

# Promoting Intercultural Competence and Multilingualism Through EFL Textbooks

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Klešković, Ivana

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Department of English

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Promoting Intercultural Competence and Multilingualism

Through EFL Textbooks

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Student: Ivana Klešković

Supervisor: Stela Letica Krevelj, Ph.D., assistant prof.

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Studentica: Ivana Klešković

Mentorica: dr.sc. Stela Letica Krevelj, doc.

Zagreb, 2023.

Examining committee:

1. Renata Geld, PhD, Associate Professor
2. Jasenka Čengić, Assistant
3. Stela Letica Krevelj, PhD, Assistant Professor (Supervisor)

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## **Abstract**

Even though EFL textbooks are not the only resource that English teachers have available, they still provide a systematic representation of teaching material that is developed in accordance with the learner's age and proficiency level. The textbooks creators must comply with the regulations of several legally binding documents that prescribe the requirements of an English syllabus, including the most important one for this thesis – The Croatian National Curriculum. One of the biggest changes that the Curriculum has brought is the introduction of three domains: linguistic competence, intercultural communicative competence and learner autonomy. The domain that is in focus of the thesis, the intercultural communicative competence, still seems ill defined despite the vast amount of recent research. The term 'intercultural competence' is now widespread in education, however, it is yet to be determined what it would specifically entail and what the best approach to teaching it to learners of English is. This study analysed if and how the intercultural communicative domain outcomes are achieved in an EFL textbook series, and the way culture is taught. The study confirms adherence to the Croatian National Curriculum with regards to teaching about intercultural communicative competence. Interestingly, as many as twelve target cultures are represented in the analysed Hello World! textbook set with variable coverage and through different connections. Thus, a special focus in the study is given to the possible ways of promoting intercultural competence, and multilingualism.

Key words: intercultural communicative competence, multilingualism, Croatian National Curriculum, EFL textbooks

## 1. Introduction

The last decade has been a time of reforms for Croatian educational system. One of those reforms includes the approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In 2019 the Ministry of Science and Education has brought forward a document describing the outcomes that the learners in elementary and high school should accomplish by the end of each grade. This document, known as the *Curriculum for the subject English language for primary school and grammar school (Kurikulum nastavnog predmeta Engleski jezik za osnovne škole i gimnazije)*, changed the view on the domains that an English class syllabus should have as a basis to work on. Those domains are designed as three separate competences, including the one that this study is interested in – the intercultural communicative competence. The research on the intercultural competence and its link to language learning was conducted by several authors, who provide different definitions to the term itself, that in turn leads to various conclusions how this should be promoted in English classrooms. The question of intercultural competence is greatly linked to the topic of interculturalism and multilingualism, which is why the first part of the thesis provides the theoretical background for the following study.

In order to investigate how the EFL textbooks included the intercultural communicative competence requirement, the second part of the study will analyse a newly created series of textbooks for grades 5 to 8 of elementary school. The first aim of the analysis is to answer the question of its compliance to the Croatian National Curriculum. One of the most important elements in the Curriculum refers to accepting others, breaking stereotypes, learning about different cultures, and their languages. However, the Curriculum itself does not insist on promoting multilingualism, as much as it emphasises learning about the target culture. This study not only provides an overview of the field of intercultural competence, but it also demonstrates the specific cultural elements and knowledge that the learners will be introduced to if they follow the analysed textbooks. Additionally, it is investigated whether extra effort is put into the creation of the textbooks in order to promote multilingualism, which would include, for example, multilingual characters.

Finally, having analysed the textbook material and cross-referenced it to the official binding documents, taking into account the theoretical framework as well, the third part of the thesis provides the final conclusion.

## 2. The key concepts of intercultural education

### 2.1. Culture and its link to language

Despite the fact that the terms “interculturalism”, “multiculturalism” and “multilingualism”, are now widespread and generate a vast amount of research, their definitions still remain elusive. In order to even approach the task of explaining their meanings, one must first grasp the concepts they entail – culture and language. Even though the term “culture” is one of the most frequent words used<sup>1</sup>, the task of explaining its meaning is not as simple as it seems. As Huber nicely puts it, we are dealing here both with the concepts we are aware of, as well as those that seem invisible to us (2012, p. 19). *Lexico* dictionary separates four distinctive meanings of the term, with only one crucial for this work: “the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society”. They add an additional sub-meaning to this concept by referring not only to particular people or society, but also to particular social groups. *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, on the other hand, provides a more detailed explanation for the target meaning of the word, including four sub-meanings that explain four different concepts. As well as *Lexico*, they include the customary beliefs and social forms, but they add material traits, and spread the referee to “racial, religious, or social group”. The second and third sub-meanings refer to institutions or organizations and particular fields. The last one, however, attracts interest as the wordiest one, explaining culture as “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations”. As it is clear from these definitions, the most important element of culture is a social group that could be a racial or a religious one as well, that stands behind the particular culture. The next crucial element consists of the groups’ customs, beliefs and behaviour, as well as some type of knowledge that is transmitted from generation to generation. Lustig and Koester have a different approach, claiming that culture entails shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices, and this in turn affects the behaviour of the members of a group of people (2010, p. 25).

However, the question remains on how to examine what a particular culture would entail. Petravić (2016) argues that some researchers (e.g., Jürgen Bolten, 2007) want to capture the specific culture at one point of its development and examine all the particular features and characteristics while the culture remains “frozen in time” (p. 15). The problem of this approach,

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<sup>1</sup>in top 1% of words according to Merriam-Webster's look-up popularity

as it is clearly described by Petravić (2016, p. 15), is the fact that culture is constantly changing and therefore, what was true for a certain culture at one point in time is not necessarily valid after a certain amount of time. However, the difficulties are not limited only to the aspect of time changes. As was previously mentioned, culture includes both visible concepts, those that we are aware of, as well as invisible ones that influence behaviour and attitudes, which are not often obvious to us (Huber, 2012, p. 19). Such view of culture is best represented through Chase's iceberg analogy (Chase et al. 1996, as cited in Huber, 2012, p. 19) that separates the tip of the iceberg as the visible cultural patterns that members of the culture are aware of, such as: fine arts, literature, drama, music, dancing, food, dress. On the other hand, the massive amount of information remains "hidden" from the same members as it is imbedded in the subconscious. According to Chase, there are 39 entities belonging to this category, including: history, roles in relation to age, sex, occupation, kinship, etc., nature of friendship, social interaction rate, facial expressions, and approaches to problem solving, to name a few (Chase et al. 1996, as cited in Huber, 2012, p. 19). It is visible from this division, that culture refers not only to the symbols that we usually take as representatives of a certain culture, such as its national dress or national food, but also to the everyday phenomena that includes how the members of the society behave, as well as what their opinions and attitudes are. In that sense, we can say that what separates different society members lies in the set of elements that we call culture. UNESCO's resolution on culture confirms this as they define culture as a "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (2001, p. 62).

Even though none of the explanations mentioned language as an element of culture, the link between them is undeniable. There are numerous explanations of the concept of language, such as Bloch's and Trager's (1942) "system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group operates" (as cited in Robins & Crystal, 2021), in which we can immediately see the mention of a social group. If language is explained as a system of spoken, written, or signed symbols that allows human beings to express themselves (Robins & Crystal, 2021), those same human beings must be members of a social group, and therefore participants in a culture. Sociolinguistic explanations of language differ in that their main focus is on the members of a specific culture. Wardhaugh (2006, p. 1) sees language as "what members of society speak", while Duranti (1997, p. 2-3) defines language as a "cultural resource" and speaking as an act of "cultural practice". In other words, language would be considered a mere means of having

and practicing culture. Robins and Crystal (2021) claim that language is transmitted as a part of culture, and therefore culture is transmitted largely through language. If translation is taken as evidence of this, much of the content might not be understandable for people with different cultural background, which is why there is often a need for footnotes or additional explanations (Robins, Crystal, 2021). All of this raises an immediate question – what role does learning about culture have in the process of learning a foreign language?

## **2.2. The role of culture in language learning**

There is a question of how much cultural knowledge a person should have in order to be considered proficient in a language. Even referring to standardized language levels, the usually used frameworks do not include cultural knowledge as one of its components, not even at the highest proficiency level. For example, the Common European Framework of Reference, known as CEFR, makes a distinction between levels A, B and C which all have sublevels denoted with 1 or 2. CEFR demonstrates what learners can do across five language skills: spoken interaction, spoken production, listening, reading and writing. A closer look at their description of the C2 level, demonstrates that “in everyday speech, this level might be called ‘bilingual’, as in ‘I am bilingual in English and French’” (Cambridge, 2013). However, on their entire description of competences that come with this level of English, there is no mention of cultural knowledge one should be acquainted with to claim what they refer to as “essentially a native level”. In other words, it is not even implied that native-like level should include understanding cultural background important for many contexts where the particular language is used. However, while learning a foreign language it is unavoidable to come into contact with the new culture. In the same way, the process of teaching a foreign language should make learners familiar with the culture of the native speakers, which allows for successful intercultural communication. Lustig and Koester (2010, p. 46) define this concept as a “symbolic, interpretative, transactional, contextual process in which people from different cultures create shared meaning”. Their definition of intercultural communication differs from that of communication solely in adding the phrase “from different cultures”. However, intercultural communication would then differ based on the communicators taking part in the process. This would very likely be imagined as a continuum between the least intercultural and most intercultural communication (Lustig and Koester, 2010, p. 51). According to this continuum, the more cultural information communicators learn about each other, the closer they get to the least intercultural end (as based on the scenario with Anibal and Dele, in Lustig

and Koester, 2010, p. 51-52). So, in other words, for a communication to be considered the most intercultural, the cultural differences need to create such dissimilar interpretations and expectations that the question of competent communication is raised.

### **2.3. Intercultural communicative competence**

Intercultural communicative competence is considered to be a crucial element in a situation of communication between representatives of two different cultures with the stress on the efficiency of such communication. While the first two parts of the term were previously explained, competence itself is usually defined as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (*Lexico*). However, the matters are not as simple as the question of efficiency of communication may lead to. The key of proving competence lies in the people involved, and for it to be achieved, a communicator must be prepared for the underlining conditions. To be considered competent, a person needs to not only possess a certain combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills, but also to be able to use them correctly and successfully when necessary. Pavlović argues that competency can be seen as a construct of cognitive, affective and conative potentials of a person, that are achieved namely in an intercultural situation (2016, p. 18). In other words, the person involved in such communication needs to have the knowledge about the culture, about himself and his interlocutor (that is both related to him as an individual and as a member of a society), as well as the awareness of the ways in which their cultures affect language and communication. However, even before acquiring the required knowledge, the person must have a positive attitude towards learning intercultural competence and towards different cultures. Sercu (2006, p. 2-3) claims that in order to achieve success in an intercultural situation, the interlocutor must demonstrate an entire array of traits, but firstly he needs to be willing to engage with foreign culture. One of the central elements of intercultural competence is being aware that we are talking to a person who perhaps sees the world through different eyes, and we need to be willing to try to match their views. However, in that respect it is important to recognize that individuals cannot be reduced to their collective identities. The person should consciously use their culture learning skills in order to correctly interpret the cultural context, after which they will be able to evaluate other person's standpoint, and therefore bridge the gap between the two cultures (Sercu, 2006, p. 2-3). Such a person with highly developed abilities and competences could take on a role of a successful cultural mediator. However, other than being interculturally competent, to achieve success in an intercultural situation the speaker must also possess communicative competence. Ali and others

(2015, p. 7) claim that the effective application of communicative strategies in foreign language learning programmes plays a crucial role in the development of intercultural competence. Therefore, the competence known as the intercultural one lengthened its name to include communicative element, as well. As Sercu (2006, p. 3) claims, communicative competence is the basis for the intercultural communicative competence, since the latter one builds on the acquired knowledge and skills.

One of the biggest issues in teaching intercultural communicative competence is the lack of culture teaching and lack of implementing precisely those skills that Sercu recognizes as crucial ones. Ali et al. (2015) comment on Pakistani and Iranian classrooms that are lacking in elements of culture in their textbooks. As a result, Ali et al. (2015, p.15) claim learners are left with the inability to use language in cultural contexts. Therefore, the task on teaching and allowing the learners to achieve intercultural communicative competence lies in the instructors of the language and their teaching materials, or more generally, the educational system.

### **2.3.1. Intercultural communicative competence in education**

In the times when intercultural communicative competence did not exist as a norm, it was sufficient for language teachers to become knowledgeable on the culture in question and to pass that knowledge onto their learners. However, the demand for the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the competence provides has become increasingly important, which as a result has a major change in the teaching process. In order to reach intercultural communicative competence, education policy makers need to include intercultural objectives into their curricula, textbook publishers need to incorporate it into their material, and finally teachers need to implement it in the classroom. Since textbooks are the most important source for language learning material aimed both at teachers and learners, they serve one of the biggest roles in language teaching and learning process, including the process of developing intercultural communicative competence. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p. 199) emphasize, textbooks serve as a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, and possibly also as a de-skinner and an ideology. For some learners it could also serve as the only glance into the target culture they are learning about.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) offer insight into the incorporation of cultural elements into textbook materials. In their analyses, textbooks should contain source culture, target culture and international culture. While the target culture refers to the culture behind the language learners

are trying to comprehend, source culture is learners' own background, culture that is already familiar to them. International culture, as the name describes, connects all other cultures from throughout the world. All three types of culture, in Cortazzi and Jin's opinion, are crucial for developing intercultural competence. However, the question still remains on how to appropriately incorporate all that material. A number of researchers has opted for introducing checklists that would ensure existence of cultural elements in teaching and learning materials. However, even though that approach answers the question of including such content into the material, it neglects the appropriateness and even naturalness of the content itself. It could even raise the question whether the culture is only a setting for the linguistic material. Therefore, culture should be presented in an attentive, but also objective and sensitive manner.

Finding the means of representing target culture remains a problematic task. Radić-Bojanić and Topalov (2016, p. 142-3) uncovered cultural bias in language learning textbooks that appeared as a consequence of native speakers' (usually) subconscious import of their own opinion, values, attitudes, and beliefs into the image of the culture behind a certain language. As one of the aims of language teaching, especially in regard to intercultural communicative competence, is to transfer the skill set and knowledge necessary to bridge the cultural gap in intercultural situation, it is important to critically think about the material that is presented in the textbooks. Mostly because the majority of a country's culture is not immediately visible, but rather occurs in everyday life, it is a task for the textbook authors to correctly present that lifestyle.

Today, several researchers in the field of glottodidactics agree with Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence, in which he stands for the introduction of an "intercultural speaker, or mediator" (Byram, 1996, as cited in Petravić, 2016, p. 23). This idea follows the current global changes, the decrease in monolingualism and monoculturalism, which causes the decrease in the admiration towards the native language speaker. An ideal speaker in that sense would be an intercultural one, a person that can successfully mediate between two cultures. Even though not all researchers agree that the interculturalism should be directly implemented in language classrooms since the nature of language teaching is by itself intercultural, others disagree, claiming that implementing it would ease and emphasize the importance of developing intercultural competence (House, 1996; Hu 1999, as cited in Petravić, 2016, p. 24). Introducing an intercultural speaker in the language learning material could be seen as an attempt to present the learners with a role model. Learners would be able to see this person's everyday life, which would allow for subconscious consumption of the

target culture. Following this analogy, a learner that is surrounded with intercultural speakers will himself become an intercultural speaker with the developed intercultural communicative competence.

### **2.3.2. Intercultural communicative competence in Croatian education**

Petravić (2016) analyses in detail the history of intercultural approach to foreign language teaching in Croatia. For that purpose, she identifies three periods of development starting from a mere implementation of cultural elements to a wider-incorporating intercultural competence. Interestingly, all three periods are in the last thirty years. The starting point began in the early 1990s, when the additional elements of anthropological and sociological cultural components of target language were added in the teaching process. However, even before this time period, the cultural components were obligatory part of teaching material. Those elements would belong to what Chase et al. (1996, as cited in Huber, 2012, p. 19) see as the tip of the iceberg, while the changes in the 90s demonstrated the importance of including the invisible part of the iceberg – beliefs, norms and concepts. This change brought about a few analyses into the learners' perceptions of different cultures, their attitudes and the interculture that came into existence because of this (Petravić, 2016, p. 27). In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the entire field of glottodidactics became much more interested in interculture and intercultural competence, following the development of the mentioned Byram's "intercultural speaker". However, the question remained on how to implement the new insights into the teaching process. This was the time when Croatian educational policy makers decided to diverge from the Western ones, creating the first official requirement in a legally binding document – intercultural competence as a part of the "Teaching plan and programme" in 2006 (*Nastavni plan i program*, as opposed to the Curriculum that took over in 2019) (Petravić, 2016, p. 28). However, the implementation had its difficulties, most of them related to insufficient explanations, limited time, and finally, one of the things Sercu also noticed as a special problem – insufficient teacher training. The newest era, according to Petravić (2016, p. 29), started in 2010 with the implementation of intercultural competence in the *Croatian National Curriculum Framework* (*Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje, opće obavezno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje*) in not only foreign language classes, but also in the entire communicative subject field, including Croatian language classes. However, as was the case with the previous period, the legal requirements did not efficiently bring about change. There was a satisfactory depiction of the implementation of the competence six years after in separate

documents that dealt with each subject distinctively. Petravić (2016, p. 30) ends her historical analysis on a positive note, claiming that the positive effects of intercultural competence are clearly visible when it comes both to the learners developing it and teachers including it in the teaching process. However, she still sees room for improvement, especially when it comes to textbooks and teacher training.

The previously mentioned document, *Croatian National Curriculum Framework for Pre-School Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education* (2011) introduces intercultural competence firstly through one of the eight competences – “communication in foreign languages”. They claim that developing intercultural understanding skills is a significant component of this competence (p. 17). They also see the achievement of multilingual and intercultural competency as the way to develop the awareness about the necessity to learn other languages and familiarizing yourself with their culture, as well as to promote tolerance and respect towards those who are different (p. 55). The intercultural elements are included in all of the domains of language and communication: listening, speaking, writing and reading, but especially in the one called “intercultural acting”, where the learners are expected to implement intercultural skills in an intercultural situation.

A new change in Croatian EFL education arrived with the introduction of the *Curriculum for the subject English language for primary school and grammar school* (*Kurikulum nastavnog predmeta Engleski jezik za osnovne škole i gimnazije*) in 2019. This change has not yet been analysed in any studies, so this thesis will provide a short overview of its implementation of intercultural competence. The first overall change that this Curriculum has brought is the introduction of learning objectives, a criterion that demonstrates what a learner should know by the end of the school year. The Curriculum still mostly emphasizes communicative goals, which is one of the downfalls of the 2010 Framework Curriculum that Petravić mentions (2016, p. 28). However, the latest Curriculum (2019, p. 7) claims that through communication the learner will “learn to recognize and respect the uniqueness of other cultures, develop cultural awareness, intercultural competence and multiculturalism, as well as build their own positions and roles in different communicative relationships”. Because of the emphasis on communicative competence, it comes as no surprise that one of the three domains is intercultural communicative competence, together with learner autonomy and communicative language competence. The main idea behind the intercultural communicative competence (p. 9-10) is to develop attitudes and awareness of other cultures to understand and respect them,

since the current world is multilingual and multicultural. One of the main issues is also to discard prejudice and stereotypes and allow for an understanding world view as well as a successful entrance of the learner in the job market. For the Curriculum authors, to be interculturally competent, as a result of achieving objectives listed for each year, means to:

“be able to notice and interpret similarities and differences in cultures; to be empathetic, adaptable and open to understanding, acceptance and appreciation of English speakers and their cultures; to be ready for the reception of literature in English and to know roughly its most important forms; to be able to communicate effectively and contextually with the native and non-native speakers of English language which leads to mutual satisfaction of the interlocutors of different cultural identities and building harmonious intercultural relations” (Curriculum, 2019, p. 10).

Their understanding of the intercultural communicative competence goes in line with the opinions of Sercu (2006) and the analysis of Petravić (2016). The crucial matter is to be successful in an intercultural situation, which can only be a result of the developed intercultural communicative competence. However, there is still the question of the implementation of these requirements in the educational system, especially in English textbooks. That is a change that had to be done for all textbooks published in the school year of 2020/21, except for those for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade that were published in the school year of 2021/22.

### 3. Previous Research

Textbook analyses are a common method of assessing teaching material done not only by researchers, but also by teachers themselves. One of the central points which Sercu (2006, p. 13) emphasises is that teachers are able to comment critically on the cultural contents in foreign language teaching materials. They are knowledgeable enough to differentiate between good and less satisfactory sides when it comes to the cultural dimension of the material. Some of the answers provided by the participants also included the necessity to revise the textbooks' approaches to teaching cultural contents, as well as add more intercultural tasks.

In regard to teaching intercultural communicative competence, Kim and Paek (2015) come to a similar conclusion. The aim of their research was to examine the appropriateness of cultural content in English textbooks, since previous research proved existence of discrepancies. Previous research done in Korea (conducted by Han & Bae, 2005; Lim & Gu, 2005; Yu, 2002, as cited in Kim and Paek, 2015, p. 84) demonstrated that the cultural content was focused mostly on "experiences of white westerners", and it was "generally fragmented, indicating only the products and practices (i.e., food, festivals, clothes, etc.)". In their opinion, this reinforces learners to believe that for the appropriate use of English it is sufficient to know only the culture of a small portion of population (white westerners). Ten years later, Kim and Paek analysed five newer EFL textbooks for middle school students in Korea by identifying elements of source, target and international culture, intercultural interaction, and universality across culture. Their research demonstrated the still-existing imbalance between cultural representation in the textbooks, as well as a serious lack of intercultural interaction. They called for an immediate change in the approach to teaching English, since, in their opinion, the representation of cultural content plays an essential role in the language teaching and learning process.

Basabe (2006) investigated the representation of English-speaking cultures in current Argentinian ELT materials. His proposition was based on the 1990s notion that the culture of English-speaking countries was no longer in the centre of the ELT textbooks. A position that would now belong to international culture, in his opinion. This, of course, refers to the trend set by Byram's "intercultural speaker". Interestingly, Basabe's research is focused solely on the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as, in his opinion, those are the two cultural systems traditionally represented in (Argentinian) ELT textbooks. Basabe categorized cultural references into target, source, and international culture, and the possible combinations between them. His research, however, demonstrated a strong presence of English-speaking

cultures, namely the UK and the USA, as opposed to intercultural ones. One of the possible explanations of such phenomenon, according to Basabe, is seeing them as “cultural targets the globe has to aspire to, imitate, and follow” (2006).

Stevanović (2018) examined cultural content in EFL textbooks approved for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though the official documents of Croatia and the Federation are not identical, their definitions of an interculturally competent learner do not greatly differ. The study researched local, target and international culture, as well as all their combinations, in the texts of chosen textbooks. The chosen method followed the study of Basabe (2006), with the difference that source culture was referred to as ‘local’ by Stevanović. This study demonstrated that even with the existence of the same legally binding document, the cultural content in all three sample textbooks greatly differed when it came to their representation, as well as the learners’ expected engagement in intercultural tasks.

Bocu and Razi (2016) conducted a study aimed at evaluating a textbook series in terms of cultural components. The research was, similarly to the aforementioned ones, focused on source, target and international cultural elements that are a basis for the development of intercultural communicative competence. The research strongly relied on Byram et al.’s (2002) notion that intercultural competence is mostly promoted while comparing and contrasting source and target culture and thus developing awareness. Bocu and Razi’s study demonstrated that even though the cultural representation was satisfactory, there was a lack of guidance for teachers on how to integrate it in the lesson, which could cause difficulties for learners to become interculturally competent. Their study also included interviews with lecturers who used the textbooks in English classes, as well as students that learned from them, who additionally confirmed the results.

Candrawati et al. (2014) were mostly interested in sociocultural perspective of EFL textbooks. They researched characters in an Indonesian EFL textbook with regards to their age, gender, social distance and status, as well as the type of language they use (politeness, genres, registers, dialects). The researchers concluded that the textbook represented predominately male characters aged 12-18 years old (which is the textbook’s target age). The characters used British English dialect together with many informal words and expressions aimed at representing youth culture. The study urged for a better scrutinization of textbooks in terms of their content, especially regarding gender misrepresentations, cultural stereotypes and content appropriateness, before being approved for EFL learners worldwide.

As exemplified in the previously mentioned study, one of the biggest problems in assessing and creating intercultural content in EFL textbooks is caused by cultural bias. Byram et al. (2002) warn about the danger of limiting culture into “stereotypical icons of the target culture – the instantly recognisable pictures of the clichéd sights”. Radić-Bojanić and Topalov (2016) emphasized the importance of critical analyses of teaching material to avoid stereotyping and prejudice against the target cultures. The paper served as a basis for Brozd’s 2018 study of cultural bias in Croatian EFL textbooks where she investigated the representation of “others”, which proved that there was a definite existence of various types of bias, both hidden and explicit in all analysed textbooks (p. 43). One series of the textbooks she analysed are a predecessor of the textbook series analysed in this study, which could comparatively demonstrate the immediate changes that the introduction of a new official document has caused.

Petrović (2016, p. 29) demonstrated that the different analyses of the adherence to the National Curriculum Framework in textbooks provide a detailed assessment of the image of target culture and native culture. That is, in turn, an important factor in the development of intercultural competence. Their analysis proved that the intercultural and linguistic contents are not satisfactory combined. Even though there was an emphasis on intercultural tasks, the failure of integrating intercultural and linguistic content led to unsatisfactory results in studies assessing learners’ intercultural competence (Petrović, 2016, p. 30).

The mentioned studies were conducted before the change of the official document from National Curriculum Framework to National Curriculum, which called for a change in the teaching material requirements. This study analysed a series of textbooks that were created after the introduction of the National Curriculum in 2019. It examined English language textbook’s adherence to its requirements when it comes to the intercultural communicative competence, which could be used as a basis for assessing learners’ intercultural competencies.

## **4. The study**

### **4.1. Aims**

The overall aim of this study was to analyse four English textbooks that are used in higher grades of Croatian elementary schools. The point of view from which the analysis was performed is an intercultural and multilingual one. The analysis was directed towards the various cultures represented in the textbooks, the cultural elements included, mention of other languages spoken or learned in those cultures, and the tentative promotion of multilingualism and interculturalism. Therefore, the focus of the study was on the elements of the target and international culture that are taught to the learners, as well as tentative opportunities for promoting multilingualism and intercultural competence through the realization of the content in the classroom.

The textbooks were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, with the method of content analysis. The quantitative analysis refers to the instances of mention of certain cultural elements, including the languages, or even cultures as a whole. The aim of this analysis was to demonstrate which cultural elements are the most frequent, therefore seen as the crucial ones, in the process of learning a language, or learning about a culture. The same method was also used to investigate the amount of content dedicated to a certain target culture. The qualitative analysis provided more detail on specific information given on certain cultures to show how they are portrayed.

Finally, the content analysis also shed light onto the perceived importance of multilingualism and interculturalism by analysing instances in which such concepts were brought to the readers' attention. For such an analysis, the characters were taken as one of the key factors, especially considering their family background, ideas and opinions they expressed throughout the units. As each character introduced a specific culture, the cultures were also analysed in terms of multilingualism and interculturalism. A special focus was given to the official binding documents, especially the Curriculum, in order to determine whether the textbooks are solely adhering to the criteria, or promoting such concepts on their own accord.

## **4.2. Research questions**

- 1 Are the EFL textbooks in compliance with the intercultural communicative competence criteria set by the Curriculum?
- 2 How is intercultural competence taught: what are the chosen cultural elements and what are the chosen target cultures?
- 3 Do the textbooks promote interculturalism and multilingualism, and if yes, through which means?

## **4.3. Sample**

For the purpose of this study, a series of four EFL textbooks used in Croatian elementary school was examined. Croatian elementary school is divided into two parts; the first one from the grade 1 to 4, with the second part referring to the grades 5 to 8. The textbooks analysed in this study are intended for higher grades of elementary school, since those are the grades when the introduction of intercultural competence does not present a problem given the age and language level of the learners. The selected textbooks are intended for learners learning English for the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> year.

The textbooks in question were created as the first edition of a new series. These particular textbooks were chosen because of their relevance to the topic of the study – as the entire series was newly developed in 2020 and 2021, it should be fully in compliance with the standards set by the National Curriculum from 2019. All the textbooks, including the last published textbook for the eighth grade (2021), were approved by the Ministry of Science and Education. Also, apart from the textbook for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all of them were already used for the past three years (the academic year of 2023/24 being the fourth one) in elementary schools across Croatia, while the one for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade as the youngest one is now in usage for the third year. Besides content in the textbooks themselves, this study also examined audio files available online on the official IZZI platform, as well as video files intended as an introduction into each unit for textbooks for grades 5 to 8, from the same source.

The following EFL textbooks were analysed:

Kirin, I. and Uremović, M. (2020). *Hello, World!* 5. Profil Klett

Kirin, I. and Uremović, M. (2020). *Hello, World!* 6. Profil Klett

Božinović, S., Pavić, S. and Šavrljuga, M. (2020). *Hello, World!* 7. Profil Klett

Kirin, I., Palijan, B. and Uremović, M. (2021). *Hello, World!* 8. Profil Klett

The following abbreviations are used in the study to refer to the analysed textbooks:

HW = *Hello, World!* series

HW5 = *Hello, World!* 5

HW6 = *Hello, World!* 6

HW7 = *Hello, World!* 7

HW8 = *Hello, World!* 8

The structure of the textbooks is the same in all the textbooks, with a few exceptions in the one for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In the beginning of each textbook, the list of contents structurally demonstrates the title of each unit, the country in centre of it, and an image of the main character in one column. The next three columns are dedicated to the three competences, with a list of included elements and abbreviations of the Curriculum criteria. The fourth and final column shows the grammar taught in the units. Each textbook consists of five units with an introduction and eleven lessons. The textbook for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade is different in that it has five units, each with an introduction and nine lessons. The lessons are not dedicated to a separate domain (such as speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, grammar, literature, culture, etc.) which is the case with some textbook series, but they rather incorporate elements of each in the lessons. After the final 5<sup>th</sup> unit, each textbook has an additional finishing unit, and an appendix dedicated to certain chosen holidays.

#### **4.4. Analytical framework**

The analytical framework used for this study was modelled on Basabe's (2006), Bocu and Razu's (2016) and Stevanović's (2018) studies: all cultural elements from the textbooks were divided according to their references – source, target, or international culture. Such division

stems from Byram et al.'s (2002) claim that intercultural competence is best learned from comparison and contrast of source and target cultures, through which the learner develops awareness of interculturalism. Additionally, as seen in Basabe's and Stevanović's studies, the interaction between the three was identified, as well. Elements of source culture were taken as those connected to Croatia. Since there is no single target culture in the textbooks, as opposed to, for example, textbooks that deal only with the UK and teach solely British English, there are more target cultures, and each is referenced as such. Each of them was separately dealt with to list and number cultural elements mentioned. However, it is important to note that some units contain references to more than one country or culture. If such cultural data do not belong to the main character, that is, to the culture 'in focus' in that unit, it was correlated to its appropriate culture, but as a reference 'out of focus'. The data was assessed quantitatively to demonstrate which cultural elements prevail, that is, which cultural elements seem to be of the most importance to represent a culture from the EFL textbooks' perspective. Additionally, the data served to demonstrate how much coverage each of the target cultures has. Qualitative analysis was carried out, as well, with the purpose of demonstrating a picture each target culture portrays. Mentions of multilingual characters or traits were additionally analysed separately to examine possible promotion of such phenomenon in the framework of intercultural competence.

The most important set of criteria was the one chosen for identifying cultural elements that would be taken as a reference base for this analysis. Cortazzi and Jin's (1999, p. 203) criteria for textbook evaluation, that was mostly influenced by Byram's 1993 study on representation of German in German EFL textbooks, was used to define cultural elements. The criteria is focused on 8 aspects: social identity and social groups (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities), social interactions (different levels of formality; as outsider and insider), belief and behaviour (moral, religious beliefs; daily routines), social and political institutions (state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government), socialization and the life cycle (families, schools, employment, rites of passage), national history (historical and contemporary events seen as markers of national identity), national geography (geographic factors seen as being significant by members), stereotypes and national identity (what is "typical", symbols of national stereotypes). Cultural elements mentioned in the sample were also cross-referenced to the culture-as-an-iceberg analogical representation in order to analyse the proportion of visible and invisible elements (Chase et al. 1996, as cited in Huber, 2012, p. 19). The given standards served as criteria to which words or phrases mentioned in the

textbooks should be taken as cultural references in the textbook analysis in the first step. In the second step they served to demonstrate which of the aspects are taught as important cultural elements crucial for the understanding of demonstrated cultures. However, as the analysis later demonstrated, most aforementioned aspects were not touched upon.

All cultural elements were evaluated in terms of accuracy, appropriateness, and neutrality of insertion (whether it was presented as isolated facts, or integrated into the unit), which was separately commented.

#### **4.5 Procedure**

The first step into the analysis was deciding on the materials. As was previously explained, the chosen textbook set was newly created to satisfy current policy regulations on English language teaching in Croatian education. The analysis was done from page to page for each textbook. Since the textbooks have an abundance of visual material as well, such as photographs and illustrations, those were also included in the study. The audio material that the textbooks refer to was analysed according to the same criteria. Another type of additional material that was analysed did not belong to the textbook itself but was referred to in the beginning lesson of every unit. That is the audio-visual material that can be found on publisher's official platform – IZZI. The videos on the platform serve as an introduction to the country and character in question, which provided a great insight into the representation of the chosen cultures. The cultural information shown in the videos was cross-referenced to establish possible repetition of information, or more importantly – introduction of new cultural references sometimes not further developed in the units.

#### **4.6 Results and discussion**

Analysed data was categorized qualitatively and quantitatively in order to answer the three research questions. The detailed numbers and categorizations can be found in the Appendix, while the most important results and their implications are described as follows:

1. Results related to the first research questions – can we confirm that the EFL textbooks are in compliance with the Curriculum criteria.

2. Results related to specific cultures and chosen cultural elements – which cultures prevail, which cultural elements are deemed most important, and do they differ in terms of culture they refer to.
3. Results related to the phenomena of interculturalism and multilingualism – (how) are the textbooks promoting them.

#### **4.6.1. Compliance to the Curriculum criteria**

The first demonstration of the textbooks' connection to the Curriculum criteria is visible in the very beginning where the contents page is located. As previously stated, contents table shows abbreviations of Curriculum competence objectives that are supposed to be met in the units themselves. It also lists more specific elements pertaining to each unit, through which the process of adherence should be accomplished. The textbooks claim that each unit in HW5, HW6, HW7 and HW8 meets all set curriculum objectives.

Analysis of the contents tables demonstrated that the most important elements of intercultural competence for textbook creators are: “*Target* culture” (*target* being the one demonstrated in the unit), “Comparing cultures”, and “Celebrating diversity” in the first two textbooks (HW5 and HW6). Those three elements can be found in all 10 units of the two textbooks, as well as in all finishing chapters and appendices. The third place is held by “Using appropriate register” that refers to linguistic properties taught in the lessons. The situation changes for textbooks for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in that the first element is no longer named “*Target* culture”, but “Understanding the culture (and lifestyle) of *target* culture” or “Understanding the (important) facts about *target* country / language”. In this way, the focus is supposed to shift from only demonstrating cultural information to both understanding the importance of it and acquiring the related knowledge. The element of comparing cultures still has the second place in all units, which is not surprising given that it is greatly emphasised in the Curriculum itself. Nonetheless, culture is not the only compared element in textbooks for older children. There is a great focus on understanding and comparing a variety of cultural information (sports, literary texts, school systems, human rights, cuisines, etc.). The results of the cultural information analysis will be demonstrated in more detail in the next section of this study. Interestingly, the third aforementioned element, “Celebrating diversity”, has its place in every unit of HW8, including the finishing chapter and appendix, while in HW7 it is mentioned solely in the finishing chapter and appendix, but not in any of the units. The linguistical cultural element in HW7 also changes into “Applying suitable language structures”, while in HW8 it shifts back to “Using appropriate

register”. However, the possible reason for these inconsistencies could lie in the authorial change – HW5, HW6 and HW8 were all created by Kirin and Uremović (additionally Palijan for HW8), while HW7 was created by Božinović, Pavić and Šavrljuga.

The contents table serves as a convenient demonstration of information found in the units themselves. By cross-referencing the satisfied objectives, claimed elements and the factual content of the units, it was proven that they almost fully contain the mentioned elements. All lessons in one unit are connected through one main character, whose cultural background provides a logical reason for the satisfaction of intercultural communicative competence criteria. In that way, all the Croatian Curriculum criteria can be met through various topics connected to different cultures.

#### 4.6.1.1. Grade 5

Set Curriculum criteria for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade includes four main points – cultural knowledge, polite behaviour in intercultural communication, avoiding cultural misunderstanding, and choosing friendship and cooperation in intercultural experience (Curriculum, 2019, pp. 38-39).

The first intercultural competence point (B.5.1.) relates to the application of basic knowledge about target language cultures, more specifically: celebrating and understanding the importance of dates not usually celebrated in native culture, engaging in everyday activities specific for target language countries, and finally, acquiring linguistic and cultural content in English language (riddles, proverbs, literary works, etc.). In HW5 that can be connected to the set objectives: English culture, Culture of New Zealand, American culture, Irish culture, Culture of the Republic of South Africa, Croatian culture, Comparing cultures, Names in the English-speaking world, Symbols of England, Interests and hobbies in another country, Children’s books and characters, Famous sights, Proverbs, Difference between British and American variety of English, and Famous bridges (HW5, 2020, pp. 4-5). Finding the realization of the first mentioned element, important dates, was not as straight-forward as it might seem. The only included holidays in the appendix are Christmas and Easter, which are indeed shown through international eyes, that is, from the perspective of children from Finland, the USA, the UK, and Australia. However, neither of the holidays is specific for target language countries, which means that they don’t satisfy the given criterion. The actual realization of the criteria satisfaction can be found in a lesson conveniently teaching about ordinal numbers and dates (pp. 58-59). The unit revolves around Ryan, a boy from Chicago. The emphasized holidays in

the lesson are Mardi Gras (connected to New Orleans), St Patrick's Day (in connection to Ireland and the USA), and Independence Day (connected to the USA in general). The other mentioned holidays, which were not described in detail, include: Thanksgiving Day, New Year's, St George (implied), Christmas, Valentine's Day, Labour Day, Earth Day, and Halloween. The same unit can be taken as a proof of the second criterion satisfaction – engaging in an everyday activity. Even though there is an abundance of everyday activities throughout the book, finding those that would at the same time be specific for the target culture and engaging proved to be a not so easy task. An ambiguous question that could be asked here is what could even be considered an everyday activity typical for target culture. Ryan engages in such an activity while ordering a Chicago-style hot dog. The lesson teaches appropriate register and polite phrasing, such as “please”, “thank you”, “Can I have”, etc., as well as the vocabulary related to street food. However, more importantly, it is also engaging learners through role play of such activities. Finally, linguistic cultural content can be found in the same unit. Part of the unit teaching about furniture and house parts conveniently takes advantage of a poem *Here is the House* by American children's poet Kenn Nesbitt (p. 57). The goal of the lesson is to read a poem loudly and clearly, with the additional tasks of drawing it, reciting it, writing a similar poem and writing a newspaper article about the poem. Another interesting element implemented by the textbook which was not called for by the Curriculum is the introduction of names in the English-speaking world. It becomes clear that the textbook for grade 5 has the highest number of names as opposed to the other textbooks. However, not all names are native to the target countries, which provides for additional intercultural situations.

The second objective (B.5.2.) aims at learners being able to have short and simple communication using the key conventions of polite behaviour in intercultural meetings. In the textbook that can be recognized in the objectives – Using appropriate register and Evaluating norms in online communication (HW5, 2020, pp. 4-5). That gives learners an opportunity to engage in a completely informal style and formal style of communicating. The learners are firstly introduced to examples of emojis and Internet slang (OMG, BTW, XOXO, LOL, etc.), while being taught about the appropriate time to use them (p. 70). They are next introduced to email writing and the possible usages of such communication (p. 71). A different example of such instance could be traced back to Ryan from Chicago and his hot-dog order (p. 61). The lesson, as previously explained, teaches the strategies of polite behaviour and appropriate register in the target language.

The third objective (B.5.3.) is that the learner can recognize and describe basic strategies to avoid and overcome culturally conditioned misunderstanding and accept others and different ones. The fourth objective (B.5.4.) is quite similar, since it encourages friendship, cooperation and accepting diversity in intercultural experiences. It can mostly be evident in HW5 in the presence of ‘Celebrating diversity’ objective (HW5, 2020, pp. 4-5). These two objectives can most evidently be connected to the aforementioned Ryan, since one of the intercultural-competence elements in his unit is ‘Avoiding misunderstanding’. The already mentioned celebrations of target cultures’ holidays can be connected to this objective. St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is shown as a person celebrated both in Ireland by native Irish and in the USA by Irish immigrants who continued their tradition. It is also stated that the celebration has spread around the world, which consequently promotes acceptance and solidarity (p. 58). Another instance of the same phenomenon can be seen in the very next lesson. The Taste of Chicago festival is presented in a way to embrace others and engage in the “celebration of the city’s diversity” (p. 60). The lesson mentions cultural geographical elements (Mexico, Greece, Middle East, Japan) as well as culinary ones (with visuals: crepes, corn on the cob, tacos, beef sandwiches; without visuals: candy floss, fish and chips, kebab, langos, hamburger, hot dog). Another example of intercultural teaching can be seen in a lesson about different homes (p. 53). The lesson describes four types of houses: snow houses or “igloos” (without cultural geography elements, except for “people in cold climates”), Asian stilt home, underground homes in Coober Pedy, Australia, and finally yurts belonging to nomads in Asia. The pictures from the lesson show an Indigenous person in a traditional igloo, and six Asian children and two adults surrounding a stilt home. The other two pictures do not have people in them, but, like these ones, have a lot of traditional imagery (carpets, clothes, furniture, etc.). However, even though this lesson demonstrates intercultural teaching by representing different features of certain cultures, sometimes this could be considered problematic. The very lesson before presents Colombia as a country where “some children (...) need to slide down a zipline” to get to school, China as a place where “children have to cross mountains to get to their school”, in India “some children (...) ride on a horse and cart” and some villages in Indonesia where children “cross the river on a car tyre” (p. 53). Even though all mentioned quotes contain phrasing such as “some children”, “some parts”, or “some villages”, the very fact that all claims are emphasised with pictures of such events happening, promotes a negative picture of certain international cultures more than it promotes diversity. It is also important to mention that even though the curriculum specifically mentions “strategies to avoid misunderstandings”, there is no instance in which such event is happening or it is being destined to happen without some

interference. Even though it can be claimed that the strategies are shown by promoting polite and appropriate conversation skills, nevertheless the learner is not taught how to overcome cultural misunderstandings, or how to describe consequences of excluding “others”, which the Curriculum demands in objective B.5.3.

Overall, the analysis confirmed the presence of all but one objective that the textbook emphasized on the contents page. The only one lacking, as previously explained, is the realization of a cultural misunderstanding. Even though the objective aims at strategies to avoid such event from happening or overcome it in case it does happen, there is not a clear example of the possible scenarios where such strategies could be applied. Nevertheless, the analysis demonstrated an abundance of clear examples and demonstrations of other criteria set by Curriculum in each unit of the textbook.

#### 4.6.1.2. Grade 6

The textbook for learners in grade 6 is focused on five important intercultural elements: exploring additional information on target countries, describing intercultural encounters and learning from them, recognizing and describing sociolinguistic functions of a language, noticing and breaking stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and finally learning the basis for good intercultural relations and understanding the importance of foreign-language learning (Curriculum, 2019, pp. 44-45). As opposed to the previous year, the learners are now expected to widen their cultural knowledge on the target culture by doing their own investigations on history, geography, art, important news, etc. In intercultural encounters the learner is now supposed to be on a higher level already knowing how and why these events should proceed. There comes an additional point on which learners should put a lot more focus – sociolinguistics and its role in language learning and real-life events. The final two elements are again connected to acceptance and inclusivity, as learners are now taught to recognize explicit stereotypes and prejudice, as well to develop the need to break them. In addition, they are pushed to enforce positive intercultural relations and notice possible misunderstandings, while at the same time see the importance of foreign-language learning.

The first Curriculum criterion, B.6.1. can easily be traced to every unit of this textbook, except unit 5 which has a different emphasis. The textbook provides several objectives to satisfy this criterion: Scottish culture, Symbols of Scotland, Canadian culture, Australian culture, Differences between British English and Australian English, Australian folk song, British and

Indian culture, Culture of the United States of America, Comparing cultures (HW6, 2020, pp. 4-5). For example, Unit 4 focuses on Raj, a boy living in England, whose grandparents moved from India. Such family background allows for a good representation of all intercultural elements of the Curriculum. Firstly, as this lesson dwells in history, it gives the learners a chance to study food facts, for example about European food in Medieval Times (pp. 72-73), famous Indian recipes and Indian food (pp. 74-75), important international inventions (pp. 76-78), as well as important historical people, such as Marco Polo (p. 80), or the Beatles (p. 81). As demonstrated, this unit provides a chance to study and additionally explore the topics of history, geography, culinary, science, maths, music, etc.

The sociolinguistic element (B.6.3) can most clearly be seen in an Indian restaurant scene while learning how to order food (HW6, 2020, p. 75). The lesson serves as a guide to polite behaviour in such events, but also as an introduction to Indian cultural elements, as it is an Indian restaurant. As opposed to a similar scene in HW5, where George is ordering a hot dog, now Raj's friend Ellie is in a more formal situation with her parents, which allows for a more expanded vocabulary. The parents take advantage of phrases such as "Could I see the menu, please", "Could I have ..., please", and similar ones, which could be considered a level higher than the last year's teachings.

The second situation, that can exemplify the final two Curriculum criteria regarding discrimination and intercultural relations, B.6.4. and B.6.5., as well as B.6.2. (again, about intercultural relations) is Raj's grandfather's experience coming to England (HW6, 2020, p. 69). Raj's background allows for the understanding of immigrants and the struggles and difficulties they come across when moving to a different country. Even at an earlier age, the learners are gradually taught about the reasons for immigration, as most are, as Raj's grandfather, "in search of a better life" and "a different childhood for [their] children" (p. 69). This lesson introduces the notion of stereotypes and prejudice in the answer to Raj's question "What did you like least about living in England", in that "there are people who don't welcome those of different colour, religion or customs". It also warns about the consequences of such behaviour to those who endure it: "It hurt a lot when they mocked me" (p. 69). Finally, it gives a solution on how to deal with it, as Raj's grandfather says: "be proud of who you are and respect others for who they are". At an earlier point in the textbook, the learners are introduced to the meanings of words *phrases* (as 'things that are true'), *opinions* (what you think of something) and *stereotypes* (images of a group of people, often not true). As an example, the

textbook gives sentences about Scotland, such as: “Scotland is a country in the UK”, “I think Scotland is the most beautiful country in the world”, and “Everyone in Scotland wears kilts” (p. 24). However, not until the Raj’s unit are these notions exemplified.

All in all, even though the notions of cultural misunderstandings and social problems such as stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination are included in a small dosage, they are gradually integrated and additionally explored when contrasting with the textbook for the previous level. Additionally, there is a clear jump from the cultural elements taught in HW5, as now the number of cultures has expanded, as well as the number of cultural aspects, all of which will be additionally explored in the next chapter of this analysis.

#### 4.6.1.3. Grade 7

According to the Curriculum criteria, learners in grade 7 are expected to master five intercultural elements. Firstly, they should not only recognize pure informational facts about the target cultures, but rather compare similarities and differences between the source culture, target cultures, and other cultures, as well. They should also be able to explain the process of their understanding and learning of intercultural situations, as well as to apply sociolinguistic language functions in various scenarios. The last two Curriculum points refer to spreading awareness of dangers of generalisations, prejudice and stereotypes, as well as uncovering and fighting factors which contribute to misunderstandings between cultures (Curriculum, 2019, pp. 50-51). When compared to the objectives the learners accomplished over the course of the previous year, it is visible that the Curriculum now enhances the same five elements by adding aspects of reflection, comparison, explanation, application, etc. Surprisingly, the Curriculum is no longer focused on language-learning aspect as that part of element B.6.5. is no longer present in B.7.5.

The first Curriculum element, B.7.1., puts the greatest emphasis on comparing cultures. So, it comes as no surprise that the most frequent objective in HW7 is exactly “Comparing cultures (and heritage)”. It is followed by those dedicated to specific cultures and/or their languages: Understanding the culture of New Zealand, Understanding important facts about the Irish and English languages in Northern Ireland, Understanding the culture and lifestyle of New Orleans, Understanding facts about the Welsh and English languages, Understanding important facts about India and the English language in India, Explaining symbols representing individuals and nations (HW7, 2020, pp. 4-5). As the focus of the element is on making comparison, a lot

of everyday lifestyle aspects are compared, including sports, results of a survey about the use of technology, metric systems, literary texts, cuisines, music and instruments, family lifestyles and values, film genres, and festivals. And lastly, certain objectives have more general focus, such as – Identifying global ecological issues. Interestingly, even in the objectives focused on certain target cultures, it is visible that HW7 has a strong focus on language and language learning without a certain Curriculum criterion that would condition that. Additionally, the textbook also added a separate objective of ‘Understanding the importance of learning a second language’ to account for multilingualism promotion (pp. 4-5).

Culture comparison, in focus in this grade, can clearly be seen in the character of Manaia, a girl whose father moved from Australia to Dublin, who is now starting to live in Wellington. By providing such immigrant backstory to this character, Manaia can raise awareness of as much as three different cultures, by gradually comparing them. For example, one entire lesson is dedicated to comparing Dublin and Wellington in terms of food – “The food here is similar to what we eat in Ireland. I was very excited when I learned they have sausages that are similar to our *Superquinn* sausages. Unfortunately, they are not as tasty (...) There is nothing better than the Hokey Pokey ice cream they have here”, people – “People are as open and friendly as people back home”, as well as some other aspects, like clothes preferences, weather, rush hour, etc. (p. 24, audio). The unit dedicates a lot of its space to teaching about Māori culture, especially in terms of their traditional dances, art, tattoos and cuisine. This will in greater detail be analysed in the next chapter of this study. The lesson described conveniently teaches about the grammatical structures of comparing. In that way, it can be connected to element B.7.3. as learners are taught how to make comparisons in a couple of different ways.

A realisation of element B.7.2. in terms of an objective from HW7 contents page was not found, however, there is an abundance of situations that could be seen as those teaching about intercultural meetings. The best example would be the previous comparison between Dublin and Wellington which happened as part of a phone conversation between Manaia and Molly. Even though a great deal of the lesson is written in terms of culture comparison as the two girls contrast their cultures in blogs and emails, the phone conversation best demonstrates it. It allows for the implication of polite strategic questions that the learner can ask to inform oneself about other person’s culture. For example, in the mentioned and quoted phone conversation, Molly is inquiring about all different aspects of life in Wellington: “Tell me more about this Hangi cooking” (p. 24, audio). This example also serves as a realisation of B.7.3. element, as

learners are taught polite phrases that could be used in a conversation to show one's engagement and interest in the topic. The two objectives for B.7.3. that could be traced to HW7 are applying suitable language structures and behaving politely.

Since the entire unit is shown through the eyes of a family that went through immigration twice, it comes as no surprise that the unit would also provide a good basis for teaching about inclusivity and fight against cultural misunderstandings. Those elements are realised through HW7 objectives: Celebrating diversity, Solving cultural misunderstandings, Understanding stereotypes and diversity, and Noticing ways of solving culturally conditioned misunderstandings (pp. 4-5). However, this is not exemplified only through Manaia, as HW7 also tells the story of Holden, an African American living in the South (New Orleans), and Mangai, an Indian girl. Mangai introduces the notion of Britain historically treating Indians as "second-class citizens" (p. 86), while Nolan introduces the discussion about African slaves in a very subtle manner: "The ingredients available to the families of African slaves were simple and local. The meat was typically the least desirable cuts, as African-American families could not usually afford expensive ingredients" (p. 63). The story of acceptance of others and the fight against discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes can best be seen in Mardi Gras krewes tradition (p. 59). It explains how some Mardi Gras krewes, such as African Americans, were not welcome at the parades, but now "there aren't any krewes that are forbidden from participating". Interestingly, grade 7 is the first one where the holiday of Thanksgiving is included, but because of its significance, it will be analysed in greater detail in the next chapter.

#### 4.6.1.4. Grade 8

Differently to all previous grades, Curriculum (Curriculum, 2019, p. 56) sets only 3 goals for learners to master when it comes to intercultural communicative competence in grade 8: to critically connect target cultures related information (B.8.1.), to choose communication patterns appropriate to the (intercultural) context (B.8.2.), to strategically avoid and overcome stereotyping, prejudice, and generalisation, as well as to understand importance of foreign language learning (B.8.3.). Interestingly, foreign language learning objective is only in focus in grades 6 and 8 when it comes to the Curriculum set criteria. However, as was seen before, the lack of criteria does not stop HW from including related information and incentive in their lessons.

HW8 puts most of its focus on the first and the last Curriculum goal. In such way learners are very well versed in the information about the target culture, as well as the problems they are facing. Cultures in focus are clearly seen amongst the learning objectives for intercultural competence: Understanding the culture and lifestyle of New York City, Famous sites in New York City, Understanding British history, Understanding the culture of Jamaica, Understanding US and Native American culture, Understanding the culture of Australia, and Cultural facts about Croatia (HW8, 2021, pp. 4-5). As learners are expected to critically connect information about target language and other cultures, it is not surprising that shared objectives also include Comparing cultures, Understanding various school systems, Understanding the varieties in the English language, and, the final objective related to this goal – Understanding the importance of storytelling, connected to Curriculum’s goal for the student to be able to critically connect information found in literary works. HW8 includes as much as ten literary works, which is the biggest number out of all four textbooks, including HW5 which also had literary works as part of textbook objectives and Curriculum set goals. The works include poems (*If I Could Be a Superhero* by Steve Lazarowitz, *Revolting Rhymes: Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf* by Roald Dahl), a short story (*Christmas Cracker* by English Jeanette Winterson), an adapted story (*The Adventure of the Speckled Band* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), a song (*Three Little Birds* by Bob Marley), a book excerpt (*Chasing a Croatian Girl* by Cody McClain Brown, *Zombie Survival Guide* by Max Brooks), blog descriptions (*Humans of New York* by Brandon Stanton), as well as a native speech (Chief Seattle’s speech) and Aboriginal myth story (*The Rainbow Serpent*). All mentioned literary works, except for Doyle’s adapted story, are authentic works that students need to critically analyse in terms of text purpose, deeper meaning and tone, while also doing a bit of research into the overall topic, authors and circumstances of creation (especially for native and Aboriginal texts). Especially the last two mentioned literary works give learners a chance to learn more about Native Americans in the USA and Aboriginals in Australia. However, as these topics are considered sensitive since they are often wrongly portrayed, it is very important to choose words carefully. The textbook does not include struggles that these people went through except for one instance describing Native Americans who “still keep their culture and history alive, showing pride in their heritage, despite all the hardships their ancestors have been through” (HW8, 2021, p. 81). However, the information representing Native Americans and their culture will be thoroughly studied in the next chapter.

HW8 includes the minimal amount of source culture, focusing mostly on cultures of the USA (more specifically both New York and Wyoming), London as the centre of British history,

Sydney as the temporary Australian home for a brother and sister with parents of Croatian origin, and finally Montego Bay as the first and only representative of Jamaica in HW series. The unit talking about Lota and Luka now moving to Croatia, deals mostly with the topic of immigration, while not including any difficulties that might be connected to it, such was the case in the previous textbooks. Another unit that tackles the topic of immigration, but in a different sense, is the one centred around Diego. Diego introduces his grandmother as a singer who “moved to New York from Puerto Rico when she was young, and she used to sing backing vocals in many famous New York clubs” (p. 14). Other than this short mention of his family background, we are also aware that Diego speaks English and Spanish, that he is fluent in American Sign Language and is also learning Japanese because of his friend Hiro, an exchange student from Japan (p. 15). Intercultural problems are touched upon again in the mentioned photoblog *Humans of New York* where we have the experience of Jack who advises readers to “love the good and tolerate the bad” when it comes to the new residence (p. 25). However, the most significant look on interculturalism can be found in ‘The American Dream’ lesson (p. 27) which talks about the USA as “the land of opportunity” and “a multicultural society”. It is pointed out that “the USA is a nation of immigrants” who have made America what it is today by bringing “their culture, customs and languages”. The textbook objectives urge understanding of the importance of respecting the cultural heritage of other countries, human rights, avoiding cultural misunderstandings, differentiating between stereotypes and facts, and being a responsible tourist. The best example of such teaching can be found in a lesson about human rights (p. 42) where it is explained that “human rights are basic rights that should belong to all human beings, no matter what their race, gender, nationality, language or religion is”. Nevertheless, the focus here is not on cultural discrimination, but rather gender one. Students are introduced to literacy differences, pay gaps, as well as job position distinctions. However, the lesson takes advantage of the possibility to include significant people from different backgrounds here, as they lead with the examples of Malala Yousafzai and Mae Jemison (p. 42).

The lesson that deals with discriminatory issues based on culture the most is the one on bullying (pp. 20-21). In the lesson a boy Bahar, aged 13, talks about his school experience when bringing traditional Indian food that some call “pig food”, while others bully him based on the stereotype that “Indians stink”. Except for presenting an opportunity to teach about the consequences of such behaviour, the lesson demonstrates an opportunity to give advice, which conveniently falls into the B.8.2. domain. The learners are taught how to use appropriate register and how to

recommend the most suitable course of action. Furthermore, the lesson takes advantage of some situational specifics and introduces another sociolinguistic element – idioms – *fed up with*, *drive one up the wall*, *get to the bottom of something*, *easier said than done*. By centring the lesson topic around such issues, the textbook successfully and naturally incorporates more objectives into a thorough teaching opportunity.

To conclude, the analysis demonstrated an affirmative answer to the thesis question – the textbooks do satisfy the Curriculum criteria when we talk about intercultural communicative competence. The detailed analysis of Curriculum and textbook objectives, as well as their realization in the textbooks can be seen in the Appendix<sup>2</sup>. However, the realization is not done in equal proportions in terms of Curriculum criteria. In the last place by the number of objectives in HW we can find the second element provided for by the Curriculum – the specifics of intercultural relations and engagement in such communication (B.5.2., B.6.2., B.7.2., B.8.2.). This is covered with the total of 0.07% with only 5 objectives in all four textbooks. The third element does not appear in Curriculum agenda for all grades, but only for grades 6 and 7. That is the sociolinguistic aspect of language. Because of that, it is not surprising that it covers only 10% of total objectives, with the maximum coverage of 38% in HW6. The final Curriculum element is the one consisting of arguments for inclusivity and against discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice, as well as the one promoting learning foreign languages and interculturalism. That criterion holds the most points in the Curriculum as it can be seen in B.5.3., B.5.4., B.6.4., B.6.5., B.7.4., B.7.5. B.8.3., but can be connected to only 14 objectives, which is merely 21% of all HW objectives. Interestingly, the biggest focus is always on the first element of the Curriculum agenda – information on target culture (B.5.1., B.6.1., B.7.1., B.8.1.). Out of 66 set objectives from HW, as much as 40 of them are directly connected to the first set criterion. That includes the maximum 77% coverage in HW7, followed by 71% in HW5, 47% in HW8, and the minimum 38% in HW6. The next chapter of the analysis demonstrates in greater detail how exactly the learners are introduced to target cultures and which target cultures specifically that entails.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix A: Curriculum compliance analysis

#### 4.6.2. Cultural representation in HW

The Hello World set is focused primarily on 12 target countries: the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, the Republic of South Africa, Canada, India, Ireland, as well as separately England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Each of the twenty units in all four textbooks has one culture as the one ‘in focus’. In addition, the units also explore and compare Croatia as a source country, especially in the final unit of HW8. The total HW set lists as much as 671 references to the mentioned target countries<sup>3</sup>. Not surprisingly, the number of references can also be correlated to the learners’ age. Each year learners are gradually exposed to additional cultural knowledge, very often with repeating references (especially geographical ones). The only exception to this rule is HW8, which has a higher number of cultural references when compared to HW6, but lower than HW7. It is also different in the way that it explores the USA twice, and introduces an abundance of contemporary cultural references related mostly to the USA (present-time New York), as well as to England (music, TV, royal family, sports events, etc.).

Even though it is clear from the number of dedicated units which cultures are more dominant, the analysis into referenced elements of mentioned target cultures has demonstrated that the prevalence is not as straightforward as it might seem. The USA seems to be prevalently in focus by all selected criteria – number of dedicated units (as much as five), total references in dedicated units (203 – almost thrice the following country), as well as the number of references out of focus (31). The following country would be England with three dedicated units and the total of 114 references (both in and out of focus). Interestingly, the culture that comes in third is Indian – with only one unit in focus, it has managed to accumulate 63 references in that single unit, as well as additional 12 references through others. This surprisingly puts India higher on the scale than Australia and New Zealand with two dedicated units each. The last place on the scale belongs to the Republic of South Africa which only has two references through all four textbooks, namely because the lesson dedicated to it was more focused on Tanzania (with five cultural references). A more detailed analysis can be found in the Appendix<sup>4</sup>. It is important to mention here that, for example in the particular case of India, all out-of-focus references were culinary cultural elements. This poses the question through which cultural elements are the selected cultures presented and how is culture defined in HW set.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the names of countries themselves were excluded from the quantitative analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix B: Referenced target culture elements

So, what does culture mean for HW authors? The first mention of the word ‘culture’ can be found in HW 5, when Ella “learns about Māori culture” (HW5, 2020, p. 41). However, neither Ella, nor the task itself, give any additional information as to what would that entail. Interestingly, the second mention of culture is connected to cuisine, as Antoine (HW6, 2020, p. 41) states that through cooking he’s “learning about different countries and cultures”. Very soon after, in the lesson dedicated to Canadian Multiculturalism Day, learners can see that “Each nation brought elements of their own culture, such as **language, food, clothes, customs, stories, art, music, religion and values**” (HW6, 2020, p. 45; own emphasis). A real definition comes in HW7 where culture, heritage and tradition are contrasted, as “all the things people do that include music, literature and other forms of art”, “things, such as art, building, traditions and beliefs, that people believe are important for their history and culture”, and “very old customs, stories and things that people believe in” (HW7, 2020, p. 13). Dylan (HW7, 2020, p. 71) wants to emerge in some aspects of Welsh culture to “explore his Welshness” but they are limited to music and language. Interestingly, humour, specifically British one, is considered to be an important cultural element, as “in some cultures, people are the first to laugh at their own jokes, but not in Britain” (HW8, 2021, p. 45). Even though not mentioning the term ‘culture’, Amelia plays around it by listing topics that would best describe a country: music, art, food, lifestyle, geography, tourism, politics, ecology, sport, history (HW8, 2021, p. 63). Similarly, in HW6 learners are expected to tick the topics that interest them about a foreign country, which include: population, popular food, currency, symbols, flag, wildlife, names of big cities, famous people, popular sports, holidays and festivals (HW6, 2020, p. 26). Finally, the last important cultural aspect, the topic of culture shock, is explored with Luka and Lota who are moving back to Croatia, their parents’ native country, from Australia (HW8, 2021, p. 97). This became a clear opportunity for contrasting source culture with one of the target ones.

It is quite clear that the majority of references belong to the geographical aspect of a country, presenting either some geographical location, city name, or institution name. Because of that, some lessons that teach about capital letters, for example, would have a much higher number of references than others. As a rule, all target cultures have the highest number of references belonging to the geographical aspects of the culture, usually followed by other elements in the amounts that could be considered insignificant for a stronger impression. However, in the case of India, because of the large number of references to Indian food in a lesson about (and in) England, including several restaurant mentions and one full menu depiction, the first association to the sixth-grade learners after mentioning India could easily be Indian food.

Another mention of Indian food, but in a completely different way, is seen in a lesson teaching about the dangers of bullying (HW8, 2021, pp. 20-21). 13-year-old Bahar mentions that some children bully him because “Indians stink”, while others mock him by referring to traditional Indian food as “pig food”. Interestingly, the first portrayal of India can be traced to the fifth grade’s unusual journeys to school, where it says that “In India, some children (...) take a ride on a horse and cart!” (HW5, 2020, p. 53), possibly adding to already mentioned negative prejudice about India. However, the most in-depth depiction of India can be found in HW7, where the focus now shifts to rich cultural information regarding historical specificities (British rule), religion preferences, as well as the abundance of celebrations and festivals, together with the famous Bollywood centre. It could be said that the unit gathers both the visible and invisible part of the iceberg, as we can learn a lot about Indians: their beliefs, norms and way of living. However, in such a situation it is very easy to fall into stereotypes and expected norms. In the same manner, HW7 states that “the most popular physical activity in India” is yoga (HW7, 2020, p. 88). Even though yoga could be primarily connected to India, research into the topic proves that although it is popular, it is not the most popular one, as the top three positions belong to running, jogging, and walking (MediAvataar, 2019). There is also room for improvement in the same unit, in a lesson called *It’s gone viral* dedicated to famous men connected to internet technology (HW7, 2020, p. 92). The lesson puts four men in focus – Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, and Steve Jobs, and shortly mentions four women as a topic for further research (Hedy Lamarr, Margaret Hamilton, Annie Easley, Grace Hopper). Interestingly, one of the key people in Google, Inc. is an Indian-born American Sundar Pichai. He is not only the CEO of the company since 2015, but he has also greatly benefited the product development of the company, including project such as Google Chrome (Shepherd, 2016). Including such person in a lesson precisely on that topic could promote a more realistic portrayal of present-time India and its contemporary significant people. Adding such topics could also prevent that the learners’ strongest associations upon mentioning ‘India’ are yoga and curry.

In a similar way, through the textbooks’ references, Jamaica is mostly connected to music, especially Bob Marley’s, while New Zealand is to Māori traditions, predominantly haka. New Orleans part of the USA is mostly depicted through comfort Southern food that stems from African slave history, while New York is mostly shown through its real-life monuments, as well as cinematographical action ones. Wyoming, on the other hand, serves solely as a representation of the USA’s Native Americans.

Even though Wyoming is not the first reference to Native Americans, it is supposed to be the most detailed one, with objectives such as ‘I can talk about Native American culture’ (HW8, 2021, p. 81). It is important to mention here that throughout the grades the textbook set does not portray equal living conditions when describing Native Americans and their fortune. Native Americans are represented as those who inhabited the land long before Columbus came. However, not even HW8, the textbook aimed at learners at their oldest, demonstrates much hardships when retelling the events between the white people and Native Americans in Wyoming. Even though there were many instances where there could have been a mention of the difficulties Native Americans went through, it is only stated that there is a smaller number of Native Americans in the USA now, but those living show pride in their culture and heritage “despite all the hardships their ancestors have been through”. It is also stressed that “some stereotypes [about Native Americans] still exist” (HW8, 2021, p. 81). The usual place where such events could be displayed is the lesson dedicated to Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving is covered solely in HW7 out of all textbooks. Interestingly, there were no hardships mentioned in this lesson except for the hardships endured by Pilgrims with a very happy outcome for everyone involved: “That year was hard for the Pilgrims. They did not have much food. But Wampanoag Indians helped the Pilgrims survive ... The Native Americans and the Pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving in 1623 to give thanks for surviving the winter and becoming friends” (HW7, 2020, p. 104). The inconsistencies could have been resolved with careful comparison of teaching content in all four textbooks, including appendices. However, the history lesson gets more complicated by introducing other natives.

Canadian First nations and Inuit people were mentioned in a manner similar to the one in HW8, only as many as two grades earlier. HW6 teaches that “the French and the British came in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, bringing wars and diseases to native people” (HW6, 2020, p. 45). The similar story can be traced to the Aboriginal people. The same textbook, HW6, gives a picture of the history of Down Under with its first inhabitants – the Aboriginal people. However, as it seems, after Cook’s arrival, “in many places, the white people pushed Aboriginal people out of their land” (HW6, 2020, p. 58). The textbook does, just like in HW8 for Native Americans, try to depict their lifestyle with art imagery, Dreamtime explanations, and spirits’ stories (HW6, 2020, p. 60). Aboriginal Australians are only mentioned again in HW8 with the *Rainbow Serpent* creation story (HW8, 2021, p. 99). Even though not mentioned directly in the textbook, but referred to only in the video on the platform, Jamaican indigenous people, the Taino, are described with the worst living conditions, as they “were conquered by the Spanish colonists

and almost became extinct: some managed to escape, but a lot of them died of European diseases, starvation and overwork” (HW8, 2021, p. 48, video). Curiously, this leads to the conclusion that Jamaican, Canadian and Australian indigenous people all endured terrible living conditions, such as diseases, starvation, overwork, land seizures, etc., while at the same time American native people just suffered ‘hardship’, very similar to a hard year Pilgrims had.

#### 4.6.3. Promoting interculturalism and multilingualism

Benjamin Zephaniah in his *U.N. (United Neighbours)* poem says:

“**Me** is a simple Jamaican man/ From Jamaica in de caribbean/ Me look like an African/  
Because Africa is me Motherlan.// **Me** neighbour is a European/ Born an bred in  
Engerlan/ And we juss cannot understan/ Why nations cannot live as wan.” (HW6, 2020, p. 71)

The analysis of four textbooks confirms that *Hello, World* set promotes interculturalism and multilingualism. In addition to the quoted poem, the first can be demonstrated through the significant number of correlations between source, target and international culture already shown in the previous sections. The textbook material integrated elements of other cultures into the units dealt with some specific target cultures. However, those target cultures included mostly countries mentioned in the textbooks as those where main characters live, originate from, or have relatives in. Additionally, there would be a reference to those that have an important geographical or historical role, such as the Seven Wonders of the World (HW8, 2021, pp. 72-73), or some that serve perhaps solely a supporting role to identify some grammatical section, for example telling the time (different time zones) (HW5, 2020, pp. 68-69).

The most important way in which the promotion of interculturalism and multilingualism is achieved is through the multilingual or multicultural main characters. Results of main character analysis in those terms are presented in the Appendix<sup>5</sup>. Out of twenty main characters from all four textbooks, eight of them have closer family members with different origin, while additionally one character has one member of wider family from another culture. The last one is the only example of immigration found in HW5, which possibly gradually introduces the notion of interculturalism, since it is only mentioned that the main character George’s uncle’s girlfriend Yoko comes from Japan (HW5, 2020, p. 18). In other textbooks, these characters are

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix C: Main character analysis

used to further promote interculturalism to additionally stress the frequency of immigration and its influence on the world as six of them are descendants of immigrants or are moving places themselves. Throughout the four grades, learners are introduced to Ben, Maya, Raj, Helen, Manaia, Holden, Diego, and siblings Lota and Luka, all of whom are in a way multicultural. Such character background additionally supports some lessons that are focused solely on teaching about immigration, respecting and accepting others and their heritage. Such is the case of Ben from Canada in HW6. The illustration of Ben visibly portrays the boy as a non-white character, more specifically one of Asian origin. The textbook explains that his father is Chinese, while his mother is British (HW6, 2020, p. 30, video). There are no additional details that explain the reason for immigration that are included in some later character developments. However, it is clear that Ben's family kept their heritage, as Ben is part of "a very large Chinese community in Vancouver" (p. 30, video). Ben is shown celebrating and explaining the importance of Chinese New Year to Chinese people (p. 44). This allows for a lesson about culture called "Faces of Canada" (p. 45) in a text entitled *One country, many faces*. The goal of the text is to portray immigration as a natural historic phenomenon which made Canada "a true mosaic of many different cultures and customs". That is especially celebrated on 27 June – Canadian Multiculturalism Day. The historicity of immigration is traced back to "Indians (now called First Nations) and Inuit" (p. 45) who lived on the territory before the first immigrants – the French and the British (p. 45). Based on the fact that Ben is the only main character representing Canada, Canada is shown solely as a multicultural country gladly accepting others.

While being the first one portrayed in such a way, Canada is not the only country demonstrating cultural diversity. The USA is represented as a diverse country in more than one occasion. It started in a lesson on Taste of Chicago, a real-life festival that is, according to the textbook, "a celebration of the city's diversity" with food from different parts of the world (HW5, 2020, p. 60). This subtle introduction of the USA as a country accepting those who bring their heritage becomes a greater story for Holden in HW7. Holden is portrayed as a non-white boy, one of African American origin (HW7, 2020, p. 55). His mother is as well portrayed in that way, while his father is a white man. His parents are representing two clashing cultures in New Orleans – Creole and Cajun, or as he himself says, Holden is "of mixed heritage" (p. 48, video). Creoles are people "of mixed colonial, French, African American and Native American origin", while Cajun are "French settlers who came from Canada to Louisiana". However, the multiculturalism of New Orleans does not stop there, as Holden explains how the city has influences also from

“Spanish, African, Caribbean, German, Irish, and Italian” that makes it “a melting pot today” (p. 48, video). Even though the direct focus is on the differences in Creole and Cajun cuisine, as well as Mardi Gras festival, there is a subtle message about the prejudice here. Holden explains how some Mardi Gras Krewes, such as Indians and African Americans, were forbidden from participating in the festival. However, now times have changed, and, according to Holden, all are welcome (p. 59). Even though he does not state so explicitly, it is implied that the reason for their exclusion was their slave history.

Interestingly, the textbook talks about slavery in the sense that soul food originates in African American culture, and it is often simple since “the ingredients available to the families of African slaves were simple and local” (p. 63). The textbook does not explore the topic of slavery in greater lengths. Besides this instance, there are two more mentions of slavery in HW set, and they are both in grade 8. The first one is in a lesson called ‘Diversity, equality and unity’ which talks about every person deserving “the right to life and liberty, to education and work, freedom from slavery, freedom of opinion and many other freedoms (...) without discrimination” (HW8, 2021, p. 42). This lesson, however, is mostly focused on gender discrimination, rather than cultural one. The second is, on the other hand, connected to Jamaica’s history. Finally, the USA’s multiculturalism escalates into ‘The American Dream’ lesson in HW8 (2021, p. 27). The lesson’s primary goal is to teach about immigration and people’s reasons for it. Conveniently, the unit is centred around Diego, a boy whose “family came to New York from Puerto Rico in search of a better life, dreaming of making it big” (HW8, 2021, p. 12, video). He additionally explains that “together with other nations and cultures, [their] Puerto Rican heritage has helped build and shape the City of New York as we know it today”. However, he does not refer to his family as immigrants. It is interesting to note that the word “immigrant” is mentioned only in three occasions in HW series. Firstly, in the previous lesson about Canada as a multicultural society (HW6, 2020, p. 45), secondly in the history of Australia (HW6, 2020, p. 59), and lastly in the last-mentioned lesson about America as a melting pot (HW8, 2021, p. 27). America is here also named “the land of opportunity” that attracted people since 1892, when it “became a gateway for millions of immigrants” (HW8, 2021, p. 27). In such a way, America became “a nation of immigrants” and “all those people who have gone to the US have taken their culture, customs and languages with them” to “contribute what America is today: a multicultural society”. However, the textbook also stresses that this life decision is not an easy one to make and go through as most immigrants suffered from “the feeling of being lost, confused and scared of the new beginning and what

awaited” because “the majority of them would never see their home country again” (HW8, 2021, p. 27).

Even though the aforementioned lesson best encapsulates the search of a better life and the struggles that accompany it, this is not the first mention of it. The first example of a long journey in order to find a better life can be found in the story of Maya’s great-great-grandmother, who moved with her family from Brighton to Australia. However, her story is quite short, since it is only known that “it wasn’t easy at first. But, with time she started to love her new country” (HW6, 2020, p. 52). A better teaching moment has been presented in Raj’s family, who struggled with unacceptance upon their arrival in the UK. Interestingly, Maya’s family decided to find better life outside of the UK, while Raj’s decided to go to the UK for the same purpose. Raj’s grandparents came from Delhi and had travelled for two months both by train and ship to reach Liverpool. However, it is clear that they were not the only ones with this idea, as the video also demonstrates other Indian people living in the UK, including Raj’s “relatives all over the country” (HW6, 2020, p. 66). Raj’s grandfather explains that “there are always people who don’t welcome those of different colour, religion or customs” which hurt him a lot since people mocked him based on his origin (p. 69). However, even in this situation, he teaches that one should “be proud of who you are and respect others for who they are” (p. 69). Interestingly, as was mentioned before, the bullying instance from HW8 was also connected to an Indian. Bahar, whose image was not presented, was mocked in school because of his origin and the traditional Indian food that his mum prepares. The food was called “pig food” and Bahar was told that “Indians stink” (HW8, 2021, p. 20). Even though that unit is centred in New York, it is not clear where these events are taking place. Unlike Bahar, Raj from the UK is portrayed as a boy of Indian origin, but he himself does not experience any prejudice or stereotyping. The notion of the UK as the third important multicultural country culminates in lesson ‘From Rule Britannia to Cool Britannia’ (HW8, 2021, p. 40). The lesson talks about Britain’s imperial history, which influenced former colonies, such as Australia and New Zealand, but, more importantly, “British culture, in return, has become richer thanks to the people and traditions of the countries it used to colonise”. Another subtle mention of India can be found there, since, according to the textbook, “curry has become Britain’s national dish”. Britain is here portrayed as “multicultural”, since “fashion, food, music, festivals and different customs from around the globe have enriched British culture”. However, there is one sharp critique of Britain, and that is aimed at the British Museum. It is stated that “lots of former British colonies have asked the UK to return treasures taken from their countries under British

rule” (HW8, 2021, p. 40), a series of requests that all got denied. The text also encourages learner to wonder if that is a fair decision.

The most positive experience portrayed regarding culture exchange can be seen in the examples of Lota and Luka, as well as Manaia. The unit centred around Lota and Luka demonstrates a very large amount of cultural information shared both by Australia, their birth country, and by Croatia, their future residence. For example, one of the authentic texts presented in the book is an excerpt from Cody McClain Brown’s book *Chasing a Croatian Girl* on the topic of *propuh* (HW8, 2021, p. 97). In this light-hearted funny text, the learners are introduced to the phenomenon of culture shock that one may experience when changing culture. However, this is not only a teaching moment, as learners must also additionally investigate it by themselves. Lota and Luka’s lesson includes a third culture as well, Australian Aboriginal. Even though this is not the first mention of Australian Aboriginals, learners are now read a creation story on how the Earth was formed (p. 99). The lesson also motivates learners to find and present more creation myths including those from Northern Ireland, New Zealand, and Croatia.

While the beginning of this discussion opened with a poem about Jamaica’s diversity, it is quite surprising that the fourth country, and the last one that is portrayed as a multicultural one in a clear way, is exactly Jamaica. Jamaican history is described as a very problematic one, mostly because of the Spanish conquering efforts. However, Jamaica’s multiculturalism started in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, when “more African slaves were shipped to work on sugar-cane plantations” which is why the majority of Jamaicans today are of African ancestry (HW8, 2021, p. 48, video). The introduction leads that “this mix of European and African cultures is nicely summarised in [their] nation’s motto: ‘Out of Many, One People’”. Interestingly, the slave theme is additionally enforced by adding that in addition to English, their official language, Jamaicans speak Patwa, a Creole language which is a “mix between English and the West African languages that the slaves brought to Jamaica” (p. 48, video). However, apart from this instance, the multiculturalism of Jamaica was not additionally explored.

The character that talks about cultural exchange with the most enthusiasm is Manaia. Manaia just moved from Dublin to New Zealand, her father’s native country, where he found a new job. Manaia takes these news as “very exciting” because she gets to see her grandparents more often (HW7, 2020, p. 12, video). Her grandparents are both Māori, and Manaia states that she is looking forward to learning about their culture in more than one occasion. Her family refers to heritage as “treasure” (p. 18). It was previously depicted how Manaia explores the

similarities and differences between Ireland and New Zealand, which was done in a way to state the differences, but also to respect them. However, most of Manaia's focus is on her Māori culture, as she recites: "I love all things Kiwiana/ And I'm eager to start/ To learn about New Zealand/ Of which I'm now a part" (p. 21).

An important aspect of learning about a culture is learning its language. There are numerous instances of words mentioned belonging to the traditions, such as in the case of Māori: *haka*, *Ka Mate*, *Kapo o Pango*, *Kōwhaiwhai*, *koru*, *moko*, etc. (HW7, 2020, p. 27). Manaia teaches some native words, since she speaks Māori, together with English and Irish. She is not the only multilingual amongst the characters. Out of 20 main characters, nine speak at least two languages. Interestingly, it seems that after English language, Irish, Spanish and Māori are the most popular ones. The textbook puts a great deal of effort into promoting foreign language learning, even when it is not obligatory by set Curriculum criteria. Manaia says that "Languages are awesome/ They teach us so much" (p. 21). However, the promotion of multilingualism can be traced back to the first textbook in the series, HW5. Interestingly, the first mention of foreign language learning is also connected to Māori, as Ella studies Māori because her stepdad always says that "learning languages open doors to the world" (HW5, 2020, p. 33, audio). HW5 also introduces the importance of learning English as your second language, because one would be able "to talk to and understand people everywhere" (p. 81). While this lesson focuses on the current importance of English, especially in media, it does not include the significance of learning other languages. Helen, unlike other characters, sees her bilingualism as something ordinary, because her family speaks two languages at home, English and Spanish, and because more people speak Spanish than English in LA (HW6, 2020, p. 84, video).

Molly, on the other hand, is an Irish girl who has just recently started learning Irish because of her heritage. She herself states that her parents cannot speak the language, only know some phrases, while just her few cousins are truly bilingual (HW7, 2020, p. 45). Similar to Ella's stepdad's saying, Molly's grandmother has a belief of her own – speaking the language will let her make a deeper connection with her Irish heritage, so she tells her stories and legends in Irish. The textbook has also used additional sayings to promote second language learning, such as – "To have another language is to possess a second soul" by Charlemagne (p. 45). Learners are here introduced to the first-mentioned advantages of using two languages: you get better at reading in both languages, and your performance in school improves. However, the situation with Irish is special because of its status. It is emphasized that the Irish language could become

extinct in the near future, which stimulates learners to think about some other languages that may have the same destiny. It could be said that Irish has a similar status to Welsh, which is being promoted just a couple of pages later. Dylan is trying to explore his Welshness by learning Welsh to become a better musician. Some encourage him to do so, like his mum, because “*Cenedl heb iaith, cenedl heb galon*” (‘A nation without a language, a nation without a heart’), and his father: “Welsh isn’t an easy language to learn, but it’ll be worth it. And your grandparents will be so proud of you” (p. 71). It is clear that the number one reason for language learning is connected to preserve heritage. However, some think that it is unnecessary to learn other languages, as “everybody speaks English anyway” and “Welsh is more difficult to learn than English” (p. 71). The learners' job in this moment is to assess which side to take and how to make the right informed decision on this dilemma (although the “correct” answer is clearly suggested). Interestingly, the notion of losing languages to English is again mentioned in HW8. While reading about the influence of British Empire on the world, the learners are taught that even though English language makes communication easier, some smaller countries have taken steps to protect their language from its influence (HW8, 2021, p. 40).

Already mentioned Diego is the first character that could be considered multilingual with certainty, as he speaks English and Spanish, and he is also fluent in American Sign Language. He even states that he loves languages. Furthermore, Diego does not stop at three languages, as he is also learning Japanese to be able to talk to his new friend Hiro (HW9, 2021, p. 15). Diego is interested in Japanese culture as well, but this is limited only to Japanese pop music and the Shina Inu dog that Diego is soon going to have (p. 12, video).

Even though not all possible venues were explored while demonstrating multiculturalism and multilingualism, the textbooks have a significant number of characters with diverse backgrounds who are demonstrating how learning languages can be fun and useful for a number of reasons. Additionally, mostly with their familial stories, they portray the difficulties that people experience while making the decision to move to a different place, and later proceeding with that choice. These topics are introduced gradually, as HW5 contains the minimum amount of such topics and later HW6 introduces as many as 4 characters sending subtle messages regarding immigration for better life conditions. HW7 sends stronger messages with the passionate Manaia and the slave history in NOLA, while HW8 offers insights into cultural diversity by contrasting past and present times.

## 5. Conclusion

Language and culture are deeply intertwined, as understanding the cultural context behind a language can greatly enhance language learning experience. By learning about culture, language learners gain insights into the nuances and subtleties of the language, which allows them to communicate more effectively and genuinely with native speakers. It also helps them understand the values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and social norms of the community that speaks the language, making their interaction not only more meaningful, but also more respectful. Thus, teaching about culture as a part of language learning classes is not merely highly beneficial, it is also a crucial element that improves learners' overall comprehension and communication skills, which helps them achieve intercultural communicative competence. In relation to the first research question, this study confirmed that HW set satisfies the Curriculum criteria in regard to intercultural communicative competence by incorporating different cultural elements and intercultural situations from which the learners accumulate cultural knowledge and develop necessary skills needed to overcome intercultural miscommunications. However, it is important to ensure that cultural content is presented accurately, especially in regard to stereotypes or misconceptions. The cultural information included should be chosen carefully to provide a balanced representation of the target culture, avoiding generalizations or biases. That is related to the second research question, which demonstrated that cultural representation is prevalently based on geographical elements, followed by culinary, musical, historical, sporting, etc. However, it was noticed that there are instances of subtle generalizations and biases in the portrayal of some cultures, some related specifically to chosen context and cultural elements, while some to overall descriptions. Overall, textbooks should foster cultural sensitivity and awareness, as well as promote respect and empathy towards people from different background. The latter is especially important today when one should aim towards becoming a global citizen who appreciates and values diversity. This goes hand in hand with the promotion of multilingualism. Multilingualism is a valuable skill that allows individuals to further connect with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Precisely such characters were introduced in HW set. As an answer to the third question, the textbooks do promote multilingualism, especially by focusing on a range of multilingual and multicultural characters and their familial backgrounds.

English language teachers have the task of effectively incorporating the textbooks into their teaching methods and adapting them to meet the specific needs and abilities of their students.

However, textbooks themselves still have the power to shape learners' attitudes and behaviours towards cultural and language learning. By emphasizing the value of interculturalism and multilingualism, textbooks can inspire learners to become more proficient in foreign languages and encourage them to continue their language learning journey beyond the classroom.

## **6. Potential limitations of the study and future development**

As was seen in Petravić's work (2016) every introduction of an official document brings about immediate changes in the teaching and learning process. Even though the emphasis on the intercultural communicative competence is only gaining importance in Croatia in the last thirty years, the number of changes that it has caused has significantly altered the approach to teaching English as a foreign language. As Petravić explains (2016, pp. 273-284), the entire task frame scheme needed to be reconstructed in order to accommodate the development of intercultural competence. One of those alternations is immediately visible in the textbooks used as a teaching and learning resource. For example, the analysed HW set took the place of an older set that was previously researched by Brozd (2018). The comparison of the two studies as further research could provide an answer to the question of the immediate changes that the publishers had to implement. The analysis of textbooks that are adapted according to the changed official guidelines could demonstrate the understanding of the notion of intercultural competence. This study focused on four EFL textbooks for grades 5 to 8 written by Croatian authors. Even though this is a good method to demonstrate the building of knowledge and information to higher grades from the perspective of one textbook series, it would be useful to analyse other textbooks sets as well. For example, certainly different criteria and patterns for intercultural information could be found in textbooks co-created or created by British and American authors that are used in some Croatian schools. Additionally, this study did not take into account workbooks and teacher's books, as well as the audio and video files referenced in the workbooks, since those are not necessary in the classroom. However, to gain more insight into what learners are exposed to in English language class altogether, those should be included in the future analysis. The study also demonstrated the textbooks' stance on the promotion of interculturalism and multilingualism, which greatly affects teachers using those textbooks, as well as learners learning from them. The study results could be used as a basis for research into perceived intercultural competence of learners who studied from these textbooks.

Finally, this study identified cultural elements taught to children in grades 5 to 8. It may help teachers and textbooks writers to select suitable materials. More importantly, it should instruct future authors to be more cautious whilst selecting elements to include in relation to some specific cultures, since precisely that completely influences the cultural representation portrayed to learners. That, of course, is related to the type and number of elements they choose, but also the context they decide to set it in.

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## 8. Appendices

### Appendix A: Curriculum compliance analysis

Hello, World! 5

Curriculum set criteria	Intercultural Competence Element	England	New Zealand	USA	Ireland	Republic of South Africa
<b>B.5.1.</b>	<b>Target culture</b>	+	+	+	+	+
		0	0, 3A	0, 1B, 3A, 3B	0, 1A, 2A, 5	0, 1A, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 5
<b>B.5.1.</b>	<b>Comparing cultures</b>	+	+	+	+	+
		3A, 3C, 5	1A, 1B, 3B, 3C	1B, 1C, 2C	4	3A, 3C, 5
B.5.1.	Names in the English-speaking world	+	*	*	*	
		1A, 1B, 2B	1A, 2B, 3B	1B	1A, 3A, 4	
B.5.1.	Symbols of <i>target country</i>	+	*	*		
		5	3A	3A		
<b>B.5.4.</b>	<b>Celebrating diversity</b>	+	+	+	+	+
		3B, 3C	3A, 5	1C, 2A, 3A, 3B	1A, 5	3A, 3C
B.5.3.	Different types of school		+			
			1A, 5			
B.5.1.	Interests and hobbies in another country		+	*		
			1B, 2A, 2B, 2C	1B		
B.5.1.	Children's books and characters	*	*	*	+	*
		2C	1C	2C	3A, 3C	4
B.5.1.	Famous sights	*			+	+
		3A, 3B, 3C, 4			2A	3A
B.5.2.	Evaluating norms in online communication				+	
					1B, 1C	
B.5.1.	Proverbs and idioms			*		+
				0		0
B.5.3	Avoiding misunderstanding			?		
B.5.1.	Differences between <i>variety of English</i> and <i>variety of English</i>			+		
				1A, 3B		
B.5.1.	Famous bridges			+		

				5		
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Hello, World! 6

Curriculum set criteria	Intercultural Competence Element	Scotland	Canada	Australia	England	USA
B.6.1.	<i>Target culture</i>	+ 0, 1A, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 5	+ 0, 4, 5	+ 0, 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 3C	+ 0, 1A, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 5	+ 0, 1B, 2C, 4, 5
B.6.1.	<b>Comparing cultures</b>	+ 1A	+ 1C, 5	+ 2B, 3A	+ 1A, 1C	+ 1A
B.6.1.	<i>Symbols of target country</i>	+ 4		* 5		
B.6.5.	<b>Celebrating diversity</b>	+ 3B	+ 1B, 2A, 5	+ 1B, 3B	+ 1A, 1C	+ 1A
B.6.1.	Differences between <i>variety of English</i> and <i>variety of English</i>	* 3C		+ 5		
B.6.4.	Understanding stereotypes // Distinguishing between facts and stereotypes	+ 3B			+ 1A	
B.6.3.	Using fillers in conversation	+ 3A				
B.6.3.	Asking for clarification politely	+ 3C				
B.6.3.	<b>Using appropriate register</b>	+ 3A	+ 4	+ 4	+ 2C, 3A	+ 4
B.6.5.	Universal and individual values / Universal human values		+ 2A, 4	* 1B	* 1A, 1C	+ 1A, 4
B.6.1.	<i>Target country</i> folk song			+ 5		
B.6.3.	Using interjections			+ 4		
B.6.3.	Using polite phrases				+ 2C	

Hello, World! 7

Curriculum set criteria	Intercultural Competence Element	New Zealand	Northern Ireland	New Orleans (specifically)	Wales	India
<b>B.7.1</b>	<b>Understanding the culture (and lifestyle) of <i>target country</i></b>	+ 0, 1A, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4	* 0, 1A, 2C, 3A, 3B, 5	+ 0, 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 5	* 0, 1A, 1B, 1C, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4, 5	+ 0, 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4, 5
<b>B.7.1.</b>	<b>Understanding important facts about English languages in <i>target country</i> / <i>target country language</i> and English</b>		+ 2A, 5		+ 1C	
<b>B.7.1.</b>	<b>Comparing cultures (and heritage)</b>	+ 2A, 2C, 3B, 5	+ 3A, 3B	+ 1C, 2A	+ 2A	+ 3C
B.7.3.	Applying suitable language structures	+ 4	+ 2B, 4	+ 4	+ 1A, 4	+ 3C, 4
B.7.4.	Solving cultural misunderstandings	+ 3B		* 3B		* 3B
B.7.4.	Understanding stereotypes and diversity	+ 3B	* 1A, 1B	* 3A, 3B		
B.7.5.	Noticing ways of solving culturally conditioned misunderstandings	+ 3B		* 3B		* 3B
B.7.1.	Comparing sports		+ 1B			
B.7.1.	Comparing results of a survey about the use of technology		+ 2B			
B.7.1.	Comparing dance styles and fashion		+ 3A, 3B			
B.7.1.	Understanding the importance of learning a second language	* 2C	+ 2A		* 1C	
B.7.1.	Comparing metric systems			+ 1C		

B.7.1.	Comparing literary texts			+ 2C	* 2C	
B.7.1.	Comparing cuisines			+ 2A, 2B		
B.7.1.	Identifying global ecological issues				+ 3A, 3B, 3C, 4	
B.7.3.	Behaving politely				+ 3B	+ 3B
B.7.1.	Comparing music and instruments				+ 2B	
B.7.1.	Explaining symbols representing individuals and nations				+ 2A, 5	
B.7.1.	Comparing family lifestyles and values					+ 3A, 3B
B.7.1.	Comparing film genres					+ 3B, 4
B.7.1.	Comparing festivals					+ 5

Hello, World! 8

Curriculum set criteria	Intercultural Competence Element	New York City	England	Jamaica	US and Native American	Australia
<b>B.8.1.</b>	<b>Understanding the culture (and lifestyle) of <i>target country</i></b>	+ 0, 1A, 2A, 3A, 3C, 4, 5	* 0, 1A, 1B, 2A, 3A, 3B, 5	+ 0, 1A, 3A, 3B, 3C, 5	+ 0, 3A, 3C, 5	+ 0, 1A, 1B, 2A, 3A, 5
<b>B.8.1.</b>	<b>Cultural facts about <i>source country</i></b>					+ 1B, 3B, 3C
<b>B.8.1.</b>	<b>Comparing cultures</b>	+ 2B	+ 3B	+ 1B, 2A	+ 5	+ 3A, 3C, 5
<b>B.8.1.</b>	<b>Understanding <i>target country</i> history</b>	* 5	+ 1A, 1B, 3A			
B.8.1.	Famous sites in <i>target country/city</i>	+ 1B, 3A				
B.8.1.	<b>Celebrating diversity</b>	+ 2B	+ 3B	+ 1B, 2A	+ 5	+ 3A, 3C, 5
B.8.2.	Accepting and declining suggestions	+ 3A				

B.8.2.	<b>Using appropriate register</b>	+ 1B, 4	+ 3C, 4	+ 2B, 3B, 4	+ 4	+ 4
B.8.3.	Understanding the importance of respecting the cultural heritage of other countries	* 2B	+ 3B	* 1B, 2A	* 5	* 5
B.8.3.	Understanding the importance of human rights		+ 3B		* 5	
B.8.3.	Avoiding cultural misunderstandings			+ 1B, 2A		
B.8.2.	Using polite phrases			+ 1B, 3B, 4		
B.8.3.	Being a responsible tourist			+ 1B, 2A		
B.8.1.	Understanding various school systems					+ 1A
B.8.1.	Understanding the importance of storytelling					+ 3C, 5
B.8.1.	Understanding the varieties in the English language					+ 1B
B.8.3.	Differentiating between stereotypes and facts				* 5	+ 2A, 2B

Code:

+ = Intercultural Competence Element mentioned for the Unit and realised in the Unit

\* = Intercultural Competence Element not mentioned for the Unit, but realised in the Unit

? = Intercultural Competence element mentioned for the Unit, but not clearly realised in the Unit

## Appendix B: Referenced target culture elements

<i>Country/Culture</i>	<i>Number of units in focus</i>	<i>Total references in focus</i>	<i>Total references out of focus</i>	<i>Total references</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
The USA	5	197	34	<b>231</b>	34.43%
England	3	85	28	<b>113</b>	16.84%
India	1	64	12	<b>75</b>	11.33%
New Zealand	2	44	5	<b>49</b>	7.45%
Australia	2	48	2	<b>50</b>	7.45%
Wales	1	39	0	<b>39</b>	5.81%
Northern Ireland	1	28	3	<b>31</b>	4.62%
Scotland	1	29	0	<b>29</b>	4.32%
Jamaica	1	28	0	<b>28</b>	4.17%
Ireland	1	6	7	<b>13</b>	1.94%
Canada	1	5	0	<b>5</b>	0.75%
The Republic of South Africa	1	1	1	<b>2</b>	0.30%

<i>Yearly representation:</i>	<i>References in focus</i>	<i>References out of focus</i>	<i>Total references</i>
HW5	56	19	<b>77</b>
HW6	114	15	<b>129</b>
HW7	224	32	<b>266</b>
HW8	177	26	<b>199</b>

## Appendix C: Main character analysis

<i>Name</i>	<i>Culture in focus</i>	<i>City, Country of living</i>	<i>Other cultural connections</i>	<i>Languages spoken by the character</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Textbook</i>
George Walker	English	York, England (UK)	uncle's girlfriend Yoko from Japan	English	unknown, celebrates Christmas	HW5
Ella Smith	New Zealand	Auckland, New Zealand	/	English, French (learned), Māori (learning)	unknown, celebrates Christmas	HW5
Ryan Johnson	American	Chicago, USA	/	English	/	HW5
Ian Keane	Irish	Dublin, the Republic of Ireland	/	English	/	HW5
Kayla Adams	South African	Cape Town, the Republic of South Africa	/	English	/	HW5
Sophie	Scottish	Edinburgh, Scotland (UK)	/	Scottish English	/	HW6
Ben	Canadian	Vancouver, Canada	Immigration: father of Chinese origin	English	/	HW6
Maya	Australian	Melbourne, Australia	Immigration: grandmother moved from the UK	Australian English	/	HW6
Raj	British and Indian	Liverpool, England (UK)	Immigration: grandparents moved from India	English	/	HW6
Helena	American	Los Angeles, USA	Hispanic American family	English, Spanish	/	HW6
Manaia	New Zealand	Wellington, New Zealand	Immigration: family moved from Dublin,	English, Irish (learned),	/	HW7

			Ireland // her father's family originates from Australia	Māori (learning)		
Molly	Northern Irish	Belfast, Northern Ireland (UK)	/	English, Irish (learning)	/	HW7
Holden	American	New Orleans, USA	Creole (African American) mother, Cajun father	English	/	HW7
Dylan	Welsh	Cardiff, Wales (UK)	/	English, Welsh (learning)	/	HW7
Mangai	Indian	Jaipur, India	/	English, Hindi	Hindu	HW7
Diego	American	New York, USA	Immigration: grandmother moved from Puerto Rico	English, Spanish, American Sign Language, Japanese (learning)	/	HW8
Freddie	English	London, England (UK)	/	English	/	HW8
Amelia	Jamaican	Montego Bay, Jamaica	/	English, Patwa	/	HW8
Charlotte (Charlie)	American, Native American	Wyoming, USA	/	English	/	HW8
Lota and Luka	Australian, Croatian	Sydney, Australia	Immigration: mum's family of Croatian origin, moving back to Croatia	English, Croatian, Latin (Lota)	/	HW8

## Sažetak

Unatoč činjenici da udžbenici engleskog jezika nastavnicima nisu jedini dostupni izvor za poučavanje, oni i dalje pružaju sistematičan prikaz nastavnog materijala koji je prilagođen dobi i jezičnoj razini učenika. Autori udžbenika moraju se pridržavati propisa brojnih državnih dokumenata koji određuju kriterije koje nastava engleskog jezika mora ispuniti, uključujući najvažniji za ovaj rad – Nacionalni kurikulum Republike Hrvatske. Jedna od najvećih promjena koje je kurikulum donio odnosi se na uvođenje triju domena: komunikacijske jezične kompetencije, međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije i samostalnosti u ovladavanju jezikom. Međutim, domena koja je u središtu ovog rada, međukulturna komunikacijska kompetencija, pripada području koje se unatoč velikom broju istraživanja još uvijek čini “neodredivim”. Pojam “međukulturna kompetencija” danas je posebice u obrazovanju široko rasprostranjen, no još uvijek nije postignut konsenzus o tome što on zapravo podrazumijeva i koji je ispravan pristup poučavanja te kompetencije učenicima engleskog jezika. Ovaj je rad istražio da li se i kako se ishodi spomenute domene postižu u seriji udžbenika engleskog jezika te kako se točno kultura poučava. Rad potvrđuje da su se kriteriji Nacionalnog kurikulumu ispunili po pitanju međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije. Zanimljivo, čak je dvanaest ciljanih kultura u različitoj mjeri predstavljeno u seriji udžbenika. Posebna pozornost usmjerena je na moguće promicanje međukulturne kompetencije, a ujedno i višejezičnosti, te na načine njihova postizanja.

**Ključne riječi:** međukulturna komunikacijska kompetencija, višejezičnost, Nacionalni kurikulum RH, udžbenici engleskog jezika