. Tunisians' Self-appraisal is, however, more oriented towards Appreciation with 15.06% of the total Self-appraisal compared to 7.76% for Affect and 6.39% for Judgement. This pattern suggests that Tunisian Appraisers are more concerned with material aspects of their environment than with their emotions.

Table 3 also indicates a predominance of positive Self-appraisal with 70.77% of the total of Self- appraisal instances. Despite the overall limited number of negative evaluations, it is noted that the negative appraisal of Affect is much more frequently used by the British characters, who produce 26 instances of negative appraisals out of a total of 64, compared to only 7 instances expressed by Tunisian Appraisers.

As for Other-Appraisals, Table 4 shows that in both directions, Appreciation is the most frequent attitude type (102 out of 163), and Judgement is the least frequent (17 out 163). Tunisian Appraisers tend to use Appreciation tokens more frequently (74 versus 28) when evaluating the British persons and attributes than the reverse. This lack of reciprocity confirms the previous claim that textbooks' characters tend to focus on the material aspects of the Other's culture rather than on interaction and relationship building.

Table 4. *Frequency Distribution of Attitude Sub-Systems and Polarity in Other Appraisal*

| | Affect N= 44 | | Appreciation N=102 | | Judgement N=17 | | Total N= 163 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Tun to Br* | Br to Tun | Tun to Br | Br to Tun | Tun to Br | Br to Tun | |
| Positive | 25 (56.81) | 16 (36.36) | 62 (60.78) | 27 (26.47) | 9 (52.94) | 6 (35.29) | 145 |
| Negative | 2 (4.54) | 1 (2.27) | 12 (11.76) | 1 (0.92) | 1 (5.88) | 1 (5.88) | 18 |
| Total | 27 (61.36) | 17 (38.63) | 74 (72.54) | 28 (27.45) | 10 (58.82) | 7 (41.17) | 163 |

*Tun to Br and Br to Tun refer to the direction of appraisal from Tunisian characters to British ones and vice versa

** The items in parentheses refer to the percentage of the item out of the total of each sub-system.

Compared with Self-Appraisal (Table 3), Other-Appraisal is less frequent with 163 instances as opposed to 219 instances of Self-Appraisal, as shown in Table 4. In both cases, that is Self and Other-Appraisals, the native speaker emerges as both the source and the target of evaluation (see Tables 3 and 4). This implies the dominance of the native speaker in textbooks' representation of culture. It also suggests that the relationship and interaction between characters of

different cultural backgrounds are secondary, serving primarily the purpose of discovering the native speaker and foregrounding his/her position as a linguistic and cultural model.

### 4.2. Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of Self and Other-Appraisal across Sub-Systems and Types

The following Tables 5, 6 and 7 present detailed results of each Attitude sub-system, types and Polarity according to the directionality of appraisal.

#### *4.2.1. Quantitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Affect Types*

A general reading of Table 5 shows that most Affect tokens in textbooks are positive Happiness (+ Happiness) and are mostly expressed by British characters. Four significant associations emerge from the data. First, there is a strong relationship between the British Appraiser and the use of Affect-related appraisals. Second an association relates the British as Appraiser and the British persons and attributes as the Appraised. This pattern has established them as the central experiencer of Affect or the trigger of feelings. Third, the British Appraisers are significantly associated with the Happiness subtype. Finally, a notable association is observed between the Tunisian as Appraiser and the Tunisian person and attribute as Appraised.

Overall, the use of the Happiness sub-type is much more frequent for both Appraisers than the other subtypes accounting for 122 out of 133 across both Appraisers. This indicates that evaluation in the textbooks is more directed towards personal feelings described by Martin & White (2005, p. 49) as "'affairs of the heart' -sadness, hate, happiness and love" rather than toward emotions triggered by social phenomena as in (in)Security and those triggered by social achievements as in dis(Satisfaction).

Table 5. *Frequency Distribution and Correlation in Affect Types According to Appraiser*

| Affect | | Tunisian Appraiser | British Appraiser | Correlations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Number | Chi-square | Significance |
| | | 44 | 89 | 133.000 | * |
| Type | (+/-) Happiness | 43 | 79 | 3.118 | * |
| | (+/-) Security | 1 | 8 | 2.105 | |
| | (+/-) Satisfaction | 0 | 2 | 1.004 | |
| Polarity | Positive | 35 | 62 | 1.457 | |
| | Negative | 9 | 27 | 1.457 | |
| Appraised | Tunisian (person +attribute) | 17 | 17 | 5.905 | * |
| | Tunisian person | 10 | 7 | 1.059 | |
| | Tunisian attribute | 7 | 10 | 1.059 | |
| | British (person +attribute) | 27 | 72 | 5.905 | * |
| | British person | 16 | 33 | 1.416 | |
| | British attribute | 11 | 39 | 1.416 | |

The following section provides a qualitative analysis of examples selected from the textbooks to illustrate how Happiness tokens are realized to offer deeper insights into the type of attitudes they construct.

#### *4.2.2. Qualitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Affect Types*

This section presents a qualitative analysis of Affect types, examining both Self-appraisals and Other-Appraisals

##### *4.2.2.1. Qualitative Analysis of Affect-related Self-Appraisals*

The analysis begins with examples of Affect tokens, which are, the, followed by a detailed qualitative discussion.

**Example 1.** a. Author: "Imene is *very happy* because she's got a lot of presents." *(Let's Learn English*, p. 92).

b. Author describing a birthday party at Chris' house: "Everybody looks *happy* […] chatting warmly. They are *all excited***.** (*Let's Learn More English*, p. 66).

In examples 1a and 1b, Tunisian and British people appraise themselves as happy people through the author's voice. Affect expressed in these instances is both positive and intense, conveyed by the adjectives "happy" and "excited", which are further upscaled by the adverbs "very" and "all" respectively. In both examples, the feeling of happiness is associated with celebrations.

**Example 2.** a. Aly "We are *very pleased* to invite you to our quiet island." (*Let's Learn English,* p. 42).

b. Chris: "We will be *very happy* to see you again and I promise you won't regret it." (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 12).

In examples 2a and 2b, both the Tunisian and British characters express strong feelings of pleasure and happiness about inviting their foreign friends. In each example, these feelings are upscaled by the intensifier "very", highlighting the hospitable character of both groups.

**Example 3.** a. Author*:* "English people *love* pets. They take good care of them." (*Let's Learn English*, p. 28).

b. Unnamed British character about his parents: "They *don't make me feel guilty*" (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 118).

c. "I have many friends and they are *all dear* to me." (*Let's Learn More English*, p. 122).

In Example 3, British characters express feelings towards parents, pets, and friends and attitudes towards social relationships. These expressions of feelings of Happiness are predominantly positive and strong, achieved through the intensification resources such as the verb to "love" in Example 3a, and the quantifier "all" in Example 3c. This use of intensified positive Affect conveys the happy relations that British characters maintain with their social environment. However, the quantitative analysis indicates that 27 out of 89 instances of Affect are negative, as illustrated in Example 4.

**Example 4.** a. British character (unnamed):" No one is here to keep me company. *I feel lonely*." (*Let's Learn More English*, p. 117).

b. Catherine: "Mum is very *upset*. I am very *unhappy* right now." (*Let's Learn More English,* p. 126).

These examples of (- Happiness) underscore feelings of loneliness that British teenage characters experience while living with and relating to their families. These meanings are expressed by the adjectives "lonely" and the intensified adjectives "very unhappy" and "very upset".

To sum up, the analysis of Self-Appraisal of Affect by both Appraisers validates the dominance of the Happiness sub-type and how it is realized in appraising celebrations. Happiness tokens in connection with social relations are particularly articulated by British characters to express positive connections with their families. The qualitative analysis has also demonstrated that such relations can sometimes be unhappy. The analysis of the examples reveals that Self-appraisal of Affect, particularly of Happiness, is realized through upscaling graduation resources, revealing the emotional orientation of the characters' attitudes towards people, events, and activities.

*4.2.2.2. Qualitative Analysis of Affect-related Other-Appraisals*

As shown in Table 5, expressions of Affect towards the other are not statistically significant, nor are they frequent in the corpus. Example 5 illustrates a few instances of the British and Tunisian characters' Affect towards each other.

**Example 5.** a. Aly talking about Norwich: "I *like* the houses, the streets and the river." (*Let's Learn English,* p.41).

b. Author talking about Peter in Djerba: "He *likes* their big hats and traditional clothes." (*Let's Learn English*, p. 88).

The utterances by Tunisian and British characters in Example 5 include positive Happiness tokens that appraise attributes of the other characters' culture. These Affect instances are oriented towards positive Appreciation as they reflect emotionally-loaded attitudes towards the material features of culture, such as places and clothes, which reflects the textbooks' tendency to promote a tourist gaze.

### *4.2.3. Quantitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Judgement Types*

The results in Table 6 show that the Judgement sub-system is more frequently used by British characters than by Tunisian ones, with 48 and 25 out of a total of 73 occurrences, respectively. A significant association is found between the British Appraiser and the use of Judgement-related appraisals.

Table 6. *Frequency Distribution and Correlation in Judgement Types According to Appraiser*

| Judgement | | Tunisian Appraiser | British Appraiser | Correlations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Number | Chi-square | Significance |
| | | 25 | 48 | 73.00 | * |
| Type | (+/-) Normality | 0 | 1 | 0.528 | |
| | (+/-) Propriety | 7 | 39 | 20.000 | * |
| | (+/-) Veracity | 0 | 0 | 0.000 | |
| | (+/-) Tenacity | 6 | 0 | 12.557. | * |
| | (+/-) Capacity | 12 | 8 | 8.114 | * |
| Polarity | Positive | 18 | 36 | 0.077 | |
| | Negative | 7 | 12 | 0.077 | |
| Appraised | Tunisian (person +attribute) | 15 | 6 | 18.100 | * |
| | Tunisian person | 13 | 5 | 0.039 | |
| | Tunisian attribute | 2 | 1 | 0..039 | |
| | British (person +attribute) | 10 | 42 | 18.100 | * |
| | British person | 9 | 39 | 0.093 | |
| | British attribute | 1 | 3 | 0.093 | |

As for the classification of Judgement according to sub-types, Table 6 shows that Propriety related Judgement is the most frequent sub-type used by all Appraisers, followed by Capacity and Tenacity (46 out of 73 appraisal instances). A significant relationship is found between the British Appraiser and the use of Propriety-related Judgement, whereas a significant association is noted between the Tunisian Appraiser and the use of Capacity and Tenacity related appraisals, though the number remains limited.

Table 6 also reveals that both Appraisers tend to use positive Judgement tokens to evaluate one's behavior and avoid judging others, with Tunisians using 15 Self-Appraisals of Judgement out of 25 and British expressing 42 out of 48. The British characters use Propriety-related Judgement for Self-evaluation (39 out of 48 instances of Judgement-related appraisals), emphasizing moral qualities of honesty, kindness, and goodness. Tunisian characters, however, use Capacity and Tenacity more than Propriety sub-types of Judgement, emphasizing qualities of maturity, courage, and resolution. The British and Tunisian characters use more positive Self and Other Judgement tokens than negative ones, which aligns with the results obtained from the analysis of Affect.

### *4.2.4. Qualitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Judgement Types*

The qualitative analysis of examples of Judgement tokens produced by Tunisian and British characters are analyzed to understand how both parties evaluate their behavior and each other's behavior.

#### *4.2.4.1. Qualitative Analysis of Judgement-related Self-Appraisals*

**Example 6.** a. Unnamed British character: "I get on well with my parents because they are *very understanding*." (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 118).

b. Unnamed British character: "Nat is *the best*. He is *always polite and cheerful*. He *always greets people with a lovely smile.* Besides, he is *very helpful* and *always ready to lend a hand*". Yet, the thing I like most is his *generosity*" (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 122).

c. Author about Tunisian teacher Miss Shedly: "She was *active and cheerful*" [....] "her pupils were attentive" [...] "many of them were *excellent* at using the keyboard." *Let's Learn English*, p. 152).

d. Author (Tunisian pupil at prep school): "Every one of them is *responsible fo*r cleaning one part of the school." (*Let's Learn English,* p. 157).

In the British characters' judgement of people in their environment, focus is put on the positive ethical behavior of British teenagers' parents and friends. Parents' behavior with their children is evaluated in terms of Propriety. In utterance 6a, parents are positively evaluated as "understanding". The appraisal of friends' behavior is positive through the use of the adjectives good, polite and cheerful that are intensified by the superlative and the adverbs "always" and "very" (6b)

Tunisian characters do not appraise Tunisian people from a Propriety perspective, but from a Capacity one. Focus is on the individual's capacity to perform actions rather than on the interpersonal and social dimensions of Judgement. While the British characters' behaviour is judged as "helpful", "polite" and "cheerful" (6 a, 6b), Tunisian characters' behaviour is evaluated "active", "excellent", "responsible" (6c, 6d). The focus on morality in constructing British characters' attitudes indicates a tendency to showcase the human dimension in the native speakers' character.

*4.2.4.1. Qualitative Analysis of Judgement-related Other-Appraisals*

As shown by the quantitative analysis, limited are the instances where British and Tunisian characters appraise each other and where Tunisian characters judge the British. The following instances in Example 7 illustrate the type of Judgement appraisals used by both characters, with more focus on the British characters' appraisal of Tunisians.

> **Example 7.** a. Peter talking about Aly's English teacher and school headmaster: "Both men were *kind* to me" (*Let's Learn English*, p. 143).
>
> b. Chris: "People are very *friendly and helpful*." (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 12).
>
> c. Imene to Chris: "You are *good* at dancing." (*Let's Learn more English*, p. 68).

Instances of Judgement 7a and 7b include British characters Peter and Chris talking about Tunisian people they met during their stays in Djerba. Tunisian people are positively evaluated in terms of their moral qualities. They are "kind", "friendly" and "helpful". These adjectives express the Propriety sub-type of Judgement sub-system, whereas the adjective "good" used by the Tunisian character Imene is of the Capacity sub-type. The characters' use of different sub-types aligns with the quantitative results in Table 6. British characters focus on the moral dimension of their behavior and others' behavior, whereas the Tunisian characters are more interested in the Capacity dimension.

To conclude the analysis of the Judgement sub-system, the findings indicate that the British characters employ more Judgement appraisal resources than the Tunisian characters. These appraisals are mostly directed toward people in their immediate social environment, namely their parents and friends, and are largely positive with Propriety as the dominant type. This focus suggests an emphasis on the moral dimension of the British characters' behavior, in contrast to Tunisian characters, whose evaluations are more oriented towards physical and mental capacities. The attitudes that the textbooks' writers aim to construct and transmit to Tunisian learners of English about themselves and the British people and culture are mainly positive. The limited frequency of mutual appraisals reflects a tendency to avoid conflictual relationships. The portrayal of Tunisian teenagers' attitudes may reflect the textbooks' writers' intention to promote the model of "the good pupil" who is excellent at using technology and is willing to do voluntary work for the benefit of his/her school environment. The model of the intercultural speaker (Byram, 2021) does not emerge as a clear pedagogical objective given the scarcity of mutual Judgement and limited opportunities provided for relationship building and intercultural communication.

***4.2.5. Quantitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Appreciation Types***

The results in Table 7 show that the appraisal of attributes is more dominant than the appraisal of persons when the Appraiser is Tunisian or British. Tunisian Appraisers (characters and textbooks' writers) use Appreciation tokens more frequently than the British Appraisers, with 107 and 69 out of 176 Appreciation tokens, respectively. This is supported by the significant association found between the Tunisian Appraiser and the use of Appreciation-related evaluations (see Table 7).

Table 7. *Frequency Distribution and Correlation in Appreciation Types According to Appraiser*

| Appreciation | | Tunisian Appraiser | British Appraiser | Correlations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Number | Chi-square | Significance |
| | | 107 | 69 | 167.00 | * |
| Type | (+/-) Reaction | 50 | 37 | 0.798 | |
| | (+/-) Composition | 20 | 18 | 1.355 | |
| | (+/-) Valuation | 37 | 14 | 4.162 | * |
| Polarity | Positive | 88 | 61 | 1.227 | |
| | Negative | 19 | 8 | 1.277 | |
| Appraised | Tunisian (person +attribute) | 33 | 28 | 1.757 | |
| | Tunisian person | 4 | 2 | 0.423 | |
| | Tunisian attribute | 29 | 26 | 0.423 | |
| | British (person +attribute) | 74 | 41 | 1.857 | |
| | British person | 12 | 11 | 1.857 | |
| | British attribute | 62 | 30 | 1.857 | |

Table 7 demonstrates that the Tunisian Appraiser tends to evaluate the British persons and attributes more frequently than the Tunisian (74 tokens out of 107), emphasizing the centrality of the native speaker's attributes as the target of appraisal (62 out 74 of Appreciation-related appraisals are directed towards the British attributes). The focus on attributes reinforces the textbooks' tendency to provide content that is oriented towards tourism by highlighting a positive image of the tourist-attraction places in the characters' countries.

In terms of the classification of Appreciation into sub-types, the Reaction sub-type is the most dominant for both Appraisers. According to Martin and White (2005), Reaction is related to affection, which supports the fact that appraisal is built upon feelings both in Affect and Appreciation. As Reaction is related to affection, attitudes expressed by Appraisers are emotional rather than cognitive. This result seems to align with the general frequency distribution of attitudinal sub-systems (see Table 2), indicating the dominance of Appreciation sub-system in the corpus under analysis.

The Valuation subtype of Appreciation ranks second in frequency after Reaction and is strongly associated with Tunisian Appraiser. As shown in Table 7, 37 out of 107 instances of Appreciation produced by Tunisian Appraisers belong to Valuation, emphasizing the worth and significance of the appraised objects (Martin & White, 2005).

### *4.2.6. Qualitative Analysis of Self and Other-Appraisal across Appreciation Types*

The following examples are analyzed to understand how Appreciation and its sub-types are realized by British and Tunisian Appraisers to evaluate their cultures and each other's culture.

#### *4.2.6.1. Qualitative Appreciation-related Self-Appraisal*

**Example 8.** a. Aly: "My family and I are very pleased to invite you to *our quiet island*. We always have a *lovely weather*" (*Let's Learn English*, p. 42).

b. A Tunisian pupil: "Our prep school is *small*, but it is *very nice*." (*Let's Learn English*, p. 157).

c. Unnamed British character: "I think school is *boring and tiring*." *(Let's Learn more English*, p. 50).

d. Peter: "Fish and chips. It is my *favourite* fast food." *(Let's Lean English,* p. 41)

The utterances above are examples of Reaction-related Self-appraisals. For the Tunisian Appraisers, Djerba, an island renowned for being a tourist attraction, is described as "quiet" and its weather as "lovely" (8a). The description of the Tunisian schools is positive ("nice") and upscaled by the intensifier "very" (8b). The British characters' appraisal of the attributes of their culture such as food is also positive and of Reaction type (8d), whereas attributes related to everyday life such as school life, are negatively appraised through the adjectives "boring" and "tiring" as mentioned in example 8c.

#### *4.2.6.2. Qualitative Appreciation-related Other-Appraisal*

**Example 9.** a. Aly: "Norwich is a *very beautiful* city." (*Let's Learn English*, p. 42).

b. Imene in her diary: "took pictures of Nelson's Column… *Very interesting*" (*Let's Learn More English*, p. 24).

c. Chris: "The island was very *quiet and peaceful.*" (*Let's Learn More English*, p. 12).

d. Peter about Couscous: "This dish *smells delicious.*" (*Let's Learn English,* p. 61).

e. Peter: "Here the weather is *very nice*. It is *usually sunny and warm* in Jerba." (*Let's Learn English,* p. 128).

Tunisian characters' evaluation of British culture is largely limited to features typically appreciated by tourists. In examples 9a and 9b, Tunisian characters' attitudes towards the British culture's attributes combine positive Reaction and positive Valuation, both intensified by the adverb "very". Example 9a illustrates the Reaction type, where Norwich is appraised as a "very beautiful" city and the environment is described as "beautiful" and "clean" (9b). Tunisian characters' evaluation of Britain is, however, of Valuation type, emphasizing the value of some British monuments which are described as "very interesting" (9 b).

Utterances 9d, 9e, and 9f illustrate the British characters' use of Appreciation to evaluate attributes of Tunisian culture, including food, the island, and the weather. The evaluations are predominantly positive, intensified, and of the Reaction subtype, reflecting emotions rather than reasoned judgments. The island is described as "quiet" and "peaceful," while the weather is frequently praised as "lovely," "very nice," and "usually sunny and warm" (see examples 9c and 9e). Overall, the Appreciation expressed by both British and Tunisian characters reinforces a tourism-oriented view of Tunisia and Britain

To summarize, the analysis integrates both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitatively, all sub-systems are expressed by Tunisian and British Appraisers with varying frequencies. Affect and Appreciation sub-systems are more recurrent in the corpus than Judgement for both Appraisers. Self-appraisal is more frequent than Other-Appraisal, with the British Appraiser as the dominant source and target of appraisal. At the subtype level, positive Happiness is the most frequently used subtype of the Affect subsystem triggered by attributes such as events and celebrations. Within Judgement, the Propriety sub-type, is more frequently employed by British Appraisers particularly when evaluating parents and friends, while in Appreciation, Reaction is the dominant sub-type, reflecting an emotive appreciation of attributes. Qualitatively, the analysis illustrates these quantitative patterns, showing that most attitudes are positive, affect-oriented, and often intensified through adverbs.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Representation of Self and Other-Appraisals Across the Sub-systems

The results of this study provide insights into how two Tunisian EFL textbooks represent Self (Appraiser's culture) and Other (the culture of the Appraised) through the attitudes of the characters and the narrator (textbook writers), using the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory. Overall, the results indicate that the three sub-systems are present, with the dominance of Appreciation followed by Affect, while Judgement is the least expressed attitude. The dominance of Appreciation suggests that textbooks' cultural representation is mostly focused on the material dimension of culture, which reinforces a tourist gaze towards the cultures portrayed and de-humanizes Self-Other relationship. This limitation is further supported by the predominantly positive attitudes expressed in both directions (towards Self and Other). From an intercultural pedagogical perspective, the dominance of positive attitudes may hinder intercultural communication and lead to disappointment when encountering a different reality in interaction (Byram, 2021; Sercu, 2000). A realistic cultural content should include a balanced representation of positive and negative aspects to help learners acquire accurate knowledge of the target culture (Canale, 2016) and develop relativized intercultural attitudes that are essential for effective intercultural communication (Risager, 1991; Sercu, 2000).

As for Self-Appraisal across the subsystems, the analysis reveals it is predominantly positive. These results are in line with the findings obtained from the analysis of EFL textbooks' cultural representations in different EFL contexts. For example, Abid's (2012) study on the Tunisian EFL textbooks' representation of culture shows that both the Tunisian and British cultures are portrayed positively. Abid (2012) and Sercu (2000) argue that the representation of culture is unrealistic if it excludes the negative aspects. It may lead to intercultural misunderstanding in intercultural encounters. Self-Appraisal analysis also indicates that the British Appraiser expresses more positive Affect, while the Tunisian tends to use positive Appreciation. This may imply that the British Appraiser is more concerned with his/her personal feelings,

whereas the Tunisian is more interested in depicting the material dimensions of his/her culture and country, including the beautiful and quiet island, the lovely weather and the sandy beaches.

The results of Self-Appraisal also show that the British Appraiser is more articulate at the three subsystems, positioning him/her as the source of appraisal and the dominant participant in textbooks' discourse. Similar results are found by studies on EFL textbooks' cultural representation and intercultural contacts, which underscore the powerful position of the native speaker as a dominant participant in conversations, the main source of information and the character assuming more roles in interaction (Abid & Moalla, 2020; Abid & Moalla, 2022; AlZubi et al., 2023; Moalla et al. 2025; Bose & Gao, 2022). In AlZubi et al's (2023) and Masghoudi's (2020) studies, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis has revealed the dominance of native speakers with the exclusion of the national culture. Kamran et al., (2019) and Masghoudi (2020), however, have found different results. They show that the textbooks' representation of Western cultures in Punjab and Iran, respectively emphasize negative representation of the Western cultures while glorifying the local culture as a policy to protect the national identity against Western imperialism. From an intercultural language teaching perspective, these researchers argue that the imbalanced representation of culture in textbooks can only develop stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes, which impede the development of ICC (Alzubi, 2023; Karman et al., 2019; Masghoudi, 2020).

As for Other-Appraisal, being less frequent than Self-appraisal, reflects the lack of reciprocity and mutual representation. Interaction and building relationships between the British and Tunisian Appraisers are undermined. In line with this study, Abid & Moalla's (2020, 2022) analysis of intercultural contacts in Tunisian EFL textbooks reveals that the conversations between Tunisian and British characters are based on emotionless question-answer patterns. The Tunisian character is represented as the seeker of information and the British character as the provider of knowledge about his culture.

### 5.2. Representation of Self and Other Through the Sub-systems and Types

This section discusses the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of attitude sub-systems and their types across Appraiser and Appraised, with a focus on how the types of Attitude subsystems are realized to convey particular attitudes and representation of Self and Other.

#### *5.2.1. Affect Types*

The analysis of the Affect sub-system and its types shows that both appraisers use positive Happiness more than the other Affect types. The qualitative analysis of some examples clarifies how feelings are both positive and intense through upscaling of positive adjectives. Self-Appraisal is centered on positive emotional reactions towards material things, emphasizing the textbooks' tendency to construct a view of Britain and Tunisia as tourist attraction places. This claim is confirmed by Abid's (2020) study on the same textbooks, which has given similar results, using Content Analysis as an analytical tool.

The analysis of Other-Appraisal reveals that Affect tokens directed at the Other are neither frequent nor statistically significant. This implies that the textbooks do not seem to prioritize the human dimension or relationship building. Most of the Affect tokens are of Happiness type and oriented towards Appreciation, as they are reactions to material things and events such as the weather, parks, monuments, tourist-attraction places and beaches. This stands in opposition to Vinagre and Corral's (2018; 2019) findings, which highlight the importance of mutual Affect for relationship building between participants. The participants in their studies employ Affect more frequently than Appreciation and Judgement to seek interaction with their virtual partners and establish relationships of solidarity. Similar results are found by Magfiroh et al. (2021) who argue in their research on a narrative text from an English Textbook that positive Affect tokens, especially those of Inclination type, help the text narrator to build rapport with the readers and influence their emotions.

#### *5.2.2. Judgement Types*

As for the Judgement sub-system, both Appraisers use a limited number of positive Judgements, avoiding evaluating each other's behavior and exchanging attitudes. As for Judgement types, British Appraisers tend to evaluate themselves and their Tunisian counterparts using Propriety type of Judgement, focusing on qualities of kindness and honesty. However, Tunisian Appraisers use Capacity and Tenacity related judgement, focusing more on the physical and mental capacities of Tunisian characters to represent themselves as achievers. This aligns with Abid's (2020) research on

the same textbooks as the present study, which shows that intercultural encounters are flat and monodirectional, lacking mutual representation and judgement of behavior and character. The study, however, does not specify the attitude types given the limitation of Content Analysis to provide this typology.

### *5.2.3. Appreciation Types*

The results of the Appreciation sub-system show that the appraisal of attributes is more frequent than that of persons, with Tunisian Appraisers evaluating the British attributes more than the reverse. This confirms previous results about the dominance of the native speaker as the source and target of appraisal. In terms of Appreciation types, positive Reaction is the most frequently used and is more oriented towards feelings. Limiting the representation to the positive material aspects promotes a discourse that serves tourists' needs, and not learners who intend to establish intercultural connections and communicate interculturally for different purposes, such as studying and working (Abid, 2020; Abid & Moalla, 2022).

The analysis of cultural representation through the lenses of Appraisal Theory comprises several advantages compared to Content Analysis, a dominant methodological framework in intercultural studies. These advantages are summarized in the following points:

(1) Unlike studies based on Content Analysis, which focus on the categorization of cultural content into topics such as, school and family and compares their presentation across cultures, cultural representation through attitudes goes beyond the categorization of content into fixed topics to a representation of cultural aspects through emotions, evaluation of objects and behaviour.

(2) As opposed to Content Analysis, which offers little insight into the connection between people from different cultures, the Appraisal System gives an idea on how Tunisian and British characters perceive themselves and others, which can have an impact on the Tunisian learners' future interactions with British people or other people from different cultural backgrounds.

(3) Content Analysis of cultural representation of persons focuses on the quantification of criteria marking someone's identity such as physical appearance, origin, gender, occupation, and age. The representation through Appraisal Theory offers complementary perspectives on the representation of characters that are related to their personality markers (Affect and judgement), how they connect with the world (Appreciation), and how they connect with each other (through being Appraiser and Appraised). Appraisal does not identify humans as entities with fixed distinctive physical features and social roles, but humans with feelings and attitudes.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study investigated the representation of culture in two Tunisian EFL textbooks using the Attitude System of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to identify how the British and Tunisian cultures were represented through the textbooks' characters' attitudes towards themselves (Self) and each other (Other). The analysis of texts in terms of the Appraisal subsystems and their types showed an imbalance in the representation of the cultures in question revealed from the uneven distribution of evaluative resources over the subsystems and their types. The imbalance has led to the following conclusions. First, the high frequency of evaluative tokens used for the British as Appraiser and Appraised in the three subsystems highlights the centrality of the native speaker as a linguistic and cultural model in the two EFL textbooks. Second, the dominance of the positive Appreciation sub-system reinforces the Appraisers' perception of Britain and Tunisia as tourist attraction countries. Third, the lack of Judgement tokens showcases the under-representation of human interactions and exchanges in the textbooks.

The results obtained from the implementation of Appraisal Theory can have implications for language teaching pedagogy and research on intercultural language learning. Textbooks' content used in the Tunisian and other EFL contexts should be more balanced and more inclusive of the learners' culture and other cultures. The native speaker is not the only possible interlocutor for Tunisian EFL learners. With the proliferation of social media and telecommunication means, learners have more opportunities to communicate with geographically and culturally distant people for different purposes. The model of the native speaker should be replaced by the intercultural speaker (Byram, 2021) who is able to mediate between cultures and interact with culturally different people on equal basis, using cultural knowledge, attitudes of tolerance and openness, and communication skills. Content should also include more intercultural interactions where

attitudes are expressed, exchanged and analysed by language learners to understand their importance for the success and failure in intercultural communication.

Teachers as well can benefit from the use of Appraisal Theory and the Attitude System. It is important in the context of language and culture teaching to raise teachers' awareness of the role that Appraisal Theory plays in enhancing the critical reading of the texts they plan to teach and in fostering learners' ability to express their attitudes effectively in writing and speaking. Critical thinking is assumed to be an essential skill that contributes to the development of ICC through comparison of cultures (Murtazina et al., 2023).

Based on this study, it can be argued that Appraisal Theory has provided a different methodological perspective on textbook analysis and the notion of representation in the context of teaching languages for intercultural communication. It has demonstrated its relevance and usefulness to the study of cultural representation of English language textbooks through the attitudes of characters. The theory can empower researchers by providing a system that helps enhance the understanding of the different layers of attitudes that cannot be observed through other analytical methods such as Content Analysis.

Appraisal Theory has offered a deeper understanding of how feelings, evaluation of objects and behaviour can reveal about the culture(s) included. However, behind characters, there are textbook writers and publishers who have a voice and intentions behind the selection of textbooks' content, a content that may reflect their ideologies and influence their decision of which content to be included or excluded. Appraisal Theory, we assume, can be a relevant framework to the investigation of textbook writers' voice, using the Engagement and Graduation systems.

In the present study, the results obtained from the analysis of evaluative resources were discussed with research using other frameworks such as CDA, Multimodality and Content Analysis. This implies that an Attitude-based analysis can be supplemented with other analytical approaches to enable a deeper analysis and multiperspectival interpretations and discussion of the results. Also, one of the limitations of this study is the focus of analysis on written texts. Visuals can also be subject of investigation in terms of their representation of attitudes as advanced by multimodal research (Chen, 2019; Moalla et al., 2025; Weninger, 2020).

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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