

# Reprezentacija britanske kulture u udžbenicima engleskoga jezika

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UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB  
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH CULTURE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS**

MASTER`S THESIS

Zagreb, 2021.

University of Zagreb  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Department of English

**REPRESENTATION OF BRITISH CULTURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEXTBOOKS**

Master`s Thesis

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Zagreb, 2021.

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Language, medium and perception.....	2
Theoretical framework - an attempt to define culture .....	4
<i>Divisions as an essential element of cultures</i> .....	5
<i>The attitude of Western culture towards itself and towards other cultures</i> .....	12
British Empire, Culture and English language.....	16
<i>English as a colonizing phenomenon</i> .....	19
Educational colonization .....	21
Framework for qualitative analysis of textbooks .....	22
<i>Research aim and research question, development of an instrument for analysis</i> .....	26
<i>Analyses of individual textbooks</i> .....	34
<i>Headway Pre-intermediate</i> .....	34
<i>Smiles 1</i> .....	38
<i>Solutions</i> .....	40
<i>Project explore 1</i> .....	43
<i>New Success</i> .....	45
<i>Results and interpretation</i> .....	47
Conclusion .....	51
Works cited.....	53
Appendix 1 – Instrument for textbook analysis .....	57

## **Abstract**

### **Representation of British culture in English language textbooks**

This thesis deals with a critical analysis of the way in which British culture is represented in English textbooks for primary and secondary school which are available on the Croatian market. The aim of the paper was to investigate whether the representation of British culture in textbooks is realistic, i.e., whether some elements of culture are omitted and whether others are emphasized in order to present culture in a different, desired way. The analysis of five different textbooks from three different British publishers was conducted using an instrument developed for this purpose and based on the theoretical framework that deals with defining culture for the purposes of this paper. The results of the analysis show that the depictions of British culture in the analyzed textbooks (Headway Pre-Intermediate, New Success Elementary, Project Explore 1, Smiles 1, and Solutions Pre-Intermediate) are generally unrealistic and the UK culture is presented in a way that dominantly emphasizes positive elements, making the presentation superficial and stereotypical. Although there are differences among the textbooks in the degree of realism regarding the presentation of culture, none of the analyzed textbooks deals with divisions on political, national, racial, ethnic, economic, ideological or religious grounds in a somewhat serious way. English textbooks are nowadays largely written for a large number of markets that are different across a range of parameters, and incorporating such divisions would potentially undermine the sales of the textbooks and thus the publishers' profits, which, from a pedagogical perspective, is a problem that deserves to be approached critically.

Keywords: English language, textbook, culture

## **Introduction**

This paper deals with the subject of representation of British culture in English textbooks from the perspective of critical pedagogy. The course of the work is such that first some definitions of culture are provided, which are relevant for setting the theoretical framework of the work, but also for the subsequent construction of the empirical part of this research. After that, the specific context of the English language today is processed, and the analysis of the textbooks ensues. It is self-evident that teaching and learning are subjects of pedagogical science, and since I am studying both pedagogy and teaching English as a foreign language, I was prompted to explore the picture of the United Kingdom offered by textbooks used in teaching English. Critical reflection on textbooks is necessary to establish how good they are as teaching aids, but also what kind of a picture of reality they provide students with and what their potential long-term pedagogical effect is, regarding the formation of students as persons in terms of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, etc.

## Language, medium and perception

"The more languages you know, the more valuable you are" a popular proverb reads. If a human being were, for example, a tractor that offers the ability to attach multiple different attachments, such as a plow, disc harrow or seed drill, this statement would be completely accurate, but a person's value is intrinsic and does not depend on the work they are able to do. To think otherwise would run the risk of engaging in dangerous discrimination, where those who know and can are considered more valuable than those who do not know or cannot do so much. This would be contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically Article 1, which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Narodne Novine, 2009). Obviously, this form of folk wisdom needs to be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, this proverb contains a good deal of truth, since the language used by a person greatly shapes and determines their thinking, which is self-evident to those who are sufficiently introspective during language learning, and which, in linguistics, is called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or the linguistic relativity hypothesis (Hussein, 2012). Casasanto also argues that: "(...) speakers of different languages come to think differently in various ways, via a variety of mechanisms (...)" (2014, 109). An interesting and concrete difference, which becomes obvious to those who speak both Croatian and English, is the lack of morphological specificity of gender in many nouns in English. For example, the word teacher can mean both a female and a male teacher, the word boss can denote both a female and a male boss or so on. But does Casasanto's statement that speakers of different languages think differently automatically imply vice versa, that speakers of the same language think the same? This could be related to the nationalists that Katunarić writes about: "(...) who determine kinship among people as linguistic in terms of speaking the same language (rather than the meaning and significance expressed in language)" (2007, 5). Such logic is invalid and one should be careful so that speaking the same language would not be equated with having the same opinion, attitude, worldview and the like. Although to some extent it determines and directs thinking, language is undoubtedly a polyvalent tool that enables the divergent thinking needed to navigate life, whether it is used for perceiving reality, acquiring knowledge or communicating with others.

As for the perception of reality, in the state of human embodiment it is necessarily done through a certain medium. In physics, specifically optics, a medium is defined as the matter through which light moves. For example, even a small child can understand that a clean window is better than a dirty one; it seems to us an innate assumption that one of the

measures of the usefulness of a window is the amount of light it lets in. After all, if we didn't need light inside buildings, we wouldn't be building windows, as they are more expensive and complex than a wall that could be in their place. Just as a window is better if it lets in more light, we can say that the medium is better the more transparent it is. It is interesting to note that the means of informing the public are also called media, and it is necessary to keep in mind their profitable or even regime, and thus potentially biased nature, which, sometimes more and sometimes less, paints them in a certain colour. Just like while looking at stained glass window through which the sun is shining, a person sitting in a room can experience sunlight as greenish or bluish while it really isn't.

Light is a very good example in the context of these introductory thoughts about language and education because it enables sight, and it is sight or *idea* in Greek and form or character in Latin that are the elements that form the basis of education, because, according to Hentig, education takes place according to an image, as illustrated by the word *Bildung*. In German it means education and comes from the word *Bild*, which means a picture (Hentig, 2008). Furthermore, in the Croatian language, the connection between the word education (*obrazovanje*) and the word face (*obraz*) should be noticed, and to lighten someone's face (*osvjetlati obraz*) or defile it (*okaljati obraz*) means to influence the public perception of a person in a positive or negative way. Therefore, in terms of language teaching, and in particular, teaching aids such as textbooks, it is necessary to inquire about their transparency, i.e. how well they convey the image of reality from the object to the observer. Of course, reality is hard to define, so we could just consider it a set of physically observable parameters, such as light and sound, for the sake of the discussion at hand. As human beings, we are very limited in terms of perception through the senses, as we see a very narrow range of the electromagnetic spectrum, i.e. light with a wavelength of 380 to 720 nanometres (Hadhazy, 2015) and hear only a very small fraction of sound waves, wavelengths from 20 hertz to 20 kilohertz (Fay, 1988). The physical perception of reality for human beings is therefore very limited, and in this connection we can recall whistles for dogs that humans do not hear, but dogs do hear them, or infrared thermal cameras that capture what a human being does not see with the naked eye, and yet we know it exists. Furthermore, another limitation is that the nature of human perception and interpretation of reality is such that a person tends to weave their experiences, aspirations, desires, fears, ambitions, etc. into that act. In other words, humans are necessarily subjective beings in this respect, but it is our duty to look at reality critically from several angles, especially bearing in mind the various enumerated limitations of human



sensory, cognitive, and emotional perception, so that in our own being and acting we would minimize biases and shortcomings stemming from the mentioned tendencies, which are characteristic for human beings. If language is a medium of perceiving reality, acquiring knowledge and communicating, then the textbook is a kind of meta-medium, i.e. a medium that deals with another medium, and as such, the textbook deserves to be created and chosen carefully, regardless of the inertia of established trends within the educational system, financial interests and the like.

### **Theoretical framework - an attempt to define culture**

Bearing in mind the limitations in terms of human perception, we can move on to the object of perception itself. In this context, the object of perception is the notion of culture, which is ambiguous and complex, and for that reason it would be good to move from simpler considerations of the said notion to more complex ones. Of course, this paper will not deal with bacterial communities also called cultures, nor will it deal with the verb cultivation as tillage, but these meanings can help to see how ambiguous and demanding the term culture for analysis. The Croatian encyclopaedia conveys the definition of E.B. Taylor, which is considered the first scientific and broadest definition of culture, which states that culture consists of knowledge, religion, art, morality, laws and customs. Taylor set out this definition back in 1871 in his work *Primitive Culture*. Also according to the Croatian encyclopaedia, culture is “a term that usually denotes a complex set of institutions, values, ideas and practices that make up the life of a particular human group, and are transmitted and received through learning” (Croatian encyclopaedia, 2020). If culture is received through learning and contains, among other things, knowledge, it becomes obvious that it is not possible to teach someone something in a culturally neutral way, without transmitting culture to the student, or without co-constructing culture with them. That is, any teaching is a necessarily a cultural activity, so the teaching of the English language is necessarily a cultural and political act, and it is important to consider the teaching aids by which it is conducted.

As for the definition of culture, they are very numerous, but currently it is not quantity but quality that matters, otherwise we could enumerate indefinitely. In the introduction to his work, Katunarić (2007) criticizes the collecting approach (which is very common) when defining culture and strives for a consistent definition whose parts would be logically connected and which would be usable for the purpose of understanding and explaining the

notion. He writes, “Despite so much dispersion, the meanings converge somewhere. Contemporary authors, from functionalists and Marxists to postmodernists, agree on at least one thing. Culture is a secondary pattern of adaptation to a reality that is already affected by the less ‘cultivated’ forces of human activity” (2007, 145). Despite the relative convergence of meanings of many definitions of culture, it seems that culture carries something inherently divergent, which does not unite but separates: “So, in socioanthropological terms, culture consists of beliefs, customs, language, historical memory, identity and a lifestyle of people in general: of peoples, social classes, professions, age groups, etc. All such elements serve, above all, to establish boundaries between groups” (Katunarić, 2007, 156). Here the boundaries, quite obviously, serve to establish divisions.

### *Divisions as an essential element of cultures*

Katunarić offers another meaning of culture, which is probably the most widespread, i.e. it appears as the first association with the word cultured: “So 'cultured' means 'civilized.' Such a meaning is elitist and exclusive, as it takes the manners of the European aristocracy as a model of culture and civilization” (Katunarić, 2007, 149). Here the author implies that those who do not have desirable manners are not cultured, that is, the division into those who are cultured and those who are not becomes obvious. At the very beginning, Europeans set themselves up as an authority on the matter, guided by their own ethnocentrism. Self-criticism aside, it is necessary to pose the question: what about the expression *ancient culture*, when one thinks of, for example, Mesopotamia? What about the natives, since they are also admitted to have some kind of culture? “So, there is no Culture, only cultures. That is what belongs to a man as a member of a group (Kroeber, Kluckhohn, 1960; Williams, 1982)” (Katunarić, 2007, 155).

One of the most present divisions today is still very strong in the mind of the so-called. common man, although it has been transcended in the minds of the rich and powerful because “money has no homeland”. It is about the concept of the state, i.e. the nation as a state, which is being overcome today by integrating nation states into superpowers such as the European Union, NATO, NAFTA, ASEAN, the African Union and the South American Union. The consolidation of power and control will be discussed later, for now this outdated, Enlightenment era concept of the state is important. “In the optics of the Enlightenment, the

national is particular, what divides us, not unites us” (Katunarić, 2007, 154). It is quite possible that this aspiration for the national is in fact the aspiration for love and affection, no matter how shabby it may sound: “The national most successfully imitates the space of a real, intimate and immediate community, such as family, kinship or friendship” (Katunarić, 2007, 158). Katunarić goes on to explain: “Nationally, it is the result of the concurrence of a series of facts in a given area: economic interests, the state and cultural elements - from language to historical monuments - that determine the collective identity of the social majority” (Katunarić, 2007, 157). It is obvious that, according to this definition, there will be differences between national cultures: “(...) cultures are expressions of differences between peoples, languages, religions and social customs and these differences are irreducible” (Katunarić, 2007, 152). These differences are used as an “excuse to conquer territories and appropriate resources” (Katunarić, 2007, 154). “But differences cannot be bridged, only 'put in brackets' in order to achieve some other goal, political or economic. Such an understanding was explained by Max Weber, and today it is formulated as a problem of ‘incommensurability of values’ (Bernstein 1991)” (Katunarić, 2007, 152).

In addition to the struggle between different nations, the author also writes about another struggle, the one between the faces of culture: “Of the two faces, one is gloomy and prone to closing the community and a destructive attitude towards the inner and outer world, and the other, on the contrary, smiles, opens the community and creates and enriches the world (...)” (Katunarić, 2007, 6). He goes on to write about the two cores of culture, the creative and the destructive, and states that the creative cores of two different cultures are actually closer than the creative and destructive cores within the same culture, and that history is actually a struggle between the two cores (2007). The implications of the above actually discredit the already mentioned nationalism. Apart from the already mentioned proximity of identical nuclei in two different cultures, the discrediting of nationalism is based on Katunarić’s position that destructive nuclei are present in all (national) cultures, i.e. that every culture, no matter how proud its people are of it, has a dark side.

When it comes to refuting outdated theories based on ignorance and xenophobia, it is necessary to mention a similar scientifically unfounded, but unfortunately still too present phenomenon that Katunarić’s thinking is reminiscent of, and that is racism. If we take into account the fact that usually larger genetic variations occur within a single population (nations, races, etc.) than between different populations, it becomes clear that racism is not scientifically based (Witherspoon et al., 2007). In particular, differences in phenotype, i.e.

skin colour, do not necessarily entail significant differences in genotype. It is interesting to note that some human beings look for connections with others on the basis of such shallow thinking and how exclusively they behave in the process: “It is similar to the notions of racial or civilizational affiliation in the last few centuries, who falls into which category is the result of an essentially arbitrary definition that has no basis in biology and very little in the history of nations” (Katunarić, 2007, 147).

Do Homo sapiens really need these divisions to feel better? Katunarić offers an explanation: “Finally, culture today is also understood as a pattern of behaviour characteristic of a certain group of people, from tribe to nation. At the same time, various symbolic elements, from language to social customs, serve as signifiers of identity, i.e. the boundaries of group affiliation. When these are not enough, they are being reinforced by clashes between groups. In fact, identity is fully formed only in interaction with other groups (Barth 1969)” (Katunarić 2007, 146). Aristotle said that man is a *zoon politikon* or social being, but it seems that sociability in some way rests on divisions, which at first glance may seem a bit contradictory and negative, because discrimination as an oppressive practice, for example, arises from divisions - sexual, gender, racial, religious, financial, etc. In other words, contrary to the intuitive pacifist idea, divisions within society are not an undesirable side effect in society, but the foundation of identity building, because *others* give us identity in some way.

Historically, divisions according to some criterion have existed in human society since time immemorial, be it sex, gender, language, religion or something else. If we take into account, for example, financial or occupational divisions, castes and classes have changed throughout history (and space) – there have been all sorts of names for the stratification of people, until the emergence of communism as a so-called classless society. This so-called classless society, although attractive as an idea, especially to the lower social strata, needs to be taken with great caution, as Orwell very vividly warns in his *Animal Farm* (1990). Katunarić comments: “Addressing ordinary people, the leaders of public opinion explain popular beliefs and symbols of harmony, primarily religious and national. In this way, they act in an integrative way, interpreting the interests of the upper and lower layers of society as unified. The question of whether these parts belong to the same society or culture is a matter of interpretive art of persuasion” (2007, 146).

A phenomenon that is current and relevant, and in connection with which the interests of human society are presented as unified, is lockdown. According to a report by the World

Labour Organization (WLO) from January 2021, 8.8 percent of working hours were lost compared to the last quarter of 2019, which would mean the loss of 255 million full-time jobs. That is four times the loss caused by the 2009 global financial crisis. It is pointed out that Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as southern Europe and southern Asia, were particularly affected by the losses (International Labour Organization, 2021). In other words, the hardest hit regions are those that are already struggling with poverty. Due to the consequences of lockdowns, and especially in the case of recurrent lockdowns, we can expect a further decline in the number of hours worked, job loss and lower living standards for hundreds of millions of people, if not endangerment of their very survival. If we take the example of Japan as an economically developed country, we will be able to see that things are not fabulous there either. The above mentioned survival has been severely hampered by a 16% increase in the suicide rate during the second wave of COVID-19, compared to the same period last year, with women being hit the hardest and suicide rates rising by as much as 37%. This was due to lockdown measures which severely limited particularly the branches of industry in which mostly women were employed (Reuters in Tokyo, 2021). Thus, through economic inequality, the same phenomenon exacerbates the problem of sex and gender inequality. As for Croatia, according to official data from the Croatian Employment Bureau, in December 2020 there were 28 thousand or 21.3 percent more unemployed persons than in the same month of 2019, making the total of 159,845 unemployed (Monthly statistical bulletin - 12/2020, 2021). For example, from November to December, according to the mentioned bulletin, 3295 people lost their jobs, and from December to early February, i.e. during January, as many as 5270 people became unemployed, which unfortunately shows the trend of accelerating unemployment growth. Thanks to government interventions such as wage subsidies to private companies whose turnover has fallen due to closure, the full force of the crisis is not yet felt, but this is certainly a subjective impression and the question is - how long it will be so?

On the other hand, for 2,200 world billionaires, 2020 was more than successful, since their wealth increased by a total of \$ 1.9 trillion, and now amounts to a staggering \$ 11.4 trillion, according to stock values from December 2020, claims the reputable Forbes. The average world billionaire's wealth has grown by 20%, almost as much as unemployment in Croatia. It is worth mentioning that the United States` over 600 billionaires became \$ 560 billion richer in the previous year and now own about \$ 4 trillion, twice as much as, say, Chinese billionaires. But even though the super-rich Chinese have half as much, in 2020 they amassed

\$ 750 billion and their wealth grew by 60%, compared to a weak 16% increase of US billionaires' wealth. The absolute winner is Elon Musk, who made \$ 110 billion in 2020. His fortune quadrupled in just one year thanks to a 630% rise in Tesla shares, making him the third richest man in the world with \$ 137 billion. In front of him is Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, who increased his wealth by 67 and a half billion dollars, and is now worth a total of 182 billion (Peterson-Withorn, 2021). Katunarić expertly comments: “Someone who knows the world and wants to manage it, looks most at stock market reports” (2007, 147)”.

As people say, one man's loss is another man's gain. Obviously not everyone is equally affected by the financial crisis that is beginning and whose consequences we are yet to experience in their fullness, and which, according to the already mentioned data of the International Labour Organization, could be much worse than those that befell the world ten years ago. It is quite obvious that the interests of the upper and lower strata of society are not unified, but opposed, as they have been countless times throughout history. The gap between rich and poor has widened indescribably during this crisis year, and one reason that is obvious even to an economic layman could be that in times of crisis the poor are forced to sell their property below the real market price to feed themselves, while the rich can use their wealth to buy those same estates whose value is greater than their price, thus widening the gap between rich and poor. Winston Churchill reportedly stated that, “We should never waste a good crisis”, echoing Machiavelli's alleged words. The source of this idea is not really important, but its ubiquity in society is.

As for the conflicting interests of different strata of society, another example of a crisis that can be well cashed is war. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems wars are always present as a phenomenon and simply changing locations, ensuring a constant sale of weapons and an influx of capital to those earning on someone else's death and suffering. Thus, the United States, as the world's largest military power, in fiscal 2020 exported \$ 175 billion worth of weapons (Stone, 2020), and their budget for military purposes in the coming fiscal year will be \$ 943 billion (Amadeo, 2020). The phenomenon of constant war in which enemies periodically change and the psychological implications of such a state are vividly described by Orwell in his novel *1984* (1998). In his dystopian world, there is a daily ritual called two-minute hatred, which involves watching a film depicting enemies of the state and all citizens screaming, spitting and otherwise expressing anger and frustration in this socially acceptable way (1998). This is a good example of the sociological phenomenon of *scapegoating*, that is, the search for a scapegoat for all the problems in society, which Orwell's society abounds in.

Katunarić, like Orwell, also describes such rapid changes in relations between nations: “But “friends” and “enemies”, and constant categories in intergroup communication, are not always one and the same and can periodically change places. Modernization and the speed of change, economic and political, make such relations even more superficial” (2007, 148). *Divide et impera*, as the proverb reads.

But since there are no rituals of two-minute hatred in our reality, the question arises as to what actually maintains the status quo and prevents a potential social revolution fuelled by inequalities, which have certainly existed in history? Is it the already mentioned weapons or something else? “Political parties, like business companies, compete with messages tailored to popular beliefs and symbols. The modern political order is not maintained, therefore, primarily by force, but by persuasion. An important part of persuasion concerns the trivialization of culture, i.e. appeals to the beliefs and customs of the majority. Success in such a struggle, which Gramsci called ‘cultural hegemony’, explains what has stunned the critical mind. Namely, in most cases 'subordinate social groups act in a way that does not undermine the social order' (Thompson 1992)” (Katunarić, 2007, 146). Katunarić further explains that the manipulation is realized by another division, and that is the fact that: “The West deals with two notions of culture - universal and particular. In periods of economic growth, the former prevails with the ideas of a unique humanity and the similarity of cultures, in periods of recession, the latter prevails with the ideas of relativism, racism and nationalism (Wallerstein, 1990)” (Katunarić, 2007, 147). It is interesting to note the ease with which the masses are manipulated, which comes from their ignorance and inability to act autonomously within a democratic society.

As for divisions, they exist not only in society but also in science, specifically as components of previous attempts to define culture. Katunarić (2007, 7) also looks back at the old David Edgar's division of culture into folk, aristocratic and radical, but disagrees with it, since composers of classical music, which is considered high culture, often use folk motifs, i.e. it could be said that there is borrowing and a certain fusion between these two types of culture. The works of composers of classical music are published on millions of CDs (Katunarić, 2007) and thus become available to the masses, which is certainly a feature of what we would call low or folk culture. In this way, music can serve as a good example of the broader principle that Katunarić talks about, how science and art, which are traditionally considered high culture, are opening up to a wider audience. Hasn't the trend of popularization of university education, which is a combination of the spheres of education and science (or art,

if an art academy is in question), a good example of opening science and art to the general population, or overlapping of high and popular culture?

Another in the series of divisions when trying to define culture is introduced by Katunarić, this time dividing culture into three faces instead of two, or “three models of the meaning of culture in the modern West: enlightenment, national and the latest, intercultural” (2007, 147). Since the work repeatedly touches on nationalism, it is important to convey Katunarić's view of the national face: “The other face is domestic. It is a closed mythical symbolic framework of identity by which the community expresses that it considers many things, from territory to language, only its own and does not want to share them with others” (2007, 148). The Enlightenment face, according to Katunarić, in a way created the second, national one. Also, in the context of today's world as a global village, a third, intercultural face is very important. “The third face 'screens' the environment, those it considers others or strangers. In this way, it remembers and selects experiences, evaluates relationships and builds communication bridges or obstacles” (Katunarić, 2007, 148). It is worth noting a parallel - the other, national face, with its “I and mine” is reminiscent of the human ego, so does this mean that relations between states are actually similar to relations between people?

Particularly impressive, though perhaps somewhat unorthodox, is Katunarić's thinking about another division, this time within the human psyche: “The source of creativity that could significantly contribute to the elimination of development problems today, from poverty to wars and environmental pollution, these known but still stubborn and insurmountable pains of the modern world, I see in a certain synthesis of scientific and artistic work” (2007, 8). As a (future) pedagogue, I consider such an effort very favourable and commendable. A better world starts with a better individual, and a better individual is one who achieves the synthesis of both hemispheres of the brain holistically, using his full potential, without excessive and paralyzing concern whether in his daily work a little art will spill over into science or vice versa. Since art is based on emotions, I consider it important to emphasize the perspective of pedagogical positivism on this topic: “Rousseau and Schiller hold that education can develop all the abilities of humanity, not only rational but also emotional” (Katunarić, 2007, 150). I have had the opportunity to witness the importance of the development of emotional abilities, i.e. emotional intelligence in adolescents by conducting workshops on toxic masculinity and dealing with emotions in a few Zagreb high schools with mostly male student populations. It is not possible to emphasize how important it is to have a holistic education and not just focus



on academic achievement, i.e. the quantity of information verifiable by standardized tests, which Gorski calls the pedagogy of poverty (Gorski, 2013, 113).

It is clear to language students, and probably to many “lay people”, without special emphasis, that language includes science, such as syntax, morphology, phonetics, semantics and art, since literary works cannot be written without the medium of language. Katunarić also writes about literary works: “So, first of all, I found (...) that a literary work for sociology opens a window into the world of everyday life and the individual, even the private sphere, which cannot be achieved by analytical, basic statistical methods for processing (quantitative) data, not even in-depth interviews. Take the example of Orwell's *1984*, whose atmosphere no study can convey, and many have been written on the subject of Stalinism” (2007, 9). In this way, Katunarić establishes the artistic form of a literary work as a kind of method of research in the social sciences, which is certainly necessary if we want science to capture human life in its fullness for the purpose of studying and improving it.

#### *The attitude of Western culture towards itself and towards other cultures*

Katunarić continues to draw inspiration from Orwell's visionary work by opening up the issue of privacy, which is even more burning now, due to the omnipresence of smartphones and personal computers acting as two-way information portals, just like *telescreens* in 1984. Katunarić continues: “Politically, however, democracy exists only as a backdrop or illuminated advertisement. Important decisions are made in a narrow circle of the top hierarchies of the business world (made up of directors of leading multinational companies) and their `agents` at the top of the leading Western countries. They determine the prices and the fate of millions of employees, they decide to start meaningless, in fact endless wars” (2007, 10). If this sounds too dark, we need to turn to recent events, specifically, the banning of former US President Donald Trump from social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as the almost immediate abolition of the social network Parler, which Trump was not banned from. The last nail in Parler's coffin was hammered by Amazon, denying Parler the ability to use their servers they had been using until then, while Apple and Google had previously prevented users from installing the app on their smartphones (BBC News, 2021).

It would not be advisable to enter into discussions about the justification of censorship in this case or to assess Trump's character and work, but it is worth noting that all this took place in the Western world, which allegedly abhors the very thought of censorship. Also, attention

should be paid to the hypocritical fact that censorship is not called by its real name, and that such a practice is not at all in line with the democratic social order. It is interesting how this undemocratic practice takes place in the heart of a country that is so proud of its democracy and convinced of its benefits that it has been relentlessly exporting around the world for decades, most often in exchange for oil and other valuable resources. Katunarić writes about trading oil for democracy, offering another term for censorship, and reveals that censorship in the West is not really a new thing: “It is ‘information imperialism’, which manifested most during the Persian Gulf War, when CNN offered an abundance of censored information and shaped the interpretation of events in a one-sided way (Galtung, Vincent, 1992; Bamyeh, 1993)” (Katunarić, 2007, 152).

When censorship is carried out by communist North Korea, then it is censorship, and when it is carried out by the United States, then it is about the so-called care for the safety of citizens? Is it really a matter of concern for the security of citizens or a concern for the security of the position of those in power? It is clearly a matter of conflicting interests of those in power and those who are governed, as it has been countless times throughout history. Katunarić writes: “With all of Habermas’ interpretive virtuosity and deeply morally justified efforts to bridge the gap between conflicting views on the principles of ‘truth, honesty and regularity’ (Habermas, 1992), it is difficult to disagree with Bordieu who says that the practice of public and political communication serves more as symbolic competition and domination than for agreement (Bordieu, 1979)” (Katunarić 2007, 144). Is it perhaps possible that Google, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, or Apple are exercising enormous political power because of their financial influence? Is it perhaps possible that despite all the intelligently written constitutions, voting systems and other achievements of democracy, money is still what makes the world go round, as the saying goes?

It cannot be stressed enough that democracy, which seeks to distribute power in as many hands as possible to reduce the possibility of its abuse and neoliberal capitalism cannot coexist well in any way. The reason for this is the fact that neoliberal capitalism strives for the exact opposite phenomenon, the concentration of financial power as a lever of political power in a very small number of hands. One must prevail, it seems, as selfish economic interests increasingly take precedence over altruistic, idealism-driven laws whose purpose is to establish and protect democracy. “Reason, tolerance and human rights, they say disappointedly, are words that mean something only in the speech of university intellectuals and UN bureaucrats (Hankiss, 1995)” (Katunarić, 2007, 149).

Yet it seems that most people in democracies somehow manage to reconcile in their minds these two contradictory concepts, democracy and neoliberal capitalism. This is very well described by *doublethink*, Orwell's 1984 concept that allows a person to keep two mutually exclusive pieces of information in mind at the same time, allowing something to be both a lie and a truth at the same time (1998). *Thoughtcrime* goes hand in hand with doublethink, it is the act of thinking that goes against the official doctrine and is punishable. This is familiar from history because of, for example, the Gulag or Goli Otok, which are recognizable tools of communist censorship of dissidents, but what about the West? Does the Western world apply a doublethink attitude towards media censorship? If so, what does this say about the current state of Western culture? Is the destructive nucleus currently prevailing over the creative one? Are we aware of that? Have we reached the level of hypocrisy which Orwell describes in *Animal Farm* by arguing that all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others (1990)? If so, the social order in which we currently live is not called, given the distribution of power, democracy but technocracy and plutocracy, but the average citizen is expected to accept the so-called democracy by applying doublethink mental gymnastics.

This same doublethink mental gymnastics driven by a superiority complex applies to Western attitudes toward other cultures as well. Katunarić conveys the considerations from the First World Conference on Cultural Networks, which was held in Zagreb in 1995, emphasizing that what Westerners consider culture is “nurturing, perfecting the cosmic reality” while in India, which is, among other things, known for its religiosity, considers that “reality rests on a cosmic order that cannot be repaired” (2007, 143). How do we reconcile these two conflicting worldviews, one that emphasizes man as an agent of change and the other that emphasizes the cosmic order, we might say destiny, as something superior to man? Saraswati, whose last name, by the way, signifies the Indian goddess of learning and wisdom offers a solution by claiming: “Cultures with different worldviews can communicate by trying to put one's own worldview in relation to another's worldview” (Katunarić, 2007, 143). Is the West really ready for such a thing, such a radical departure from the zeitgeist of modern science, not only science but also the social atmosphere in which it is immersed? The aforementioned cosmic order that forms an essential element of that other, Indian worldview most likely originates from God, although this is not explicitly stated here. Isn't God dead, haven't we killed him, as Nietzsche claims in his famous statement? (1999)

Katunarić's reflections go in this direction: “A Western scientist does not conduct a dialogue with understandings that he considers to belong to the prehistory of his knowledge, delusions.

He will, however, listen to the contemporary animist because it is dictated by the rules of the conference as well as the current trend of multiculturalism, according to which the correctness of other understandings must not be judged by the criteria of one's own culture, ethnocentrically. Ultimately, however, the truth, as seen by the West, is not subject to cultural relativism. (...) The West does not usually listen to the pulse of nature to weigh its industrial interventions or negotiate with other societies about its ways of spreading wealth and power” (2007, 143). It is obvious from this statement that the West, despite its technological superiority, is not as cultured as it likes to think it is, if we understand “cultured” as civilized or one that respects and conducts dialogue with others which are different. This dialogue seems to exist only pro forma, as an excuse or an alibi. Katunarić sums it up perfectly by saying that it is “the stronger one who imposes their rules” (143, 2007), and elsewhere he writes: “Culture is, therefore, usually a secondary form of power and influence on people's behaviour by which the more direct and mostly more brutal forms of power are justified or disguised” (2007, 146).

The conclusion of the previous few pages is that the West treats its own culture extremely dishonestly, declaring one and doing the other and thus increasing social inequalities, and towards other and different cultures in a condescending and oppressive way, culturally concealing exploitation. At the same time, one should not live in a naive delusion, wishing that things would get better over time, due to the accumulated experience: “The sum of our attempts and mistakes is overwhelmingly instructed. Almost every segment of multicultural humanity has had or will have its Beethoven or Hitler, symphonies and concentration camps. How to enable the development of that which builds and suppress that which destroys?” (Katunarić, 2007, 148). Katunarić further describes the impotence of traditional wisdom, used often in this paper, in the context of today's society and concludes: “This gigantism does not want a culture as a guide of meaning, which will distinguish sick from healthy, destructive from building, but a culture of opinion and behaviour that accepts everything” (Katunarić, 2007, 148).

Katunarić conveys a particularly sick eugenic vision of culture, well-fitted to the chaotic and uncertain times we live in, from Yorick (1995): “Judging by the predominant use of the term culture in today's analyzes of global processes, people are refining their role in a world of oligarchic wealth and power, a world whose resources, according to the vision of the same oligarchy, are sufficient for a comfortable life for only three hundred million people” (Katunarić, 2007, 149). Having in mind all these tendencies for bullying and domination, it is

necessary to re-examine the role of language, specifically, textbooks as a means of spreading and establishing the dominance of Western culture.

As for the attempt to define culture, it seems that it, despite considerable effort and extensive space dedicated to it, still remains only an *ad hoc* solution. Enumerated aspects of division within and between cultures such as racism and nationalism, war, economic polarization and exploitation, manipulation of truth through language and media, and manipulation of the masses by demagoguery constitute aspects of culture that is not specifically British but they should be addressed in textbook analysis. Of course, these are not all aspects of the analysis that need to be addressed, but only some that I find particularly relevant and interesting or that are sometimes given less space, if any at all.

### **British Empire, Culture and English language**

In an attempt to consider British culture and its impact on the world of today and tomorrow, it should be borne in mind that the British Empire was by far the largest empire ever, which at its peak in 1920 stretched as much as 35.5 million square kilometres, covering more than 26 percent of the earth's land surface. By comparison, the Roman Empire covered only 3.71 percent of the globe at its peak in 117 AD (Taagepera, 1997). Although cultural influence cannot be directly measured by the geographical size of an empire, there is no doubt that a correlation exists. For example, as far as language is concerned, aren't Turkisms present in Slavic languages, including Croatian, because the Turks ruled a large part of this region? To deny the connection of historical-political events with the development of culture and language would be naive and incorrect. The cultural influence of the Roman Empire on the Western world is immeasurable, even though it reached its zenith almost two millennia ago, which is evident from the fact that this thesis is written in Latin script. Price (2006), as a historian, points out the turn towards the study of the British Empire as one of the most important innovations in British studies. It took place at the turn of the millennium and followed the linguistic turn that dominated in the 80s and 90s. Price studies how Britain and its empire "constitute each other" and states: "After all, from its beginning in the sixteenth century, the very idea of Britain was an imperial construction" (Price, 2006, 602). Empire, as history shows, implies wars, conquests, subjugation and enslavement of others and different, economic exploitation and similar oppressive phenomena, so it can be said that the idea itself contains violence and suffering.

If we put together Big Ben, Westminster Palace, the Tower of London and the nearby Tower Bridge, the distinctive red double-decker buses and black old fashioned taxis, a traditional English breakfast of bacon, blood sausage, eggs, beans, mushrooms and tomatoes, pubs where draft beer is drunk, football and rainy weather, one might think we have an idea of British culture. And we would be somewhat right, although this is a very stereotypical depiction of London culture, such stereotypes are common among, for example, international tourists, especially those who have not yet visited a country to experience at least a small fragment of the atmosphere and culture of a place. Of course, London stands out in the context of the United Kingdom, but also in the global context, as a tourist destination. We should consider it here through an international prism, bearing in mind that in 2019 London was visited by 22.8 million foreign visitors and 118.9 million international overnight stays speaks volumes about its popularity (Office for National Statistics, 2020 a). London owes much of its abundance, grandiosity and appeal to tourists in large part to the fact that it was the capital of an empire built on war, exploitation and suffering, but this is of course not mentioned, as it would not be good for business, and most tourists simply fail to bring this fact into awareness. It is all about the popularity of the London image. Marketing experts are well versed in psychology and it is known that a certain image in the mind of the consumer is what is being sold, not the quality of the product or experience itself. It is for this reason that it is important to study the image of British culture present in English textbooks, since the image is mostly built without the conscious attention of the recipient, and such a practice makes critical consideration difficult.

I also consider myself a victim of the implantation of a certain image of London that I had received through the media. In 2007 I had the opportunity to visit London for the first time and it was the exceptional ethnic diversity that surprised me the most. A part of that ethnic diversity is certainly due to the fact that London was visited by over 15 million foreign tourists that year, but a large number of people of different faces and skin colours were employed in various institutions and companies, from airports to museums, hostels, cafes and shops (Office for National Statistics (2020 a). The TV programs on London that I have consumed since childhood failed to show me that London is “the most ethnically diverse region in England and Wales (...) where 40.2% of residents identified with either the Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic group” (Office for National Statistics, 2018 a). The rest of England and Wales is much more ethnically homogeneous and Whites make up 86 per cent of the population, Asians 7.5 per cent, Blacks 3.3 per cent, 2.2 per cent are of mixed ethnicity

and one per cent belonging to other ethnic groups (Office for National Statistics, 2020 b). Ethnic diversity as the coexistence of phenotypically different people in the same area is a consequence of migration, which in London was far more present than, for example, in my hometown, which has barely 40,000 inhabitants, and Price points out: “Immigration is, of course, integral to Britain’s past, tying its experiences to spheres beyond the nation itself” (Price, 2006, 602). The racial uprisings that erupted in 1981 in major English cities are certainly worth mentioning (Biressi & Nunn, 2013), since differences in ethnicity often entail prejudice and racism, and consequently different opportunities for exercising human rights and vertical social mobility.

Monarchies, such as the United Kingdom, are usually associated with a traditional social order with rigid stratification, because that has been the case throughout history, and if we look at the historical period up to the 1980s, that was the state of affairs in the UK. “In social terms, the 1980s has been heavily cited as the decade in which already-foundering traditional class structures and class based affiliations finally broke down, giving way to the more fluid and individualised social formations fostered by the processes of neoliberalism. In scholarly terms, within sociology, cultural studies and cognate fields, this was also the period in which the utility of class-based cultural analysis was being increasingly questioned and challenged” (Biressi & Nunn, 2013, 2) Although this quote sounds promising, it is necessary to closely inspect whether, due to the mentioned social changes, something better was really offered to the lowest strata of society?

Regarding the 1980s, Biressi cites an autobiographical example of her employment with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS) and compares such a lower-paid government job to the job of co-author Nunn who worked as a broker in the City of London. As might be expected, a larger share of women and national minorities, such as second and third generation immigrants from Kenya, Uganda and Jamaica were working the lower paid job (Biressi & Nunn, 2013). The authors further describe the link between the deregulation of the City of London as a centre of securities trading and Thatcher's experimental approach to entrepreneurship with the transformation of culture and class, which resulted in *precariat*, a neoliberal construct or unhappy state in which workers are required to be flexible and are offered uncertainty in return. Interestingly, the authors point out that the great economic crisis of 2008 had its roots in the deregulation of the City, Thatcherism and neoliberal politics. Of course, the consequences of this global crisis have been felt by most of humanity, and we can see that the United Kingdom has followed the same path as most countries in the

world, only a little earlier. In today's global village, which had been led by Britain for a long time, it's hard to draw boundaries between British culture and other national cultures, it's hard to say what's actually British and what's global or common, other than the stereotypical elements listed at the beginning of this part of the thesis. The elements of the division of cultures previously written about are certainly present in British society as well.

### *English as a colonizing phenomenon*

The English language is omnipresent today, from social networks and internet content to popular culture, science and art, it can be said that there is no pore of a society into which it has not infiltrated. Not only has it infiltrated, the question is whether there is any area of life where English is not the dominant language. It is therefore not surprising that Graddol called it the global *lingua franca* twenty years ago, which tends to colonize other languages (1997). Crystal describes an increase in the number of English speakers, and, according to him, the number of speakers has risen from one-fifth to one-third of the world's population in the last quarter of a century (2008). This claim was made thirteen years ago, but there is no reason to doubt that such a growth trend has continued, probably even accelerated, thanks to the growing availability of technology, mostly smartphones and personal computers. It is almost impossible to come up with more precise figures because language proficiency is difficult to define, and consequently operationalize and research. In the world as a global village, language is an indispensable medium for connecting people, and English as the *lingua franca* of the global village is constantly being learned and spread. Bearing in mind the colonizing tendency of the British Empire and Western European countries in general, and the already mentioned Graddol's claim that the English language colonizes other languages by gradually taking their place (1997), as well as the knowledge that language is an element of culture, we can conclude that the colonization of language leads to the colonization of culture, since language is an essential element of culture. The question arises to what extent are English textbooks a means of cultural colonization and how is the colonization implemented?

In order not to approach the issue too harshly right away, it should be noted that the mentioned linguistic colonization, unlike military colonization, does not have to take place intentionally, or even consciously. Katunarić quotes Edward Hall, one of the most influential researchers of intercultural communication, who says culture is "(...) a world of everyday habits and customs that take place automatically. Most people are not even aware of that, so



they do not give them a deeper, reference meaning (Hall and Hall 1990)” (Katunarić, 2007, 145). As for the unconscious and almost imperceptible linguistic colonization, while studying the English language, I have noticed that even professionals like journalists very often use sentence constructions that are not typical for the Croatian language and are obviously borrowed from English. This has been most obvious in certain news feeds that transmit news from foreign sources, translating them probably with the help of Google Translate or a similar form of automated machine translation, without bothering about language design or sentence constructions that would be in the spirit of the Croatian language. Apart from some journalists who take their work lightly, the linguistic influence of the English language is more than apparent when listening to the younger generations of Croats who switch from one language code to another to say: “*Oh my God*, did he really say that? (*Oumajgad*, je li on to stvarno rekao)?” or “Were we *actually* supposed to send that to the professor? (Jesmo li mi to *ekšli* trebali poslat` profesorici)?” I am aware that I practice similar patterns of behaviour, whether due to language economics, or due to mental laziness. For example, it seems much easier to remember the word *default* than the Croatian synonym *zadano*. It is known from popular psychology that the neural pathways that are used more often actually get stronger, and those that are not used become weaker and weaker. Does this mean that every day we forget a fragment of the art of using our own language in favour of English?

Alsaif, as well as other authors he cites, approach the issue of language colonization sharply: “It has been stated throughout this study that this domination of EFL materials by English and Western culture was not only observed within the KSA. It was also witnessed by other researchers as an “imperialistic tool” (Phillipson 1992) and a “missionary language” (Pennycook 2003; Wong and Canagarajah 2009)” (Alsaif, 2016, 15). Phillipson teaches in Copenhagen, Pennycook in Sydney, Wong in Los Angeles, and Canagarajah in Pennsylvania. This seemingly trivial piece of information on these experts` employment serves to show that this attitude is nurtured by professors from respected universities, even from the inner circle of the English-speaking world, so that we would not easily write off this quote as just an eager lamentation of a college student from a transition country.

In what way, specifically, are textbooks involved in the educational colonization and reproduction of inequalities in the distribution of cultural capital? Alsaif offers one possible answer: “According to Alptekin (1993: 138), most textbooks writers are native speakers who consciously or unconsciously transmit the views, values, beliefs and feelings of their own

English society” (Alsaif 2016, 17). Alsaif admits that it is very difficult to expect a native speaker to write a textbook free of culture, and that this is not even necessary, if at all possible. He also offers a solution, proposing to encourage bilingual and multilingual English speakers and lecturers to write textbooks and teaching materials (Alsaif, 2016). But the story does not stop at an individual inadvertent example of ethnocentrism that we could justify as a ubiquitous human error, because too much is known about such a practice for it to be ignored. By repetition over a long period of time, an individual omission becomes a systematic neglect of facts, and the meaning of this paper, i.e. the need for a critical pedagogical analysis of English language textbooks arises from such a practice.

### **Educational colonization**

Although the United States is the largest, most populous, and economically as well as politically most influential country in which English is used as an official language, it is not the source of English language or culture but a former English colony, just like Australia, South Africa, India and China. These countries are similar to Croatia in the sense that they were recipients of British culture, among other things, through language. Of course, Croatia has never been under military colonization by Great Britain, but the economic colonization of the world by English-speaking countries is considered something that goes without saying today, because it is ubiquitous and impossible to oppose. It is necessary to ask whether there is, or to what extent there is educational colonization, along with the cultural, since education is indivisible from culture? Education and the learning of language, as its indispensable component, is in fact one of the key elements of the reproduction of a culture, both for future generations and for foreigners. As far as educational colonization is concerned, it is carried out not only linguistically, but also through curricula, and Katunarić describes the predominance of technical education at the expense of classical education and spiritual subjects: “Knowledge participates in the reproduction of the hierarchical system of society domestically and internationally. (...) Experts make up cadres of states and corporations whose work and decisions are not based on the humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment. Education had these ideals, but society functions on other principles” (2007, 151). The key concept needed to understand how knowledge, not just money, participates in the reproduction of social hierarchy is introduced by Bordieu: “So that not one but two species of capital now give access to positions of power, define the structure of social space, and govern

the life chances and trajectories of groups and individuals: economic capital and cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1996, X). Bourdieu also offers an additional explanation of the term by dividing it into individual aspects: “Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied state*, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified state*, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized state*, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (Bourdieu, 1986, 143).

Katunarić further explains and comments: “Accordingly, Bourdieu describes knowledge as property, as symbolic or cultural capital, unequally distributed in society, i.e. in accordance with social stratification (Bourdieu, 1979). Cultural capital has its value in the market, as do other products and services. It is inherited, and transmitted through family, school, corporation, and the state. It is spreading around the world much like trade that knows no borders. Whether it is the production of literary works, films or ordinary news, i.e. ‘cultural exchange’, the lion's share of cultural capital remains in the possession of the West, primarily the United States. From there it is transferred and charged to others. The transfer of knowledge is conditioned, moreover, by the acceptance of the ideological framework of the sender. It offers a ‘monolithic story’ about events and their meaning” (Katunarić, 2007, 152).

### **Framework for qualitative analysis of textbooks**

A few remarks need to be made at the beginning of this part of the paper. First, that I am, in accordance with the title, conducting research on textbooks that contain depictions of the culture of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as the origin of the English language and British culture, and in this paper the adjective “British” refers to the United Kingdom Great Britain and Northern Ireland, while the terms “Great Britain”, “United Kingdom” and the abbreviation “UK” are used alternately, for the sake of practicality and language economy. Furthermore, the term “foreign culture” refers to the target language culture (TLC), i.e. the culture of the language being learned, and is also used for the sake of language economy and practicality.

In order to set up a framework for the analysis, it is necessary to provide an answer to the question: What is a textbook? In didactics, the textbook is considered a textual teaching tool, and Gedik Bal points out that we can use it in two ways: the first is to accept it as a scenario for teaching a particular subject, and the second to see it as a resource used selectively: “(...) as Cortazzi and Jin (1999) indicated, the role of a textbook can be a guide, an ideology, or an authority, so it differs in various contexts” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 2). Alsaif adds: “Textbooks provide a focal point for the direction of education, and a systematic organisation of concepts in a single place for both students and teacher. They also provide a breakdown of course content that permits the progression of a course in incremental stages” (Alsaif, 2016, 3). Gedik Bal also conveys Tomlinson’s claim that textbooks are still the dominant form of teaching material (2020).

Ross goes further than that, quoting Arthur Schlesinger Sr.’s claim: “Whether we like it or not, the textbook not the teacher teaches the course” (Ross, 2012, ix). Further, Ross then proceeds to explain the context of the claim by describing how sometimes a teacher is considered just a person who has to process everything given in a textbook, and how the introduction of a standards-based curriculum is a move by the elite to shape education policy by promoting their own interests (2012). Hickman and Porfilio sun in a similar vein: “Further, they position teachers to view textbooks as rarefied forms of knowledge that not only should never be questioned, but also must be at the centre of their instruction, where students continually regurgitate this information to pass a battery of high-stakes examinations and come to believe social and economic inequalities are individual rather than social and economic phenomena” (Hickman & Porfilio, 2012, xxii). An interesting example is the decision of the Arizona state legislature HB 2281, described by by Hickman and Porfilio, which prohibits schools from introducing any subjects targeting a specific ethnic population or subjects that promote ethnic solidarity, and the authors add that: “This bill limits the availability of classes that might challenge the dominant Western narrative and examine the inherent privileges associated with that narrative” (2012, xxii).

Pingel also connects politics and textbooks on an everyday and far-reaching level, noting that language textbooks largely shape what students know and how they think about others (2010). It is not necessary to be very intelligent in order to understand that the great uniformity of the education system can also contribute to a greater uniformity, i.e. conformism of opinion, which in turn maintains the political status quo. The political aspect

of textbooks is also emphasized by Altbach: “Textbooks are one of the most important educational inputs: texts reflect basic ideas about a national culture, and ... are often a flashpoint of cultural struggle and controversy” (Pingel, 2010, 7).

It is important to inquire about the objectivity of textbook authors and Pingel offers an answer: “Textbook authors have not always been critical enough towards the society they live in. With the emergence of nation states in the last century it became quite obvious that schoolbooks contain statements that glorify their own nation and disparage others, that glorify the ruling groups within one nation or society and disparage so-called minority groups” (Pingel, 2010, 8).

Ross points out: “Operationally, curriculum standards are anti-democratic because they severely restrict the legitimate role of teachers and other educational professionals, as well as members of the public, from participating in the conversation about the origin, nature and ethics of knowledge that is part of the enacted curriculum” (Ross, 2012, xi). In addition to stifling discussion, undemocratically censoring the opinions of others and preventing the adaptation of the curriculum to the real, practical needs of the community, such an approach devalues everything that educators learn in colleges and countless professional trainings because it reduces them to the level of machines that destroy creativity, as well as critical and divergent thinking among students, potentially depriving the world of some future Tesla, Shakespeare, or Martin Luther King. I belong to the first generation of high school students who took state graduation exams (Državna matura) and I am still well aware of the motto of my helpless teachers: “We are doing this because this will be in the state graduation exam, until now we did it in a different way.”

This approach to teaching only for the purpose of subsequent testing, i.e. high-stakes testing, leads to the fact that the future of students largely depends on one exam, instead of continuous long-term work and on memorizing (and later inevitably forgetting) huge amounts of irrelevant data, instead of integrating knowledge and making it a part of one`s personality in order to grow as a person. Apart from the stress for the students and the burden on the education system, this approach is also a great insult to the teaching profession, so it should be eradicated and hung on the wall as an example of bad practice. This topic would require a separate study in order to be dealt with properly, I can only offer a provisional explanation that there are political interests that have polluted the educational sphere. A truly educated

person is primarily capable of critical thinking and can challenge the political status quo, while a person who passively receives and reproduces information cannot, because they are not perceiving themselves as an active, empowered agent of political change. It is known that people learn by observing the behaviour of others, and this helplessness and passivity of the teachers can probably cause the same feelings in students, since, as the saying goes: “The teacher does not teach what is written in the book or what he/she says, but what he/she is”. This should, by no means, be understood as a critique of teachers, but as a call for the cooperation of those who operate in classrooms and lecture halls in order to protect their interests, political and other.

Politics and economics generally go hand in hand, and Ross describes how, since the middle of the previous century, through education reforms funded by industry, government and private foundations, a curriculum that is more capitalist and less enlightened has been created by those who prescribed it (2012). Ross continues the description by claiming that the textbooks that are most in line with the adopted (so-called common core) curriculum are chosen, drawing attention to the interesting fact that sometimes the most suitable textbook appears on the market before the guidelines for their selection are officially adopted. Whether this is a conflict of interest, a leak of information and the rigging of a tender, or a major coincidence, one must judge for themselves. “In attempting to reach the widest range of purchasers, textbook publishers promote values (overtly and covertly) that maintain social and economic hierarchies and relationships supported by the dominant socioeconomic class (Anyon, 1979; Apple, 1986; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991)” ( Ross, 2012, xi).

Regarding textbook content analysis, Hickman and Porfilio point out that it is important to make a connection between textbook content analysis and the dominant political climate: “Given the new age of testing ushered in by No Child Left Behind, the corporate dominance over textbook production inside and outside of US, and the US’s quest for cultural and economic dominance since 9/11 (Chomsky, 2003) it is important to examine the materials used with children in schools for the messages both explicit and implicit in the content” (2012, xxii). But not everything is that simple. Weinbrenner believes that textbook research is not sufficiently theoretically processed - there is no so-called “theory of textbooks” on the basis of which the research methodology could be built and very little is known about the effects of textbook use. In addition, there is no set of methods and instruments by which to measure and evaluate textbook research (Nicholls, 2003). In other words, there is a lack of

not only textbook evaluation methodology, but also of a meta-methodology, a set of criteria by which a possible methodology could be evaluated, which makes this venture demanding, as Nicholls also writes: “However, it has to be said from the beginning that researching this area is not an easy undertaking. This is due to the fact that surprisingly little work has been done in terms of setting out clear generic guidelines for analysing texts” (Nicholls, 2003, 11).

It is necessary to mention another important thing regarding the so-called human factor: “(...) textbook researchers with different backgrounds may evaluate textbooks from different places and at different times in different ways” (Nichols, 2003, 15). There was an attempt to fix this by introducing certain lists that would form a universal criterion but not very successfully, as Pingel describes it: “Tulley and Fair criticised that “evaluation and selection checklists require only that reviewers determine the presence rather than the quality of various features” (2007, 70). In addition to prior knowledge, Nicholls explains how critique of an object starts from “implicit orientation”, which could mean an implicit pedagogy or values attributed to a subject that is localized or placed in context, and its ideal, according to which evaluation is done, is also localized (2003), which actually makes textbook analysis a political act. Nichols also recognizes this, linking the methodology of textbook analysis with the epistemological and socio-political orientation of the authors of a particular analysis (2003). The importance of the local context is also emphasized: “Stradling recognises that what counts as being a good textbook in one place by a certain group of people is likely to be perceived differently in another place by other people and that ‘a definitive answer usually leads to little more than broad and rather platitudinous generalisations” (Nicholls, 2003, 16). Pingel also argues that it is impossible to teach the social sciences devoid of value judgments, which is truer for history and geography than it is for language. In Ellis's words: “As Sheldon (1988: 245) observes, 'it is clear that coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick” (Ellis, 1997, 2).

#### *Research aim and research question, development of an instrument for analysis*

As for the method of analysis used in this paper, it is of a qualitative nature and it arises from the main research question, which is: Are the depictions of British culture in English textbooks, conditionally speaking, realistic? The aim is to investigate whether British culture is presented in English textbooks in a superficial way, saturated with stereotypes and

dominated by positive connotations? Specifically, this thesis explores whether and to what extent the discriminatory and problematic aspects of British culture are represented in the textbooks, e.g.: racism, sexism, homophobia, discrimination against persons with disabilities, economic inequalities, exploitation and hypocritical practices contradicting the declared democratic principles such as transparency and access to information. The following quote can serve as an explanation as to why the qualitative approach has been chosen: “With qualitative methods of textbook analysis depth presides over breadth. As such, the results tend to be richer with regard to understanding the way that information is presented in a text yet more difficult from which to make generalisations” (Nicholls, 2003, 13). Pingel points out that the very question of what will be analyzed in the textbook is actually of a qualitative nature, and points out that the qualitative and quantitative approach complement each other. He also distinguishes two approaches to textbook analysis, deductive and inductive. The inductive approach, which is used in this thesis, is aimed at discovering the paradigm that the authors were guided by when choosing the content and its presentation (Pingel, 2010).

The aim of this paper is the critical examination of the representations of British culture in English textbooks, and thus one arrives at the dominant type of analysis conducted in this paper, which Nichols defines, taking from Foster: “(...) critical analysis, used to identify and expose textbook portrayals that perpetuate unequal social relations in society” (Nicholls, 2003, 14). Nicholls, according to Foster, cites some other types of analyses that are relevant for this work, for example, analysis of questions, which analyzes whether the questions in the textbook are aimed at reproducing the presented content or its critical analysis (2003). It is clear that this type of analysis does not exclude critical analysis and it is here considered in some way subordinate to it. The beauty of critical analysis lies in its applicability, in that it forms a kind of super-category, which can include, for example, hermeneutic (discovery of hidden meanings and messages in the text - Nichols, 2003), linguistic (use of controversial words and terms - Nicholls, 2003) or structural (research on the presentation of historical events and the process in textbooks - Nicholls, 2003) analysis without departing from its purpose. On the contrary, critical analysis is enriched by this, both in terms of breadth and depth.

As for the sample, it is determined by the qualitative paradigm and formed by the critical analysis as the method which requires a certain depth of the analysis. Another factor of sample formation is the availability of the textbooks themselves, and since no funds are provided for this work, I am using the textbooks from the faculty library, taking into account



the maximum possible diversity, thus processing five different series of textbooks by different authors and three publishers, at levels ranging from the first grade of elementary school to the first or second grade of high school. In addition to diversity, efforts were made to include the latest possible textbooks, so that four of the five analyzed textbooks were printed in 2019 and one in 2017. Of course, it was possible to achieve greater diversity by including older titles, but this was the best possible compromise, judging by my experience, which suggests that teachers (and the rest of the education system) often insist on using the latest textbook, even though very often changes relative to the previous edition of the same textbook were cosmetic in nature.

What was needed as the next step was the development of an *ad hoc* instrument for English textbook analysis, which is described in the final part of this chapter and can be found at the end of the paper as *Appendix 1*. Before the detailed description of the construction and composition of the instrument for analysis, I present the findings of fellow English language teachers who have also analyzed English textbooks: Gedik Bal from Turkey and Alsaif from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Although neither the Turkish nor the Arab education system are relevant for this paper, I use concrete examples of qualitative textbook analyzes as valuable guidelines for creating a network of criteria for analysis and as reference points for comparison.

In today's global village, interculturalism is gaining importance, and so Gedik Bal analyzed English language textbooks from the perspective of the development of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is one of those terms that are very ungrateful if we want to define them precisely and concisely because a lot has been written about them and they can be seen from many perspectives, and there is no space here or a need to go deep into the analysis of this term. In the analysis of the notion of culture, it could be said that intercultural competence is the art of successfully achieving relationships between different cultures. For example, the Council of Europe considers: "In order to recognise the commonality in aims, the development of intercultural competence needs to be seen as a deeply moral concern and central to personal growth and development, rather than simply a process of getting to know something about another country at a superficial level" (Fleming, 2010, 4). In the context relevant for this thesis, the English classroom context, Gedik Bal describes intercultural competence very well in a succinct way through two main approaches to it: "Whereas some scholars emphasized the effective management of interaction by

culturally distinctive individuals, who represent diversified cognitive, behavioural, and affective approaches to the world (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), others underlined the development aspect and adaptability to various cultural frameworks (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Hammer, 2015)” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 2).

The role of textbooks in this is significant, as Gedik Bal believes that: “One quick way of helping and encouraging in-service teachers to focus on IC during their language teaching is to provide them with the textbooks that facilitate this learning process as course books are a significant component of the curriculum and they assume a leading role in conveying cultural knowledge. They might be the sole or even the best sources to reach otherness for language learners in some contexts (Garcia, 2005)” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 2). In addition, Gedik Bal writes about the application of papers like this one: “Evaluation of the textbook from an intercultural perspective, therefore, might provide some insight into what should be done further to help teachers in their endeavour to teach IC in the classroom. As teachers primarily depend on the textbooks and materials in the teaching of foreign languages and cultural issues (Kahraman, 2016), inadequacies might be detected and the textbooks could be revised or some supplementary materials, and activities might be developed to close the gap. Besides, teachers may be trained about how to exploit available resources to promote IC skills in language learners” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 2).

Regarding the development of intercultural competence and the qualitative analysis of textbooks, it is important to point out two components of the analysis: the representation of elements of domestic (source) culture and foreign (target) culture that is being studied. That is, the correlation of these two cultures is important in the textbook, as described by Alsaif: “Looking at the textbooks used (i.e. at a tertiary level where the author teaches), one can notice that student’s “Eastern” culture is to a large extent missing in these materials. Most of these books represent dominantly “Western” culture instead, namely American and British cultures. This can clearly be depicted by topics discussed, pictures, clothing, names, and many other issues portrayed in these textbooks” (Alsaif, 2016, 2). Here the results from the Turkish education system, represented by Gedik Bal and those from the education system of the Kingdom of Arabia, presented by Alsaif, find a common denominator and a connection with what was mentioned earlier about cultural colonization through language.

A notion closely related to cultures, especially foreign ones, is stereotype. Gedik Bal draws attention to the results of other research (Çetin Köroğlu, 2016; Göktaş, 2013) which revealed in international textbooks a lack of content that deals with stereotypes about domestic and foreign culture, more specifically, with their re-examination (2020). It is not surprising that Gedik Bal found that the textbook she conducted research on did not provide students with insight into their own culture, but it is encouraging that she states: “The majority of instructors and students thought the textbook challenged students’ existing stereotypes to some or a large extent” (8, 2020). She continues: “Regarding the presentation of the attitude component of intercultural competence, 40.2 % of the students and 46.7% of the instructors thought that the textbook developed tolerance to some extent” (2020, 8). and similar percentages are mentioned when researching the development of empathy.

Gedik Bal reports another research: “(...) Dimici et al. (2018) investigated the perceptions of the instructors at a preparatory program about the ‘English File’ textbook and carried out content analysis. The results indicated that visual, audial, and written texts involved gender, and ethnicity dimensions although political orientation, disability, and social class were rarely seen” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 3). Regarding discrimination, the author also investigates whether and to what extent the textbook deals with insight into racial, cultural and gender stereotypes (2020).

Furthermore, in the report of her research, Gedik Bal includes a table, which deals specifically with the cultural content in the textbook and which was intended for students and professors of the preparatory course at the faculty so they could assess the extent to which cultural content is integrated into the textbook, agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements: " The textbook reflects the cultural character of the foreign society. The cultural content is integrated in the course. The characters in the textbook are representative of the foreign society with regard to age, their social class, their interests, their mentality, their family situation” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 7). It is interesting to note: “There was also a significant difference between students’ and instructors’ views on the extent of representativeness of foreign society regarding social class ( $p=.041$ ), students claimed that this representation was to a large extent and there were also students who believed that they were completely representative” (2020, 7). The question that arises is who knows the foreign culture better? Due to richer life experience and because it is their profession, the answer would probably be – the professors.

However, Gedik Bal deals with another aspect that is important in this paper, and that is the historical and geographical perspective and art in society. In addition, she explores representativeness in terms of the range of subcultures and professions present in society, as well as the representation of other cultures such as British, American, Indian and African (2020). Unfortunately, the general conclusion about the representation of culture in textbooks offered by Gedik Bal is not encouraging: “It has long been acknowledged in the literature that stereotypical content about various cultures is prevalent in English language course materials” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 11).

Yet another aspect of the West’s potential, if not realized linguistic hegemony, is the assumption that members of other cultures will use language to address members of Western, in this case British, culture. For example, when an Arab tourist comes to the United Kingdom? But what if none of the people involved in a linguistic interaction belong to British culture, but only use the language as a lingua franca, when, for example, a Russian woman talks to a Chinese person? “Since English is taught in many contexts as an international language, the place of culture in the textbooks was questioned by many scholars earlier (Alptekin, 2002; Baker, 2012)” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 10). Alsaif comments: “Yet, if we consider the purpose of learning English for EFL learners, most of them study English either to meet their individual or institutional needs. Researchers such as McKay (2002) and Kumaravadivelu (2006) suggested that English for such learners is used as “language of communicational necessity, not of cultural identity” (Alsaif, 2016, 2). Gedik Bal explains that learning about a foreign culture is insufficient in such cases: “Textbooks that present only the TLCs do not meet the needs and expectations of the language learners who learn EIL (Alptekin, 2002; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Shin et al., 2011; Alsaif, 2016)” (2020,10).

Does the universal nature of the language being used as a lingua franca require the knowledge of its source culture and, if so, how to ensure a sufficient level of such knowledge among speakers from different continents? “Tomlinson (2005) advocates that language teaching materials utilized in countries where English is used as a foreign language should have priority to help learners to communicate not only with native speakers of English but also with non-native speakers of English because the interaction between non-native speakers of English comprises over the half of the total interaction in English. Therefore, textbook authors should also consider the impact of the development of EIL in foreign language instruction. And textbooks should include perspectives, practices, and products of a diverse

set of cultures to meet the communication needs of the members of local and global contexts (Baker, 2012; Çelik & Erbay, 2013)” (Gedik Bal, 2020, 10).

In the context of textbooks, it is important to introduce another division of culture: “Culture can be divided into two distinct groups: big ‘C’ and small ‘c’ culture. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) explain that big ‘C’ culture or ‘achievement culture’ comprises history, geography, institutions, literature, art, and music. On the other hand, small ‘c’ culture or ‘behaviour culture’ has been broadened to include “culturally-influenced beliefs and perceptions, especially expressed through language, but also through cultural behaviours that affect acceptability in the host community (Tomalin and Stempleski)” (Matić, 2015, 1). Keeping this in mind, when analyzing the textbook, it is advisable to pay attention to the relationship between the two mentioned cultures in the textbook, i.e. the presence of culture with a small "c" which makes knowledge practically applicable. Pingel also recognizes this: “Speech acts are embedded in a social and cultural context. Modern textbook authors attempt to introduce this phenomenon as early as possible. The sentences the students read and speak should not only train vocabulary and grammar but also occur in situations in which these sentences are normally spoken” (2010, 76). Furthermore, Pingel emphasizes the importance of introducing contrasting situations in language teaching, in which all daily situations from both countries are compared in order to start developing intercultural competence as early as possible. This refers to the country whose language is being taught and the country in which the language is being taught. Of course, for example, with immigrants, the situation can be complicated - even a textbook well adapted to the Croatian context would not be suitable in that case, but one should acquire or make one adapted to the culture from which the student comes.

One cultural factor concerning language usage is the use of slang and idioms that form the backbone of everyday communication, and the degree of presence of these expressions can show to what extent a textbook is a realistic reflection of everyday life, or to which extent small “c” culture is present. “As it is not authentic to present only the formal language in the textbooks, more colloquial language use should also be offered so that students are well prepared for the actual and informal use of language outside the classroom (Gedik Bal, 2020, 12).

The described research findings were used as landmarks in the construction of my own instrument for analysis of British culture as represented in English language textbooks, which

is comprised of several components. The components function as units made up of questions or statements, depending on how the particular contributing author originally formulated them, and are linked by a common theme. There are five thematic components, or groups of questions/statements, dealing with: a) race, culture, nationality and religion, b) gender, c) economic opportunities, d) disability/developmental difficulties and e) political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.). Since divisions have already been established as a necessary element of culture by the theoretical frame, they serve as a common denominator when constructing the instrument. Each of the five thematic units explores how visible the divisions are, based on a particular theme. For example, the component dealing with economic opportunities explores how present the divisions between the rich and poor are in the portrayal of British culture in each textbook.

Besides the components themselves, I should give due credit to the contributing authors. First off, as stated earlier, Gedik Bal emphasizes that English textbooks should aid the development of the students' intercultural competence. To see whether and to which extent this is done, a part of the table "List for evaluation of information materials" taken from Banks' *Introduction to Multicultural Education* (2002, Appendix C) has been taken and appropriately modified to fit the British context, as Banks deals with the USA, not the UK. As for the possible terminological inconsistency, since intercultural competence is also written about, and now a book on multicultural education is being used: "Often the difference in use seems mostly geographical. In Europe the preferred term is intercultural education while especially the United States but also the rest of North America, Australia and Asia use the term multicultural education (Hill, 2007; Leeman & Reid, 2006). However, in Europe there are differences between countries as well. For example, in Sweden and the Netherlands intercultural education is used while in Great Britain and Finland multicultural education is the commonly used term" (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009, 2). Furthermore, Holm and Zilliacus provide a useful elaboration: "(...)there are several different kinds of both multicultural and intercultural education. The more traditional and conservative approaches focus on learning to get along and learning about different cultures. The more critical approaches focus on social justice as a core value, on furthering democracy and working against prejudice and discrimination" (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009, 15).

Gedik Bal also does qualitative research on English textbooks and offers a very good list of statements for analysis concerning the way in which knowledge of a foreign language and

culture is presented in the textbook in *Table 4* (2020, 8), so her contribution is also incorporated in the instrument. Falk Pingel's contribution is taken from the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* and contains several very interesting questions from the perspective of critical pedagogy. The author had taken them form a questionnaire for textbook evaluation used by a Canadian education authority which is used to "check whether a multicultural approach has been employed" (Pingel, 69, 2010) . The last, but not least important contribution to the development of this instrument comes from Sleeter and Grant. The title of their work *Race, Class, Gender, and Disability in Current Textbooks* is self-evident, so I just point out a few l significant quotes: "Social class and disability are absent from most textbook analyses. The most comprehensive analysis of social class issues was done by Anyon in 1979, when she examined seventeen secondary history texts. Social class is sometimes mentioned in other analyses, but is otherwise overlooked. Disability is briefly mentioned in a few textbook analyses, which note mainly that people with disabilities are very underrepresented in reading textbooks" (188, 2011). According to these claims, questions about disability and social class were formulated and added to the instrument, as were several others. Furthermore, Sleeter and Grant emphasize picture analysis as an important modality of analysis, which I have largely relied on for reasons that will be explained in the following chapters: "Picture analysis involves tallying who is in each picture, categorized by sex, race (...), and disability. Pictures can be designated as individual or group pictures. In addition, racial and sex stereotypes, and the social-class background or setting, are to be noted" (Sleeter & Grant, 188, 2011). The questions without the name of a credited author in brackets beside them are my own.

### *Analyses of individual textbooks*

#### *Headway Pre-intermediate*

Soars, Soars & Hancock (2019)

We begin the analysis with this textbook because I have used an older edition of the same textbook in the first grade of high school and continued using textbooks from this series all throughout high school. It is important to note that this textbook, unlike some of the others, does not indicate the age or grade for which it is meant. Given the abundance of visual content included in the textbooks, the analysis of the textbooks begins with picture analysis. The analysis is done by thematic units, following the composition of the instrument.

#### a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

Black people are shown 32 times, so they make seven percent of the people portrayed, and Asians are shown only six times, and make just over one percent of the people portrayed, which means that blacks are shown twice as many times as they are present in the ethnic composition of the UK, and Asians are shown seven times less (Office for National Statistics, 2020 b). It is interesting to note that Asians of the “Indian phenotype” are not shown in the textbook at all, which definitely does not match the composition of the UK population from my personal experience. All the other representations of persons in the pictures that are not specifically mentioned depict White persons, in this textbook and all the subsequent ones.

As far as race and ethnicity are concerned, it is important to point out two texts, both of which are in the fifth unit, which is titled: “The future is in your hands”. It is questionable how true such a title is, given the different starting positions that individuals gain in life thanks to the family and the country into which they are born. The following two stories can be considered to fit both the racial and economic category. The first, very short audio story deals with a female black-skinned student who owes £ 35,000 she spent on her schooling and hopes to get a job. This text is commendable because it shows, at least indirectly, that women, especially within minority ethnic groups, are often in an unenviable financial position, but so are, for example, white male college students. It is questionable whether the student is in such a situation because she is a black woman or just because she is a college student. Economic gender inequality is indirectly presented in the context of employment and the different wages of three people, which is commendable, but this time the presentation is ethnically homogeneous, as all characters are White (p. 72, 73). Another story about a black boy deals with a ballet dancer from a slum of the Nigerian capital who received a scholarship to study at a prestigious ballet school in London. Although the story is inspiring, the question is how many young people did not get such an opportunity. This seems like putting a deliberate emphasis on the probably quite rare positive events or cherry picking. His life story is sparingly mentioned only in the last sentence, where it states that his family lost their home in a fire last year, along with another 2,000 people from the same slum (p. 55). This superficial mention of such a difficult circumstance seems dehumanizing.

#### b) Gender

Out of 447 persons shown in the textbook, 202 or 45 percent are female. The number would have been even higher, i.e. the representation would have been more gender equal if there



were not a few photos of men's football teams. The tenth of the twelve units in the book deals with all-time greats in sports and in this unit gender inequality is the most obvious, as there are 24 men and only four women in the pictures.

The following story can also be considered to belong to the racial category, but it seems that gender is more of an issue here, as it will be obvious from the person's occupation. The story of the first British black stuntwoman is told very superficially and in a sensationalistic manner. "Amanda is doing very well for someone who spent their childhood in children's homes and had three children by the age of 21" (Soars, Soars & Hancock, 2019, 84). This sentence is the only information the reader gets about her life, the challenges she could have faced thanks to unenviable life circumstances are not mentioned anywhere. As far as gender equality is concerned, this text and the text that follows on the next page about the second stuntwoman are the closest to the mentioned ideal, since they show women in atypical roles, i.e. occupations. As far as women are concerned, a mother of three who is forced by circumstances to stay at home and misses her job is also briefly mentioned (p. 51). This is the range or depth with which this textbook deals with the role and position of women in society. The textbook does not mention or portray LGBTIQ people, at least not in a way that would show them as such, for example, on a date with a person of the same sex, while dates of heterosexual people are described.

### c) Economic opportunities

Apart from race and gender, an important topic of analysis is money, but it seems that the notion of unequal distribution of wealth is almost completely absent from the textbook. Nowhere, except in the case of the mentioned Black female student, is there a mention of lack of money, stratification of people according to wealth, the impact of money on the quality of life and the like. Admittedly, the already mentioned Nigerian boy from the slum is present in the textbook, but almost no attention is given to his financial status, except the dehumanizing superficial mention at the very end of the text that he lost his home along with 2000 other people in a fire last year. Also, he is not in from the UK, but once he gets to the UK, he seems to be bound for material success, as the story frames it. It is interesting to note that a lot of texts and accompanying questions and exercises deal with international travel, which seems very easy and decided upon at the drop of a hat, as if it can be done at no cost. The first unit mentions two retired professors, spouses who travel the world after they quit their jobs because they had gotten bored of work. Although the standard of living is higher in the UK

than in the Republic of Croatia, it is necessary to ask whether such a decision is realistic. On the next page (p. 12) there is an interview with a Turkish professor who came to Canada just to learn English and there is no mention of him doing any work. Since Mehmet can afford it, we might wonder if Turkey is the promised land for educators? One of the characters, who works as a carpenter says that he and his girlfriend don't care about money at all (p. 15). Also, in the seventh unit there is a series of texts and exercises which are linked by the thought expressed in the title: "The best things in life are free". It could be argued that the purpose of emphasizing such an attitude is to suppress materialism which is already too widespread, but it could also be argued that such an attitude is the privilege of those who have enough money to meet at least the basic necessities of life. People who suffer from hunger or disease due to poverty all their lives should be asked if they agree with this. This message should be understood in the right context, not black and white, as if money does not matter. Very rich people who have succeeded in the business world are also mentioned, and the philanthropic activities of the royal family, as well as of the mentioned rich people are emphasized, which potentially equates wealth and virtue, i.e. noble qualities and humanitarianism. Does this mean that money is not important, but if a person has it, then they are a humanitarian, a good person?

d) Disability/developmental difficulties

The textbook does not mention or portray people with disabilities.

e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)

As far as history is concerned, there is not a shred of ethnic or political history, only some mentions of Roman legacy. What is also interesting are the headlines that appear next to the text on Roman heritage: "The West sent more soldiers to Iraq", "More refugees have tried to enter the country, after the government announced that no more will be allowed in", "There have been more protests against high government taxes" (Soars, Soars & Hancock, 2019, 64). The quoted titles refer to the period 2000 years ago. Of course, Iraq was then called Mesopotamia and the West was the Roman Empire, but the political trends are clearly the same. The question is whether such a contribution is included in the textbook to indicate the cyclical repetitiveness of political events, or to make students less sensitive to current events? Regarding social problems, there is an indirect mention of pollution in one sentence, in a text

about a fisherman who found a penguin whose feathers were covered with oil, cleaned it and took it home (p. 30).

The general impression is that the language material could have been processed in a much more socially engaged way, thus making the textbook closer and more relevant to students. As for the way of presenting the material, it is obvious that the authors avoided all problematic topics at all costs. Thus, the textbook is lacking in quality according to the criteria set out in the instrument, and the question arises as to whether quality was sacrificed at the expense of quantity? Has it been done to make it as easy as possible to increase the number of 100 million students who have learned English through the Headway Series textbooks, as the authors themselves claim on the cover? I am inclined to think so.

### *Smiles 1*

Dooley (2019)

This textbook is intended for the first grade of elementary school, which, in addition to being pointed out, is immediately noticeable from the fact that the title is written in glittery letters.

#### a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

What must be pointed out is that the textbook shows only two Black persons, which makes four per mille, and one Asian, which makes two per mille, making it the by an order of magnitude the least racially heterogeneous of all five textbooks that have been analyzed. Although this dominance of Whites is worrying, we should point out one important fact – the textbook is adapted to the local context, and it could be argued that this fact justifies it to some extent, as Croatia is still quite ethnically homogeneous, although I consider it dangerous to thread down this path. Some more heterogeneity would be in order. Regarding other national cultures, students are expected to learn about the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Spain, China, Russia, Italy, Canada, Spain and Turkey, through several topics involving famous characters, schools, traffic and food. The content covering other cultures is stereotypical, much like Gedik Bal and Alsaif report it to be in other textbooks.

#### b) Gender

The cover photo shows four children, probably 6-7 years old. There are three boys and one girl in that picture and this trend of unequal representation continues to some extent within the textbook. There are fewer women than men, 175 versus 239, so women make up 42

percent of the people shown, which means that the situation is slightly worse in terms of equality of representation than with Headway, and making this textbook the most unequal in terms of gender representation. The textbook is rich in depictions of animals, especially personified ones, as well as personified trains, and no gender identity has been attributed to them. The textbook does not mention or portray LGBTIQ people in a way that their sexual orientation would be obvious.

c) Economic opportunities

Money is completely absent for the textbook, so in this regard, nothing could be analyzed.

d) Disability/developmental difficulties

It is commendable that at least one person in a wheelchair was shown under the title “We are all different but special”, making it the only analyzed textbook that at least includes a person with disability in the pictures. However, no mention of any kind of disability is present in the text.

e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)

Politics and social engagement are completely absent from the textbook.

The general impression of this textbook is largely affected by the age group for which it was intended, which is expected. Given the level of cognitive maturity of six and seven-year-old children, the developed instrument for analysis, except for picture analysis, could hardly be applied to this textbook, since money, class, status, the role of women in society, and socially engaged topics are completely absent. However, it was important to include this textbook in the analysis in order to get a more complete overview of the available textbooks by age categories.

From the pedagogical perspective, the textbook could have been worse, and there are some positive elements worth mentioning. The Smiles family are a recurring group of main characters, whose adventures span through most of the textbook. It seems that the author of the textbook decided to repeat the characters in order to develop a certain familiarity with the students, which can lead to receptivity to learning, because it creates the effect of familiarity. The teaching of values through fables and fairy tales is certainly worth pointing out, it is emphasized, for example, how good should be reciprocated by good (p. 61), how not to be

selfish (p. 75), that one should work first and then play (p. 89). It is commendable that CLIL an approach that integrates content and language learning, is included in the textbook for the same purpose, and these topics are combined through learning about good behaviour (p. 87). Although they may seem banal, such pedagogical elements are often lacking at higher educational levels, and are very valuable for personality development - knowledge without character is not only worthless, but also dangerous.

The localization of the textbook is its most positive aspect, it is something that Gedik Bal and Alsaif emphasize as necessary and worth implementing on a larger scale. In this case it is achieved, by including Croatian names such as Petar, Marina, Danica and Matija, local foods such as stuffed peppers, čevapčići and štruklji, traditional musical instruments such as tambure, gajde and sopele, and events and institutions that children can visit in Croatia, such as the Zagreb puppet theatre or zoo and the Šibenik International Children's Festival. It is necessary to point out once again that the instrument could not be applied to analyze the textbook and that the portrayal of British culture seems so superficial that there is apparently nothing to analyze but the pictures.

### *Solutions*

Falla & Davies (2019)

This textbook, as pointed out on the cover, is intended for the first or second grade of high school. Like the previously analyzed Headway, this is a pre-intermediate level textbook and that is why some aspects of the two textbooks will be compared here.

#### a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

First of all, there is a difference compared to Headway in terms of the total number of people depicted and representation of different “races”. This textbook shows approximately one third less people (330 compared to 447), which is not that significant and suggests that the textbook is more textual. Due to this, it seems less cluttered with pictures, but what it is not cluttered with are depictions of people of different skin colours. We find only four black people in the textbook, which makes a little more than one percent, and seventeen Asians, which makes five percent of the people shown, so this textbook gets closer to the UK ethnic census than Headway. Here, “Asian” means a person who appears to be of Far Eastern descent, not Indians or Arabs, who may technically be considered Asians. It is interesting to note that Asians are in only three pictures within the textbook, one showing five children in a

Korean kindergarten who have a robot instead of an English teacher and are playing with a robot puppy, another showing two Asians interacting at an airport, and a third one showing ten Asians on the plane. The Asians are not in contact with people of any other phenotype or “race” in the pictures, as if they are being segregated or possibly alluding that their communities are closed and stereotyping them. Another stereotype, which is not necessarily untrue, is connecting Asians to technology, like in the first mentioned image, so there is a parallel to Gedik Bal’s and Alsaif’s findings in regards to stereotypes. As far as history is concerned, the contribution of other cultures or ethnic groups is nowhere explicitly mentioned, but foreign and classical languages such as French, Latin and Greek are mentioned as sources of English words, thus at least indicating that language, as part of culture, it is not a homogeneous and monolithic entity formed in isolation. Of course, such indications are far from recognizing the role of ethnic minorities in building British culture.

#### b) Gender

In terms of gender, Solutions is quite similar to Headway. The pictures in Solutions show 46 percent of women, 153 people out of a total of 300 shown, one percent more women than Headway. The imbalance in the representation of women and men is increased by the fact that some images are repeated, they appear in a reduced form at the beginning of the unit and in full size later, and the persons on them are counted twice. This textbook does not portray LGBTIQ people, at least not in a way that would reveal that they are LGBTIQ people.

#### c) Economic opportunities

The seventh unit (p. 74) is dedicated to money and ranges from depicting astronomically expensive products and services to questionnaires for more thrifty purchases, advice on how to make money by selling old things or how to make homemade substitutes for expensive cosmetics (p. 76). It’s far from depicting financial inequalities caused by race, class, or gender, but at least it includes business owners having tens of millions of dollars and still living modest lives (p. 81), homeless people returning bags full of money (p. 77), and slums in Sao Paulo (p. 76). Also, three stories are told and two scientific studies cited, which all demystify winning the lottery by showing that the happiness of the winner is usually short-lived and that they may even be more dissatisfied with life after winning than they were before (p. 10, p. 76). As with Headway, the question can be raised as to what such a perspective is intended to achieve, and these interpretations can go both ways: one being the banalization of money and the other emphasizing other things in life as more important than

money. This dilemma can be solved by looking through the rest of the textbook, which points out that the lack of money exists as a phenomenon, though far away in poor Brazil, acknowledges its importance and promotes values which should be more important than money, such as honesty and modesty, or rational management and giving for noble purposes. There is even a brief debate about whether life would be better for poor people if money were abolished, which encourages questioning the status quo, develops critical thinking and is a direction in which students' thinking should be encouraged in order to possibly develop some new paradigms of life, making it a commendable feature.

#### d) Disability/developmental difficulties

Much like Headway, the textbook does not portray people with disabilities or developmental issues.

#### e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)

Democracy and politics are absent as such, but there is content that can be considered akin to those notions e.g. socially relevant or socially engaged topics. The textbook includes, for example, natural disasters, which never remain only natural if they occur in populated areas, but also become social, such as earthquakes (p. 44) and global warming (p. 45, p. 49) and the authors offer contradictory views of the same problems and seek students' opinions on them, which is a very rare and commendable element that contributes to the development of critical thinking and can be seen as a minuscule exercise in democracy. Different opinions are also offered regarding potentially very interesting topics for students such as piracy (p. 35) and video games (p. 36). Also, the entire eighth unit is dedicated to crime, which is commendable, despite a dose of romanticism and humour which has been added to make the stories more interesting. It should be noted that the story of a radio journalist who investigated crime on the streets of London and himself became its victim is also included, which can be considered a reference to real social problems and a refreshingly realistic depiction of the dark side of UK culture, or to the destructive face of culture Katunarić writes about (p. 86). In addition, thefts, robberies, burglaries and drug-related crime are also dealt with, which is far more relevant than the crimes in the Wild West, which are also depicted. Unfortunately, violent crimes are completely absent in the textbook, with the exception of the text about the dead body found at a beach. The topic of murder is not directly addressed in the story but at least the story describes a potential victim of violence (p. 91).

Other elements of the textbook worth pointing out also include raising the question of the potentially overestimating the practical value of university education, which is certainly a relevant topic due to the commercialization of education, especially higher education (p. 57), which was dealt with in the theoretical frame, in the part about high and low culture. The inclusion of the short text “How foreigners see the British” (p. 108) is also laudable, as it represents a hint of cultural (auto)reflection by the authors, but a somewhat expected conclusion is offered: for most people who come to live in the UK, the reality is that their experience is better than they had expected based on stereotypes. The text also highlights the negative aspects that bother foreigners, such as British reservedness, the specific British humour or British culture in general, the latter being a big stumbling block and bothering almost a third of newcomers (p. 108). In relation to the developed instrument, the culture is still somewhat superficial in its presentation, meaning that the positive aspects are emphasized and the negative ones are downplayed, but in relation to Headway, the textbook offers a more realistic image of it, since it deals with crime and tackles the issue of money in a more sober way. It also offers more practical and relevant knowledge and enables more student engagement on potentially controversial topics than Headway.

### *Project explore 1*

Phillips, Shipton & Hutchinson (2019)

This textbook is intended for the fifth grade of elementary school and fifth year of studying, which is also evident from the cover photos showing children of that age. The picture analysis shows that this textbook stands out from the others by the sheer number of people shown, which is 882, more than in Headway and Solutions combined.

#### a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

Another difference from the previously analyzed textbooks is the noticeable presence of persons of Indian phenotype, there are 56 of them and that makes eight percent of the people portrayed. People from the Far East, whom we previously called Asians make up one percent with only 14 depictions. Depictions of Black people are the most numerous so far, with 72 persons or eight percent. The variety of visual content in the textbook was quite demanding to analyze, as there are many illustrations of people of different skin colours who might be Black, Indian, Arab, perhaps even South American, so the classification took into account the photographs of real people and it was assumed that the illustrations somewhat followed the phenotypes or “races” represented there. As mentioned earlier in the paper, “race” is not a



scientific term nor is it my business to count blood cells in this thesis, but scientific rigor dictates that some divisions be introduced nonetheless, for the purpose of analysis. Finally, the result of the picture analysis is positive, in the sense that this is by far the most colourful textbook in terms of skin colour. The textbook follows the stories of not one but two groups of protagonists. The first group consists of four students, two of whom are Indians, a boy named Ravi and a girl named Viki, and in the second group of protagonists there is a Black girl named Anna. Such diversity is good because people of different skin colours are not just assigned the role of extras, they are not present just to meet the norm of racial diversity, but they are agents of action. Among the comics dealing with enchanted statuettes, flying robots, as well as realistic conversations of the already mentioned group of students, a short text about Diwali, the Indian festival of light, has crept in. This is a commendable acknowledgement of other people's cultural contributions, or even to some extent cultural integration, since it is stated that this holiday is celebrated in many British cities. Learning about other cultures is accomplished through learning about food, for example Sacher cake when learning about Austria, omelette with potatoes when learning about Spain, or pies, pavlovas and lamingtons when learning about Australia (p. 83, 84). Although Australia is not in Europe, this approach is Eurocentric and it is a real refreshment to read about chocolate ants, snake stew and lizard wrap (p. 81). Of course, these depictions of foreign cultures are stereotypical.

#### b) Gender

Another characteristic that distinguishes this textbook from all three textbooks described thus far is that there are more females than males in the pictures and illustrations, 477 versus 405, which means 54 percent of persons depicted are women. The textbook does not mention or portray LGBTIQ people in a way that their sexual orientation would be obvious.

#### c) Economic opportunities

Money and class are left out of the textbook.

#### d) Disability/developmental difficulties

It should be noted that there are no depictions or mentions of people with disabilities in the textbook.

e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)

Topics such as ideology, politics and socially engaged topics are not present in the textbook.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the visual impression this textbook makes. The textbook itself is very colourful and too abundant in illustrations. There is also a certain style of drawing comics that is eye-catching to the point of being annoying, but this has probably been done on purpose, to keep the eleven-year-olds` attention on the illustrations, as their brains are probably constantly being bombarded with visual content from the screens of various devices. It is obvious that the learning material is adapted to the students` age by noting the way in which the topics are presented: the texts are very short and basic and the authors of the textbook do not delve into the topics that are of interest in this paper at all. Besides picture analysis, the instrument could not be applied to this textbook. "Racial" variety is certainly a positive side, but the general impression is that the visual variety could be reduced, and that some socially engaged topic should be introduced in a form suitable for students of that age, which would add value to the textbook.

### *New Success*

Comyns Carr, Parsons, Moran & White (2017)

This is a textbook for high schools, elementary level (A1 + A2). Although the intended for students with a lower level of language proficiency, this textbook can easily compete with Headway and Solutions, as it will be explained.

a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

Black people are shown 16 times, making up about five percent of the total depictions, which is slightly more than the ethnic composition of the UK. At the same time, there are less Asians, only 10, and this makes three percent, which is less than half than the percentage actually present in the ethnic composition of the UK. Due to such a disproportion in the presentation of ethnic groups, the textbook is similar to Headway, but the total number of people depicted is more similar to Solutions, as well as the ratio of images and text - the general impression is that this textbook is more textual, like Solutions.

## b) Gender

A total of 331 people are shown in the textbook and 170 of them, or 53 percent, are female. Such a situation, and even the stated percentage, corresponds to the actual situation in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2018 b). The textbook does not mention or portray LGBTIQ people in a way that their sexual orientation would be obvious.

## c) Economic opportunities

Admittedly, the textbook deals less with money than Solutions, which has devoted an entire unit to it, but still emphasizes the importance of managing it rationally through, for example, savings tips (p. 81). In this respect it is worse than Solutions.

## d) Disability/developmental difficulties

The textbook does not mention or portray people with disabilities.

## e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)

What Solutions does well, by very loose criteria, of course, New Success does better - it devotes the entire twelfth chapter, entitled "Look to the Future", to a variety of socially engaged topics: from second-hand clothing and greener traffic through cycling (p. 106, 107) to recycling, energy conservation (p.107, 110), collecting litter (p.113) to highlighting the importance of protecting endangered animal species (108). The importance of local food production, i.e. planting gardens, is also emphasized through the story of a school garden (p.113). Interestingly, a letter sent by citizens disturbed by the devastation of the local park to the local government is cited as an example of a formal letter, which relates to the issue of reducing the gap between democratic ideals and reality to some extent. Since the chapter deals with pollution quite extensively, the final group of questions from the instrument becomes applicable, which is a pleasant novelty, and this is the only textbook that has succeeded in doing so. What should be pointed out is the integration of language content and values, including slogans such as: "Don't pollute the air, cycle to work" or "Protect the plants and animals. Take your litter home" as a fill-in-the-gaps exercise (p. 109) and in this respect this textbook resembles Smiles. Of course, it can be argued that empty slogans are of no use, but a change in reality comes from a change of consciousness, and it is therefore

commendable that the textbook points out that “small changes can affect the future of our world” (p. 107).

Unexpectedly, since it is written for students of a lower level of language proficiency, *New Success* raises the bar set by *Solutions*, which is its relevant “competition” in terms of quality. The second topic that *New Success* handles better than *Solutions* is English culture. As for its geographical aspect, the textbook offers some brief information about, for example, Manchester (p. 18) and describes a visit to London (p. 44), at the level of a tourist brochure. The chapter on food also mentions the traditional English breakfast (p. 51), but this textbook offers something more than such stereotypical depictions of culture. While *Solutions* contains only a very short text, few sentences long, stating that foreigners are pleasantly surprised by the UK once they arrive, here there are as many as four pages dedicated to UK culture. Admittedly, not the whole four pages, as other countries of the inner circle are mentioned, the USA and Australia, but such comparisons actually make it easier to distinguish between related cultures that students could mix up because they speak almost the same language, at least from the perspective of a person in the elementary level of language proficiency. Another element of the instrument that can be partly applied here is the question whether the textbook offers insight into students’ own culture. Of course, since it is not localized, the textbook, unlike *Smiles*, does not offer a direct insight into the culture, but it encourages asking questions about one’s own culture and its connection with the English language, e.g. asking how often students hear English in the media, how much of it is present in their mother tongue through English words and how many accents their mother tongue has or how many regional languages are spoken in their culture. The quiz on the global character of the English language (p. 114) should be pointed out as well, along with the two-page story on British architecture, which, in my own experience, is the most authentic reflection of British culture in these five textbooks (p. 116, 117). The fact that that this is the most realistic aspect of culture is as commendable as it is sad, since the textbook is not intended for students at the Faculty of Architecture or Civil Engineering. Houses are not important without people.

### *Results and interpretation*

The analysis of the selected English language textbooks has shown that they are dominated by an unrealistic, superficial and stereotypical portrayal of British culture. Unfortunately, even *New Success*, as the best analyzed textbook, simply does not offer anything close to the content that is sought for by the instrument for analysis and which, according to the standard

set by the theoretical framework of this paper, would be a realistic reflection of British culture. The sullen, destructive and divisive face of culture Katunarić writes about is nowhere to be found either in domestic or in foreign culture, and the textbooks fall short in portrayal of both, meaning that they are not conducive to developing intercultural competence. Admittedly, a hint of the destructive face is seen in Solutions, in the unit about crime, especially in the story of a news reporter who has become a victim of crime, and in this regard, Solutions is an exception from the rest of the textbooks, even though it offers an insufficient portrayal of crime. In general, the already cited Pingel's claim that textbook authors are not critical enough of their culture is valid here (2010). Katunarić also writes about demagogues who try to portray the interests of the rulers and the ruled as unified (2007), and yet, from the selected textbooks it is not at all obvious that such two groups exist, let alone have conflicting interests. Regarding those aspects of culture that this paper, due to my own personal interests, deals with the most, and those are ideology and politics, this quote by Gedik Bal summarizes the issue perfectly: "Regarding the lack of political, religious, and ideological perspectives in the textbook, Dimici et al. (2018) also found that political orientations were rarely observed in the textbook. Amerian and Tajabadi . (2020) had similar findings upon the teachers' evaluation of the 'New Headway' internationally published textbook" (Gedik Bal, 2020, 12). I am inclined to support the position of the authors mentioned by Gedik Bal regarding the other textbooks analyzed, not just Headway. Politics is almost completely absent from the textbooks, with the exception of a tiny hint of democracy when a person writes a letter to the local government about the devastation of a local park in New Success, but it is not labelled as such since democracy or politics are not issues dealt with in the unit or the textbook.

Different religions and different, non-straight sexual orientations such as practised by the LGBTIQ community are totally absent from the textbooks, as are currently relevant issues of surveillance, the right of privacy, censorship etc. Those with different bodies, such as the physically or mentally challenged are almost invisible, except for one illustration in Smiles 1, and no textbook mentions or deals with disability or LGBTIQ people explicitly. Gedik Bal states that foreign cultures are being portrayed stereotypically in English textbooks, and this holds true, as pretty much the only differences between national cultures seems to be the food that their inhabitants eat.

Admittedly, there is another difference, as some inhabitants of other countries like Brazil (Solutions) and Nigeria (New Success) are portrayed as living in slums. Economic

inequalities, except for these examples, are generally not mentioned, and even the Nigerian boy described in *Headway*, who comes from a poor background, seems to be bound to achieve material success, according to the clichéd story, *per aspera ad astra*. The question can be raised, is poverty a phenomenon that affects only other countries, but not the UK? Money, which is necessary for survival and is crucial in culture is largely lacking in textbooks, as it is not being dealt with on a serious, critical level. It should be noted that *Solutions* is an exception in this regard, and at least deals with money to some extent, although it is far from showing the economic inequalities that this paper deals with. This neglect of money as a means of survival and the implications it entails is very worrying, as it suggests that a huge part of British culture is simply being ignored and pushed under the rug, such as the growing wealth gap and growing economic inequalities, which are global phenomena and were already described earlier.

It is disappointing to see how much nationality, gender, race, class, religion, politics, equality, sexual orientation, and similar topics that could lead to a constructive discussion, which does not always flow smoothly, are avoided in textbooks. This remark can be countered by claiming that language content is pushed to the forefront and that is perfectly fine, but it would be very naive to think that this language content is devoid of cultural charge and will not negatively or misleadingly affect students' perceptions of the United Kingdom. "The textbooks might intentionally avoid such issues in the fear that such topics might lead to conflicts among the students. However, textbook authors should embrace a critical perspective concerning the realities of the world, and certain issues such as ideologies of different societies and human rights should be incorporated" (Gedik Bal, 2020, 12). Another worrying feature of the analyzed textbooks is that they do not depict conflicts on any of the mentioned bases, which makes them less realistic than fairy tales. With the exception of *Solutions*, which includes a unit dedicated to crime, violence is also not mentioned at all or presented in any form in any textbook. Even *Solutions* does not write about it directly, since the pictures show offenses directed exclusively against other people's property. like burglary and theft, not against other people. War, as a phenomenon which connects many of the topics relevant in this research, such as politics, nationality, religion, race, economy and even demagoguery, is not mentioned in the textbooks at all, despite being constantly present in some part of the world.

Admittedly, the textbooks represent gender and ethnic differences, but they do so mostly visually, through pictures of people of different skin colours and sex, the implications of such

differences are not addressed at all, with the exception of Headway, which implicitly links female sex and black skin to financial debt in the case of a female student. The question can be raised whether this is just a description of unenviable student status in the UK, deprived of racial and gender awareness. The characters in all the analyzed textbooks do not seem representative of the British society because they seem quite artificial and sterile, they lack depth and it is very questionable whether they actually represent the real culture of the UK or just a “facade”, used as a tool for teaching the language. Besides class differences, which are absent, one of the reasons for this is the absence of everyday colloquial language that contains, for example, slang. Also, it should be noted that the culture with a big “C”, in terms of some geography and history is present in all analyzed textbooks except Smiles, but it is represented meagerly, usually through a brief mention of a well-known city. There is almost no small “c” culture, which focuses on learning about acceptable behaviour in a foreign culture (Matić, 2015), except for a few formulaic expressions, such as greetings and some courteous questions about how a person feels, which does not meet the needs of everyday communication or authentic learning about culture. The absence of taboo topics from textbooks is related to this, as well as the absence of dealing with stereotypes, which is quite disturbing. As for stereotypes, Headway portrays women in atypical gender roles - as stuntwomen, but this is a sensationalist stunt which becomes obvious by studying the rest of the textbook.

Alsaif and Gedik Bal, as mentioned earlier, claim that a textbook that teaches only about foreign culture is not satisfactory, so it should be noted, as these authors also found in their analyses, that depictions of foreign cultures in the five analyzed textbooks are present, but they are insufficient in quantity and stereotypical. It is a sad fact that knowledge is becoming a commodity, one of the reasons being the fact that such knowledge is a second-class commodity, as Alsaif comments that the lack of representation of domestic culture negatively affects the teaching process (2016).

However, it must be pointed out that there are differences between individual textbooks. If one were to sort the textbooks from worst to best, the sequence would be: Project Explore, Headway, Smiles, Solutions and New Success as the best. Smiles is actually better than one might conclude from the placement, but since it is meant for very young children, it cannot compete with the others thematically and can hardly be analyzed with the same scientific rigor. What should be emphasized once again as a positive side is the localization of the textbook Smiles 1, and it would be interesting to see how it would be implemented at higher

levels of education, and not only in the first grade of primary school. This endeavour is commendable because the inclusion of domestic culture, as mentioned earlier, allows students to learn the language better, reduces the tendencies of linguistic and cultural colonization and enables the development of intercultural competence. Regarding Solutions, it is disappointing to admit that a textbook that can barely provide some half-baked answers to a few questions listed in the instrument is the best, but it is true.

## Conclusion

As pointed out earlier, the analyzed textbooks convey an unrealistic, superficial and stereotypical portrayal of British culture. Such results of textbook analysis are not at all surprising, but they are worrying, if we take into account the deprofessionalization and devaluation of the teaching profession. If, through textbooks, the influence of teachers as pedagogues in the teaching process is bypassed and overcome, it becomes clear that there is a centralist hegemony at play, driven by the interest of capital, as described earlier. In addition, as also illustrated earlier, the relationship of Western culture to itself is quite self-deceiving, and it is logical that such an attitude is reflected in elements of culture such as textbooks. Bearing in mind the dominating and oppressive attitude of Western culture towards other cultures, this cultural self-deception becomes a global problem because of the prevalence of English as a lingua franca and the fact that it is taught globally. If the teacher's person is thrown out of the equation as the backbone of the educational process and if the focus is shifted to the textbook, or worse, to the standardized exam, which is happening more and more often, the educational system is pushed into a dangerous sphere of serving questionable content that maintains the status quo to minds who have not sufficiently developed their own ability to critically evaluate information, and the teacher is severely limited in his ability to perform one of his roles, which is to adapt the material to the time, place, circumstances, and most of all, to the person they are teaching.

In addition to the fear of conflict among students, the reason for presenting such a self-censored and superficial image of British culture and avoiding problematic topics may be economic in nature. I consider that the artificial and superficial image of the culture of the United Kingdom is presented in textbooks primarily so that they can be sold in dozens of markets around the world. It is more likely that a thing will be sold in a large number of markets in a large circulation if it is as colourless as possible, and a critical perspective would



therefore be difficult to monetize, although it would add immensely to textbook quality, providing knowledge not limited to language. The commodification of knowledge and education is unfortunately a ubiquitous phenomenon and it makes no sense to bury one's head in the sand to avoid it. The authors of the textbooks, together with the consumers, primarily referring to the committees that approve their procurement, should be bound by a duty to future generations, whose minds need to be encouraged to develop critical thinking above all else. In today's immense sea of contradictory and manipulated information and the generally fast-paced and chaotic world, critical thinking is a skill, ability or quality that, more than any other, ensures the survival of a person as an independent thinking individual and thus as a dignified human being. Therefore, it is necessary for each teacher to encourage critical thinking in his students by encouraging them to question the picture of reality that is served to them, even if it is presented in a textbook approved by the proper ministry.

Besides receiving the textbooks critically, much needs to be done to improve their quality and this can be done, for example, by supplementing existing textbooks with additional materials which will provide a more realistic portrayal of the cultures of both the UK and foreign countries and which will encourage the questioning of such portrayals. Regarding the development of new textbooks, they should be developed by persons of rich cultural background, bilinguals or multilinguals, and should take into consideration the needs of the speakers of English as a lingua franca as well as be localized, like it was done with Smiles 1. Depending on the cognitive maturity of the students, increasingly demanding and problematic topics and their implications should gradually be introduced and integrated into the language learning, such as: nationality and different national cultures, race, ethnicity, war, economic inequalities, class, sex, gender, LGBTIQ, physical and mental disabilities, religions, stereotypes, taboos, politics, democracy, communism, censorship, surveillance, utopias, dystopias, critical thinking, etc.

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## Appendix 1 – Instrument for textbook analysis

Within the representation of British culture, to what extent are divisions visible, based on the following:

### a) Race, culture, nationality and religion

1. The political (also ideological and religious) perspectives of TLCs are taken into consideration (Gedik Bal, 2020).
2. Includes a range of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that reflects the diversity within UK life and society (Banks, 2002).
3. Describes the wide range of diversity that exists within racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (for example, social class, regional, ideology, and language diversity within ethnic groups) (Banks, 2002).
4. The textbook offers insight into a variety of subcultural groups (namely, professions) (Gedik Bal, 2020).
5. Is the material designed to help students appreciate the importance of cultural diversity? (Pingel, 2010)
6. Is the material designed to help students appreciate that all racial/ethnic groups have mixed heritages which serve as both sources of pride and humility? (Pingel, 2010)
7. The historical perspective is present to explain the national identity of the TLCs (Gedik Bal, 2020).
8. Acquaints students with key concepts that are essential for understanding the history and cultures of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in the UK, such as prejudice, discrimination, institutionalized racism, institutionalized sexism, and social-class stratification (Banks, 2002).
9. Integrates the histories and experiences of racial and ethnic groups into the mainstream story of the development of the UK rather than isolating them into special sections boxes and features boxes (Banks, 2002).
10. The geographical perspective is present to explain certain features of the national character of the TLCs (Gedik Bal, 2020).
11. Acquaints students with key historical and cultural events that are essential for understanding the experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the UK, such as colonization, slave trade, etc (Banks, 2002).

12. Describes the range of dialects and languages within UK society, the problems of language minority groups, and the contributions that diverse languages make to UK society (Banks, 2002).
13. The textbook offers insight into the creative arts of the TLCs (Gedik Bal, 2020).
14. The textbook offers insight into the socially acceptable or taboo topics of the TLCs (Gedik Bal, 2020).
15. The textbook offers insight into the cultural/racial/gender stereotypes (Gedik Bal, 2020).
16. Is the material designed to help students examine racial/ethnic stereotypes critically? (Pingel, 2010)
17. Is the material designed to help students go beyond stereotypes to offer genuine insight into other racial/ethnic groups? (Pingel, 2010)
18. Is the material designed to help students promote acceptance of racial/ethnic groups and individuals on the basis of personal worth? (Pingel, 2010)
19. The textbook offers insight into the students' own culture (Gedik Bal, 2020).
20. Is the material designed to help students examine their own values and attitudes? (Pingel, 2010)

## **b) Gender**

1. Describes the roles, experiences, challenges and contributions of women within various racial and ethnic groups (Banks, 2002).
2. Helps students to view UK history and society from the perspectives of women within various racial and ethnic groups (Banks, 2002).
3. Helps students to understand the extent to which acculturation within UK society is a two-way process and the ways in which majority groups have incorporated (and sometimes appropriated) aspects of the cultures of ethnic groups of colour and the extent to which ethnic groups of colour have adapted and incorporated mainstream culture into their ways of life (Banks, 2002).

### **c) Economic opportunities**

1. Helps students to view the historical development of the UK from the perspectives of groups that have been victimized in history and from the perspectives of groups that have been advantaged in the UK, such as higher-income groups and nobility (Banks, 2002).
2. Helps students to understand the powerful role of social class in UK society and the extent to which class is still a significant factor in determining the life chances of UK citizens (Banks, 2002).
3. Are there depictions of people with different economic opportunities in the textbook?
4. Does the textbook emphasize the importance of money as a potentially limiting factor when it comes to quality of life?

### **d) Disability / developmental difficulties**

1. Are there presentations of people with disabilities in the textbook?
2. To what extent are people with disabilities present in the textbook?
3. Is there any discussion about the specific needs and life challenges that people with disabilities face?

### **e) Political equality (application of democratic ideals, such as the right to information, decision-making, etc.)**

1. Helps students to understand the role that students need to play to help close the gap between democratic ideals and realities (Banks, 2002).
2. The textbook offers insight into socio-political problems of the TLCs (unemployment, pollution, etc.) (Gedik Bal, 2020).