Show me your wor(l)ds: the pedagogical potential of a multilingual picture storybook for promoting multicultural awareness

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SHOW ME YOUR WOR(L)DS: THE PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF A MULTILINGUAL PICTURE STORYBOOK FOR PROMOTING MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

Diploma paper

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POKAŽITE MI SVOJE RIJEČI I SVJETOVE:

PEDAGOŠKI POTENCIJAL VIŠEJEZIČNE SLIKOVNICE

ZA PROMICANJE SVIJESTI O MULTIKULTURALNOSTI

Diplomski rad

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Abstract

In today's multicultural world, it is important to promote multicultural awareness and solidarity from the earliest possible age. One of the ways to achieve that is to approach children through the world of imagination. Multilingual picture storybooks representing a number of different cultures might interest young learners in foreign languages and cultures, as well as familiarize them with their own cultural and linguistic background and heritage. The aim of this study was to explore the pedagogical potential of a multilingual and multicultural picture storybook called *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*, created by the author of this paper, and of students' projects inspired by Cummins' (2006) concept of identity texts in promoting multicultural awareness among Croatian primary school students. The study was supposed to find out which aspects of multicultural awareness would be the easiest to grasp for young learners, which aspects of the storybook would be most helpful in promoting multicultural awareness, which aspects of their own culture would the students include in their identity text projects and if the storybook and the identity text projects would spark students' interest in learning about their own language and culture and other languages and cultures. The students grasped all of the important aspects of multilingual awareness: accepting and respecting differences and similarities between different countries and languages, the importance of tolerance and appreciation, acknowledging and overcoming foreign language anxiety in order to communicate and form friendships with people from different countries. Most helpful in promoting multicultural awareness were the features most prominently represented in the storybook: flags, languages, famous buildings/sights, local food, traditional clothes, local music, songs, instruments, and dance. The aspects that the largest number of students included in their identity texts were food, famous people, the flag and the coat of arms, nature and different regions and cities. All of the students showed excitement and enthusiasm when reading and listening to the storybook and when doing their identity text projects in which they represented their countries and languages, and most of them showed interest in learning more about different countries and languages. We believe that the use of similar storybooks is a good step towards raising their multilingual and multicultural awareness.

Key words: multicultural awareness, multiculturalism, multilingualism, multilingual storybooks, multicultural storybooks, children's books, identity texts

1. Introduction

The main feature that distinguishes one culture from another is its language. Imagine an English speaker encountering a person using the German language in either written or spoken form. Inside the English speaker's head will most likely appear a concept of the German speaker being *somewhat different* from them. What is more, if the English speaker correctly recognizes which language the German speaker is using, a concept of specific features carried by German speakers will most probably be evoked inside the English speaker's head as well. What we underlie here as those specific features is culture.

The hot topic of the present day is globalization, a process which has a significant impact on the everyday life of the majority of Earth's population. With the world being a global village, almost everyone is to at least some extent multilingual and lives in a multicultural community, if not in the "real world", then at least in the digital, ICT sphere. In such diverse communities, it is important to promote multicultural awareness and solidarity from the earliest possible age. A great way to achieve that is to approach children through the world of imagination. Multilingual picture storybooks representing a number of different cultures might interest young learners in foreign languages and cultures, as well as familiarize them with their own cultural and linguistic background and heritage.

The aim of this study was to explore the pedagogical potential of a multilingual and multicultural picture storybook called *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*, created by the author of the paper, and of students' identity text projects for promoting multicultural awareness among Croatian primary school students. The paper begins with a brief summary of multilingualism and multiculturalism theory and practice with special emphasis on their position in the European Union and in the field of education and teaching. The theoretical framework is concluded with a short overview of studies exploring the pedagogical potential of children's literature and creative work for promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism. The final part of the paper is the study based on a multilingual and multicultural storybook, students' multilingual and multicultural projects inspired by Cummins' (2006) concept of identity texts, and a multicultural and multilingual awareness questionnaire designed in line with the *FREPA/CARAP Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Candelier et al., 2010).

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Multiculturalism and multicultural awareness

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001) defines culture as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, encompass[ing], in addition to art and literature; lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (para. 5). In modern society, one has a vast quantity of cultures close at hand – globalization, migrations, ease of transportation, and information and communications technology or ICT (IFLA/UNESCO, 2012) have made the whole world a melting pot. Even if one lives in a culturally homogeneous society, which is an extremely rare situation nowadays, they can still easily and constantly communicate and share experiences with culturally diverse people from all over the globe, provided they have Internet access. In such an environment, it is important that all cultures are equally valued.

In Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, multiculturalism is defined as "the practice of giving importance to all cultures in a society". Article 2 of *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO, 2001) and *IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto* (IFLA/UNESCO, 2012) provide a broader definition of *multiculturalism, cultural diversity* and *cultural pluralism*: the harmonious co-existence and interaction of different, plural, varied and dynamic cultures, and their willingness to live together under the principles of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace.

A concept which stems from multiculturalism and stands at the center of this diploma paper is multicultural awareness. In Collins Dictionary, cultural awareness is defined as the "understanding of the differences between oneself and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values". According to the University of Notre Dame's Counseling Center, "multicultural awareness involves a greater understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation of the history, values, experiences, and lifestyles of groups that include, but, are not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, mental or physical abilities" (para. 1). The same source further mentions some of the benefits of becoming more multiculturally aware: gaining greater awareness and understanding of oneself and of others through multicultural interaction, better education about one another, developing new friendships and better interpersonal skills,

becoming better able to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, promoting healing, harmony and unity between groups, and becoming better equipped to live in a multicultural world.

2.2. Multilingualism

Bilingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism are terms referring to a more or less similar concept and are thus often used interchangeably. Although the prefix *multi-* tends to prevail in this paper, the study is also in accord with the principles of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism.

In the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, multilingualism is defined as "the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4) and it "may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school or educational system, or by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language, or reducing the dominant position of English in international communication" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). Plurilingualism goes beyond the concept of multilingualism in that it refers to "[the expansion of] an individual's experience of language in its cultural contexts from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4), meaning that an individual's "[knowledge of specific] languages and cultures [is not packed] in strictly separate mental compartments" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4) in a "diglossic situation" (Sridhar, 1996, as cited in Garcia et al., 2007, p. 12), but rather "overlap[s], intersect[s], interconnect[s]" (Sridhar, 1996, as cited in Garcia et al., 2007, p. 12) and "builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). Thus, an individual can call upon different parts of their communicative competence and language experience according to the interlocutor they are interacting with and the specific situation they find themselves in. For example, they can shift between different languages, dialects and registers; experiment with alternative forms of expression in different languages or dialects; make sense of a written or spoken text in a previously 'unknown' language by evoking knowledge from a common international linguistic and cultural store, communicate with individuals with whom they do not share a common language, exploit paralinguistic resources (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.), and

radically simplify their use of language (Council of Europe, 2001). As has already been mentioned, plurilingualism does not only imply competence in a variety of different languages but also in a variety of different dialects and registers within one or more language(s) (Garcia et al., 2007), as well as the valuing of linguistic tolerance (Garcia et al., 2007), which has significant influence on raising multicultural awareness since language is an essential token of culture.

Nowadays, almost everyone is bilingual or even multilingual to a certain extent. In most cases, educational institutions and systems offer at least one foreign language, mostly English, as a compulsory school subject by the age of 8 at the latest (Elsner, 2011). Migrations and globalization have created a multilingual heritage even in countries with only one official language (Baker, 1995). Travelling has become relatively easy, cheap and above all in vogue. The job market requires foreign language knowledge; today, it's assumed that 'everybody knows English', so using three, four or more languages gives job candidates an advantage over the candidates who speak 'only' their mother tongue and English. One can hardly walk down the street, go shopping, watch television, surf the Internet, or do any sort of everyday activities without seeing or hearing words, expressions, and even entire texts, conversations and discourses in languages other than one's own mother tongue. Today, multilingualism can be considered the norm (Baker, 1995; Elsner, 2011), an asset or even a necessity in order to survive in the modern world. In other words, "the ability to communicate in a language other than one's mother tongue is acknowledged to be one of the key competences which citizens should seek to acquire" (Council of the European Union, 2014, p. C 183/26). The modern world is essentially multilingual.

2.3. Multilingualism and multiculturalism in the European Union

In the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001), plurilingual and pluricultural competence is defined as "a complex or even composite competence" (p. 168) and "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees in several languages and experience of several cultures" (p. 168).

As “languages define personal identity” and are at the same time “part of a shared inheritance” (European Commission, 2021, Overview section, para. 1), language is often represented through the metaphors of a *door* or a *bridge* to culture. Along that line of thought, all European languages together create “a shared sense of European identity” (European Commission, 2021, Overview section, para. 1) since “linguistic diversity is a fundamental component of European culture and intercultural dialogue” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p. c 183-26). Namely, with its 27 member states and at least 175 nationalities (European Commission, 2021), the linguistic and cultural landscape of the European Union is indeed rather complex and diverse (Council of the European Union, 2014): it has 3 alphabets, 24 official languages and about 60 other languages spoken in particular regions and by particular groups of people, with an addition of numerous languages brought to Europe by a long history of migrations (European Commission, 2021). In order to acknowledge such a multitude of languages and cultures, Article 22 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* states that “the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity” (European Union, 2012, p. C 326/400). Additionally, the European Union’s motto “united in diversity” (European Commission, 2019, Why is multilingualism important section, para. 1) promotes “the harmonious co-existence of European languages” (European Commission, 2021, subtitle), which puts linguistic diversity and language learning at the center of attention in the European Union (European Commission, 2019).

Multilingualism leads to “intercultural understanding” and enhances employability, mobility and personal development, which results in “improving the competitiveness of the EU economy” (European Commission, 2019, Why is multilingualism important section, para. 2). Thus, the EU Member States have agreed that they will collaborate to reach the goal of promoting multilingualism, language diversity, and language teaching and learning in European schools (European Commission, 2019). The Council of the European Union (2014) agreed that the EU Member States should assess progress in developing language competences by covering all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in each EU country in accordance with their respective national contexts and circumstances with the aim of promoting multilingualism and effective quality teaching and learning of languages in school. Language competences assessment is based on the percentage of pupils aged from 14 to 16 who attain the level of *independent user* (at least B1 level, as defined in the *CEFR*) in the second language studied (Council of the European Union, 2014). However, according to the Council of the European Union (2014, p. C 183/29), “only official EU languages may be

considered as second languages". That statement could easily and justifiably become a matter of debate, since this may imply that only the official languages of the European Union should be promoted in education, which might lead to neglecting the importance of languages which do not fall into that category. Nonetheless, the Council of the European Union (2014, p. C 183/27) has made some concrete proposals with the aim of promoting multilingualism, language diversity, and language teaching and learning in EU schools, such as inviting all Member States to do the following:

- . . . teach at least two languages in addition to the main language(s) of instruction from an early age [while employing] innovative approaches to [language] development . . .,
- . . . develop appropriate methods for assessing language proficiency . . . ,
- . . . support children and adults with migrant backgrounds in learning the language(s) of the host country,
- . . . exploit the potential of the Erasmus+ Programme, the European Structural and Investment Funds, . . . the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Europass, the European Language Portfolio and the European Language Label,
- acknowledge the role which non-formal and informal learning can play in language learning . . . ,
- exchange experiences and best practices via the Open Method of Coordination . . . ,
- . . . increas[e] the attractiveness of, and . . . commitment towards, language learning . . . [with the help of the ICT] and Open Educational Resources . . .,
- . . . reduc[e] the number of learners who abandon [their] language studies before [reaching] an adequate [proficiency] level . . .

2.4. Multilingualism and multiculturalism in teaching

Nowadays, *multi-* is the prefix that can be attached not only to society in general but also to the minor parts that constitute it, such as classrooms, which have become *multi*cultural and *multi*lingual as well. Cummins (2006) notes that "greater population mobility than at any

time in human history" (p. 51) has resulted in "the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of urban education systems" (p. 51). According to Garcia (2009, as cited in Elsner, 2011), young learners encounter phenomena like code-switching, code-mixing and translanguaging on a daily basis from kindergarten age onward. In times of insecurity like the one we live in presently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to imagine, for example, an online English classroom connecting students from the most remote parts of the globe. Today, all teachers, be it in online or "real", traditional classrooms, have a challenging task: to include a number of different cultures and languages in their teaching practices in order to teach their students to live in a multicultural and multilingual reality while abiding by the principles of social justice and egalitarianism. That goal might be reached through didactic and pedagogic models of education devoted to multilingualism and multiculturalism promotion. In this paper, special attention will be given to the following models: *bilingual* and *multilingual education*, *multilingual pedagogies* and *pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures*.

With an emphasis on *bilingual* and *multilingual education* not being straightforward but "highly complex and contested constructs", Wright et al. (2015, p. 1) define *bilingual education* as "the use of two languages for learning and teaching in an instructional setting", i.e. "in an organized and planned education program", whereas *multilingual education* has the same definition, but extended to three or more languages.

García and Flores (2012) state that multilingual pedagogies are based on two principles: attention to social justice and attention to social practice. Garcia and Flores (2012, pp. 242-243) claim that teachers can bring attention to social justice by doing the following:

- providing equity for [all] students, their languages, cultures, and communities by guaranteeing equal participation in a democratic classroom and school context . . .
- building on the students' linguistic and cultural strengths and developing students' multilingual awareness and tolerance [by] . . . acknowledg[ing], includ[ing] and us[ing] the students' home languages and their language practices in the classroom, . . . [and by] helping students understand the social, political, and economic struggles surrounding different language practices,
- having high expectations and promoting academic rigor, . . . encourag[ing] all students, regardless of abilities, to achieve by working hard and taking risks, . . . [and by] focus[ing] on complex ideas that can generate future learning . . .

According to Garcia and Flores (2012, p. 243), the second principle of multilingual pedagogies – attention to social practice – is realized by socially constructed collaborative learning and trying out new ideas and actions, and involves the following:

- supporting quality interactions[,] . . . the sharing of ideas, and focused [generative] dialogue that . . . encourages further understanding regardless of the language practices used,
- . . . [combining] explicit language instruction . . . with language used in content[,] . . . focus[ing] on syntactic structures, lexicon, vocabulary and types of discourses[,] . . . engag[ing] students in discussion of how specific written and spoken texts are structured and how they work,
- [encouraging] collaborative grouping and cooperative learning . . . [in order to] increase students' opportunities to hear more language[s] directed to them, as well as to participate and interact (Gibbons, 2002, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 243), [and to boost their] self-esteem,
- focusing on high relevance of lessons and students' maximum identity investment . . . [by] relat[ing] curriculum content to students' experiences as they analyze broader social issues relevant to their lives (Cummins, 2001, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 243).

As has already been implied, multilingual pedagogies promote participation in education for a plurality of students, which means that those pedagogies include the language practices of all students (Garcia & Flores, 2012). In that way, every student gets the chance to actively and meaningfully participate in education and society while using their own language(s) (Garcia & Flores, 2012). Similarly, pluralistic didactic approaches to languages and cultures "use teaching/learning activities involving several (i.e. more than one) varieties of languages or cultures" (Candelier et al., 2010, p. 5). Both multilingual pedagogies and pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures stand in contrast to singular and monolingual approaches in which only one language or a particular culture is taught in isolation. Multilingual pedagogies are dynamic, with multiple languages used as media of instruction, language lens is multilingual, language orientation is heteroglossic, language practices are fluid, language orientation is transglossic, and bilingual orientation is recursive or dynamic and complex (non-linear) (Garcia & Flores, 2012). In simpler terms, heteroglossic multilingual approaches or dynamic plurilingual pedagogies do not simply add languages to the curriculum and teach them separately as if they were autonomous skills, but rather do

exactly the opposite – they employ the specific state that bi- or multilinguals are at by valuing and acknowledging the so-called "hybrid language practices" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 232). In this case, bilingualism is not linear or purely additive, but *recursive*, meaning that "students do not start out as monolinguals", but "have different degrees of bilingualism, bringing bits and pieces of their home languages" in the process of learning another language, and their "ancestral language practices are reconstituted for new functions" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 235). Another form of bilingualism employed in multilingual models of education is *dynamic bilingualism*, which deliberately builds on the linguistic heterogeneity of different social contexts and different linguistic profiles of the classroom where students have to develop multiple different language practices because of the multilingualism and multiculturalism that is characteristic of their social context, ever adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act in the 21st century (Garcia & Flores, 2012). Some educational programs that work on the basis of bilingual/multilingual/plurilingual/heteroglossic instruction are immersion revitalization bilingual education programs, developmental bilingual education programs, two-way bilingual education programs, poly-directional bilingual education programs, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) bilingual education programs, multiple multilingual education, and dynamic bi/plurilingual programs (Garcia & Flores, 2012). The last type will be further examined since it responds particularly well to the more complex dynamic multilingualism found in ever more multilingual and multicultural classrooms (Garcia & Flores, 2012).

Multilingual and multicultural spaces are indeed complex and dynamic, which resulted in the emergence of *dynamic plurilingual pedagogies* based on "dynamic bilingualism that draws from the different interlocutors and contexts in which communication takes place" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 239). Dynamic plurilingual pedagogies, as has already been stated, do not compartmentalize languages but rather "acknowledg[e] the complex fluid language practices of children in schools . . . and thus rely on fluid language practices" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 238). Garcia (2009, as mentioned in Garcia & Flores, 2012) named those fluid language practices *translanguaging*, a term comprising the defining unit of heteroglossic multilingual approaches – languaging – defined as "what students do with language in multilingual spaces" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 238). The main goal of translanguaging pedagogical practices is "to soften the boundaries between languages and integrate the language curricula in order for learners to benefit from their prior linguistic knowledge, metalinguistic awareness and all the other skills they possess as multilingual speakers"

(Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2014, as cited in Trinki & Letica Krevelj, 2020, p. 58). Translanguaging supports the bilingualism and plurilingualism of all students in the multilingual classroom; however, the translanguaging process is carefully and intentionally planned and thus goes beyond unintentional, random, accidental and haphazard codeswitching or concurrent translation that happens in the flexible convergence model of curricular arrangement in subtractive bilingual programs (Garcia & Flores, 2012). In the flexible multiplicity model of curricular arrangement, codeswitching, defined as "the bilingual's ability to [negotiate and] select the language in response to external cues and according to the properties of the linguistic system" (Garcia, 2009, pp. 86-87) has surpassed the traditional point of view in which it was always considered as "a sign of inadequacy or sloppy language usage or lack of knowledge" (Garcia, 2009, p. 86). Instead, codeswitching is now seen as "a sophisticated linguistic skill and a characteristic of the speech of fluent bilinguals" (Garcia, 2009, p. 86) which "offer[s] significant resources for learning" (Gutiérrez et al., 1999, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 240) since "the functional inter-relationship of language practices, … translation, language switching, and designing information bilingually will be increasingly important [abilities and skills] in the twenty-first century, . . . supported by the community's translanguaging" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 240).

Fluid and functional language practices, contrastive analysis of vocabulary, structures and discourse patterns, multilingual awareness, cross-linguistic work, translanguaging, and the habit of using both languages flexibly can be enhanced in different ways (Garcia & Flores, 2012). Hélot (2008, p. 4) advocated for *Language Awareness (LA)* as an educational approach which focuses on "adopting a comparative approach of linguistic systems" (as cited in Trinki & Letica Krevelj, 2020, p. 58). *Co-languaging* is a useful strategy for a group of students with different linguistic profiles because different languages are presented side-by-side, e.g. in PowerPoint presentations or bilingual books, where students are free to choose the language through which they make meaning and to "compare and contrast the ways in which the languages are written and concepts are expressed" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 241). Cen Williams (1994, 1996, as mentioned in Baker, 2011, p. 280-281) has developed a strategy called *trawsieithu (translanguaging)*, which Garcia (2009) further develops, where the input (e.g. the hearing, signing, or reading of lessons or books) and output (the development of the work, e.g. projects and experiments, the oral discussion, the writing of passages, poems, cartoons, comic books, stories, making videos, acting) are deliberately realized in different languages (Garcia & Flores, 2012). Another strategy is *preview–view–review*, in which

languages are used sequentially and are given different functions; Garcia and Flores (2012, p. 241) mention the following example:

> the language that students know best is used to build the background knowledge in a preview, whereas the lesson is taught in the students' second language, [or] the opposite is done, with students hearing both a preview and a review in their second language, and the lesson in their home language.

Besides language learning, multilingual pedagogical principles are beneficial in other areas. According to Sierens et al. (2018, as cited in Trinki & Letica Krevelj, 2020, p. 59), apart from the opportunity to compare different linguistic systems, "the LA approach has some effect on learners' affective and social development in the form of positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity, and more favorable perceptions of different languages and of speakers of these languages". A positive attitude toward speakers of other languages invites the opportunity to learn together, from and with others. The pedagogic core of multilingual pedagogies is the strategy of *scaffolding* (Garcia & Flores, 2012), a teaching method in which teachers and other more advanced and competent individuals (e.g. other students or family) support the student's development by encouraging and helping them achieve their learning goals. Cummins (2000, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012) applied the scaffolding strategy to the process of acquiring language and content and stated that this kind of learning will be most effective "when students are challenged cognitively but provided with the contextual and linguistic supports or scaffolds required for successful task completion" (p. 243). According to Garcia and Flores (2012, pp. 243-244), there are five scaffolding structures which can be used in the process of dynamic interaction and languaging of plurilingual students and teachers:

- establishing contextual and spatial instructional *routines* and language patterns, where teachers' and students' languages can vary according to students' interests, motivation, and the context of the lesson,
- *contextualization* through the teacher's use of the students' home language practices and paralinguistic strategies such as body language and gestures, visuals, manipulatives, realia, technologically enriched practices, graphic organizers, charts, diagrams and maps[,] . . . [which] can also point to different language and cultural contexts,

- *modelling* of all routines and language use . . . [and] verbalizing the actions and processes of the lesson through think-alouds . . . [which] can make use of all the language practices of the children,
- *bridging* and *schema building* . . . [through] build[ing] on prior knowledge by previewing the material to be taught[,] . . . [possibly] in a language other than that of the lesson, so as to build on the multilingualism of the classroom,
- *multiple entry points*, with teachers allowing students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways and differentiating instruction, including different ways of languaging.

2.4.1. New types of literacy

Hornberger (1990, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012) defines *biliteracy* as "instances in which communication occurs in two or more languages in or around writing" (p. 241), whereas Pérez and Torres–Guzmán (1996, as cited in Garcia et al., 2007, p. 4) provide a broader definition of it: "the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of contexts", similar to Lüdi's (1997, as cited in Garcia et al., 2007, p. 4) definition:

> the competences and information required to accomplish literacy practices . . . [and] engage in everyday situations in two languages, with their corresponding functions and in the corresponding cultural contexts, independently of the degree of mastery and the mode of acquisition.

The last part of Lüdi's interpretation of bilingual literacy, provided in 1997, implies that it was already on the trail of abandoning the perspective that in order to be bilingual, or bilingually literate, one necessarily has to achieve the native-speaker level in both languages.

Cummins (2006) mentions that in the 1990s, the impact of culture and ICT on literacy became noticed. This led to the introduction of the term *multiliteracies*, i.e. "new forms of literacy associated with information, communication, and multimedia technologies and, equally important, the wide variety of culturally-specific forms of literacy evident in complex pluralistic [knowledge-based] societies" (Cummins, 2006, p. 53). Along the lines of multiliteracies, a new pedagogical framework was introduced: *multiliteracies pedagogy*, which incorporates the cultural and linguistic capital that students bring to school into the

curriculum (Cummins, 2006). According to Cummins (2006), multiliteracies pedagogy provides all students with the opportunity to actively engage in their learning community, employ their intelligence, imagination, creativity, literary and artistic talents, and use technology while collaborating in the creation of bilingual or multilingual texts which include their home language(s) and language(s) of instruction. Thus, the student is presented as "the *whole child*" (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 8): "intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented" (Cummins, 2006, p. 64), unhindered by individual differences. The multiliteracies pedagogical framework works on four principles: 1) meaningful *situated practice* and the experience of being immersed within a community of learners; 2) *overt* explicit *instruction* and scaffolding; 3) *critical framing* with a focus on the historical, cultural, sociopolitical, and ideological contexts; and 4) *transformed practice*, which puts meanings and knowledge gained and transformed from the first three principles into other cultural contexts (Cummins, 2006). On a similar note, Cummins (2006), Cummins et al. (2005) and Bransford et al. (2000, as mentioned in Cummins, 2006) list several conditions for effective learning*:*

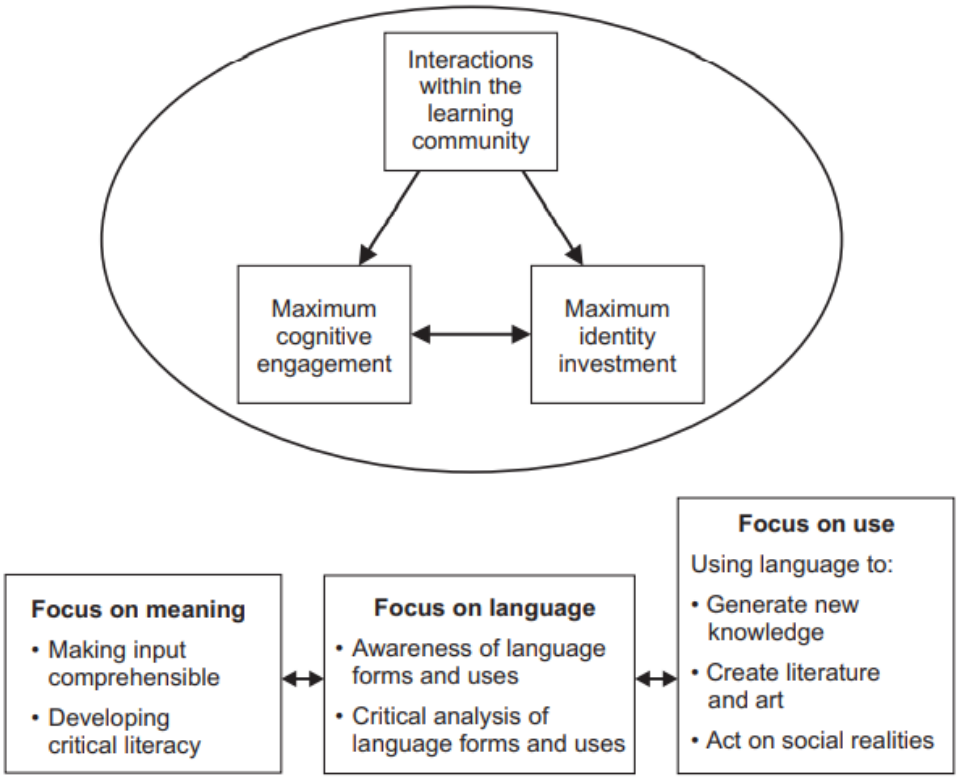
- *learning with deep understanding,* which involves "the development of critical literacy (reading between the lines)" (Cummins, 2006, p. 56) with the aim of "transfer[ring] knowledge from one context to another" (Cummins, 2006, p. 56), e.g. transferring the knowledge about one's own cultural heritage acquired through personal experience to the context of learning about different cultures in the classroom setting,
- *building on pre-existing knowledge*, skills, beliefs and concepts through both explicit instruction and "the totality of the experiences that have shaped the learner's identity and cognitive functioning" (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 38) and influenced how they organize and interpret their environment, such as the experience of coming from a linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds,
- *promoting active learning* in which "students take ownership and control of the learning process" (Cummins, 2006, p. 56) and "invest their identities in the outcomes of learning" (Cummins, 2006, p. 56),
- *support within the community of learners or affinity groups* such as classrooms, schools, families, local societies and online communities, where new members can actively participate in the community as soon as they join it (Cummins, 2006).

Cummins' (2006) academic expertise framework presented in Figure 1 further develops the concept of multiliteracies pedagogy by adding the constructs of *identity negotiation* and *identity investment.* The framework suggests that interactions within the learning community create an interpersonal space within which knowledge is generated and identities are negotiated, leading to the optimization of learning through the maximization of both cognitive engagement and identity investment (Cummins, 2006). According to Cummins' (2006, pp. 58-59) framework, the optimal instruction has a threefold focus:

1. *the focus on meaning*, which "entails the development of critical literacy rather than surface-level processing of text . . ., thereby enhancing the possibility of cognitive transfer";
2. *the focus on language*, which "promot[es] not just explicit knowledge of how the linguistic code operates, but also critical awareness of how language operates within society", enabling the students to "actively compare and contrast how each language constructs reality (e.g. comparison of idioms or proverbs across languages)" and to "achieve social goals, [e.g.] to elucidate issues, to persuade, to deceive, to include, to exclude",
3. *the focus on use*, which argues that "optimal instruction will enable students to generate knowledge, create literature and art, and act on social realities", e.g. to create a piece of literature or art depicting their social reality in one language and then translate it into other languages or make it multilingual in the first place and share it with multiple audiences through print publication or World Wide Web.

Figure 1

Cummins' (2006, p. 58) academic expertise framework



Martin-Jones and Jones (2000, pp. 5-7, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 241; Garcia et al., 2007, p. 10) developed a similar model of literacy: *multilingual literacies*, defined as the "multiplicity and complexity of individual and group repertoires"; the varied, multiple and complex communicative purposes for which different spoken, signed and written languages are used; "multiple ways in which people draw on and combine codes"; "multiple paths to the acquisition of the spoken and written languages within the group repertoire" and "varying degrees of expertise in these languages and literacies".

The topic was further elaborated (Garcia et al., 2007; Garcia & Flores, 2012) in the concept of *pluriliteracy practices*, which go beyond L1/L2 pairing and posit multiple language and literacy practices as equally valued, inter-related, "integrated, variable, flexible, changing" (Garcia et al., 2007, p. 2) and "use[able] in convergent ways to make meaning" (Garcia & Flores, 2012, p. 242). The pluriliteracies approach gives special importance to cultural significance and "emphasizes that making meaning from and with print varies according to different sociocultural contexts" (Garcia et al., 2007, p. 10-11). Furthermore,

pluriliteracies approach involves the hybridity and multimodality of literacy practices afforded by new technologies, i.e. "written–linguistic modes of meaning are intricately bound up with other visual, audio, and spatial semiotic systems" (Garcia et al., 2007, p. 11). Similarly, Garcia and Flores (2012, p. 241) describe the *flexible multiple model of biliteracy*, which encourages the use of multiple linguistic practices, modes and different kinds of multimedia: ". . . print . . . , images, videos, music, and other technology-enriched signs . . . to build background, to question the text, and think about strategies" in order to make meaning.

2.4.2. The pedagogical potential of children's literature and creative work for promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism

2.4.2.1. Multicultural children's literature

From the pluralistic perspective, the ultimate goal of language education is no longer to turn every student into the 'perfect' model of a native speaker but to "develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 5). This can be achieved by diversifying the languages offered in educational institutions, but also by raising awareness about the fact that language learning is "a life-long task" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 5), and that is why students' motivation, skill and confidence in facing new language experiences out of school should be encouraged throughout education. One of the means to spark students' interest in multilingualism and multiculturalism is to incorporate multilingual and multicultural books and storybooks into the curriculum and teaching practice, so as to familiarize students with that type of literature and hopefully encourage them to keep coming back to it throughout their lifetime, which will inevitably provide them with new multilingual and multicultural knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes.

Lynch-Brown et al. (2014) mention myriad benefits of children's literature, divided into two categories of values discussed further: personal and academic. To start with personal gains (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014), the most important one is enjoyment and fun – positive feelings that form a lifetime reading habit. The same authors also mention that books provide children with information, wisdom, factual knowledge, insights into life, opportunities to experience places and times they would not be able to visit in real life and to view situations from different perspectives, which leads to greater empathy, a sense of social justice, and

understanding that all humans are more or less alike, even if they live in different socio-political and cultural contexts. Literature, like any form of artistic expression, serves as a cultural repository and helps children gain greater appreciation of history, historical figures and national heritage. Stories depicting the world as different from what the child is accustomed foster imagination and inspiration "to overcome obstacles, accept different perspectives, and formulate personal goals" (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014, p. 4). By reading about choices characters have to make, children consider what they would do in similar situations, which develops moral reasoning and decision making. If children encounter a wide variety of literature, they soon develop a sense of literary and artistic preferences and can select authors, illustrators, topics, and styles that suit them best. Furthermore, it goes without saying that children's literature leads to great academic gains (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014); it enhances reading and writing skills by exposing children to rich vocabulary and various writing styles and makes them value the habit of reading. If teachers opt for *literature across the curriculum* and use literary works as teaching material for content areas like foreign languages, social studies, history, science, health, mathematics, etc., the content will be presented in a much more captivating, relevant, comprehensible and memorable way than in most textbooks. Finally, rich illustrations in picture books add to cognitive (better comprehension) and aesthetic value (art appreciation).

Multicultural literature can be broadly defined as "all books about people and their individual or group experiences within a particular culture, including mainstream cultures" (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014, p. 217). Lynch-Brown et al. (2014, pp. 217-218) mention some of the benefits of multicultural literature:

- greater "understanding across countries and cultures, connecting children to their home cultures and to the world beyond their homes",
- greater opportunity for marginalized groups and immigrants to "develop a better sense of who they are, improve their self-esteem, and take social action for a better future",
- a deeper "understanding of and appreciation for other cultures, . . . histories, traditions and people",
- challenging prejudice and discrimination against issues of "race, religion, poverty, exceptionalities, and sexual orientation",

- a more complete understanding of past and current events through the perspective of marginalized groups and global cultures,
- a deeper understanding, appreciation of and interest in the geographical, historical and other content,
- details of daily life and human emotions are richer than in textbooks, helping the children to "live in" the country for a while,
- greater authenticity through "literature written by insiders to a country, region, or ethnic group, . . . challeng[ing] the typical media coverage of violence and crises",
- "shared experience with children of other ethnicities and nations . . . enables students to acquire cultural literacy with a global perspective".

2.4.2.2. Multilingual and multicultural storybooks and projects included in education

Daly (2017, p. 557, as cited in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019, p. 1) defines dual-language storybooks, also termed bilingual storybooks, as "the presentation of the story in more than one language within the same book". Those books typically separate the languages in side-by-side translations, e.g. English on one page and Arabic on the adjacent one (Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019). Corcoll López and González-Davies (2016, p. 70, as cited in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019, p. 5-6) emphasize that by seeing languages close together, the students are supposed to "notice language/s characteristics", which would "initiat[e] metalinguistic thought and sensitiz[e] . . . [them] towards language similarities, differences, and connections". The storybooks used in Gallagher and Bataineh's project (2019), however, are a particular subtype of dual/bilingual books, i.e. translingual books, where two or more languages are intentionally interwoven within and between sentences meaning that the reader or listener needs to make sense of two or more languages in order to follow the story. This approach allows for and requires codeswitching and, what is more, translanguaging – making use of the whole linguistic repertoire – a process more systemic and planned than codeswitching. In that way, the prospects of translanguaging pedagogy are followed, where students are allowed and required to use their full linguistic repertoires in a planned and structured manner (Lewis et al., 2012, as mentioned in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019) in order to comprehend the story, which stands in stark contrast to the "two solitudes" (Cummins,

2007, as cited in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019, p. 2) or "double monolingualism" (Baker, 2011, as cited in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019, p. 2) approach.

In the process of storybook creation, beside the linguistic elements, special attention should be given to illustrations, visual elements and design features, which in picture storybooks often carry even more meaning than the text itself (Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019). The ideology followed in Gallagher and Bataineh's (2019) project was Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, which states that all texts exist in a cultural context, including picture books for young readers, as they rely heavily on events, characters and illustrations, meaning that they have strong ideological implications (Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019). In terms of content, the storybooks as identity texts in Gallagher and Bataineh's (2019) project had to depict contemporary Emirati daily life settings, thus serving as "'windows' or 'sliding doors' or 'mirrors' for young readers" (Bishop, 1990, as cited in Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019, p. 5), and to promote multilingual and multicultural awareness, global citizenship and diversity.

Cummins (2006) states that "the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of urban education systems . . . , [and] the escalating demand for English-medium education" (p. 51), brought about in the new Information Age economy by "rapid technological development" (p. 51), made English the world's lingua franca, easily accessible through media, popular culture and modern communication technology. The omnipresence of English makes it "key to economic and social advancement" (Cummins, 2006, p. 51), which led to an ever more prevalent practice of "devalu[ing] the development of home language literacy in comparison to literacy in English" (Cummins, 2006, p. 52). However, the practice of neglecting one's own linguistic and cultural heritage breaks students' deeply personal ties and can have detrimental effects on students' sociocultural and linguistic development. Moreover, Cummins et al. (2005, p. 1) claim that "pre-existing knowledge for English language learners is encoded in their home languages", so that is why teaching should encourage students to transfer concepts and skills from their home language to English. Thus, with the goal of "supporting a *both/and* rather than the *either/or* orientation to the development of home language and English literacy" (Cummins, 2006, p. 52), or, in other words, "creat[ing] interpersonal spaces within the classroom that support the development of literacy in both English and the home language" (Cummins, 2006, p. 52), Cummins (2006, p. 52) introduced the concept of *identity texts* "to highlight the importance of identity negotiation and societal power relations". Identity texts are an effective teaching practice suitable to apply in all pedagogic frameworks revolving around multi- or plurilingualism and multi- or pluriliteracy. The process of creating

identity texts in most cases means that students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds produce a creative work that demands *maximum cognitive engagement* and *maximum identity investment*, meaning that it mirrors students' identities in a positive light (e.g. depicts their immigration experience); then the students translate the text written initially in English (the language of instruction) into their home language and possibly into other languages scaffolded by the help of their learning community (family, teachers, other students), and, finally, share their multilingual and multicultural projects via World Wide Web, which makes it likely that they will receive positive feedback and affirmation of self (Cummins, 2006). Identity texts are not necessarily only written texts, but also spoken, visual, musical, dramatic, or multimodal creative projects in which students are usually free to choose whatever topic suits them, decide on their own about the modality of the text, and are encouraged to incorporate as much of their imagination and talents they can (Cummins et al., 2005; Cummins, 2006). The topics are usually cross-curricular and younger and older students cooperate with each other and with community members – their parents, teachers, neighbors, relatives and friends in their home countries (Cummins et al., 2005). After carrying out identity text projects in several educational institutions, Cummins (2006, p. 63) concluded that "dual language initiatives [like identity text projects] can normalize linguistic [and cultural] diversity and result in more coherent and effective school policies with respect to affirming students' linguistic and cultural identities, parental involvement, and technology use within the school".

Similarly, Elsner's study (2011, p. 27) aimed to "break cultural stereotypes", "enhance creativity", and "encourage thinking outside the box". Elsner (2014) ran the "MuViT – Multiliteracy Virtual" project in order to "engage primary pupils across the world in multilingual and audiovisual reading and writing processes through the use of information technology resources to enhance multiliteracies, plurilingual awareness and transcultural understanding" (Elsner, 2011, p. 27). The MuViT project fostered the development of multiliteracies (Elsner, 2011, p. 34): a) *functional-traditional literacy*: "reading, listening, pronunciation, . . . writing, language mediation skills"; b) *multimodal literacy* through "the combination of words, images, sound, word-highlighting, different modes of communication and multiple ways of meaning-making"; c) *visual literacy* through the images that help students "interpret, negotiate and make meaning", and through "tasks which visualise grammatical phenomena and lexis"; d) *digital and technological literacy*, or "specific knowledge of and about the work with multilingual books", e.g. using the help function and

the word-highlighting (karaoke) function, turning off sound, printing out a portfolio, using the authoring tool enabling children to produce, translate and share their own multilingual storybooks with other pupil-authors from all over the world within the MuViT web-community, uploading pictures, combining pictures and text, recording a story and connecting it to a page in the book; e) *critical literacy*, which is developed through critical thinking about issues such as trust on the Internet, appropriate interpretations of the message in a story, the influence of images on text, etc.

Plurilingual awareness in the sense of language and cultural sensitivity in the MuViT project was developed by motivating the students to read, listen to, learn, think and talk about different languages and cultures, thus promoting multilingualism, multiculturalism, solidarity and equality of all languages and cultures (Elsner, 2011). MuViT activities such as making a portfolio which helped students track their own plurilingual progress or sharing their stories with members of all kinds of linguistic and cultural backgrounds made students aware and respectful of their own language and culture, as well as of those of others (Elsner, 2011).

A project called "Multicultural Cinderella" (Alexander & Morton, 2007) included exposing a culturally and linguistically diverse group of students to a variety of customs in different countries through ancient and modern versions of a well-known children's folktale, Cinderella. The students actively participated in the project – they talked about their own background, discussed their culture with their parents and brought that knowledge back to class, sometimes took the books home to read them again with their parents, made passports in which they put stamps after reading Cinderella versions from other countries, found each country on a map, retold and wrote summaries of Cinderella versions, made plays based on them, participated in extensive dialogues about art and daily habits in different Cinderella versions, and tried food from the fairy tale's versions for students to compare it with their own traditional cuisine (Alexander & Morton, 2007). The Multicultural Cinderella project proved successful in all its aims – it increased the students' multicultural awareness, sparked an interest in reading and learning about their own culture and other languages and cultures, made the students feel more appreciated and valued, and encouraged collaboration among students, parents, teachers and other project partners (Alexander & Morton, 2007).

Similar to the MuViT project (Elsner, 2011, 2014), the "Rewriting 'Goldilocks'" project (Lotherington & Chow, 2006) was based on multiliteracies pedagogy (Cummins, 2006) and made use of educational ICT. Comparable to the "Multicultural Cinderella" project

(Alexander & Morton, 2007), the students in the "Rewriting 'Goldilocks'" project (Lotherington & Chow, 2006) were introduced to a traditional folktale, "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", and then required to make new versions of it according to their own cultural relevance. In the process of creating their remakes, the students were encouraged to employ as many multimodal literacies as possible – "technology (Wiggleworks software by Scholastic for a base story; digital pictures), group work (poster of the story setting), visual arts (diorama construction), writing, and drama (a puppet show)" (Lotherington & Chow, 2006, pp. 245-246). The final results were stories that were individualized in somewhat surprising ways. The majority of students showed that culture for children today is actually something more than just race, ethnicity or language. The students' culture was cartoons, TV shows, digital and pop culture (Lotherington & Chow, 2006). Chow concludes that the students revised Goldilocks to mirror their own "urban, multicultural reality" (Lotherington & Chow, 2006, p. 248).

3. The study

3.1. Aim

The aim of the study was to test the pedagogical potential of a multilingual and multicultural picture storybook and a multilingual and multicultural identity text project for promoting multicultural awareness.

An additional objective was to enhance students' knowledge about and interest in their own culture and language through active participation in the creation of identity texts depicting their cultures and languages.

The study aimed to provide for the context which was proposed in the social justice principle of multilingual pedagogies proposed by Garcia and Flores (2012). The students read and listened to a multilingual picture storybook presenting several European countries and languages and created identity text projects in which they presented their own countries and languages. Thus, the study aimed to foster equity and equal participation by having high expectations of all students in the process of project creation and by acknowledging, including and encouraging the use of the students' home languages and cultures. Furthermore, the aim was to see the potential for raising students' multilingual awareness and tolerance. The study

also followed Garcia and Flores' (2012) social practice principle of multilingual pedagogies: as the students were supposed to create their identity text projects, the study aimed to support quality interactions, the sharing of ideas, focused generative dialogue that encouraged further understanding, collaborative grouping and cooperative learning, participation, interaction, self-esteem boosting, maximum cognitive engagement and maximum identity investment.

3.2. Research questions

There were four research questions in this study:

1. Which aspects of multicultural awareness will be the easiest to grasp for young learners?
2. Which aspects of the storybook will be most helpful in promoting multicultural awareness (language, flags, food, famous sights/buildings, natural attractions, famous people, national holidays, festivities, clothing, art, dance, music…)?
3. Which aspects of their own culture will the students include in their identity text projects (language, flags, food, famous sights/buildings, natural attractions, famous people, national holidays, festivities, clothing, art, dance, music…)?
4. Will the storybook and the identity text projects spark students' interest in learning about their own language and culture and other languages and cultures?

3.3. Socioeducational background

Foreign language learning in Croatia is strongly promoted through the formal educational system and attitudes toward it are extremely positive, "but little is still known about classroom practices with regard to the adoption of the multilingual approach" (Trinki & Letica Krevelj, 2020, p. 63). Trinki and Letica Krevelj (2020) state that "the learner make-up . . . in Croatia is still predominantly monolingual" (p. 62), meaning that the majority of learners are native speakers of Croatian, which is both the official language of schooling and the majority language in Croatia.

3.4. Sample

The sample consisted of 32 Croatian primary school students aged 8 to 12 years old. The participants will be further referred to as the Students, along with P1, P2, P3, etc. when presenting their identity text projects. The author of this paper ran the workshops together with her colleague Ida Habuš and they are referred to as the Teacher(s).

The first five questions in the Questionnaire provided information about the Students' general background. All of the Students (100% or 32 out of 32) stated that Croatian was their mother tongue and that their home country was Croatia.

Table 1 shows other languages the Students knew or spoke apart from their mother tongue (question 4 in the Questionnaire).

Table 1

Other languages the Students knew/spoke apart from their mother tongue

Languages	English	German	French	Italian	Spanish	Bosnian	Serbian	Slovenian	Russian	Czech	Korean	Chinese	Irish	Japanese	Polish	Latin	Swedish
No. of Students	32	22	9	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1

All of the Students learned English as a compulsory school subject (100% or 32 out of 32) and most of them (84% or 27 out of 32 Students) attended additional English classes in one of the foreign language schools where the research was conducted. As expected, the second most known/spoken language among the Students was German. It is a common practice in Croatia that students start learning English as a compulsory school subject in grade 1 of primary school, followed by German introduced in grade 4 as an optional school subject. A lot of students learn German in foreign language schools as well. English and German were followed by Romance languages, French, Italian and Spanish, which are also commonly learned in Croatian schools and foreign language schools as additional foreign languages, but the Students might have also heard them in movies, TV shows, music, when travelling or from tourists that come to Croatia. For example, one Student mentioned that she had learned a few Italian words when she had been in Italy. The following languages are Bosnian, Serbian

and Slovenian, spoken in Croatia's neighboring countries. One Student mentioned she had encountered Slovenian when she had been skiing in Kranjska Gora. All the Students who mentioned Slovenian emphasized that they understood it, but could not speak it very well. This is probably due to the fact that Slovenian bears the least similarity to Croatian compared to Bosnian and Serbian. The Students who mentioned Czech reported having Czech relatives. One Student reported having a grandmother of Czech origin and her mother and grandmother speaking Czech with each other. She herself sometimes talked to her grandmother in Czech „for fun", and she often asked her mother and grandmother about Czech words. The Students (3 out of 32 or 9%) who mentioned they knew/spoke some Korean knew it because their favorite music band was a South-Korean boy band called BTS. They also expressed interest in learning more about the Korean culture and suggested that the Teacher should write a storybook about Korea as well. Two participants answered they knew some Irish, and this was due to the fact that their father worked in Ireland and they had visited him several times.

Table 2 shows the languages used in the Students' families (question 5 in the Questionnaire).

Table 2

The languages used in the Students' families

Languages	Croatian	English	German	Czech	Italian	Korean	Albanian	Bosnian	French	Slovenian
No. of Students	31	16	6	3	2	1	1	1	1	1

Out of 32 Students, 31 (97%) answered that Croatian was used in their family. One Student answered that only Bosnian was used in his family, although he answered that Croatian was his mother tongue. The second most common language used in the family was English (16 out of 32 or 50%) and the third was German (6 out of 32 or 19%). Twin brother and sister said that only Croatian was used in their family but that they sometimes spoke English with each other at home so that other family members would not understand them. Thus, English cannot be counted as a language used at their home, but it shows these Students' motivation for using English. Some of the Students who mentioned German said their relatives lived and worked in Germany. As already mentioned, one Student spoke Czech with her mother and grandmother of Czech origin, for fun and out of interest in that language.

Table 3 shows the countries the Students had visited so far (question 2 in the Questionnaire).

Table 3

The countries the Students had visited so far

Countries	Slovenia	Germany	Austria	Italy	Ireland	Australia	Hungary	France	Slovakia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serbia
Number of Students	8	7	6	5	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

Only one Student had lived or spent more than three months outside her home country, and she had spent them in France. Other Students mentioned countries they had been in for less than three months. The country visited by most of the Students (8 out 32 or 25%) was Slovenia, as expected because it borders Croatia, is an important ski destination, and is located on the way to other most visited countries – Germany (7 out of 32 Students or 22%), Austria (6 out of 32 Students or 19%) and Italy (5 out of 32 Students or 16%). Some Students mentioned specific cities they had been in. One Student had visited Rome and Venice in Italy and Kranjska gora in Slovenia. One Student had visited Vienna, Graz and Klagenfurt in Austria and Bratislava in Slovakia. The most surprising finding was that 2 Students (6%) had visited Australia, and both of them had been visiting their relatives living there.

3.5. Instruments and procedure

The research was conducted in the form of nine workshops in two Croatian foreign language schools, one in Zagreb and the other in Karlovac. The in-person workshops lasted for an hour to an hour and a half and were attended by thirty participants in total. The last two Students participated in the research in the form of individual online workshops via Google Meet. Therefore, the number of participants was thirty-two in total.

Four instruments were used in the study:

- a multilingual and multicultural storybook called *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure* (further referred to as the Storybook),

- countries and languages worksheet (further referred to as the Worksheet),
- students' identity text projects,
- the multilingual and multicultural awareness questionnaire (further referred to as the Questionnaire).

The rationale behind the instruments was based on *Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on multilingualism and the development of language competences* (Council of the European Union, 2014). In other words, the study put special emphasis on teaching foreign languages in addition to the main language(s) of instruction from an early age while employing an innovative approach to language development (a multilingual and multicultural storybook and identity texts). It also encouraged exchanging experiences and increasing the attractiveness of and commitment to language learning with the help of ICT (the Storybook in the form of a PPT presentation with a voice-over).

The study also went along the lines of *multiliteracies pedagogy* (Cummins, 2006): it was built on the participants' cultural and linguistic capital and pre-existing knowledge; it included all Students productively within the supportive learning community by promoting active learning and by allowing them to express their intelligence, imagination, linguistic knowledge and literary/artistic talents through creating identity text projects; it made use of ICT and multimedia in order to expand Students' literacy practices beyond linear text-based reading and writing; it worked on principles of situated practice, critical framing and transformed practice; it promoted learning with deep understanding, critical literacy, maximum cognitive engagement and maximum identity investment. Similar to the MuViT project (Elsner, 2011, 2014), the study aimed to promote plurilingual and pluricultural awareness and foster the development of five different types of multiliteracies: functional-traditional literacy, multimodal literacy, visual literacy, digital and technological literacy, and critical literacy.

The author of this paper had in mind the two types of bilingual orientation in multilingual pedagogies while working on the study. By acknowledging the fact that the participants in the study had different degrees of bi- or multilingualism and employed their home languages in the process of learning other languages, the study went in line with *recursive bilingualism orientation* (Garcia & Flores, 2012). Since the research was supposed to be conducted in an international school, the study was also based on *dynamic bilingualism orientation* as it was deliberately built on the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity

characteristic of the social context of the supposed participants (international students) (Garcia & Flores, 2012). However, although all the participants ended up being Croatian students, these students were also exposed to various cultures and languages on a daily basis, mainly due to the media, popular culture, the Internet, online games they played with people all over the world, education etc. That is why this study went in line with *dynamic bilingualism orientation and pedagogies*, adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act in the 21st century and relying on fluid language practices called translanguaging (Garcia & Flores, 2012).

The study employed *the translanguaging method* (Williams, 1994, 1996; Garcia, 2009; Garcia & Flores, 2012) where the input (the multilingual, partly translingual picture Storybook written primarily in English but containing several other European languages) and the output (the Students' identity text projects created in their home languages/mother tongues) were deliberately meant to be in different languages. The study also employed some aspects of *the preview-view-review strategy*: the background knowledge (preview) and the lesson (view) were taught in English, which the Students learned as a foreign language, while their own projects (review) were created in their home language.

The study employed some of the five scaffolding structures listed by Garcia and Flores (2012): *contextualization* (paralinguistic strategies, i.e. visuals and illustrations in the Storybook that point to different linguistic and cultural contexts; technologically enriched practices: the Storybook in the form of a PPT presentation with a voice-over, and *multiple entry points* (the Students were allowed to demonstrate their own understanding of their culture in different ways – they could have chosen to present customs, national holidays, festivities, traditional music, dance, local cuisine, art, clothing, famous buildings, sights, natural attractions/wonders, famous people, etc. – and by different ways of languaging, using only their own mother tongue or combining it with other languages they had already known or only encountered during the workshops).

3.5.1. The multilingual and multicultural picture storybook: *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*

Trinki and Letica Krevelj's study (2020) inspired the author of this paper to include a multilingual picture storybook as an instrument in her diploma paper study. Namely, Trinki and Letica Krevelj (2020) used a multilingual material in their study – a multilingual picture

book *Subway Sparrow* written by Torres (2012) in three languages: English, Spanish and Polish.

Gallagher and Bataineh's (2019) study, inspired by Cummins' (2006) bilingual identity texts, served the author of this paper as the main source in gathering knowledge about the general features of dual-language/translingual picture storybooks, with special emphasis on cultural aspects. The Storybook will be briefly discussed according to different aspects of analysis in Gallagher and Bataineh's (2019) study.

The author of this paper created a multilingual and multicultural picture storybook called *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure* (see Appendix A), in which the main characters, two cats, Mixter and Mixus Mic, go on a tour of a number of European countries: the UK (London), Sweden, Germany (Munich and Berlin), Hungary (Budapest), Croatia (Zagorje and Slavonia regions, the Adriatic Sea), Italy (Rome, Pisa), France (Paris), Spain, and Portugal. Accordingly, the languages used are English, British English, Swedish, German, Hungarian, Croatian and its dialects (Kajkavian and Chakavian), Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. The reasons for choosing precisely these languages were practical: the author had learned or encountered them frequently throughout her lifetime, and those were the languages in which the author's colleagues and friends majored at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zagreb University, so their advice served as a tremendous help in the process of the Storybook's creation. At the beginning of the Storybook, the main characters deal with foreign language anxiety but manage to overcome it and communicate with all the other characters – members of different nationalities and cultures – that they encounter.

The dominant language in the Storybook is English and the use of the other languages depends on the sociocultural contexts the characters find themselves in, or, in simpler terms, it depends on the countries the characters visit. On the first three pages, when the characters are still at home, preparing for the tour around Europe, English is the only language used for both narration and dialogue between the main characters. The rest of the Storybook describes a tour of European countries; here, the narration is still mainly in English but interwoven with words or names in the respective languages. In narration, out of 21 words/names characterized by localization, 11 have to do with local cuisine (*fish and chips* in British English, *smörgåsbord* in Swedish, *palacsinták* in Hungarian, *štruklji* in Croatian, *pizza* in Italian, *tapas*, *paella*, *tortillas*, and *gazpacho* in Spanish, and *pastel de nata* in Portuguese), 3 refer to local festivities, music and dance (*fiesta* and *flamenco* in Spanish and *fado* in Portuguese), 3

refer to emotions or states of mind (*amour* in French, *saudade* in Portuguese, *fjaka* in Croatian Chakavian dialect), 2 are informal and/or old-fashioned local expressions for a friendly boy/man/friend (*chap* and *mate* in British English), 1 refers to fashion and clothes (*couture* in French), 1 refers to a daily life habit (*siesta* in Spanish), and 1 is a local name for a square that has its translation in English: Heroes' square (*Hősök tere* in Hungarian). Here is an example of a translingual sentence containing both English and another language, in this case, French: "In the land of amour and couture, the kitties admired the iron tower's grandeur" (Košutić, 2020, p. 10). The text in speech bubbles (dialogues, monologues and song lyrics) is written in the languages of the countries, and the main characters always communicate with local people in the language of the country. For example, Figure 2 shows a conversation in the Croatian Chakavian dialect in the Storybook.

Figure 2

A conversation in the Croatian Chakavian dialect (Košutić, 2020, p. 10)

The title of the Storybook is *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*. The title is written in English, while the word *adventure* is, alongside English, written in all other languages used in the Storybook: *äventyr* (Swedish), *Abenteuer* (German), *kaland* (Hungarian), *avantura* (Croatian), *avventura* (Italian), *aventure* (French), *aventura* (Spanish and Portuguese). Since the translation strategy was used for the title, the title cannot be considered translingual, but multilingual only. In terms of directionality and text alignment, the narration text is aligned to the left, and the Storybook is designed to be opened and read from left to right since all languages in it have that kind of page orientation. The pages are colored, and the illustrations are hand-drawn, usually placed at the bottom of the page, underneath narration. The text is also hand-written; the narration is placed above the illustrations, and dialogues, monologues and song lyrics are placed in speech bubbles. The speech bubbles are embedded into the illustrations, sometimes covering the illustrations and

sometimes placed in the empty space. In terms of font, all text has equal typographic status, meaning that the text has the same size, weight, space, and color (black) in all the languages, which implies that all languages are equally important. The exception is the cover page, where the subtitle (*Europe adventure*) is the biggest in its English version and written in the pink color, whereas the translations of the word "adventure" are written in smaller size and in different colors in a circular shape mirroring the globe on the opposite side of the page.

Therefore, the Storybook could be considered multilingual and partially translingual. The text in speech bubbles is always written in only one of the multiple languages depending on the country the characters are in (British English, Swedish, German, Hungarian, Croatian Kajkavian and Chakavian dialects, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese). However, in narration, although it is primarily written in English, the multiple languages are sometimes interwoven within a sentence, also depending on the cultural context, which points to the translanguaging strategy.

The Storybook contains two first names – *Heidi* and *Pierre* – common female and male names in Germany and France, respectively. Romulus and Remus, who were the founders of Rome according to Roman mythology, are mentioned as *Romolo e Remo* in Italian monologue. Famous Heroes' Square in Budapest is referred to by its Hungarian name: *Hősök tere.*

The characters use a number of everyday phrases commonly used in social behavior (*please* and *here you go* in British English, *god kväll*, *välkommen* and *tack så mycket* in Swedish, *hallo*, *bitte*, *ich bin . . .*, *was möchten sie bestellen?*, *aufwiedersehen* in German, *buongiorno e benvenutti* in Italian, *bonjour*, *je suis . . .* , *bon appétit*, *merci*, *oui* in French). Two Croatian dialects are used: Kajkavian in a traditional folk song and Chakavian in a dialogue.

The way of life is mostly depicted through illustrations of fashion, clothes, and style (bobby's uniform, a top hat, a monocle, a moustache in the UK; female traditional Bavarian folk costume, dirndl, in Germany; female traditional Kajkavian folk costume in Croatia; coppola hats and moustaches in Italy; berets and moustaches in France; traje de flamenca dress and male traditional folk costume in Spain; female and male traditional folk costumes in Portugal), traditional festivals, festivities, music and dance (Oktoberfest in Germany, a traditional Kajkavian folk song in Croatia, fiesta and flamenco in Spain, fado in Portugal); local cuisine (fish and chips in the UK; smörgåsbord in Sweden; sausages [Würstel],

sauerkraut, beer, and cheese pretzels [Bretzeln mit extra Käse] in Germany; pancakes [palacsinták] in Hungary; štruklji and fish in Croatia; pizza in Italy; wine [vin], cheese [fromage], croissants and baguettes in France; tapas, paella, tortillas, and gazpacho in Spain; pastel de nata in Portugal). Music, dance and food are present both in the illustrations and the text. Some implications about the way of life are included in the text (Germany is described as merry, especially during Oktoberfest; Italians are described as a cheerful, talkative nation that enjoys hugging, dancing and singing, France is referred to as "the country of amour and couture", or love and high fashion; Spain is referred to as the land of fiesta and siesta) and in environmental print – the name of the boat in Croatia's Dalmatia is *Fjaka*, a concept similar to Spain's siesta, but with a somewhat broader meaning: a Mediterranean state of mind and body, a tired feeling of fatigue, drowsiness, indifference, usually caused by high temperatures.

The Storybook contains monolingual environmental print in English, German and Croatian. Along with the already mentioned boat name, *Fjaka*, in Dalmatia, Croatia, environmental print includes the word *TELEPHONE* on the telephone box in the UK; the word *Speisekarte*, meaning menu in German on the menu at Oktoberfest; the writings and graffiti in German and English on the Berlin Wall; the saying "Kuharice, manje zbori da ti ručak ne zagori!" [*Cook, speak less, or your lunch will be a mess!*], which is embroidered on the dish cloth traditionally used as wall decoration in Zagorje, Croatia.

The cover page in the Storybook points to the sociocultural context of the Storybook and is localized through the illustrations of the Earth with Europe in the forefront and through the translations of one part of the subtitle, the word "adventure", into all of the languages used in the Storybook.

Localization is further achieved by mentioning famous people (Alfred Nobel and ABBA in Sweden); illustrations of national flags; illustrations of famous sights and buildings (Big Ben and the London Eye in London, the UK; the Berlin Wall in Germany; Hősök tere [Heroes' Square] in Budapest, Hungary; Trakošćan Castle in Croatia's Zagorje region; Rome's Colosseum and the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy; the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France), which are sometimes explicitly mentioned in the text itself, and by illustrations of natural attractions (the River Thames in the UK; the Northern Lights in Sweden; the Danube River in Hungary; Velebit mountain, the Adriatic Sea, Slavonian plains and Zagorje hills in Croatia; the Atlantic Ocean in Portugal), sometimes mentioned in the text as well.

The Students were first presented with a PPT presentation which included a voice-over narration, so they had the opportunity to hear the multiple languages read out loud by the author of the picture book. In that way, the Students were able to both read and listen to the story. The narration did not include the translation of the multiple languages, meaning that the story went uninterrupted by any additional explanations.

3.5.2. Countries and languages worksheet

While the students listened to and watched the narrated Storybook in the form of a PPT presentation, they were supposed to circle the countries and languages they recognized in the Storybook on the Worksheet.

Apart from the countries and languages that are present in the Storybook (the United Kingdom and English, Sweden and Swedish, Germany and German, Hungary and Hungarian, Croatia and Croatian, Italy and Italian, France and French, Spain and Spanish, and Portugal and Portuguese), the Worksheet contained some "misleading" non-present countries and languages: Finland and Finnish, Slovenia and Slovenian, Greece and Greek, Poland and Polish, and Austria.

3.5.3. Students' identity text projects

The ideas about identity text projects were inspired by Cummins' (2006) identity texts, Gallagher and Bataineh's (2019) project, Elsner's (2011, 2014) MuViT project and Alexander and Morton's (2007) "Multicultural Cinderella" project. The "Rewriting 'Goldilocks'" (Lotherington & Chow, 2006) project provided the author of this paper with the idea of starting her study with a storybook and giving the students the option to create a remake of that story representing their cultures and languages for their identity text projects. Although the "Rewriting 'Goldilocks'" project (Lotherington & Chow, 2006) does not specifically mention multilingualism, which is an important aspect of this paper's study, it was useful to see culture through children's eyes and grasp its meaning for today's younger generations. Namely, after reading Lotherington and Chow's (2006) study, the author of this paper

expected that the students in her study would, for example, include YouTubers and their lingo or social media such as TikTok in their identity text projects.

The project aimed to include students' home language knowledge in building on their cultural capital in an English-medium instructional context of a foreign language school. The Students were supposed to employ their creative talents when presenting their home country and language and share their cultural and linguistic heritage with the Teachers and peers.

After reading and listening to the multilingual picture book and doing the Worksheet, the Students had to come up with their own identity texts. The only rule was that they should present their own culture and language with the option to include other languages as well. Otherwise, the Students were free to choose whatever means they liked and employ any of their talents – they might have opted for creating a short picture book or a comic, writing a poem, making a poster, performing a puppet play or a regular play, making a mind map, or even combining several modalities. They were free to choose the characters (they could use the cats from the Storybook and continue or modify their journey, or create their own characters), the plot and the specific cultural aspects they would depict. They were given a mind map, presented in Appendix B, with the following instruction: "Your turn – show us your wor(l)ds! Tell us something about your culture(s) and your language(s) through…" on the graphic of the planet Earth surrounded by thought bubbles with different categories proposing what they could depict in their identity texts, along with simple graphics representing the categories: flags, famous people, famous buildings/sights, art, (traditional) clothes, national holidays and festivities, local food, local music, songs, instruments and dance, nature (sea, rivers, hills, mountains, plains, climate…) and mother tongue(s). The Teachers also advised the Students to imagine that they were taking their friends who had never been to Croatia on a tour around the country and to think of what they would show them.

3.5.4. The multicultural and multilingual awareness questionnaire

The Questionnaire (see Appendix C) used in this study was roughly based on the Council of Europe's *FREPA/CARAP Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Candelier et al., 2010), which categorizes multilingualism and

multiculturalism into three categories: multilingual and multicultural knowledge, attitudes and skills.

The Questionnaire consisted of three parts:

- general background (providing information on families' cultural and linguistic background and the countries they had lived in or visited so far),
- the storybook (testing the pedagogical potential of the picture storybook for promoting the students' multicultural and multilingual awareness),
- the mini project (testing the pedagogical potential of the identity text projects for promoting the students' multicultural and multilingual awareness).

There were several types of questions in the Questionnaire: fill-in, close-ended (yes/no, Likert scale, multiple-choice), and open-ended.

The "Multicultural Cinderella" project (Alexander & Morton, 2007) served as an inspiration in designing the Questionnaire properly so that it was adjusted to young learners. The Questionnaire was written in a language comprehensible to young students. Also, the Likert scale type of questions in the Questionnaire included emojis: crying face for *Never* or *Strongly disagree*, sad face for *Rarely* or *Disagree,* neutral face for *Sometimes* or *Neither agree nor disagree*, smiling face for *Often* or *Agree* and grinning face for *All the time* or *Strongly agree.*

The Students had the questionnaire sheets in front of them. The Teacher(s) went through each question with the Students, sometimes translating the questions into Croatian for easier comprehension. The Students gave answers orally both in English and in Croatian. The Teacher(s) helped the Students recast the answers they gave in Croatian into English and then they wrote their answers in English onto their questionnaire sheets. The Teacher(s) sometimes asked additional questions in order to get fuller, more detailed and comprehensive answers. Therefore, filling out the Questionnaire was carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews, with previously prepared questions on the questionnaire sheet, but the Teachers' additional questions and explanations and the Students' comments and answers often led to the development of conversation and discussion.

3.6. Results and discussion

As mentioned before, the first research question in this study was: *Which aspects of multicultural awareness will be the easiest to grasp for young learners?*

This question was supposed to show which features of different cultures young learners would grasp, which similarities and differences between different cultures they would notice, understand and appreciate, and what attitudes towards multiculturalism they would take.

While watching the Storybook, the Students were supposed to circle the countries and languages they recognized in the story on the Worksheet. This activity was supposed to encourage students to actively follow and engage in the storyline. The aim was to see which countries and languages would be recognized correctly and if there would be any "misleading" based on the similarities between countries and languages. Table 4 shows the countries and languages the Students correctly recognized in the Storybook.

Table 4

The countries and languages the Students correctly recognized in the Storybook

Country	No. of Students	Language	No. of Students
Croatia	32	Croatian	32
France	32	French	32
Germany	30	German	31
Italy	30	Italian	31
Spain	30	Spanish	29
the United Kingdom	28	English	28
Portugal	24	Portuguese	23
Hungary	20	Hungarian	19
Sweden	12	Swedish	13

The Students showed most confidence in recognizing their own home country and mother tongue – Croatia and the Croatian language, and all of the Students (32 out of 32 or 100%) recognized them. The only country and language that were recognized by all the Students, except Croatia, were France and French, most probably because of the Eiffel Tower. While watching the Storybook, several Students exclaimed: "The Eiffel Tower! That was easy." Germany, Italy and Spain were recognized by 30 Students (94%); German and Italian were recognized by 31 Students (97%), and Spanish was recognized by 29 Students (91%). Surprisingly, the United Kingdom and English were not recognized by everyone, but by only 28 Students (88%). However, this may be explained by the fact that the majority of the

narration in the Storybook is written in English – the United Kingdom and British English are the first country and language in the cats' journey in the Storybook after the three introductory pages written entirely in English, so the Students may have considered English as the base language in the Storybook, disregarded the British variant of English as being any different from the rest of the Storybook and/or may not have remembered to start doing the Worksheet on time. Another reason for not recognizing the United Kingdom is the fact that at that age, some children are probably not familiar with the geopolitical system in the United Kingdom and with England being part of the United Kingdom. Thus, the Teacher explained to the Students who said that London or England were in the Storybook that both of these answers were correct and instructed them to circle the United Kingdom on the Worksheet. A surprising number of Students recognized Portugal – 24 Students (75%), Portuguese – 23 Students (72%), Hungary – 20 Students (63%) and Hungarian – 19 Students (59%). Those two countries and languages are not as present in the Croatian media and popular culture as others, children rarely learn them or about them. The country and language that were recognized by the smallest number of Students were Sweden (12 Students or 38%) and Swedish (13 Students or 41%), which was not a surprising result. Sweden and Swedish are not represented in the Croatian media as much as other countries and the Swedish language is rarely learned in Croatia.

Table 5 shows the number of Students who were misled by countries and languages present on the Worksheet but not present in the Storybook.

Table 5

The "misleading" countries and languages on the Worksheet and the number of Students misled by them

Country	No. of Students	Language	No. of Students
Austria	10		
Slovenia	9	Slovenian	9
Finland	5	Finnish	5
Poland	4	Polish	4
Greece	2	Greek	2

Ten Students (31%) thought the second page about Germany was about Austria; what confused them was language similarity and the fact that this was the first country that was represented on two pages in the Storybook, while every other country before was represented on one page. Some of these Students asked why "Austrian" was not on the Worksheet. Nine Students thought that the second page about Croatia was about Slovenia and that the language

was Slovenian; what confused them was the fact that Croatia was also represented on two pages, while the majority of countries (7 out of 9) were represented on one page. In addition, this page contained a Croatian Kajkavian traditional song, "Mamica su štrukle pekli", which reminded them of the Slovenian language. Five Students mistook Sweden for Finland and thought that Swedish was Finnish due to language similarity. Four Students thought they had seen Poland and the Polish language in the Storybook. Two Students thought they had seen Greece and Greek. Such results had been anticipated, especially with Croatia and Germany, the only two countries represented on two pages, which was confusing for some of the Students, even with their own home country and mother tongue.

Table 6 shows the languages in the Storybook the Students had heard for the first time (question 16 in the Questionnaire).

Table 6

The languages in the Storybook the Students had heard for the first time

Language	No. of Students
Hungarian	13
"None – I have heard all of them before."	12
Swedish	11
Portuguese	9
French	4
Italian	3

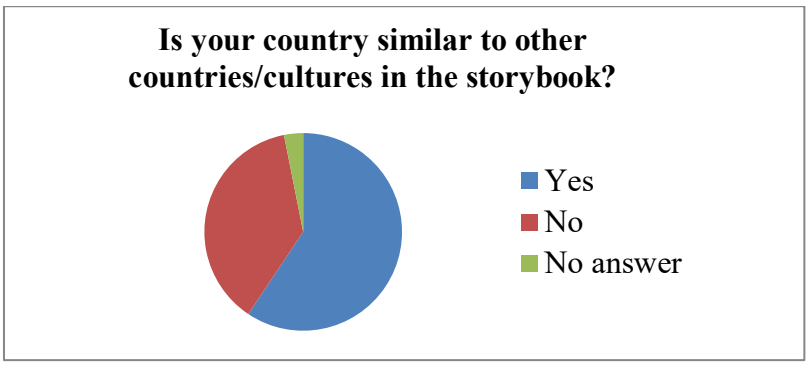
When asked about which languages they have heard for the first time in the Storybook, Hungarian was the most common answer (13 Students or 41%), followed by Swedish, heard for the first time by 11 Students (34%), and Portuguese, heard for the first time by 9 Students (28%). These answers had been expected since Hungarian, Swedish and Portuguese are rarely encountered in the media and schools in Croatia, and they were also the languages recognized by the least number of Students. French had been heard for the first time in the Storybook by 4 Students (13%) and Italian by 3 Students (9%), which is a somewhat more surprising result since these languages are more commonly encountered in Croatia, at least in the media or through tourism, if not in school. Apart from that, France and French were recognized by all Students while reading/listening to the Storybook, and Italian was recognized by 31 out of 32 Students (97%), so it was surprising that some Students had never heard these languages before. Twelve Students (38%) had heard all the languages from the Storybook before, which was a pleasantly surprising result. One Student explained her answer in detail and referred to her teacher's codeswitching between Spanish and Portuguese due to language similarity: "I

have heard all of the languages from the storybook. In my ballet practice, there are girls who speak French and Russian. I also have a teacher who speaks Spanish and Portuguese. She knows Spanish better and sometimes she confuses the two languages because they are similar."

Figure 3 shows the Students' opinions on whether their country was similar to other countries/cultures in the Storybook (question 13 in the Questionnaire).

Figure 3

The Students' opinions on whether their country was similar to other countries/cultures in the Storybook



When asked if their country is similar to any of the other countries/cultures in the Storybook, 19 Students (59%) answered affirmatively, 12 Students (37%) answered negatively, and 1 Student (3%) did not answer this question.

Table 7 shows which countries/cultures from the Storybook the Students thought their country was similar to and their explanations why (question 13 in the Questionnaire).

Table 7

The countries/cultures from the Storybook that the Students thought their country was similar to and explanations

Country	Explanation	No. of Students
Italy	pizza	4
	the Arena in Pula, Croatia and the Colosseum in Rome, Italy	4
	the Adriatic Sea	4
	similar laws	4
Portugal	similar traditional clothes	3
Germany	language	3
Slovenia*	border with Croatia	3
Hungary	border with Croatia	3
	sailing	1
England	/	1
/	similar food (pizza)	4
/	similar language	3
/	the sea	2
/	dance	1

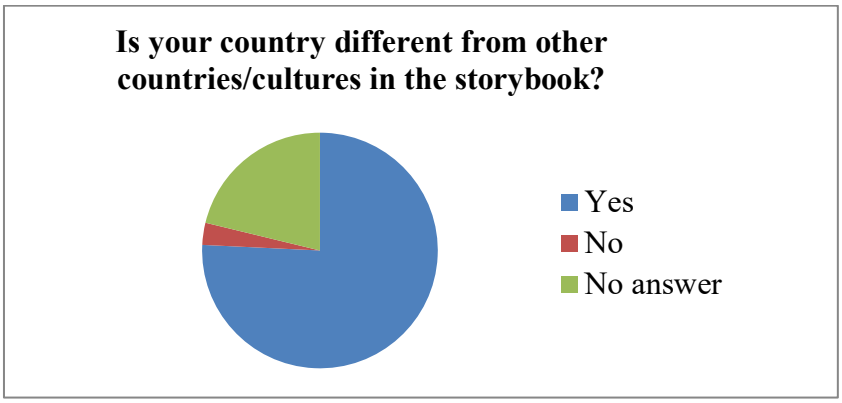
The biggest number of Students thought Italy bore the most similarities to Croatia. Four Students (13%) mentioned that Croatia and Italy shared a lot of similarities; according to them, the Arena in the Croatian city of Pula was similar to the Colosseum in Rome, Italy; pizza was eaten in both Croatia and Italy (and many other countries); Croatia and Italy shared the Adriatic Sea and had similar laws. Laws were not mentioned in the Storybook, so it can be assumed that these Students based this answer on their previous knowledge and conceptions of law in Croatia and Italy. Three Students (9%) mentioned Croatia and Portugal being similar because they had similar traditional clothes, both depicted in the Storybook. Three Students or 9% thought Croatia was similar to Germany because they had similar languages. Three Students or 9% thought that Croatia was similar to Slovenia (a country not represented in the Storybook) and Hungary because it shared the border with both countries. One Student (3%) mentioned that Croatia was similar to Hungary because people sailed in both countries. One Student (3%) thought Croatia was similar to England but did not state the reason why. Several Students (9%) thought that Croatia had similarities with other countries but did not specify which countries: 4 Students (13%) mentioned similar food (especially pizza), 3 Students (9%) mentioned similar languages, 2 Students (6%) thought that Croatia was similar to other countries because of the sea, and 1 Student (3%) mentioned similar dance. Out of the 12 Students who thought their home country (Croatia) was not similar to other countries/cultures in the Storybook, one Student stated the reason: “We are in the Balkans.”

As expected, the Students noticed similarities between their home country and other countries in the Storybook. Some of their explanations included the features represented in the Storybook, e.g. food, buildings, language, nature, customs and activities such as dance and sailing. However, some of the explanations were features not present in the Storybook, such as laws, borders and geographical location, which implies that the Students drew upon their previous knowledge and conceptions.

Figure 4 shows the Students' opinions on whether their country was different from other countries/cultures in the Storybook (question 14 in the Questionnaire).

Figure 4

The Students' opinions on whether their country was different from other countries/cultures in the Storybook



When asked if their country is different from any of the other countries/cultures in the Storybook, 25 out of 32 Students (78%) answered affirmatively and 1 Student (3%) answered negatively. Seven Students (22%) did not answer this question.

Table 8 shows the countries/cultures from the Storybook the Students thought their country was different from and their explanations why (question 14 in the Questionnaire).

Table 8

The countries/cultures from the Storybook the Students thought their country was different from and explanations

Country	Reason	No. of Students
France	the Eiffel Tower	2
	food	2
	"We don't sell cheese in the street."	1
	buildings	1
Germany	stricter rules/laws	3
	language	3
Portugal	language	3
	flag	3
Sweden	"We don't eat 10 kilos of food for breakfast."	3
	language	1
England	language	2
Spain	food	1
	dance	1
	traditional clothes	1
Italy	buildings	1
Hungary	language	1
/	food	6
/	buildings	4
/	languages	3
/	vehicles	3
/	dance	1
/	"Yes, in the things they do."	1
all countries in the storybook	"We are in the Balkans."	1
"Every country is different."	buildings	4
	rivers	3
	/	1

The Students who thought their country was different from other countries in the Storybook gave very interesting explanations. The Students noticed the biggest number of differences between Croatia and France. Two Students (6%) thought that their country (Croatia) was different from France because of the Eiffel Tower, one Student (3%) mentioned buildings in general, two Students (6%) thought it was because of different food and one Student (3%) mentioned a very specific reason: "We don't sell cheese in the street in Croatia." Three Students (9%) thought that their country was different from Germany because the languages were different and because Germany had stricter laws. Again, laws are not mentioned in the Storybook, so it can be assumed that these Students based this answer on their previous knowledge and conceptions of law in Croatia and Germany. Three Students (9%) thought

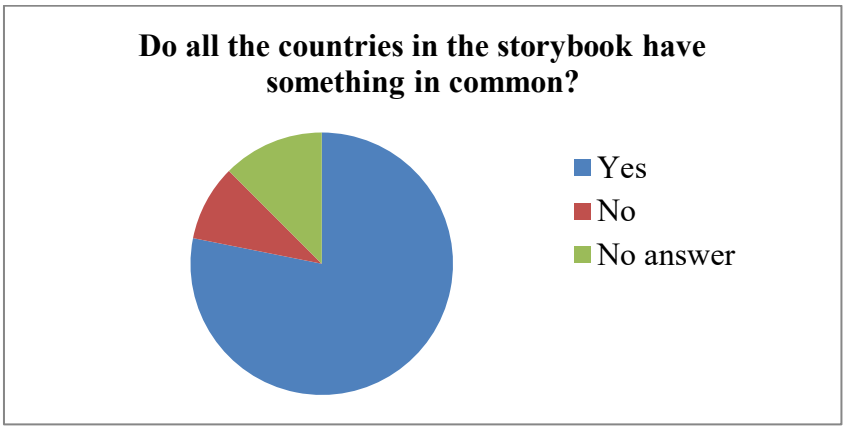
their country was different from Portugal because the languages were different and three Students (9%) thought it was because of the flag. Three Students (9%) thought their country was different from Sweden because of different languages and three (9%) offered a humorous explanation: “We don’t eat ten kilos of food for breakfast,” referring to smörgåsbord. Two Students (6%) stated that their country was different from England because of language. One Student (3%) thought their country was different from Spain because of different food, one (3%) thought it was because of different dance and one (3%) thought it was because of different traditional clothes. One Student (3%) thought their country was different from Italy because the buildings were different and one (3%) thought it was different from Hungary because of the languages. Some Students stated what made their country different from other countries but did not specify which countries: 6 Students (19%) mentioned food, 4 Students (13%) mentioned buildings, 3 Students (9%) mentioned languages, 3 Students (9%) mentioned vehicles, 1 Student (3%) mentioned dance and 1 Student (3%) mentioned “the things they do”. One Student (3%) stated that Croatia was different from all the other countries in the Storybook because “we are in the Balkans.” Four Students stated that every country was different because buildings were different. Three Students (9%) thought all the countries were different because of different languages, and one Student (3%) thought all the countries were different but did not provide an explanation why. One Student (3%) stated that their country was not different from other countries. Seven Students (22%) Students did not answer this question.

As expected, the Students noticed differences between their home country and other countries in the Storybook. Some of their explanations included the features represented in the Storybook, e.g. food, buildings, language, nature, vehicles, customs and activities such as dance and trade, but some of the explanations were features not present in the Storybook, such as laws, borders and geographical location, which implies that the Students drew upon their previous knowledge and conceptions.

Figure 5 shows the Students’ opinions on whether all the countries in the Storybook had something in common (question 15 in the Questionnaire).

Figure 5

The Students' opinion on whether all the countries in the Storybook had something in common



When asked if all countries in the Storybook had something in common, 23 Students (72%) answered affirmatively, 3 Students (9%) answered negatively and 4 Students (13%) did not answer the question.

Table 9 shows the reasons why the Students thought that all the countries in the Storybook had something in common (question 15 in the Questionnaire).

Table 9

The reasons why the Students thought that all the countries in the Storybook had something in common

Reason	No. of Students
similar traditions	10
similar (traditional) food	7
similar dance	7
similar clothes	6
located in Europe	6
similar customs	6
similar buildings	4
similar flags	4
similar languages	4
similar natural attractions	3
similar rules	1
beauty/being beautiful	1
similar cultures	1
selling food	1
selling food at festivals	1

The Students who thought all countries in the Storybook had something in common gave

several different explanations for their answers. The biggest number of Students (10 or 31%) answered it was because all countries had similar traditions – the most general term encompassing most other explanations. Similar (traditional) food and similar dance were both recognized as common characteristics in all countries by 7 Students (22%). Six Students (19%) thought all countries shared similar clothes and six Students thought they shared similar customs. The same number of Students stated that all countries were located in Europe, but only after being prompted by the Teacher who asked them if they thought that all countries were part of one whole. Still, it shows that those Students noticed that all countries in the Storybook had "a shared sense of European identity" (European Commission, 2021, Overview section, para. 1). Four Students (13%) thought all countries shared similar buildings, four Students thought they had similar flags and four Students thought that similar languages were spoken in all countries. Three Students (9%) thought all countries shared similar natural attractions. Similar rules, similar cultures, selling food and selling food at festivals were explanations each given by one Student (3%). One Student (3%) stated that all countries were beautiful.

Table 10 shows the words/phrases that the Students noticed were similar/the same in different languages and/or recognized the meaning of despite not knowing them before (questions 17, 18 and 19 in the Questionnaire).

Table 10

The words/phrases that the Students noticed were similar/the same in different languages and/or recognized the meaning of despite not knowing them before

Words/phrases	No. of Students
välkommen	21
smorgasbord	16
Guten Appetit!	16
hallo	15
palacsinták	14
storia	14
noche	12
Gäste	9
Portionen	9
chap	8
bonjour	8
buongiorno	8
delizioso	8
dia	6
aventura/avantura etc.	5
pizza	4
Veux-tu m'épouser?	4
tortillas	3
croissant	3
città	3
ristorante	2
hören	2
merci	2
leggenda	1
buona noche*	1

When asked if the languages they knew from before helped them in understanding the foreign languages in the Storybook (question 17 in the Questionnaire), if they recognized the meaning of some words they had not known before (question 18 in the Questionnaire) and if they noticed that some words were similar or the same in different languages (question 19 in the Questionnaire), all the Students mentioned that they had noticed language similarity and that the presence of cognates and pictures in the Storybook had helped them tremendously in comprehension. It proved correct Cummins' et al. (2005) claim that pre-existing knowledge of the English language (and other languages) is encoded in learners' home languages. If the Students could not immediately think of the examples of words that would answer questions 17, 18 and 19 in the Questionnaire, the Teacher(s) went briefly through the Storybook again and asked questions about the meaning of specific words, hoping to "foster the transfer of concepts and skills from the student's home language to English" (Cummins, 2005, p. 1) and

"support a both/and rather than the either/or orientation to the development of home language and English literacy" (Cummins, 2006, p. 52). The word recognized by most of the Students (21 Students or 66%) was the Swedish word *välkommen*, similar to English *welcome* and German *willkommen*. The meaning of the Swedish word *smörgåsbord* was recognized by 16 Students (50%), due to the picture of a table with many different foods and the explanation of it in the Storybook: "you eat all you can and no one keeps record" (Košutić, 2020, p. 5). Sixteen Students (50%) mentioned the German phrase *Guten Appetit!*, similar to English words *good, appetite* and the Croatian word *apetit.* The German word *hallo,* similar to English *hello,* was mentioned by 15 Students (47%). Fourteen Students (44%) recognized both the Hungarian word *palacsinták*, similar to Croatian *palačinke* = pancakes, and Italian *storia*, similar to English *story.* The Spanish word *noche*, similar to Croatian *noć* = night, was recognized by 12 Students (38%). The German words *Gäste*, similar to English *guests* and Croatian *gosti*, and *Portionen,* similar to English portions and Croatian *porcije,* were both recognized by 9 Students (28%). The British word *chap* was recognized by 8 Students (25%) due to the context: "there was a chap selling some delicious yummies" (Košutić, 2020, p. 4) and the picture of a character selling food in the Storybook. The French greeting *bonjour* and Italian *buongiorno* were both recognized by 8 Students (25%), as well as Italian *delizioso,* similar to English *delicious.* The Spanish word *dia*, similar to English *day* and Croatian *dan,* was recognized by 6 Students (19%), although only after some prompts made by the Teacher, who put it in proximity with the word *noche.* The word *aventura, avantura* and other versions of it were mentioned by 5 Students (16%). Four Students (13%) mentioned the word *pizza.* French *croissant* and Spanish *tortillas* were both mentioned by 3 Students (9%). The French expression *Veux-tu m'épouser?,* meaning *Will you marry me?*, was recognized by four Students (13%) due to the picture in the Storybook depicting a cat kneeling on one knee, saying the phrase and holding a ring, while the other cat excitedly exclaims: *Oui!* (Košutić, 2020, p. 12). The Italian word *città,* similar to English *city,* was recognized by 3 Students (9%), but some of the Students thought it had something to do with reading since the 3rd person singular present form of the verb *čitati* (= to read) in Croatian is *čita* and pronounced similar to *città.* The Italian word *ristorante,* similar to English *restaurant* and Croatian *restoran*, was mentioned by 2 Students (6%), as well as French *merci* and German *hören,* which is similar to English *hear.* The Italian word *leggenda,* similar to English *legend* and Croatian *legenda,* was mentioned by 1 Student (3%), as well as the Italian phrase *buona noche*, which is not present in the Storybook but the individual words *buona* and *noche* are

present in other phrases, so the Students might have put together this phrase, or remembered it from their background knowledge.

Table 11 shows explanations of what helped the Students to understand foreign words in the Storybook.

Table 11

What helped the Students to figure out the meaning of foreign words in the Storybook

Explanation	No. of Students
languages they knew from before	31
pictures/illustrations	26
context/other words in the text	12
flags	8
sound	5
the Teacher	4
language similarity	3
meaning	3
accent	2
the environment	1
similar pronunciation	1
similar vocabulary	1
clothes	1
buildings	1

As expected, what helped most Students to understand foreign words in the Storybook was prior language knowledge. The languages they knew from before helped all the Students except one (31 Students or 97%), and even that one Student provided several examples of cognates in the Storybook he understood the meaning of. The languages one Student knew from before helped him understand the Spanish words *dia* and *noche*. One Student reported German, which he from before, helping him to understand some words in the Storybook, and one Student reported the same for both German and French. One Student reported recognizing and noticing some words in the Storybook that she had heard in the countries she had visited so far. One Student (3%) said that German and English had similar pronunciation and vocabulary, which had helped her with comprehension. Three Students (9%) mentioned both language similarity and meaning, and 2 Students (6%) mentioned accent. The other most common explanations, as expected, were pictures and illustrations, which helped 26 Students (81%) to recognize the meaning of foreign words. One Student (3%) mentioned the environment alongside pictures and illustrations, with France as an example. Twelve Students (38%) reported context, i.e. other words in the text helping them. Eight Students (25%)

reported flags helping them to recognize the meaning of foreign words. Flags themselves cannot help you understand the meaning of words, but they can help you to recognize which country and language are in question, so it can be supposed that that was what the Students had in mind. The same goes for clothes and buildings, which were both mentioned by one Student (3%). Five Students (16%) reported sound helping them to recognize the meaning of foreign words, suggesting it was a good idea to include voiceover in the Storybook so that the Students could listen to it along with reading. Four Students (13%) said that the Teachers helped them when they asked about the meaning of some foreign words. Table 12 shows the languages the Students considered especially easy or difficult to understand (question 22 in the Questionnaire).

Table 12

The languages the Students found difficult or easy to understand

Languages easy to understand	**No. of Students**	**Languages difficult to understand**	**No. of Students**
English	14	Portuguese	6
Croatian	12	Swedish	5
German	4	Hungarian	4
French	2	Spanish	4
Italian	2	None	4
None	2	A lot of them	2
Spanish	1	French	2
Portuguese	1	Italian	1
		Croatian	1
		All of them	1

As expected, most of the Students – 14 out of 32 (44%) – found English easy to understand and all of them said it was because they were learning it and spoke it. Twelve Students mentioned Croatian as an easy language to understand because it was their mother tongue. It had been anticipated that these two languages would be found the easiest to understand. It is somewhat surprising that such a small number of Students mentioned Croatian but it can be assumed that some Students did not take it into account in this question since it was their mother tongue. Four students (13%) thought German was easy, as had also been expected since it is commonly learned in Croatia at schools or foreign language schools as the second foreign language. Two Students (6%) mentioned French, Italian or none of the languages as easy to understand, and one Student (3%) thought Portuguese and Spanish were easy to understand.

On the other hand, Portuguese was found difficult to understand by the biggest number of Students – 6 out of 32 (18%), followed by Swedish, deemed as difficult to understand by 5 Students (16%). These results had been expected since those two languages are not commonly learned in Croatia and there are not many opportunities to encounter them in the media. One Student explained that Portuguese sounded "really difficult", like she could never learn it. Four Students (13%) said that Spanish, Hungarian or none of the languages were difficult to understand. Two of the Students who thought Hungarian was difficult explained it was because it was very different from Croatian and other European languages. Two Students (6%) mentioned that French seemed difficult. One Student wrote "Spanish" but did not explain whether it was easy or difficult for them and did not explain the reason why they mentioned it. Two Students (6%) mentioned that none of the languages seemed particularly easy, similar to 2 Students (6%) who said that a lot of the languages seemed difficult and 1 Student (3%) who said that all of the languages seemed difficult to understand at first, but that one had to get used to them. She also mentioned that her own mother tongue, Croatian, would probably sound very difficult to people who did not speak it, showing awareness of the characteristics of her mother tongue that could make it seem difficult to non-native speakers.

Table 13 shows the languages the Students thought sounded/looked different from (question 23 in the Questionnaire) or similar to (question 24 in the Questionnaire) each other.

Table 13

The languages the Students thought sounded/looked different from or similar to each other

Languages different from each other	No. of Students	Languages similar to each other	No. of Students
Croatian and Portuguese	5	German and English	10
Croatian and Spanish	5	German and Swedish	9
Portuguese and Spanish	5	Portuguese and Spanish	5
French and English	4	Italian and French	3
Croatian and French	4	Spanish and Italian	2
None	4	German, Swedish and English	2
Croatian and German	2	None	2
Croatian and English	2	Croatian and English	1
Croatian and Hungarian	2	Italian and Portuguese	1
French and Swedish	2	German and French	1
Italian and French	2	All of them	1
French and Hungarian	1		
French and Portuguese	1		
Hungarian and English	1		
Croatian and all others	1		
Spanish and Hungarian	1		
German	1		

Five Students (16%) stated that Croatian and Portuguese sounded/looked different from each other, as well as Croatian and Spanish, and Portuguese and Spanish. Four Students (13%) stated that French and English sounded/looked different, as well as Croatian and French. The same number of Students thought none of the languages sounded/looked very different from each other. Two Students (6%) thought that the following languages sounded/looked different from each other: German and Croatian, French and Swedish, Croatian and English, Croatian and Hungarian, French and Italian. One Student (3%) thought that the following languages were different from each other: French and Italian, French and Hungarian, French and Portuguese, Hungarian and English, Croatian and all others, Spanish and Hungarian, and German. The Student who mentioned German did not mention the language it sounded/looked different from. One Student (3%) explained that French and Hungarian were “totally different because of their origins”. He also mentioned that Spanish and Italian were similar because they were both Romance languages. Similarly, one Student who said that Italian and French were similar said it was because they were both Latin languages.

As far as the similarity between languages is concerned, 10 Students (31%) thought German and English were similar to each other. One Student (3%) explained that they sounded similar (e.g. *hallo* and *hello*) because they were both Germanic languages. The similarity between other Germanic languages was also noticed by the Students: 9 Students (28%) thought German and Swedish sounded/looked similar, and 2 Students (6%) thought that German, Swedish and English all sounded/looked similar to each other. The similarity between the Romance languages in the Storybook was also noticed by several students: 5 Students (16%) thought Portuguese and Spanish sounded/looked similar; 3 Students (9%) mentioned Italian and French, 2 Students (6%) mentioned Spanish and Italian, and 1 Student (3%) mentioned Italian and Portuguese. Two Students (6%) thought that none of the languages sounded or looked very similar to each other. One Student thought that Croatian and English sounded/looked similar, as well as German and French. One Student (3%) mentioned that all languages looked and sounded similar to each other and that they had very similar accents.

In all cases except two (Croatian and English – Slavic and Germanic language respectively, and German and French – Germanic and Romance language respectively), the Students noticed similarities between languages belonging to the same language family. German and English; German and Swedish; German, Swedish and English all belong to the Germanic language family. Portuguese and Spanish; Italian and French; Spanish and Italian; and Italian and Portuguese all belong to the Romance language family. Vice versa, the Students saw differences between languages belonging to different language families: French (Romance) was deemed different from Swedish (Germanic), English (Germanic), and Hungarian (Uralic). Hungarian was also deemed different from English (Germanic) and Spanish (Romance). Some languages belonging to the same language family – Romance – were deemed as different from each other: Portuguese and Spanish, French and Portuguese, and Italian and French.

As far as their mother tongue, Croatian, was concerned, the Students noticed differences between it and the Romance languages Portuguese, Spanish and French, the Germanic languages German and English, and Hungarian (Uralic). One Student noticed Croatian was different from all others, which had been expected due to the fact that it was the only Slavic language in the Storybook. Croatian was deemed similar to English only, and by just one Student.

Some of the Students even showed explicit prior knowledge about language families and languages belonging to them, which is quite impressive, especially if their age is taken into account.

The next set of questions dealt with foreign language anxiety, the attitudes about speaking foreign languages and visiting foreign countries that the Students noticed in the Storybook and the attitudes that the Students would take if they found themselves in a situation like the characters in the Storybook, who take a tour around nine European countries and speak their respective languages despite Mixus' foreign language anxiety at the beginning of the Storybook.

Table 14 shows the Students' observations on Mixus' feelings about using foreign languages at the beginning of the Storybook and comparisons to the attitudes they would take in her situation (question 25 in the Questionnaire).

Table 14

The Students' observations on Mixus' feelings about using foreign languages at the beginning of the Storybook and comparisons to the attitudes they would take in her situation

Mixus' feelings	**No. of Students**	**Would you feel that way?**	**No. of Students**
(a bit) worried	31	no	17
		yes (a bit)	11
		yes and no	1
confused	4	no	2
scared/afraid because they do not know all the languages	3	no	2
		yes	1
angry	1	no	1
sad	1	no	1

Most of the Students (31 out of 32 or 97%) said that Mixus was worried at the beginning. Out of these 31, 17 Students (53%) said that they would not feel worried like Mixus, 11 Students (34%) said they would be (a bit) worried and 1 Student (3%) wrote both yes and no. Four Students (13%) said that Mixus was confused; out of them, 2 Students (6%) said that they would not feel that way. Three Students (6%) said that Mixus was scared or afraid; two of them said that they would not feel that way and one said she would. She said that when she had travelled to other countries, she had been afraid because she had not known what to say in shops. She reported having a feeling that the locals had been talking about her because she could not understand them. One Student (3%) said that Mixus was angry and sad but that they

would not feel that way. Several other Students elaborated further. One Student said that he would not feel like Mixus and that he would have fun. Two Students said they would not be worried because they would speak English and "everybody knows that". One Student said he would not feel worried because his mother knew languages. One Student said that she would feel "somewhere in the middle"; at first, she would be worried but she would manage to be fine in the end. The Students managed to grasp the idea of foreign language anxiety represented by Mixus' character. The answers given by 24 Students (75%) who said that they would not feel worried/scared/confused/angry show that the majority of Students thought they would not experience foreign language anxiety in Mixus' situation. On the other hand, 13 Students said they would experience some kind of foreign language anxiety – worry (12 Students or 38%) or fear (1 Student or 3%).

Table 15 shows the Students' observations on Mixter's feelings about using foreign languages at the beginning of the Storybook and comparisons to the attitudes they would take if they found themselves in his situation (question 26 in the Questionnaire).

Table 15

The Students' observations on Mixter's feelings about using foreign languages at the beginning of the Storybook and comparisons to the attitudes they would take in his situation

Mixter's feelings	**No. of Students**	**Would you feel that way?**	**No. of Students**
confident	13	yes	5
		no	3
		so-so	1
		yes and no	1
relaxed	11	yes	8
		no	2
(pretty) excited	5	yes	4
happy	5	yes	4
		no	1
chill	4	yes	3
good	3	no	2
		yes	1
brave	2	yes	1
		no	1
not worried	2	so-so	1
		no	1
sure of himself	1		
okay	1		

Thirteen Students (41%) answered that Mixter felt confident, 11 Students (34%) said he felt relaxed and 3 of those 11 said that he was a bit too relaxed, 5 Students (16%) said he felt (pretty) excited and happy, 4 Students (13%) said he was chill, 3 Students (9%) said he felt good, 2 Students said he was brave and not worried, 1 Student (3%) said he felt okay and sure of himself. The Students stated that they would experience different kinds of positive feelings if they found themselves in Mixter's situation: 5 Students (16%) said they would feel confident, 8 Students (25%) said they would feel relaxed, 4 Students (13%) said they would feel excited and happy, 3 Students (9%) said they would be "chill", 1 Student (3%) said they would feel good, 1 Student (3%) said they would be brave. Two Students who said that they would feel like Mixter (happy, brave, and not afraid) said it was because they knew English. One Student said he would feel chill and relaxed because his mother knew different languages. Some Students stated that they would experience negative feelings in Mixter's situation: 3 Students (9%) said they would not feel confident, 2 Students (6%) said they would not be relaxed, the same number said they would not feel good, 1 Student (3%) said they would not be happy and the same number said they would feel worried. Three Students could not decide whether they would feel confident and not worried, like Mixter, so they wrote "so-so" and "yes and no".

It should be noted that 11 Students who said that they would feel (a bit) worried like Mixus answered that they would also be happy/confident like Mixter and would manage to enjoy their trip. For example, one Student said that she would be anxious about using foreign languages and a big journey, but that she would still feel happy and excited. That shows that they were aware of some degree of foreign language anxiety they would experience but that they thought this anxiety would not be debilitating. The Students showed awareness of the possibility of having both negative feelings like worry, fear, anxiety, confusion, sadness and anger, and positive feelings like happiness, excitement and confidence at the same time when visiting foreign countries and speaking foreign languages.

Table 16 shows the advice the Students would give to Mixter and Mixus about using foreign languages (question 27 in the Questionnaire).

Table 16

The advice the Students would give to Mixter and Mixus about using foreign languages

Advice	**No. of Students**
learn (some) languages first	9
try speaking new languages/saying some words	8
use English	5
use Google Translate	3
make/force yourselves to speak	2
use a mutual language	1
go to language classes at a foreign language school like we do	1
use body language	1
don't seem rude	1
try using foreign languages without fear	1
try attracting others to their country and language once they get more relaxed	1
no advice	1

When asked about what advice on using foreign languages they would give to Mixter and Mixus, the biggest number of Students (9 Students or 28%) said the cats should learn (some) languages first before embarking on such a trip. One Student (3%) said the cats should go to language classes at a foreign language school as he and his friends did. Eight Students (25%) said that the cats should try speaking new languages or saying some words and 5 Students (16%) said they should use English. One Student said that the cats should use a mutual language. Three Students (9%) said the cats should use Google Translate. Two Students (6%) said the cats should make/force themselves to speak. Similarly, 1 Student (3%) said the cats should try using foreign languages without fear and that they should try attracting others to their country and language once they get more relaxed. One Student (3%) said the cats should use body language, as Mixter suggested at the beginning of the Storybook. One Student (3%) said the cats should not seem rude. One Student (3%) said she would not give them any advice.

The Students' advice included some of Mixter's advice from the Storybook, such as using body language or a dictionary. However, they would use Google Translate instead of printed dictionaries. One Student commented that she did not use printed dictionaries because we lived in the 21st century. A lot of them used expressions that referred to overcoming foreign language anxiety, e.g. *try* speaking new languages *without fear*, *make/force* themselves to speak, […] *once they get more relaxed.* Many recommended using a mutual language like English. The Student who said the cats should not seem rude noticed the

possibility of cultural differences between interlocutors when communicating in foreign languages, which might intentionally or unintentionally seem offensive.

Table 17 shows that all of the Students thought that Mixter and Mixus eventually did not have any problems with speaking all the foreign languages and hanging out with cats from all the different countries (question 28 in the Questionnaire).

Table 17

The Students' answers to whether Mixter and Mixus have any problems with speaking all the foreign languages and hanging out with cats from all the different countries

The Students' answers	**No. of Students**
no	30
they were relaxed in the end	5
they relied on the other cats	4
they were chill because they listened to Mixter's advice	3
they had a nice time	1

Most Students (30 out of 32 or 94%) simply said the characters did not have any problems with speaking foreign languages and hanging out with cats from different countries. Some Students offered several different explanations. Five Students (16%) said the cats were relaxed in the end, 4 Students (13%) said they relied on the other cats, 3 Students (9%) said they were chill because they listened to Mixter's advice and 1 Student (3%) said they had a nice time.

Table 18 shows the Students' differing feelings when encountering words they did not understand in the Storybook (question 29 in the Questionnaire).

Table 18

The Students' feelings when they encountered words they did not understand in the Storybook

The Students' feelings	**No. of Students**
happy to learn a new word	5
(a little) worried (like Mixus)	4
excited (like Mixter)	4
(a little) confused	3
neutral	3
weird	3
unusual	3
relaxed	3
magical	2
okay	2
normal	2
it was fun	1
interesting	1
excited like a happy cat	1
curious	1
surprised	1
not worried	1
difficult because I didn't understand everything	1
funny	1

Five Students (16%) said they were happy to learn new words. Four Students (4%) said new words made them (a little) worried (like Mixus), and the same number said they were excited (like Mixter). Three Students (9%) said they felt (a little) confused, neutral, weird, unusual, or relaxed. Two Students (6%) said they felt magical, okay or normal. One Student (3%) thought it was difficult because they did not understand everything, and the same number said that it was fun, that they felt "interesting", excited like a happy cat, curious, surprised, not worried, or funny.

Table 19 shows that the Students gave varied answers to whether it bothered them when they did not understand all the words in the Storybook (question 30 in the Questionnaire).

Table 19

The Students' answers to whether it bothered them when they did not understand all the words

The Students' answers	**No. of Students**
no	21
yes	3
so-so	3
a little bit	2
it was annoying	2

The majority of Students (66%) said new and unfamiliar words in the Storybook had not bothered them, and one of them was very precise in her answer and said that it had bothered her 0%. One Student said that he was never bothered when encountering new words (not just in the Storybook). One Student who said that it had not bothered them also said that they had not been worried. Three Students (9%) said that it had bothered them, and the same number could not decide so they answered "so-so". Two Students (6%) said that it had bothered them "a little bit" and the same number said that it had been annoying.

All in all, the Students had various reactions to encountering words they did not understand in the Storybook. The majority of Students had positive reactions and feelings like happiness about learning and eagerness to learn new words, as well as excitement, interest, curiosity, fun, pleasant surprise, feeling magical and unusual in a good way, and most of them were not bothered by unfamiliar words. Still, some Students expressed negative feelings like confusion and worry about or annoyance at encountering unfamiliar words, which bothered them because they did not understand everything. Some of the Students reported that they did not feel any particular feelings about encountering new words – they felt neutral, normal or simply okay.

Table 20 shows how the Students would behave and talk if they visited other countries like Mixter and Mixus (question 31 in the Questionnaire).

Table 20

How the Students would behave and talk if they visited other countries like Mixter and Mixus

Behaviour / communication	**No. of Students**
speak/use English	9
be relaxed	8
normal	5
try fitting in (the tradition)	5
be polite	4
like I lived in that country	3
speak both English and Croatian (sometimes)	3
respect others and their cultures	2
try/eat their food	2
speak Croatian	2
happy to be there	2
try teaching others Croatian	2
the same as now	2
go on many trips	1
a little bit sad and tired	1
buy technology because it's cheaper abroad than in Croatia	1
like Mixter and Mixus	1
be quiet at first, wouldn't know what to say	1
after using English, try to use the languages spoken in these countries to see how it goes	1
relaxed later on	1

Most Students (28% or 9 Students) said they would speak English– the lingua franca, or, in their words, "the language that everybody understands". Eight Students (25%) said that they would be relaxed. Five Students (16%) said that they would behave normally, and the same number said they would try fitting in (the tradition). Four Students (13%) said that they would be polite. Three Students (9%) said that they would behave like they lived in that country and the same number said that they would combine English and Croatian (sometimes). Two Students (6%) said that they would respect others and their cultures, and try/eat local food, and the same number said they would be happy to be there, that they would behave the same as now or that they would speak Croatian and try teaching others Croatian. One Student (3%) said he would go on many trips because he would love to travel more and visit more countries. One Student (3%) said that she had visited a lot of countries so far and that her parents and relatives had talked most of the time. She said that if she visited many countries like the cats in the Storybook, she would be quiet at first and would not know what to say. Then she would try speaking English. In the end, she would try speaking the languages of the

countries she was in to see how it goes. She said that she would be more relaxed later on. One Student (3%) said that she would be a little bit sad and tired. This answer was somewhat surprising because this Student expressed great interest in the Storybook, had travelled a lot with her family, was interested in language learning, showed advanced language knowledge for her age (grade 1 of primary school) and her family supported and encouraged her language learning. This shows that even the most enthusiastic and advanced students can experience some degree of anxiety when visiting other countries. One Student (3%) said they would behave like Mixter and Mixus. One Student (3%) gave an interesting and unanticipated answer: he would buy technology and gadgets because they were cheaper abroad than in Croatia.

The majority of Students emphasized the need to respect other cultures, fit in, be polite, take part in the customs and try out the food. One of the Students noticed that the characters in the Storybook behaved that way so they would do the same. Some Students said it was important to behave normally and be relaxed. As far as languages are concerned, many reported they would use English, at least at first, and some of them would combine it with the languages of the host countries or Croatian, and some expressed the wish to teach their hosts Croatian. Again, some of the Students expressed they would feel negative feelings like slight sadness, fatigue or anxiety to some extent, but that they would be alleviated later on.

The second research question was: *Which aspects of the Storybook will be most helpful in promoting multicultural awareness (language, flags, food, famous sights/buildings, natural attractions, clothing, dance, music…)?*

Table 21 shows what the Students learned about their own culture when reading/listening to the Storybook (question 6 in the Questionnaire).

Table 21

What the Students learned about their own culture when reading the Storybook

Features proposed in the Questionnaire	**No. of Students**	**Specific features added by Students**	**No. of Students**
(traditional) clothes	32		
local music, songs, instruments, dance	31	"Mamica su štrukle pekli" song	1
language(s)	30	dialects	4
		Kajkavian dialect	3
		Chakavian dialect	3
		Dalmatian	2
flag	30	coat of arms	2
local food	29	štrukli	1
famous buildings/sights	28	castle	1
natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)	27	the sea	2
		mountains	1
		rivers	1
		trees the woods	1 1
art	20		
national holidays and festivities	5		
famous people	3		
		the boat	4

Since all of the Students stated their home country was Croatia, all of them answered this question referring to Croatia. Some features were proposed in the Questionnaire and accompanied by simple graphics representing the following categories: (traditional) clothes; local music, songs, instruments, dance; language(s); flag; local food; famous buildings/sights; natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…); art; national holidays and festivities; and famous people, so the Students could choose and circle the ones they had learned about. There was also the "Anything else" category in which some of the Students added their observations. All of the Students (100% or 32 Students) reported learning about traditional clothes. Croatian traditional clothes [*nošnja*] are represented on page 10 in the Storybook, in Zagorje region, on a character who is making *štrukli* and singing the traditional song "Mamica su štrukle pekli". Thus, almost all Students (31 Students or 97%) also chose local music, songs, instruments and dance, and one of the Students mentioned the name of the traditional song sung in the Storybook, "Mamica su štrukle pekli" and many others mentioned the name of the song but did not write it down on the Questionnaire sheet. Thirty Students (94%) reported learning about the Croatian language. Four Students (13%) mentioned learning about dialects in general, 3 Students (9%) specified

the Kajkavian and Chakavian dialects, and 2 Students (6%) reported hearing Dalmatian. Indeed, the Storybook contains the Kajkavian and Chakavian dialects of the Croatian language. Standard Croatian is not present in the Storybook. Thirty Students (94%) reported seeing the Croatian flag, and 2 of them (6%) added the coat of arms. The Croatian flag is depicted on page 9 on top of Velebit Mountain and on page 10 on the boat at the Adriatic Sea, while the coat of arms is depicted on page 10 on the wall in Zagorje region. Local food was chosen by 29 Students (91%), and one of them (3%) added *štrukli*, although many others mentioned *štrukli* but did not write it down on the Questionnaire sheets. Famous buildings/sights were chosen by 28 Students (88%) and one of them (3%) reported seeing a castle, which is depicted on page 10 (Trakošćan Castle in Zagorje region). Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…) were chosen by 27 Students (84%), while 2 Students (6%) added the sea and 1 Student (3%) added mountains, rivers, trees and the woods. Twenty Students (63%) chose art, referring to the rhymed saying embroidered on the dishcloth traditionally used as wall decoration in Zagorje region, presented on page 10. Four Students mentioned the boat presented on page 10 at the Adriatic Sea. Five Students (16%) chose national holidays and festivities, and 3 Students (9%) chose famous people, although these two categories are not presented in the Croatian part of the Storybook.

The results show that the majority of the Students recognized the most prominently represented features of Croatia in the Storybook (e.g. language, flags, music, food and nature), with only a small number of the Students opting for the features that are not represented in the Storybook (national holidays, festivities and famous people). It can be assumed that these Students mistook the act of making and baking *štruklji* on page 10 as a local festivity since festivities represented in other countries in the Storybook involve food (e.g. Oktoberfest in Germany). They could have also mistaken the character making *štruklji* and the character fishing in a boat on page 10 as famous Croatian people.

Table 22 shows what the Students learned about other cultures when reading/listening to the Storybook (question 7 in the Questionnaire).

Table 22

What the Students learned about other cultures when reading the Storybook

Features proposed in the Questionnaire	**No. of Students**	**Features added by Students**	**No. of Students**
flags	31		
local music, songs, instruments, dance	30	in Spain castanets in Spain in Portugal	1 1 1
traditional clothes	30		
local food	30		
famous buildings/sights	29	London Eye the Eiffel Tower the Leaning Tower of Pisa churches angels in Hungary	5 1 1 1 1
language(s)	29		
natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)	27	the river in Hungary	1
art	25	statues in Hungary	1
national holidays and festivities	22		
famous people	16		
		the double-decker bus in London	4

Again, in question 7 in the Questionnaire, some features were proposed and accompanied by simple graphics representing the following categories (traditional) clothes; local music, songs, instruments, dance; language(s); flag; local food; famous buildings/sights; natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…); art; national holidays and festivities; and famous people, so the Students could choose and circle the ones they learned about. There was also the "Anything else" category in which some of the Students added their observations. The biggest number of Students – 31 out of 32 (97%) reported learning about flags. This result had been expected since the flags are depicted in each country in the Storybook, although not all Students noticed every flag. For example, in Sweden, the flag is drawn on the uniform of the hotel staff member and is not very prominent, so some Students did not notice it. Thirty Students (94%) chose local music, songs, instruments and dance; 2 Students (6%) specified that those features were present in Spain and one of them (1%) mentioned castanets (although she did not know the name of the instrument, she imitated how it was played and the sound produced), and 1 Student (3%) reported seeing local music in

Portugal. Thirty Students (94%) reported learning about (traditional) clothes and local food – the features depicted most prominently in the Storybook. Namely, local food is depicted in each country in the Storybook, while traditional and local clothes are depicted in all countries except Hungary and Sweden. Twenty-nine Students (91%) reported learning about famous sights/buildings; 5 of them (16%) further specified the London Eye, and 1 Student (3%) mentioned the Eiffel Tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, churches, and angels in Hungary, referring to the statues on the Heroes' Square, of which the middle and the tallest one represents the winged Archangel Gabriel. Twenty-nine Students (91%) reported learning about the languages; this result was surprising to an extent because it had been expected that all the Students would choose this category since every country is represented by its language in the Storybook. Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…) were chosen by 27 Students (84%), with one Student (3%) mentioning the river in Hungary, referring to the Danube. Art was chosen by 25 Students (78%), with 1 Student (3%) mentioning the statues in Hungary (the same Student who referred to them as "angels"). Twenty-two Students (69%) chose national holidays and festivities. Famous people were chosen by only half of Students (16 Students); this result had been expected since famous people or characters from legends are only mentioned in Sweden – Alfred Nobel and ABBA, and Italy – Romulus and Remus. A lot of Students had never heard about ABBA, which is understandable due to the age gap, and a lot of the Students recognized who Alfred Nobel was only after being prompted by the Teacher who mentioned the Nobel Prize.

As expected, the results show that the majority of the Students recognized the most prominently represented features of the countries in the Storybook: flags, local music and dance, traditional clothes and food, famous buildings, language(s), natural attractions, art and national holidays and festivities. The least popular category was famous people, which had also been anticipated since this is the least represented category in the Storybook.

Table 23 shows which features helped the Students to recognize the countries in the Storybook (question 8 in the Questionnaire).

Table 23

The features that helped the Students to recognize the countries in the Storybook

Features proposed in the Questionnaire	**No. of Students**	**Features added by Students**	**No. of Students**
flags	31		
famous buildings/sights	28	the Eiffel Tower Big Ben the Leaning Tower of Pisa	2 1 1
local food	26	baguette croissant pretzels	3 1 1
languages	25		
traditional clothes	22		
local music, songs, instruments, dance	19	lyrics	1
natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)	14		
art	11		
famous people	10		
national holidays and festivities	4		
		anything else: vehicles pictures boat	 4 1 1

Again, in question 8 in the Questionnaire, some general features were proposed and accompanied by simple graphics representing the categories: (traditional) clothes; local music, songs, instruments, dance; language(s); flags; local food; famous buildings/sights; natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…); art; national holidays and festivities; and famous people, so the Students could choose and circle the ones that helped them the most. There was also the "Anything else" category in which some of the Students added their observations. Flags helped the biggest number of Students (31 out of 32 Students or 97%) to recognize the countries. This result had been expected since flags are the most precise symbols of countries, so they should be very helpful in recognizing the countries, provided one was familiar with which flags represent which countries. Two Students (6%) said that flags helped them in only some of the countries since they did not know which flags represented which countries. One of them said that she only knew the German and the Croatian flags, but that they had not helped her much since she would have recognized these countries even without flags. The second most common feature that helped in recognizing the countries were famous sights/buildings, chosen by 28 Students (86%). Two of them (6%) specified that the Eiffel Tower was very helpful, as expected, and one Student (3%)

mentioned Big Ben and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Local food was helpful to 26 Students (81%); 4 of them (13%) mentioned baguettes, 2 Students (6%) mentioned croissants and 1 Student (3%) mentioned pretzels. Languages were helpful to 25 Students (78%), traditional clothes to 22 Students (69%), and local music, songs, instruments and dance to 19 Students (59%). One Student emphasized that the song lyrics in the languages of the countries had helped her to recognize the country, but that dance had not been as helpful. Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…) helped 14 Students (44%); art helped 11 Students (34%); famous people helped 10 Students (31%) and national holidays and festivities helped 4 Students (13%). Several Students added their suggestions to the "Anything else" category: 4 Students (13%) mentioned vehicles, 2 of them (6%) mentioned pictures and illustrations, 1 Student (3%) mentioned the environment and boats. One Student said that the illustrations and the environment had helped him in recognizing different countries: "When Mixter and Mixus are in France, I can see that they're buying baguettes and croissants in the illustration."

As anticipated, the features that were the most helpful to the Students in recognizing the countries were flags, famous buildings such as the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben and the Leaning Tower of Pisa, local food, languages and traditional clothes.

Table 24 shows the Students' descriptions of how the cats in the Storybook dress (question 9 in the Questionnaire).

Table 24

How the cats in the Storybook dress

Reasons	**No. of Students**
traditional/folk costumes/clothes/outfits/	32
weird	6
national clothes	5
normally	4
naked (most of the time)	4
differently	3
suits	3
I like it, but wouldn't wear it to school	1
regularly	1
collared shirts	1
berets (in France)	1
striped shirts (in France)	1
hats in Italy	1

All the Students said the cats dressed in traditional or folk costumes, clothes or outfits, and some of them mentioned the Croatian term, *narodna nošnja*. One Student who answered that the cats dressed traditionally said that she liked it but would not wear it to school, noticing the difference between traditional and everyday clothes. Six Students (19%) said the cats wore weird clothes. Five Students (16%) said that the cats dressed in national clothes. Four Students (13%) humorously observed that the cats were naked most of the time and the same number said they dressed normally. Three Students (9%) said that the cats dressed differently and the same number said they wore suits. One Student (3%) said that they dressed regularly, and one Student noticed they wore collared shirts, striped shirts and berets in France, and hats in Italy.

Table 25 shows the Students' explanations of why the cats in the Storybook dress the way they do when they are dancing and singing (question 10 in the Questionnaire).

Table 25

Why the cats in the Storybook dress that way when they are dancing and singing

Reasons	**No. of Students**
because it's a tradition in that country/to respect the tradition	16
to have fun	13
to fit in	10
to be conspicuous	4
because of culture	4
because they want to	3
because they can	2
to see how it is	1
to see what it looks like	1
to act like people in these countries	1
to be cheerful	1
because it's an honor	1
because people did it in the past	1

Half of the Students (16 Students) said the cats dressed the way they did when they were dancing and singing because it was a tradition in that country or to respect the tradition. Thirteen Students (41%) said the cats did it to have fun and 10 Students (31%) said it was to fit in. Four Students (13%) said they did it to be conspicuous and because of culture. Three Students (9%) said that they did it because they wanted to and 2 Students (6%) said it was because they could. One Student (3%) said the cats did it to see how it was or what it looked

like, and the same number said it was because they wanted to act like people living in these countries, to be cheerful, because it was an honor or because people had done it in the past.

The Students noticed the cultural importance of traditional clothes and the difference between traditional and everyday clothes. They also noticed that traditional clothes were worn when having fun and being cheerful and when reminiscing about and honoring the past.

Table 26 shows the food eaten in the Storybook that the Students listed (question 11 in the Questionnaire).

Table 26

The food the cats eat in the Storybook that the Students listed

Food	**No. of Students**
štruklji	27
pizza	24
fish	23
baguettes	17
pretzels	16
pancakes	15
sausages	11
chips	11
croissants	10
soup	10
smorgasbord	10
tortillas	8
pastel de nata	8
cheese	7
tacos	6
spaghetti	5
eggs	4
bread	4
fish and chips	3
chicken	3
bananas	3
bagels	3
burgers	3
vegetables	2
peppers	2
beer	1
Spanish food	1
tapas	1
salads	1
fruit	1
muffins	1

The biggest number of Students (27 out of 32 or 84%) mentioned štruklji, 24 Students (75%) mentioned pizza, 23 Students (72%) mentioned fish, 17 Students (53%) mentioned baguettes, 16 Students (50%) mentioned pretzels, 15 Students (47%) mentioned pancakes, 11 Students (34%) mentioned sausages and chips, 10 Students (31%) mentioned croissants, soup and smörgåsbord, 8 Students (25%) mentioned tortillas and pastel de nata, 7 Students (22%) mentioned cheese, 6 Students (19%) mentioned tacos, 5 Students (16%) mentioned spaghetti, 4 Students (13%) mentioned eggs and bread, 3 Students (9%) mentioned fish and chips (as a separate dish), chicken, bananas, bagels, and burgers, 2 Students (6%) mentioned vegetables and peppers, and 1 Student (3%) mentioned beer, Spanish food, tapas, salads, fruit, and muffins. Soup is not depicted in the Storybook, but the Students who mentioned it mistook sauerkraut or pastel de nata for soup. Chicken is also not depicted in the Storybook but was mentioned by 3 Students.

As expected, the biggest number of Students noticed *štruklji*, a Croatian traditional dish, which was probably even more conspicuous to them because of the song about *štruklji* sung in the Storybook. Pizza was the second most popular answer, most probably because it is a very well-known dish and loved by most children. All in all, the Students remembered an impressive number of various dishes, even the lesser known ones such as pastel de nata, which most of the Students listed only after the Teacher showed them that particular page again and asked them to find the word in the text that represented food. Still, one Student mentioned pastel de nata without the Teacher prompting him, said that he had tried it and explained in detail what it was – a sweet and very delicious dessert.

Table 27 shows the activities that the cats do in the Storybook that the Students listed (question 12 in the Questionnaire).

Table 27

The activities the cats do in the Storybook that the Students listed

Activities the cats do in the Storybook	**No. of Students**
eat	24
travel	21
dance	19
sing	14
sail	11
watch TV	7
cook	7
row	6
explore	5
speak weird languages	4
swim	4
run	4
jump	4
play	4
ride the London Eye/observation wheel	4
fish	3
go sightseeing	3
pack	3
play music	2
take photographs	2
sell food	2
sit in cafés	1
ride in boats	1
talk on the telephone	1
speak other languages	1
fly in an plane	1
visit different countries and try their traditions	1
showed us the countries, what they eat and do	1

The activity the cats do in the Storybook mentioned by most of the Students (24 out of 32 or 91%) was eating, as expected, since food and eating are the leitmotif of the Storybook. Twenty-one Students (66%) mentioned travelling, 19 Students (59%) mentioned dancing, 14 Students (44%) mentioned singing, 11 Students (34%) mentioned sailing, 7 Students (22%) mentioned watching TV and cooking, 6 Students (19%) mentioned rowing, 5 Students (16%) mentioned exploring, 4 Students (13%) mentioned speaking weird languages, swimming, running, jumping, playing or riding the London Eye or the observation wheel, 3 Students (9%) mentioned fishing, sightseeing and packing, 2 Students (6%) mentioned playing music, taking photographs, and selling food, and 1 Student (3%) mentioned sitting in cafés, riding in boats, talking on the telephone, speaking other languages, flying in a plane, visiting different

countries and trying their traditions, showing us the countries and what they ate and did there. The Students noticed a great number of the activities depicted in the Storybook and one Student added one thing that is not there – flying in a plane.

The third research question was: *Which aspects of their own culture will the students include in their identity text projects (language, flags, food, famous sights/buildings, natural attractions, famous people, national holidays, festivities, clothing, art, dance, music…)?*

The question was supposed to give answers to what the Students knew about their culture, what they considered as important parts of it and whether they would include the cultural features and characters from the Storybook or come up with their own ideas. Even though the original idea had been that the Students could choose various means to create their identity texts, e.g. making a short picture book or a comic, writing a poem, making a poster, performing a puppet play or a regular play, making a mind map, or even combining several modalities, due to the lack of time during the workshops, most of the Students created their identity texts in the form of drawings, short texts and essays, mind maps or simply wrote in a few words what they think represented their culture best.

Table 28 shows which cultural features of their country the Students included in their identity texts.

Table 28

What the Students included in their identity texts

Features in the Students' identity texts	**No. of Students**	**Specifics**	**No. of Students**
traditional/local food	22	(Zagorje) *štruklji*	8
		sarma	6
		pizza	2
		(cold) pork [*(hladni) odojak*]	2
		Lika sausage	2
		turkey [*purica*]	2
		mlinci	1
		strudel	1
		cheese strudel	1
		fish	1
		clams	1
		chicken [*picek*]	1
		Zagreb steak [*zagrebački odrezak*]	1

		Lika bacon [*lički špek*]	1
		"Tornado" restaurant	1
		francuska salata	1
		sinjski arambaši	1
		calamari	1
		Zagreb delicacies	1
		meat *burek*	1
		titkuš	1
famous people (athletes, actors, scientists, writers, musicians, artists politicians)	18	Nikola Tesla (scientist and inventor)	5
		Luka Modrić (footballer)	4
		Zoran Milanović (politician, current president)	4
		Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (writer)	3
		Maja Šuput (singer, TV host)	2
		Josipa Lisac (singer)	1
		Davor Gobac (singer, musician, songwriter, artist)	1
		Massimo (singer, musician)	1
		Severina (singer, songwriter)	1
		Goran Višnjić (actor)	1
		Ruđer Bošković (mathematician and astronomer)	1
		Ivan Meštrović (sculptor, architect, writer)	1
		Ivan Rabuzin (painter)	1
		Slava Raškaj (painter)	1
		Sanja Pilić (writer)	1
		Ratko Zvrko (writer)	1
		Ivan Gundulić (writer)	1
		Ambroz Haračić (botanist)	1
		Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović (politician, former president)	1
		Andrej Plenković (politician, current prime minister)	1
		Zoran Šprajc (journalist, TV host)	1
		BloodMaster (YouTuber)	1
		Filip Zubčić (ski racer)	1
		Ivica Kostelić (ski racer)	1
		Janica Kostelić (ski racer)	1
		Ivan Rakitić (footballer)	1
		Dominik Livaković (footballer)	1
		Cristiano Ronaldo (footballer)*	1
		Kylian Mbappé (footballer)*	1
		Erling Haaland (footballer)*	1
		Lionel Messi (footballer)*	1
the flag and the coat of arms	15	the coats of arms and flags on St. Mark's Church and the Parliament building	1
		flag colours: red, white, blue	1

nature and natural attractions	14	4 rivers in Karlovac: the Kupa, the Korana, the Mrežnica, the Dobra	3
		Mount Dinara	3
		Mount Velebit	2
		Vaganski vrh (the highest peak of Velebit)	1
		Mount Medvednica	1
		Sljeme (the highest peak of Medvednica)	1
		Biokovo Nature Park	1
		Plitvice Lakes National Park	1
		greenery [*zelenilo*]	1
		flowers	1
		trees	1
		hills	1
Croatian regions/cities	14	the Adriatic Sea and coast	9
		Dalmatia	3
		Istria	2
		Karlovac	2
		Poreč	1
		Rijeka	1
		Lošinj	1
		Lika	1
		Krk	1
		Dubrovnik (the Republic of Dubrovnik)	1
		Zagreb	1
famous sights/buildings/ institutions)	13	Zagreb Cathedral	2
		Ban Jelačić Square	2
		the Dubovac Castle [*Stari grad Dubovac*], Karlovac	2
		Trakošćan Castle	2
		the Vukovar Water Tower [*vodotoranj*]	2
		the Croatian History Museum, Zagreb	1
		the Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb	1
		the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb	1
		St. Mark's Church, Zagreb	1
		the Croatian Parliament	1
		the "Vatroslav Lisinski" Concert Hall	1
		the "Zorin Dom" Theatre, Karlovac	1
		the Aquatika Freshwater Aquarium, Karlovac	1
		the Pula Arena	1
		the Edison Cinema, Karlovac	1
		the "Zilik" Art Gallery, Karlovac	1
music, instruments	11	*tamburica/tambura*	6
		Dalmatian *klapa*, e.g. "Intrade"	2
		"Rock Me, Baby" song	1
		Zaprešić Boys band	1

		guitar	1
		"Mamica su štrukle pekli" song	1
traditional clothes [*narodna nošnja*]	9	traditional clothes in Slavonia	1
		the Lika cap [*lička kapa*]	1
(national) holidays	7	Christmas	4
		Independence Day [*Dan neovisnosti*]	2
		Statehood Day [*Dan državnosti*]	1
animals	5	fish	3
		cats	2
		frog	1
		stork	1
		algae	1
festivities	3	the Rijeka Carnival	1
		the International Folk Festival Karlovac	1
		the Advent Festival	1
art	3	the sculpture of Ambroz Haračić	1
		the sculpture of Ban Jelačić	1
		picture by Ivan Rabuzin	1
books and magazines	2	Smib - Croatian kids' magazine	1
wars	2	Croatian War of Independence	1
		"Storm" war operation [*Oluja*]	1
mother tongue – Croatian	2		
a map of Croatia and the Adriatic Sea	2		
everyday expressions	2	"Drago mi je"	1
		"Bok!"	1
history	1	how Croatia was made	1
transportation infrastructure	1	the Istrian Y highway complex	1
		Sljeme cable car, Zagreb	1
neighboring countries	1	Italy	1
tourist accommodation	1	Lanterna Camping Resort	1
shops/stores	1	Müller on Ban Jelačić Square	1
(good) people	1		
(nice) customs	1		
sports championships	1	Croatia won 2nd place in the 2018 FIFA World Cup	1
the Students' friends	1		
the national anthem	1		
political parties	1	Croatian Democratic Union [*HDZ*]	1
countries other than the country	1	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1

they stated as their home country			

Figure 6

P1's identity text

Figure 7

P2's identity text

Figure 9

P3's identity text

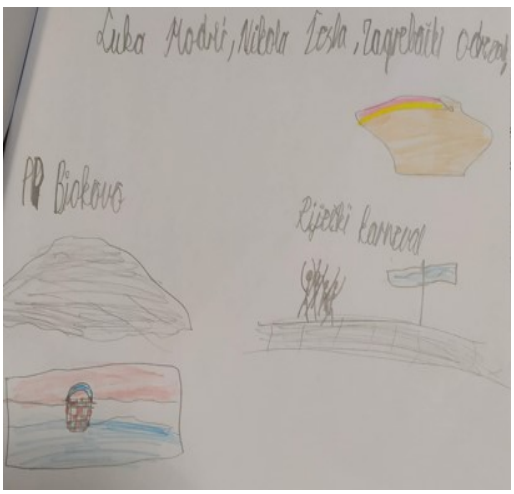


Figure 8

P4's identity text

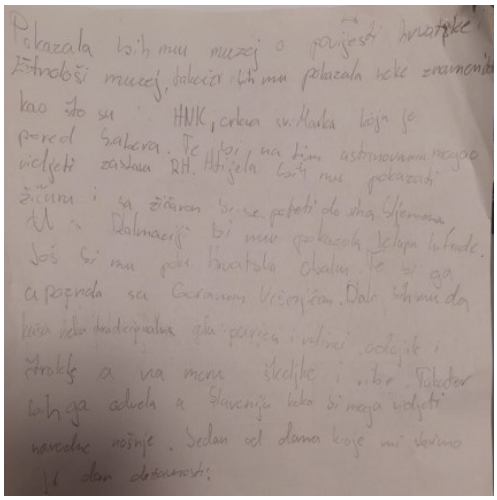


Figure 10

P5's identity text

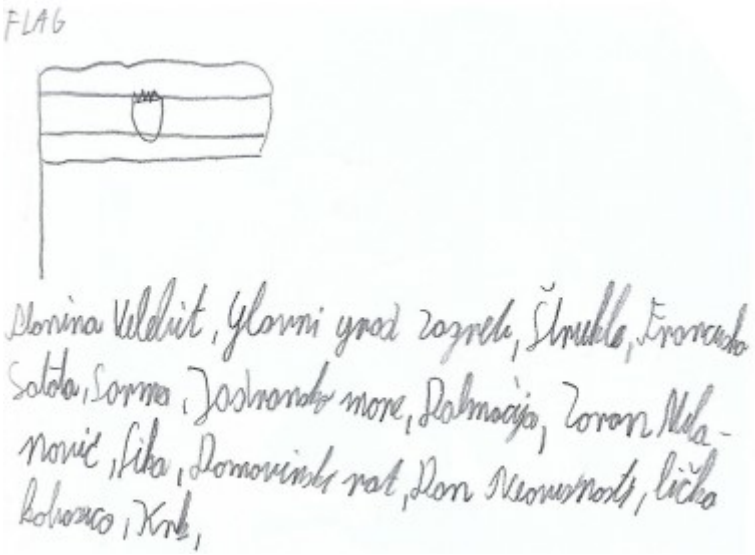


Figure 11

P6's identity text

Figure 12

P7's identity text

Figure 13

P8's identity text

Figure 14

P9's identity text

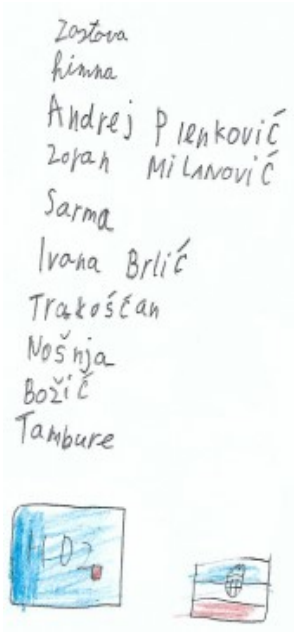


Figure 15

P10's identity text

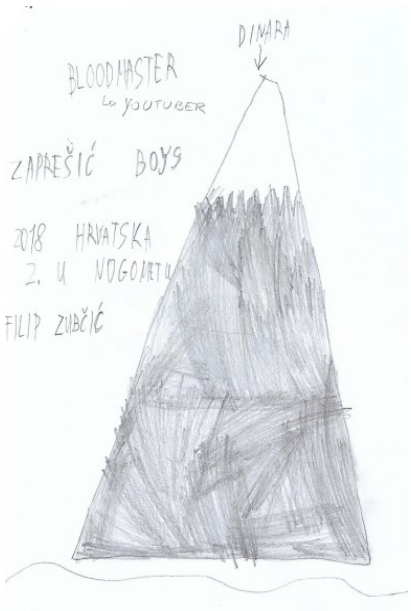


Figure 15

P11's identity text

Figure 16

P12's identity text

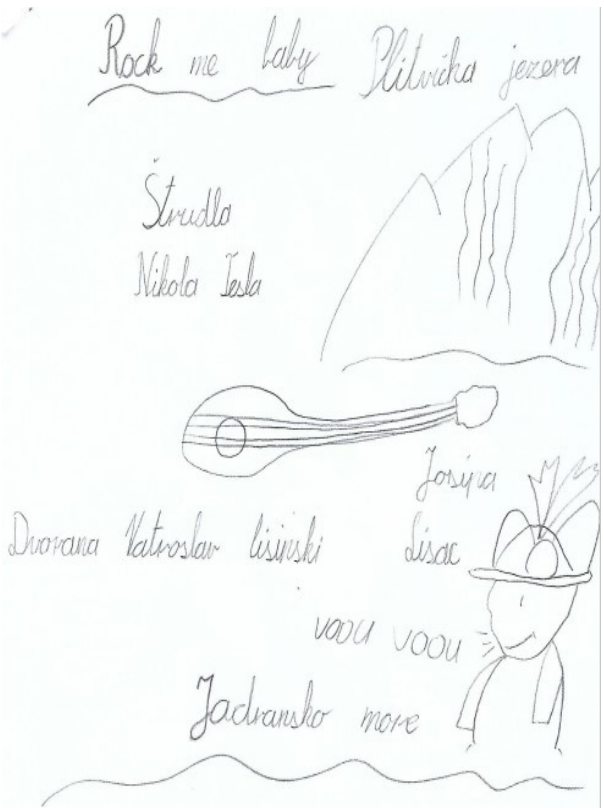


Figure 17

P13's identity text

Figure 18

P14's identity text

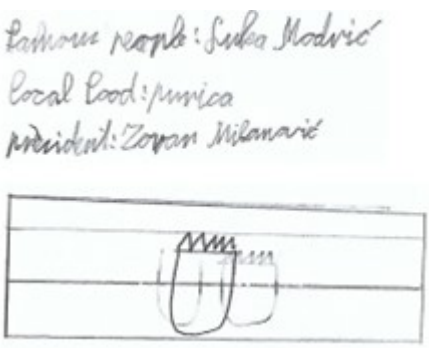


Figure 19

P15's identity text

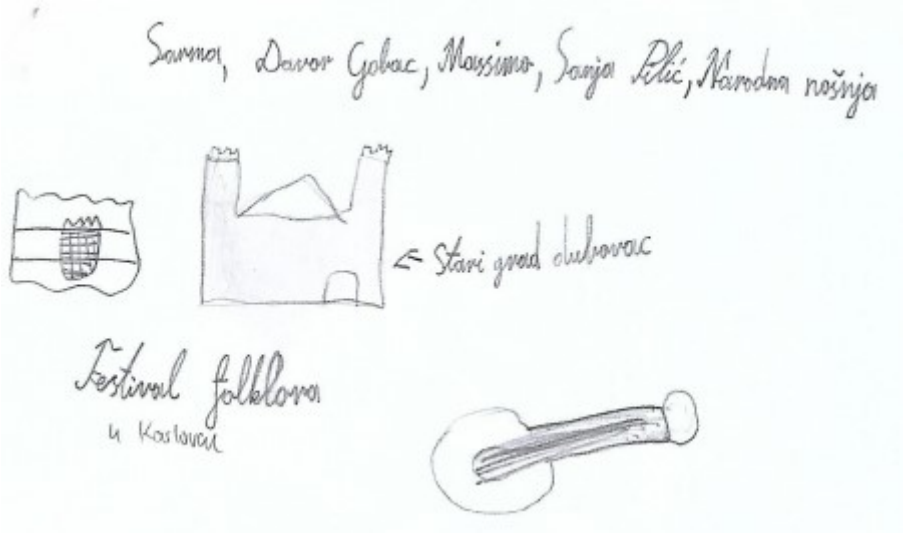


Figure 20

P16's identity text

Figure 21

P17's identity texts

Figure 22

P18's identity text

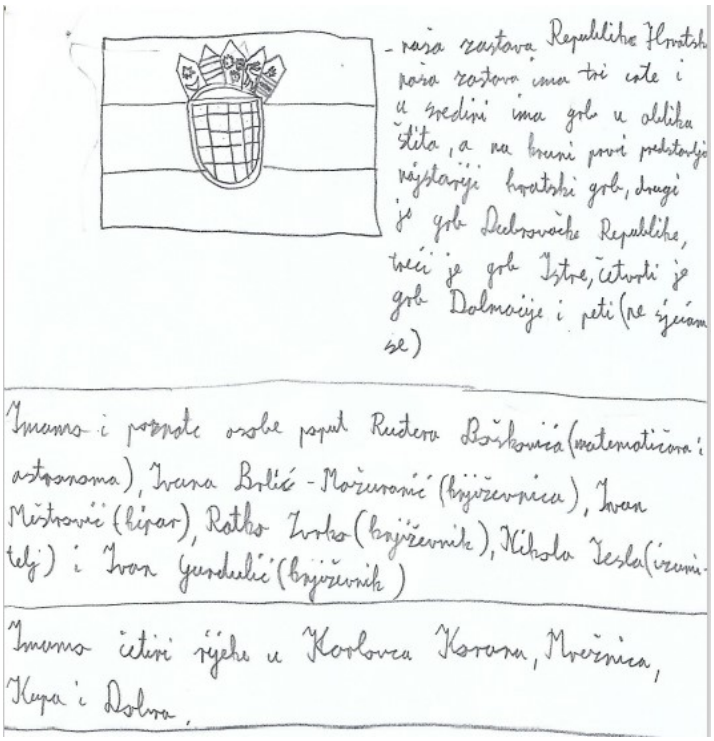


Figure 23

P19's identity text

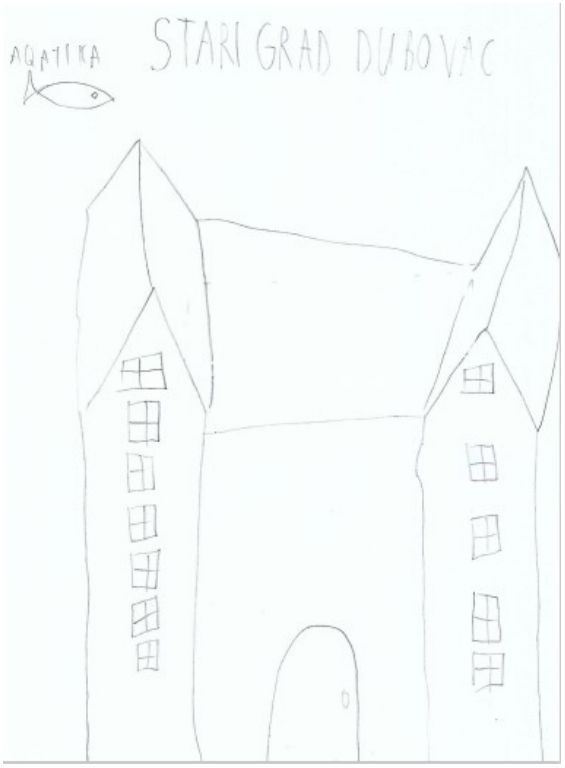


Figure 25

P20's identity text

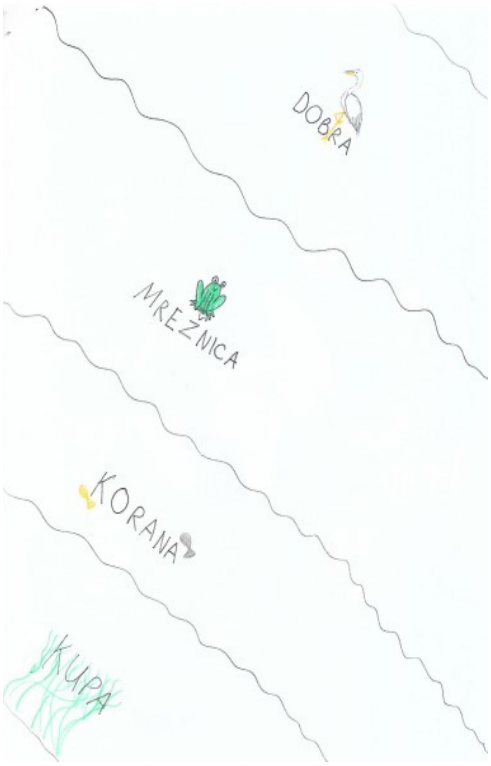


Figure 24

P21's identity text

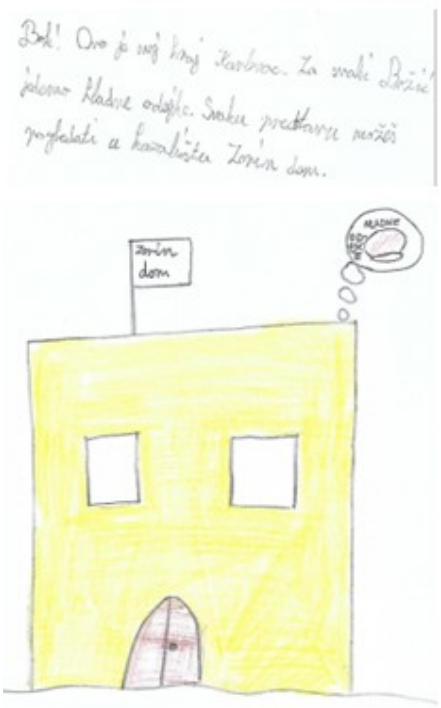


Figure 25

P22's identity text

Figure 26

P23's identity text

Figure 29

P24's identity text

Figure 27

P25's identity text

Figure 28

P26's identity text

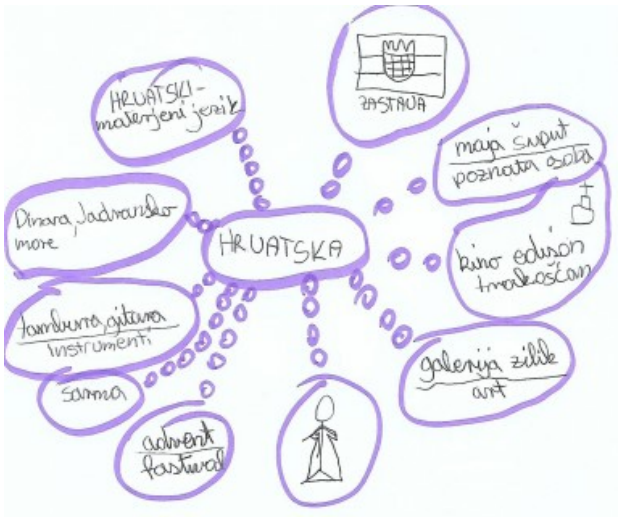


Figure 29

P27's identity text

Figure 30

P29's identity text

Figure 33

P28's identity text

Figure 31

P30's identity text

Figure 32

P31's identity text

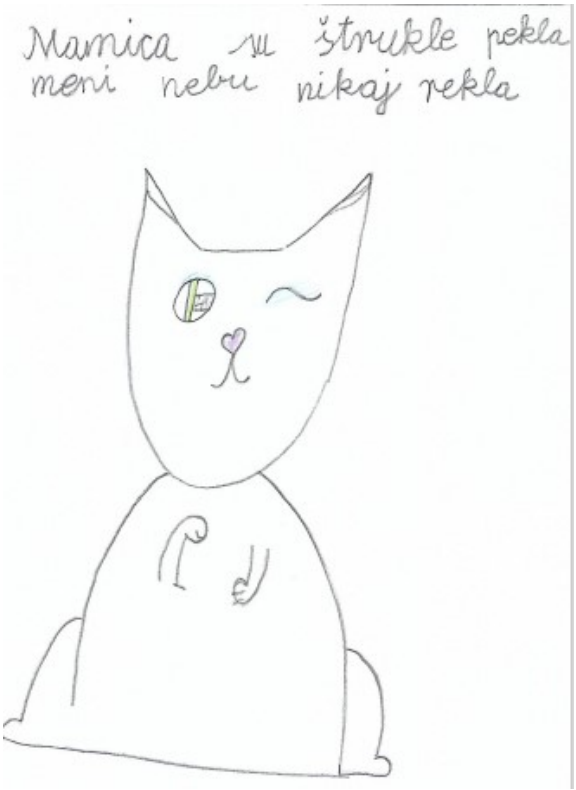
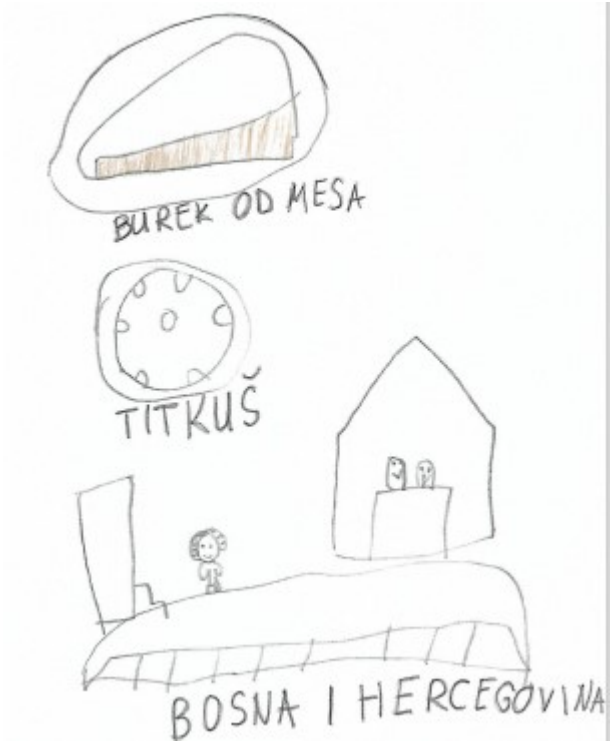


Figure 33

P32's identity text



The creation of identity texts encouraged the Students to think about their own cultural heritage and the features that represented their country in the best way. They loved the instruction to imagine they had to describe their country to a friend who was visiting it for the first time. Based on Cummins (2006) both/and rather than either/or orientation to the development of literacy in both English and the home language, the Students were instructed to use their mother tongue, Croatian, and include other languages if they wanted to, and they were excited to use Croatian. Twenty-eight Students (88%) created monolingual identity texts, using only Croatian, and 4 Students (13%) created bilingual or translingual texts, using both Croatian and English. As can be seen in Figure 13, P8 wrote a bilingual sentence: "In my country there are some mace = cats", offering the translation of the Croatian word *mace* in an otherwise English sentence, using the equal sign. Figure 16 shows that P11 used Croatian in the longer texts describing her country, starting with "Hrvatska je moja zemlja, u srcu je nosim od rođenja." She used English in the short phrases on the pictures she drew: *Croatia* inside a heart symbol, *I love Croatia* on the picture of the Adriatic Sea, and *My Croatia* on the map of Croatia. Figure 19 shows that P14 used English for the names of the categories of

things she described (*famous people*, *local food* and *president*) and Croatian for the specific features (*purica*, i.e. turkey). Figure 29 shows a similar translingual pattern: P24 used English to state the name of her country, Croatia, and for the names of the categories (*flag colours* and *famous people,* misspelled as 'pepol') but she used Croatian for the specific features, e.g. *nošnja*, i.e. traditional costumes.

The results showed that most of the Students (22 Students or 69%) included traditional/local food in their identity texts – the feature most prominently presented in the Storybook as well. *Štruklji* (cooked or baked rolled dough with cheese filling) was the most popular dish represented in the identity texts by 8 Students: P2 (see Figure 7), P4 (see Figure 9), P5 (see Figure 10), P11 (see Figure 16), P24 (see Figure 29), P27 (see Figure 32), P29 (see Figure 34), and P31 (see Figure 36). A lot of the Students loved *štruklji* and they loved the part about it in the Storybook. *Sarma* (minced meat with rice wrapped in cabbage leaves) was next, represented by 6 Students: P5 (see Figure 10), P9 (see Figure 14), P15 (see Figure 20), P24 (see Figure 29), P26 (see Figure 31), and P27 (see Figure 32). Two Students, P16 (see Figure 21) and P17 (see Figure 32), included pizza in their identity texts because it was their favorite food. Despite it not being a traditional Croatian dish, some Students commented that it was popular internationally and eaten all over the world, including Croatia. P4 (see Figure 9) mentioned that Croatians eat pork [*odojak*] and P21 (see Figure 26) said that we, i.e. Croatians ate cold pork [*hladne odojke*] at Christmas. P5 (see Figure 10) and P28 (see Figure 33) mentioned the traditional Lika sausage. P4 (see Figure 9) and P14 (see Figure 19) mentioned turkey [*purica*], and P4 added *mlinci*, a traditional Croatian dish of very thin dried dough boiled in salted water, often eaten with turkey or chicken in Croatia. P4 (see Figure 9) said that she would take her imaginary friend from abroad to try fish and clams at the seaside. Similarly, P25 (see Figure 30) said she would take her imaginary friend from abroad to try calamari, her favorite dish, at a restaurant at the seaside. P12 (see Figure 17) mentioned strudel, and P16 (see Figure 21) mentioned cheese strudel. P7 (see Figure 12) drew and mentioned *picek* – the Kajkavian word used in Zagorje and Zagreb for chicken. P3 (see Figure 8) drew and mentioned Zagreb steak [*zagrebački odrezak*] – deep-fried meat filled with ham and cheese. P27 (see Figure 32) mentioned Lika bacon [*lički špek*] and said he would take his imaginary friend from abroad to the "Tornado" restaurant in Karlovac. P5 (see Figure 10) mentioned *francuska salata* – a type of salad with boiled potatoes, peas, carrots, pickles, mayonnaise, and sometimes apple, which literally translates to "French salad" but is actually similar to traditional Russian or Olivier salad. P1 (see Figure 6) drew and mentioned *sinjski*

arambaši – a traditional dish from the city of Sinj, similar to *sarma*, without rice but with various types of dried meat, and the meat is cut with a knife, not minced. P11 (see Figure 16) said she would take her imaginary friend from abroad to try different Zagreb delicacies. P32 (see Figure 37) included traditional Bosnian dishes *burek* and *titkuš* in his identity text. Although he lived in Croatia and said that his home country was Croatia, he mentioned Bosnia and Herzegovina in his identity text, accompanied by these Bosnian dishes, meaning that he probably thought of both countries as equally important parts of his identity and cultural heritage.

The second most popular category was famous people, represented by 18 Students (56%) in their identity texts. The Students showed an impressive knowledge of both famous Croatian historical figures and current celebrities. It had been expected that there would be more contemporary YouTubers, influencers and social media celebrities in Students' identity texts, but only one Student mentioned a YouTuber. At the top of this category was one of the most famous scientists and inventors in the world, Nikola Tesla, mentioned by 5 Students: P3 (see Figure 8), P12 (see Figure 17), P13 (see Figure 18), P18 (see Figure 23), and P30 (see Figure 35). Tesla was followed by one of the best footballers in the world, Luka Modrić, who was mentioned by 4 Students: P3 (see Figure 8), P14 (see Figure 19), P16 (see Figure 21), and P22 (see Figure 27). Along with Modrić, politician and current President Zoran Milanović was also mentioned by 4 Students: P5 (see Figure 10), P9 (see Figure 14), P14 (see Figure 19), and P24 (see Figure 29). Next was writer Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, often deemed the best Croatian children's writer, who was represented by 3 Students: P9 (see Figure 14), P18 (see Figure 23) and P24 (see Figure 29). Singer and TV host Maja Šuput was represented by 2 Students: P24 (see Figure 29) and P26 (see Figure 31). All the other famous people were mentioned by 1 Student each. Four more musicians/singers were included in Students' identity texts: P12 (see Figure 17) mentioned and drew pop-rock singer Josipa Lisac singing and wearing one of her extravagant hats; P15 (see Figure 20) mentioned singer, musician, songwriter and artist Davor Gobac, along with singer and musician Massimo; and P1 (see Figure 6) drew and mentioned singer and songwriter Severina. P4 (see Figure 9) mentioned that she would introduce her imaginary friend from another country to actor Goran Višnjić. Apart from Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, three other writers were mentioned: P15 (see Figure 20) mentioned writer Sanja Pilić, and P18 (see Figure 23) mentioned writers Ratko Zvrko and Ivan Gundulić. P18 (see Figure 23) also mentioned sculptor, architect and writer Ivan Meštrović and mathematician and astronomer Ruđer Bošković. Two painters were mentioned:

P13 (see Figure 18) mentioned watercolorist Slava Raškaj and P1 (see Figure 6) mentioned naïve painter Ivan Rabuzin, accompanied by an imitation of his picture. P23 (see Figure 28) mentioned and drew a sculpture of Ambroz Haračić (misspelled as Karačić), a botanist whose research led to the island of Mali Lošinj being declared a health resort, and the Student knew about him because he went to Mali Lošinj every year to treat his allergies. Apart from current President Zoran Milanović, two other politicians were mentioned: P24 (see Figure 29) mentioned politician and former President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, and P9 (see Figure 14) mentioned politician and current Prime Minister Andrej Plenković. P1 (see Figure 6) drew and mentioned Zoran Šprajc, a journalist and TV host. P10 (see Figure 15) mentioned Croatian gaming YouTuber BloodMaster, which proved correct the expectation that young students today would include YouTubers and social media personalities as part of their culture and identities, similar to the students who included cartoons, TV shows, digital and pop culture in Lotherington and Chow's 2006 "Rewriting Goldilocks" project. Apart from Modrić, nine other athletes were mentioned. P10 (see Figure 15) mentioned ski racer Filip Zubčić; P22 (see Figure 27) mentioned our famous ski racer siblings: Ivica and Janica Kostelić, as well as footballer Ivan Rakitić. One Student, P16 (see Figure 21), mentioned footballer Dominik Livaković and could not resist including his favorite footballers Cristiano Ronaldo, Kylian Mbappé, Erling Haaland and Lionel Messi in his identity text, although they are not Croatian footballers. P2 (see Figure 7) also included a famous person who is not Croatian in her identity text; namely, she would take Jimin, a famous South-Korean singer and dancer, a member of the South-Korean boy band BTS, on a tour around Croatia.

The next category was the flag and the coat of arms, represented by 15 Students (47%): P1 (see Figure 6), P3 (see Figure 8), P4 (see Figure 9), P5 (see Figure 10), P8 (see Figure 13), P9 (see Figure 14), P11 (see Figure 16), P13 (see Figure 18), P14 (see Figure 19), P15 (see Figure 20), P17 (see Figure 22), P18 (see Figure 23), P24 (see Figure 29), P26 (see Figure 31), and P28 (see Figure 33). P4 (see Figure 9), mentioned the coats of arms and flags on the roofs of St. Mark's Church and the Parliament building in Zagreb. P24 (see Figure 29), mentioned the flag colors: red, white and blue. P18 (see Figure 23) thoroughly described the flag and different parts of the coat of arms: over the main, bigger shield, five smaller shields represent different historical regions and form a crown: the oldest known Croatian coat of arms, the Dalmatian, the Istrian, and the Dubrovnik (or Ragusa) Republic coats of arms, and he could not think of the fifth, which is the Slavonian coat of arms. Other Students drew the flag and the coat of arms or simply mentioned it in their identity texts.

The next category was nature and natural attractions, represented by 14 Students (44%). It is not surprising that almost half of all Students included some of the natural attractions in their identity texts since one of the more prominent features of Croatia is its beautiful nature. Three Students, P18 (see Figure 23), P20 (see Figure 25), and P27 (see Figure 32), coming from the city of Karlovac, which is most famous for its four rivers (the Kupa, the Korana, the Mrežnica and the Dobra), included these rivers in their identity texts. Three Students, P10 (see Figure 15), P24 (see Figure 29), and P26 (see Figure 31) mentioned and/or drew Mount Dinara, the highest mountain in Croatia. Two Students, P1 (see Figure 6) and P5 (see Figure 10), mentioned Mount Velebit. P1 (see Figure 6) also marked Vaganski vrh, the highest peak of Velebit. P2 (see Figure 7) mentioned Mount Medvednica and P4 (see Figure 9) mentioned Sljeme, the highest peak of Medvednica. Two Students mentioned and drew two of our many nature parks and national parks: P3 mentioned (see Figure 8) Biokovo Nature Park and P12 (see Figure 17) mentioned Plitvice Lakes National Park. P11 (see Figure 16) mentioned greenery [*zelenilo*], trees, and flowers. P17 (see Figure 22) drew hills typical of the area she lives in – Karlovac County.

Similarly, 14 Students (44%) mentioned different Croatian regions/cities in their identity texts, mostly the areas they lived in or had visited so far. As expected, most of them – 9 Students in total – P4 (see Figure 9), P5 (see Figure 10), P8 (see Figure 13), P11 (see Figure 16), P12 (see Figure 17), P16 (see Figure 21), P25 (see Figure 30), P26 (see Figure 31), and P28 (see Figure 33) – mentioned or drew the Adriatic Sea and coast, for which Croatia is best known. Three Students mentioned Dalmatia: P4 (see Figure 9), P5 (see Figure 10), and P18, who mentioned and drew the Dalmatian coat of arms as part of the Croatian coat of arms (see Figure 23). Two Students, P21 (see Figure 26) and P30 (see Figure 35), mentioned Karlovac. Two Students mentioned and/or drew Istria (P8, see Figure 13; and P18, who mentioned the Istrian coat of arms as being part of the Croatian coat of arms (see Figure 23). One Student mentioned the following regions/cities: P13 (see Figure 18) mentioned the cities of Poreč and Rijeka; P23 (see Figure 28) mentioned the island of Lošinj; P5 (see Figure 10) mentioned the Lika region, the island of Krk and the capital, Zagreb; and P18 (see Figure 23) mentioned and drew the coat of arms of Dubrovnik, or rather the former Republic of Dubrovnik/Ragusa, as part of the Croatian coat of arms.

The next category was famous sights/buildings, included by 13 Students (41%) in their identity texts. Two Students (P11, see Figure 16; P28, see Figure 33) mentioned the Zagreb Cathedral, and the same number (P8, see Figure 13; and P11, see Figure 16) mentioned Ban

Jelačić Square in Zagreb, the Dubovac Castle in Karlovac (P15, see Figure 20; and P19, see Figure 24), Trakošćan Castle in Varaždin County (P9, see Figure 14; and P26, see Figure 31), and the Vukovar Water Tower (P1, see Figure 6; and P24, see Figure 29). One Student, P4 (see Figure 9), mentioned the Croatian History Museum, the Ethnographic Museum, the Croatian National Theatre [*HNK*], St. Mark's Church and the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb. P12 (see Figure 17) mentioned the "Vatroslav Lisinski" Concert Hall in Zagreb. P21 (see Figure 26) drew and mentioned the "Zorin Dom" Theatre in Karlovac. P19 (see Figure 24) mentioned the "Aquatika" Freshwater Aquarium in Karlovac. P6 (see Figure 11) mentioned and drew the Pula Arena. P26 (see Figure 31) mentioned the Edison Cinema in Karlovac and the "Zilik" Art Gallery in Karlovac.

Music, songs and instruments were mentioned by 11 Students (34%). As already mentioned, 5 Students mentioned Croatian musicians or singers: Josipa Lisac (P12, see Figure 17), Massimo and Davor Gobac (P15, see Figure 20), Severina (P1, see Figure 6) and Maja Šuput (P24, see Figure 29; and P26, see Figure 31). Six Students (P9, see Figure 14; P12, see Figure 17; P15, see Figure 20; P24, see Figure 29; P26, see Figure 31; P28, see Figure 33) mentioned or drew *tamburica*/*tambura*, a traditional Croatian string instrument. Two Students (P4, see Figure 9; and P13, see Figure 18) mentioned Dalmatian *klapa*, a type of a traditional *a capella* choir, and one of them mentioned one popular *klapa* - "Intrade". One Student, P12 (see Figure 17), mentioned the "Rock Me, Baby" song by the Riva group, which was the Yugoslavian entry and the winning song at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1989. One Student, P31 (see Figure 36), wrote slightly altered lines of the "Mamica su štrukle pekli" song sung in the Storybook: "Mamica su štrukle pekla meni nebu nikaj rekla". One Student, P26 (see Figure 31), mentioned the guitar as the instrument played in Croatia, and P10 (see Figure 15) mentioned Zaprešić Boys band.

Nine Students (28%) mentioned traditional clothes [*narodna nošnja*] in their identity texts: P1 (see Figure 6), P4 (see Figure 9), P7 (see Figure 12), P9 (see Figure 14), P11 (see Figure 16), who mentioned Slavonian *nošnja* (which she misspelled as "Slovenija" instead of Slavonija"), P15 (see Figure 19), P24 (see Figure 29), P26 (see Figure 31) and P28 (see Figure 33), who mentioned and drew the traditional Lika cap.

National holidays were mentioned by 7 Students (22%). Four of them, P9 (see Figure 14), P21 (see Figure 26), P24 (see Figure 29) and P27 (see Figure 32) mentioned that Christmas was celebrated in Croatia. Two of them, P5 (see Figure 10) and P28 (see Figure 33)

mentioned Independence Day, celebrated on 25 June. P4 (see Figure 9) mentioned Statehood Day, celebrated on 30 May.

Five Students (16%) drew animals or living organisms that can be found in Croatia. P20 (see Figure 25) drew all four rivers in Karlovac and an animal or other form of a living organism in each river: a frog in the Mrežnica River, a stork in the Dobra River, algae in the Kupa River and fish in the Korana River. Two other Students drew fish: P16 (see Figure 21) and P19 (see Figure 24 – fish in the Aquatika Freshwater Aquarium in Karlovac). Two Students, P8 (see Figure 13) and P31 (see Figure 36), drew cats as they were very fond of the characters in the Storybook.

Three Students (9%) included festivities in their identity text projects. P3 (see Figure 8) mentioned the Rijeka Carnival, P15 (see Figure 20) mentioned the International Folk Festival in Karlovac, and P26 (see Figure 31) mentioned the Advent Festival in the period before Christmas.

Three Students (9%) included art in their identity texts. P23 (see Figure 28) included the sculpture of Ambroz Haračić and P8 (see Figure 13) included the sculpture of Ban Jelačić on Ban Jelačić Square. P1 (see Figure 6) mentioned and drew an imitation of a picture with the motif of hills by Ivan Rabuzin, a Croatian naïve painter.

Two Students (6%) included books and magazines in their identity text projects. P11 (see Figure 16) drew an open book. P8 (see Figure 13) made her own version of Smib, a Croatian kids' magazine, in which she represented Croatia on four pages.

Two Students (6%) included the Croatian War of Independence in their identity text projects. P1 (see Figure 6) mentioned the "Storm" [*Oluja*] war operation, and P5 (see Figure 10) mentioned the war itself.

Two Students (6%) mentioned the Croatian language in their identity text projects – P1 (see Figure 6) and P26 (see Figure 31). Two Students drew a map of Croatia and the Adriatic Sea – P8 (see Figure 13) and P11 (see Figure 16).

Two Students (6%) mentioned transportation infrastructure in their identity texts. P8 (see Figure 13) drew and mentioned the Istrian Y highway complex. P11 (see Figure 16) mentioned the new cable car that leads to Sljeme in Zagreb, the highest peak of Medvednica.

Two Students (6%) included everyday expressions in their identity texts: P2 (see Figure 7) used “Drago mi je”, i.e. “Nice to meet you”, because she imagined that she was introducing herself to her favourite singer, Jimin, a member of a South-Korean band BTS, and taking him on a tour around Croatia. P21 (see Figure 26) also imagined that she was taking a friend from abroad on a tour around her home town, Karlovac, so she started her identity text with the greeting “Bok!”, i.e. “Hello!”

P8 (see Figure 13) also said that in her issue of Smib Magazine we could find information on Croatian history and how Croatia was made. She also drew a map of Italy, Croatia’s neighbouring country, and mentioned tourist accommodation – Lanterna Camping Resort, and Müller shop on Ban Jelačić Square.

P11 (see Figure 16), said that good people lived in Croatia and that we had a lot of nice customs.

P10 (see Figure 15), mentioned that Croatian football national team had won 2nd place in the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

P17 (see Figure 22), imagined that she would introduce a friend coming from another country to her best friend.

P9 (see Figure 14) mentioned the national anthem in his identity text. He also mentioned the Croatian Democratic Union [*HDZ*], which is currently the leading political party in Croatia, and drew their membership card.

All in all, every identity text uniquely represented each Student’s perception of their home country. They showed impressive knowledge about all kinds of features representing their country, especially about traditional food and famous people, as the Students provided the largest number of different examples from these two categories. As expected, the Students enjoyed the chance to creatively express their cultural heritage through writing and drawing. Some of them emphasized that they had not had many such experiences and opportunities before the workshop. The instruction to imagine they were describing their country to a friend from abroad who was visiting Croatia for the first time and knew nothing about it made the project more fun for the Students as they got to imagine a real-life type of situation where they would act as a tour guide.

The fourth research question was: *Will the storybook and the identity text projects spark students' interest in learning about their own language and culture and other languages and cultures?*

When listening to and reading the Storybook, all the Students had very positive reactions to it. They were most excited when Croatia and the Croatian language came along, and some of them were quite surprised because they had not expected to see Croatia in the Storybook. They had the most laughs when they heard the Croatian Kajkavian traditional song "Mamica su štrukle pekli", and they also enjoyed the Dalmatian dialect in the dialogue on page 10. Apart from Croatian, other languages they found very amusing were Italian and French; some of the Students imitated the languages and the gestures, especially the so-called "finger-purse" – the most famous Italian hand gesture. After listening to and reading the Storybook, a number of Students said that they had never seen a storybook like that before.

Table 29 shows the reasons the Students liked the Storybook (question 37 in the Questionnaire).

Table 29

The reasons the Students liked the Storybook

The reasons the Students liked the Storybook	**No. of Students**
many languages	12
many countries	8
fun	8
learned something new	4
cool	4
interesting	3
magical	3
Dalmatian	3
Kajkavian, *kaj*	2
pictures/illustrations	2
unusual	2
many different things	2
France, the Eiffel Tower	1
got immersed in the story	1
saw different parts of the world	1
easy to follow	1
animals	1
Croatia	1
Croatian (funny)	1
travel	1
special/not like other storybooks	1
handwritten and drawn by hand	1

All the Students (32 out of 32) stated that they liked the Storybook and the story and gave various explanations why. They gave various explanations for why they liked it. The biggest number of Students (12 Students or 38%) said it was because there were many languages, which had been expected, provided that the Students would not find multilingualism too confusing. Eight Students (25%) said they liked the Storybook because of the many countries presented there and one Student emphasized that it was better than if just a few countries were presented. The same number said they enjoyed it because it was fun. Four Students (13%) said the Storybook was cool and the same number said they had learned something new. Three Students (9%) said they liked it because it was interesting and magical, and the same number said they liked Dalmatian. Two Students (6%) said they liked the Kajkavian dialect. The same number of Students said they liked the Storybook because it was unusual and the same number said they liked the pictures or illustrations and many different things depicted there. One Student said she really liked France because she loved the Eiffel Tower and Paris and was going to visit it this year. She said that when she had looked at the pictures, she had imagined the cultures and the languages and seen parts of the world she had never been to and got completely immersed in the story. One Student (3%) said he liked it because it was very easy to follow. One Student (3%) said they liked the Storybook because the characters were animals. One Student (3%) said they liked it because Croatia and the Croatian language were in it. One Student (3%) said they liked the travelling in the Storybook. One Student (3%) said that she liked the Storybook because it was special and not like other storybooks and because it was handwritten and drawn by hand. As expected, the Students liked the fact that there were many countries and languages in the Storybook and had not encountered many multilingual or multicultural storybooks so far, especially not the ones in which Croatia and the Croatian language are presented.

Table 30 shows the best parts of the Storybook according to the Students (question 38 in the Questionnaire).

Table 30

The best part of the Storybook

The best part of the Storybook	No. of Students
Croatia	17
everything	5
France	5
Italy	3
Spain	2
illustrations/very well drawn	2
Croatian	2
Dalmatian	2
dance in Portugal and Spain	2
cats	1
Portugal	1
love in France	1
the cats' rituals and laziness at first vs. the cats' courage afterwards	1
the Eiffel Tower	1
the sea	1
Germany	1
štruklji	1

Most of the Students (17 Students or 53%) said the best part was Croatia, as expected since it was their home country. One Student who said that Croatia was the best part for her said that she had not expected to see it in the Storybook. One of them said it was because she liked hills. Five Students (16%) could not decide, so they said answered the best part was everything. The same number said that France was the best part. One of these Students said that she loved France because of the love she had seen in that country in the Storybook and because of the Eiffel Tower. Three Students (9%) said that Italy was the best part. Two Students (6%) said the best part was Spain, and the same number said that it was the Croatian language, the Dalmatian language, dance in Portugal and Spain, and the illustrations. One of them commented that the Storybook was very well drawn. One Student (3%) said that the cats were the best part, and the same number said that the best part was Portugal, Germany, the sea and *štruklji*. One Student said that it had been fun to see the cats' rituals and them idling the days away at the beginning compared with what they did later, and that she had thought at first that the book was going to be lame and boring (she used the expression "takva nikakva" in Croatian). She said she could not have imagined that the cats would travel around Europe and be as brave as they were in the end.

Table 31 shows how easy or difficult it was for the Students to follow the Storybook (question 39 in the Questionnaire).

Table 31

How easy or difficult it was for the Students to follow the Storybook

Was it easy or difficult to follow the Storybook?	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
easy	18	flags	6
		context	3
		it was slow	3
		knew English	3
		knew some of the languages	2
		fun because of the languages	2
		many illustrations	1
		fun rhymes	1
		similarity with other countries (Spain and Mexico)	1
(really/a bit) difficult	8	did not know when exactly the countries switched (2 pages vs. 1 page)	3
		it was too fast	2
		did not understand everything	1
		does not know flags	1
		did not see flags in all the pictures	1
so-so	4	had to think hard	1
		had to know English to understand the whole Storybook	1
		easier and more fun when listening for the 2nd time	1
		confusing: Slovenia-Croatia	1
		did not know all the languages	1
both	1	easy: recognized some words difficult: does not know/recognize flags	1

More than half of the Students (18 Students or 56%) said it had been easy to follow the Storybook. Six of them said it had been easy because of the flags, as expected, and out of those six, two Students said it had been easy to follow the Storybook because of the flags, but that it would have been more fun and challenging if there had not been any flags. Three of them said it had been easy because of the context and because it was slow. Three of them said

it had been easy because they knew English, two of them said it had been easy because they knew some of the languages, and two of them said it was fun because there were many languages. One Student said it had been easy because it had many illustrations and fun rhymes. One of them said it had been easy because they had noticed the similarity between some of the countries and they provided the example of Spain, which is in the Storybook, and Mexico, which is not.

Eight Students (25%) said it had been difficult to follow the story; one of those Students said it had been really difficult and one said it had been a bit difficult. Three of them said it had been difficult because they had not known when exactly the countries had switched since Germany and Croatia were presented on two pages, while most of the countries were presented on one page, which was confusing to them. Two of them said it had been difficult because it was too fast. One of them said it had been difficult because they had not understood everything, one said it was because they had not recognized flags, and one said it had been difficult because they had not seen flags in all the pictures.

Four Students (13%) answered "so-so" when asked if it was easy or difficult to follow the story. One of them said the reason was that they did not know all the languages. One of them explained that one had to think hard to follow it and to know English to understand the whole Storybook but that it had been easier and more fun when listening for the second time. One of them said that the previously explained one-page vs. two-page representation of the countries in the Storybook confused them to think that the second page representing Croatia was about Slovenia.

One Student (3%) said it had been both easy and difficult to follow the Storybook: easy because they had recognized some of the words and difficult because they did not know which flags represent which countries.

The Students had various opinions about whether it was easy or difficult to follow the story. As expected, the features that made it easy were flags, English as the language used in most of the narration, context and illustrations. It had also been anticipated that some of the Students would find it difficult if they did not understand everything, that some would not know/recognize or notice all the flags, and that the one-page vs. two-page representation of the countries would cause some confusion, as the results show.

Table 32 shows which languages the Students liked best in the Storybook (question 21 in the Questionnaire).

Table 32

The languages the Students liked best

The language the Students liked best	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
French	10	cool	2
		would like to learn it	2
		fancy	1
		would like to visit Paris	1
		sounds nice	1
		accent	1
Italian	8	sounds nice	2
		mother: Italian teacher	1
		mother is learning it	1
		cool	1
		knows some Italian words	1
		accent	1
		talk fast	1
Croatian	6	understands it	1
		similar to Slovenian	1
German	5	is learning it	1
English	4	cool	1
Portuguese	4	talk fast	1
		cool	1
		would like to go there	1
Spanish	3	“similar to Mexican”	1
Swedish	2	different from the rest	1
Dalmatian	1		
Hungarian	1		

The most popular language among the Students was French, liked best by 10 Students (31%). Two of them said French was cool and the same number said they would like to learn it. One of them said they liked it because of the accent, and the same number said that it sounded nice and fancy and that they would like to visit Paris. Eight Students (25%) said they liked Italian best and two of them explained it was because it sounded nice. One of them said they liked Italian because his mother was an Italian teacher and his cousin said it was because his mother was learning it from his cousin’s mother. One of them said they liked Italian because of the accent, because it was cool, because Italians talked fast, or because they knew some words. Six Students (18%) said they liked Croatian best and one of them explained it was because

they understood it and the other said they liked it because it was similar to Slovenian. Five Students (16%) said they liked German best and one of them explained it was because they were learning it. Four Students (13%) said they liked English best and one of them explained that it was cool. Four Students (13%) said they liked Portuguese best and one of them said it was because the Portuguese talked fast, because it was cool or because they would like to go there. Three Students (9%) said they liked Spanish best. One of them explained that it was because it was "similar to Mexican", noticing that the language spoken in these countries sounded similar, although not knowing it was the same language and that "Mexican" was actually Spanish. Two Students (6%) liked Swedish best and one of them explained it was because it was different from all the rest. One Student (3%) said they liked Dalmatian best and one Student said they liked Hungarian best. Two Students said they did not like British English in general because it annoyed them, but that all the other languages were "okay" or "good". One of those Students also mentioned that he found French annoying in general.

Table 33 shows the Students' attitudes toward the fact that there are many countries and cultures in the Storybook (question 32 in the Questionnaire).

Table 33

The Students' attitudes toward the fact there are many countries and cultures in the Storybook

It's cool that there are many countries and cultures in the Storybook.	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
Strongly agree	23	learning more/a lot/something new about the countries	6
		learning or wanting to learn languages	4
		very cool countries	1
		very similar countries	1
		getting close to the countries	1
		seeing the customs	1
		getting immersed in the story	1
		the buildings	1
		different parts of the world	1
		makes me happy	1
		does not like France	1
Agree	7		
Neither agree nor disagree	1		
Disagree	1	does not like France, it is too big	1

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement that it is cool that there are many countries and cultures in the Storybook, 23 Students (72%) strongly agreed, 7 Students (22%)

agreed, 1 Student (3%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 Student (3%) disagreed. Six Students who strongly agreed said it was because they could learn more/a lot/something new about the countries and cultures. Four Students who said they strongly agreed explained it was because they had learned or wanted to learn languages. Two Students who strongly agreed said it was cool. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because they could get close to the countries, see their customs, and get immersed in the story. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because of the buildings. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because the Storybook showed them different parts of the world. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because some countries were very cool and very similar to each other. One Student who strongly agreed said that it was because it made her happy. One Student who agreed said they did not like Germany. Two Students who strongly agreed and disagreed said they did not like France and one of them said France was "too big".

Table 34 shows the Students' attitudes toward the fact that there are many languages in the Storybook (question 33 in the Questionnaire).

Table 34

The Students' attitudes toward the fact that there are many languages in the Storybook

It's cool that there are many languages in the Storybook.	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
Strongly agree	24	learning new languages/new words/a lot/more	9
		see similarities	2
		see differences	1
		hear different accents	1
		sounds good	1
		there aren't many such storybooks	1
		has never read a multilingual storybook	1
		cool	1
		more languages, more knowledge	1
		see something new	1
Neither agree nor disagree	5		
Agree	3		

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement that it is cool that there are many languages in the Storybook, 24 Students (75%) strongly agreed, 5 Students (16%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 3 Students (9%) agreed. Out of those who strongly agreed, 9 Students said it was because they had learned new languages and new words, or simply had

learned more and had learned a lot. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because she thought that the more languages you knew, the more knowledge you had. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because they had seen something new in the Storybook. Some Students who strongly agreed mentioned they had compared different languages in the Storybook: two Students said they could see similarities between languages and one Student said that they could see differences between languages. Some of the Students concentrated on how the languages sounded. One Student who strongly agreed said that it had been cool to hear different languages and the other said the languages sounded good. One Student who strongly agreed said it was because there were not many storybooks like this one. Another Student said that there probably were many multilingual storybooks, but that she had not had the chance to read one yet. One Student who strongly agreed simply said that it was cool that there were many languages in the Storybook.

As expected, most of the Students liked the fact that there are many languages in the Storybook and noticed the differences and similarities between the languages. They also liked the voiceover and the fact that they could hear the languages, apart from just reading the text in the Storybook.

Table 35 shows the Students' aspirations to learn more about their own country (question 34 in the Questionnaire)

Table 35

The Students' aspirations to learn more about their own country

I want to learn more about my own country.	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
Strongly agree	25	it's our country	5
		the country is beautiful	3
		the country is interesting	3
		does not know much	2
		wants to learn through experience and travelling, not study per se	1
		wants to know more	1
		love toward the country	1
		loyalty	1
		100% yes	1
		likes learning	1
		lives there	1
Neither agree nor disagree	4	already knows a lot	1
Agree	3	it would be useful	1

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement that they want to learn more about their own country, 25 Students (78%) strongly agreed. Out of these, 5 Students provided a simple explanation that they wanted to learn more because it was their country and 1 Student gave a similar answer: it was because he lived there. Three Students strongly agreed because their country was beautiful and interesting. Two Students admitted that they did not know much about their country at the moment so they wanted to improve their knowledge. One Student gave a particularly interesting answer: she said that she wanted to learn more about her country, but through experience and travelling, not through studying from books per se. One Student said that they wanted to learn more because they wanted to know more. One Student said he "100%" wanted to learn more because of the love and loyalty he felt toward his country. One Student who strongly agreed said that they liked learning. Four Students (13%) said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with wanting to learn more about their own country. One of them explained that they already knew a lot about it. Three Students (9%) agreed with wanting to learn more about their country and one of them said that it would be useful. As expected, most of the Students showed great enthusiasm toward learning more about their country.

Table 36 shows the Students' aspirations to learn more about other countries (question 35 in the Questionnaire).

Table 36

The Students' aspirations to learn more about other countries

I want to learn more about other countries.	No. of Students	Explanation	No. of Students
Strongly agree	23	why not	3
		to find out secrets	2
		learn about buildings	2
		wants to travel	2
		it's interesting	2
		father is in China	1
		has only been to Slovenia so far	1
		it's fun	1
		every country is beautiful in its own way	1
Agree	7	it would be useful	1
		it would be a wonderful experience	1
		to get to know them	1
		depends on which country	1
		would like to learn about France – wants to visit it, especially Paris	1
		it's interesting	1
Strongly disagree	2		

When asked if they agreed with the statement that they want to learn more about other countries, 23 Students (72%) strongly agreed. Three of them answered "why not" when asked to explain why. Two of the Students who strongly agreed said they wanted to find out these countries' secrets, to learn about buildings, and to travel because it would be interesting to learn more. One Student said that he wanted to learn more about other countries because his father was in China. One Student said that they had only been to Slovenia so far so that was why they wanted to learn more. One Student said it would be fun to learn and one Student said that every country was beautiful in its own way. Seven Students (22%) agreed that they wanted to learn more about other countries. They explained that it would be useful, interesting and a wonderful experience and that they would love to get to know other countries better. One Student said that it depended on which country was in question and that she would like to learn about France because she wanted to visit it, especially Paris. Two Students (6%) said that they strongly disagreed with wanting to learn more about other countries but they did not provide an explanation. As expected, most of the Students showed great enthusiasm toward learning more about other countries.

Table 37 shows the Students' aspirations to learn more languages (question 36 in the Questionnaire).

Table 37

The Students' aspirations to learn more languages

I want to learn more languages.	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
Strongly agree	20	to know how to speak in different countries	3
		to communicate	2
		it's cool	2
		wants to travel (everywhere)	2
		to ask questions in other languages	1
		it's amazing when somebody knows many languages	1
		to meet other people	1
		to make friends	1
		to talk with other players in videogames	1
Agree	6	it's fun	1
		French, the rest if she needs them	1
Neither agree nor disagree	4	would like to, but four languages he knows so far are enough	1
Disagree	1		
Strongly disagree	1		

When asked if they agreed with the statement that they want to learn more languages, 20 Students (63%) strongly agreed. Three of them said it was because they wanted to know how to speak in different countries and, similarly, two of them said it would help them to communicate and one said it would help them to ask questions in other languages. Two of them said that it would help them because they wanted to travel everywhere. Two of them said it was cool to speak many languages. One Student said they strongly agreed because knowing many languages was amazing. One of them said that they strongly agreed because knowing many languages would help them meet other people and one said that it would help them make friends. One Student said that knowing more languages would help him talk with other players in videogames. Six Students (19%) agreed that they wanted to learn more languages. One of them said it would be fun and one said she would learn French and the rest only if she needed them. Four Students (13%) neither agreed nor disagreed with wanting to learn more languages and one of them explained that he would like to, but that four languages

he knew so far were enough. One Student (3%) disagreed with wanting to learn more languages and one (3%) said they strongly disagreed but they did not provide an explanation.

Table 38 shows the Students' attitudes about the identity text projects (question 40 in the Questionnaire).

Table 38

The Students' attitudes about the identity text projects

Did you enjoy doing your own mini project?	**No. of Students**	**Explanation**	**No. of Students**
Yes	32	because of drawing/likes drawing	9
		fun	5
		loves writing essays	4
		liked to imagine describing her country to friends from abroad	3
		unusual	3
		(very) interesting	2
		funny	2
		why not	1
		100% yes	1
		because she made Smib	1
		liked talking about sports	1
		enjoyed drawing Severina	1
		has never done anything like that	1
		could express everything she wanted and that she discussed with the teacher through story, poem, drawing	1

All the Students (32 out of 32) enjoyed doing their identity text project. Nine of them enjoyed it because they liked drawing. Five of them said it had been fun. Four of them enjoyed it because they loved writing essays. Three of them liked the idea of describing their country to friends from abroad. Three Students enjoyed the project because it was unusual. Two Students enjoyed it because it was very interesting and funny. One Student enjoyed the project "100%". One Student liked it because she had made her version of Smib Magazine and one Student humorously said they had enjoyed drawing Severina, a Croatian singer. One Student enjoyed the project because she had never done anything like that. One Student enjoyed it because she could express everything that she wanted and that she discussed with the Teacher through a story, a poem and a drawing.

3.7. Conclusion

The term *multicultural awareness* comprises the sensitivity to, understanding and appreciation of the differences in values, attitudes, experiences, history, customs, and lifestyles of different groups of people in order to have successful interactions with others, develop communicative skills and new relationships, build on the cultural knowledge, break stereotypes and prejudices and ultimately become a well-informed and sensible citizen of the multicultural world we all live in.

The aim of this study was to explore the pedagogical potential of a multilingual and multicultural picture storybook called *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*, created by the author of the paper, and of students' multilingual and multicultural projects inspired by Cummins' (2006) concept of identity texts for promoting multicultural awareness among Croatian primary school students.

The research procedure took a pluralistic didactic approach to languages and cultures and used research instruments and teaching/learning activities involving several languages and cultures (Candelier et al., 2010). It was presumed that all the participants would be at different levels of bilingualism or multilingualism and bring different bits and pieces of their home languages and other languages they knew or were familiar with to the learning situation (Garcia & Flores, 2012). The students had to make sense of a written and spoken text in the storybook in previously 'unknown' languages by evoking knowledge from a common international linguistic and cultural store (Council of Europe, 2001). The study followed the multiliteracies pedagogy, building on the students' cultural and linguistic capital (Cummins, 2006). It also took the language awareness approach, which provided the students with the opportunity to compare different linguistic systems, form positive attitudes toward multilingualism and multiculturalism, and develop favorable perceptions of different cultures, languages and their speakers (Sierens et al., 2018, as cited in Trinki & Letica Krevelj, 2020).

Reading and listening to a multilingual and multicultural storybook and creating identity texts representing the students' languages and cultures followed Garcia and Flores' (2012) social justice principle: it provided equity for all students by including their cultures and home languages in the classroom, developed the students' multilingual awareness and tolerance, encouraged maximum cognitive engagement as the students had to think about complex ideas such as multiculturalism and multilingualism, and it will, hopefully, generate

future learning, as many of the students expressed the wish to learn more about their own and other countries and languages. Garcia and Flores' (2012) social practice principle was also followed: reading, listening to and analyzing the storybook combined explicit language instruction with language used in content, as the students were asked to focus on and analyze the differences and similarities between the lexicon and vocabulary in different languages they encountered in the storybook. The students' identity text project encouraged maximum identity investment by relating to students' own experiences (Cummins, 2001, as cited in Garcia & Flores, 2012) and actively including all students within the learning environment (Cummins, 2006, p. 57) by allowing them to express their intelligence, creativity, imagination, and literary/artistic talents through writing in their home language and possibly other languages as well (Cummins, 2006). Thus, each student was considered "the whole child" (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 8): "intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented" (Cummins, 2006, p. 64), unhindered by individual differences.

To conclude, the study answered all four research questions. The first research question gave an answer to which aspects of the storybook would be the easiest to grasp for young learners. The students grasped all of the important aspects of multilingual awareness: noticing, accepting and respecting differences and similarities between different countries and languages and the things they have in common, the importance of tolerance and appreciation, acknowledging and overcoming foreign language anxiety in order to communicate and form friendships with people from different countries. The storybook helped the students gain insight into and develop appreciation of the lifestyles, traditions and customs in several European countries, most of which they had not visited so far. Lynch-Brown et al. (2014) say that details of daily life and human emotions are richer in picture storybooks than in textbooks, making the children feel as if they lived in different countries for a while. Indeed, the students reported that they could easily get immersed in the story and that they imagined being part of the story. Reading about the choices the characters have to make in the storybook prompted the students to develop moral reasoning and decision making (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014). The students imagined they had to "overcome obstacles" (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014, p. 4), e.g. deal with foreign language anxiety, "accept different perspectives" (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014, p. 4), e.g. fit in different lifestyles, and "formulate personal goals" (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014, p. 4), e.g. decide how they would behave and communicate if they went on a tour of many European countries like the characters in the storybook. As expected, the students noticed similarities and differences between countries in the storybook: in their

languages, food, buildings, nature, vehicles, customs and activities such as dance, trade and sailing. However, some students mentioned differences and similarities not present in the storybook, such as laws, borders and geographical location, which implies that the students were prompted to draw upon their previous knowledge and conceptions. When comparing different languages, all the students mentioned that they had noticed language similarities (especially in pronunciation and vocabulary) and that their prior language knowledge, as well as the presence of cognates and pictures in the storybook, had helped them tremendously in comprehension. Some of them also showed impressive prior knowledge about language families. Although the students were aware that the storybook presented different European cultures, the majority of them said that they thought that all the countries had something in common and gave various examples of common characteristics. This proved that they thought that all people were similar, even if they lived in different countries and cultures (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014). Furthermore, the students managed to grasp the idea of foreign language anxiety represented by Mixus' character and showed awareness of the possibility of having both negative feelings like worry, fear, anxiety, confusion, sadness and anger, and positive feelings like happiness, excitement and confidence at the same time when visiting foreign countries and speaking foreign languages. The majority of students emphasized the need to respect other cultures, fit in, be polite, take part in their customs and try out their food. Many students said they would use English if they visited foreign countries, at least at first, and some of them would combine it with the languages of the host countries or Croatian. Some said they would try to teach their hosts about the Croatian culture and language. The part about Croatia in the storybook boosted the students' self-esteem and pleasantly surprised them since many of them had not expected Croatia to be included.

The second research question gave an answer to which features of the storybook would be the most helpful in promoting multicultural awareness. Those were the ones most prominently represented in the storybook: local food, flags, languages, famous buildings/sights, traditional clothes, local music, songs, instruments, and dance. The students noticed and learned about the cultural importance of several specific features: e.g. traditional local food, activities typical for travelling (e.g. photographing, sightseeing or sailing), customs such as festivities or local trade, and traditional clothes worn on special occasions, when having fun and honoring the past.

The third research question gave an answer to what the students would include in their identity texts. The largest number of students included food, famous people, the flag and the

coat of arms, nature and different regions and cities in their identity texts. All identity texts uniquely represented students' perceptions of their home country. As expected, the students enjoyed the chance to creatively express their cultural heritage through writing and drawing.

Rich illustrations in picture books add to cognitive (better comprehension) and aesthetic value (art appreciation) (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014). The students reported that the illustrations in the storybook helped them tremendously with comprehension. They also greatly appreciated the fact that the entire storybook was hand-written and drawn by hand and they loved the drawing style. The voiceover was also another important asset which helped them to better comprehend and notice similarities and differences between the languages. If children encounter a wide variety of literature, they develop a sense of literary and artistic preferences and can select authors, illustrators, topics, and styles that suit them best (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014). As many of the students said, before participating in this research, they had not been aware that multicultural and multilingual books existed. Thus, this storybook was their first encounter with this type of literature and will, hopefully, encourage them to read more multicultural and multilingual literature and engage in interactions with people from different countries like the characters from the storybook. The positive reactions, excitement and enthusiasm that the students had toward the storybook and identity text projects and their answers to the questionnaire show that the storybook could bring both personal and academic benefits that children's literature nurtures, as discussed by Lynch-Brown et al. (2014). As all of the students stated that they liked the storybook, that it was fun and that they enjoyed reading and listening to it, the most important personal gain of enjoyment was achieved, which could, hopefully, have at least a small impact on forming a lifetime reading habit (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014). It gives hope that they will continue to read books and/or listen to audiobooks for pleasure and engage in this type of informal learning, which the Council of European Union (2014) acknowledges as an important part of language learning. In the end, most of the students expressed interest in learning more about their country and other countries and languages, which gives a positive answer to the fourth research question. Therefore, hopefully, this storybook will be just the first step in raising these students' multilingual and multicultural awareness.

3.8. Implications for teaching

Literature may serve as teaching material in all school subjects, not only in language classes. Literature across the curriculum as teaching material for content areas like foreign languages, social studies, history, science, health, mathematics, etc., presents the content in a much more captivating, relevant, comprehensible and memorable way than in most textbooks (Lynch-Brown et al., 2014).

Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure might be used as teaching material not only in different foreign language classes but also in social studies, geography, history and other school subjects.

3.9. Limitations of study and suggestions for further research

Originally, the idea was that the Students would participate in the research remotely, from their homes and with help, and the participants were supposed to be Croatian international primary school students. However, it had not been possible to arrange the research in that way. In the end, all the participants were Croatian primary school students and the research was conducted in the form of in-person or online workshops. The author of this paper is extremely grateful to all the Students who participated in the research and the teachers who made it possible to conduct the research at their foreign language schools. The advantage of conducting the research in person was the interaction between the participants and the Teachers. It was also extremely useful that the Teachers could hear the Students' thoughts as they filled out their questionnaires and see their reactions and enthusiasm when listening to the Storybook and doing their identity text projects, which will always remain a precious and warm memory. The author of the paper is aware that all the ideas she had originally had about the research had been rather ambitious, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that it would require tremendous effort from the parties involved – the students, their parents, family members and teachers. Nevertheless, the difference between the original idea and the final version of the research may be presented as limitations of study or, rather, as suggestions for further research.

If the research had been conducted among students of an international school as originally planned, the research sample would have consisted of multicultural and multilingual participants. The research was also supposed to be conducted online in its entirety. If the research had been conducted online, the study would have employed many benefits of ICT, similar to the MuViT project (Elsner, 2014). The Students would have had more opportunities to develop digital, technological and multimodal literacy. The Students would have had to play the audio Storybook themselves and they would have had to do an online Questionnaire in MS Forms. If the Students had had the opportunity to do their identity text projects at home, with more time and technology available, they might have created identity texts in the form of videos, PPT presentations, or any other multimodal means using technology. The Students would have also shared their identity texts with other students on an online platform such as Google Disk or the school's webpage. In that way, all the Students would have become familiar with the culture and language of their peers, thus reaching the goal of promoting multiculturalism and multilingualism, which would have made the project even more multicultural and multilingual as a whole.

Furthermore, if the research had been conducted online, the students would have been welcome to collaborate with their parents or other family members while doing their identity text projects in order to stimulate discussion about their culture at home. The multilingual and multicultural questionnaire had originally had the Parents' section as well. The Students may have created more extensive projects if they had more time to do them at ease in the comfort of their own home, with no time limit and with their parents' or family members' help. For example, one of the Students who participated in the research via Google Meet sent two versions of her identity text project – one that she created quickly during the online workshop, and the other which she improved of her own accord the next day when she had more time. During the in-person workshops, some of the Students expressed the wish to have more time when doing their projects, but, unfortunately, they were hindered by the time limit of the workshops.

To conclude, the suggestions for further research are to draw a multilingual and multicultural research sample, to include parent-student collaboration (or other family members alongside or instead of parents), and encourage the use of ICT in the creation of identity texts and the sharing of the participants' identity text projects via World Wide Web.

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Sažetak

U današnjem multikulturalnom svijetu važno je promicati svijest o multikulturalnosti i solidarnost od najranije moguće dobi. Jedan od načina za to jest pristupiti djeci kroz svijet mašte. Višejezične slikovnice koje predstavljaju niz različitih kultura mogle bi zainteresirati mlade učenike za učenje o stranim jezicima i kulturama, kao i upoznati ih s njihovim vlastitim kulturnim i jezičnim podrijetlom i baštinom. Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je istražiti pedagoški potencijal višejezične i multikulturalne slikovnice pod nazivom *Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure*, koju je napisala i ilustrirala autorica ovog diplomskog rada, te učeničkih projekata inspiriranih Cumminsovim (2006) konceptom tzv. *identity* tekstova u promicanju svijesti o multikulturalnosti među hrvatskim osnovnoškolskim učenicima. Istraživanje je trebalo otkriti koje će aspekte svijesti o multikulturalnosti mladi učenici najlakše pojmiti, koji će aspekti u slikovnici bili najkorisniji u promicanju svijesti o multikulturalnosti, koje će aspekte vlastite kulture učenici uključiti u svoje *identity* tekstove, i hoće li slikovnica i *identity* tekstovi potaknuti interes učenika za učenje o vlastitom jeziku i kulturi te drugim jezicima i kulturama. Učenici su pojmili sve važne aspekte svijesti o multikulturalnosti: prihvaćanje i poštovanje razlika i sličnosti između različitih zemalja i jezika, važnost tolerancije i uvažavanja, prepoznavanje i prevladavanje tjeskobe oko korištenja stranih jezika u svrhu poboljšanja komunikacije i sklapanja prijateljstava s ljudima iz različitih zemalja. Najkorisnije u promicanju svijesti o multikulturalnosti bile su značajke koje su najistaknutije u slikovnici: zastave, jezici, poznate građevine/znamenitosti, lokalna hrana, tradicionalna odjeća, lokalna glazba, pjesme, instrumenti i ples. Aspekti koje je najveći broj učenika uključio u svoje *identity* tekstove bili su hrana, poznate osobe, zastava i grb, priroda i različite regije i gradovi. Svi su učenici pokazali uzbuđenje i entuzijazam čitajući i slušajući slikovnicu i izrađujući svoje *identity* tekstove u kojima su predstavili svoje države i jezike, a većina ih je pokazala interes za dodatnim učenjem o različitim zemljama i jezicima, stoga bi ova slikovnica mogla biti tek prvi korak u promicanju svijesti o višejezičnosti i multikulturalnosti.

Ključne riječi: svijest o multikulturalnosti, multikulturalizam, višejezičnost, višejezične slikovnice, multikulturalne slikovnice, dječje knjige, *identity* tekstovi

Appendix A

The multilingual and multicultural picture storybook:

Mixter and Mixus Mic: Europe adventure

Figure A1

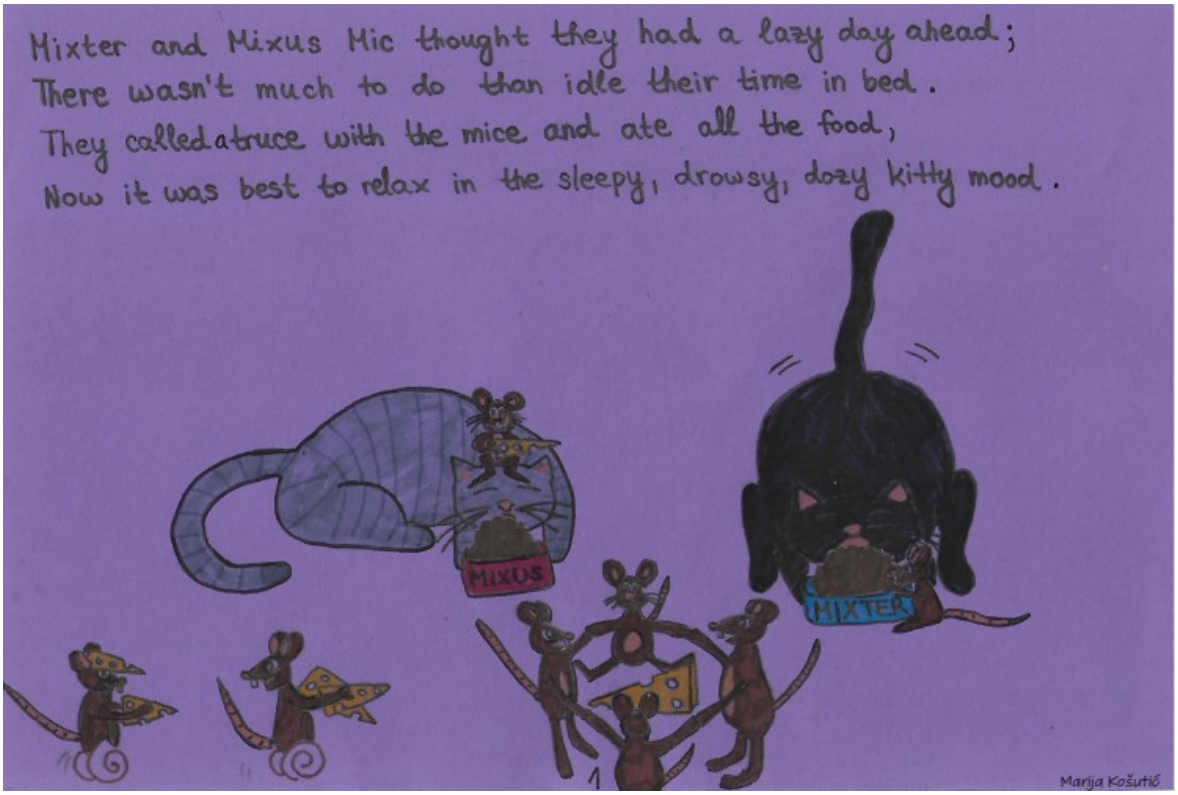


Figure A2

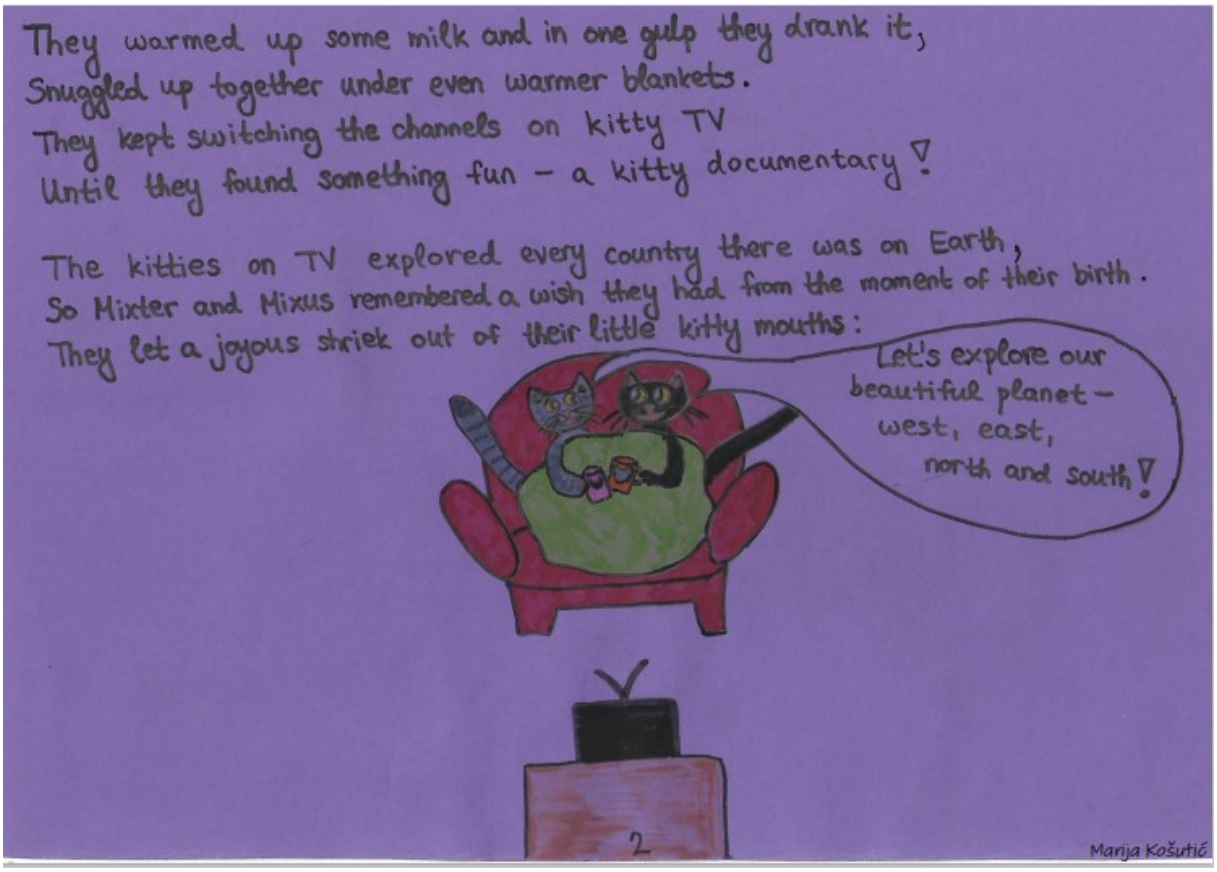


Figure A3

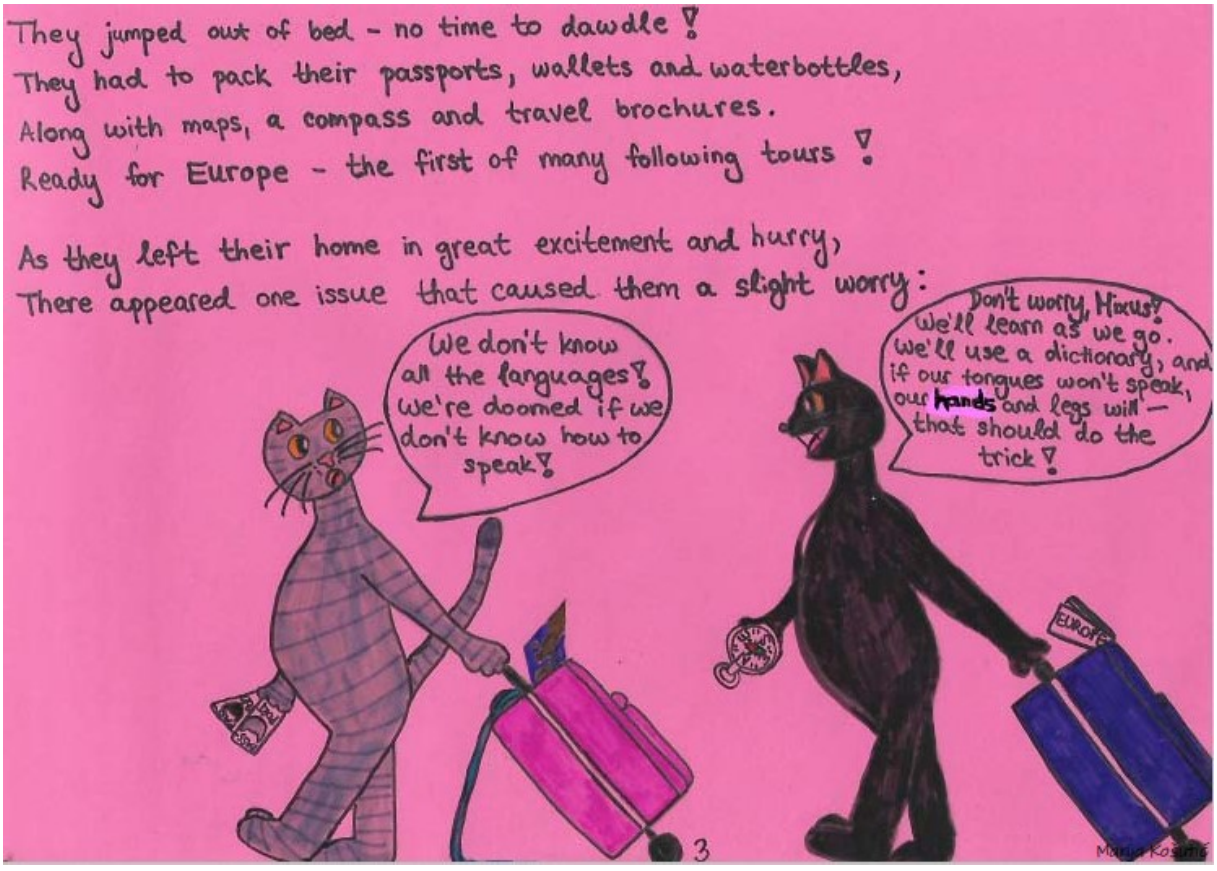


Figure A4

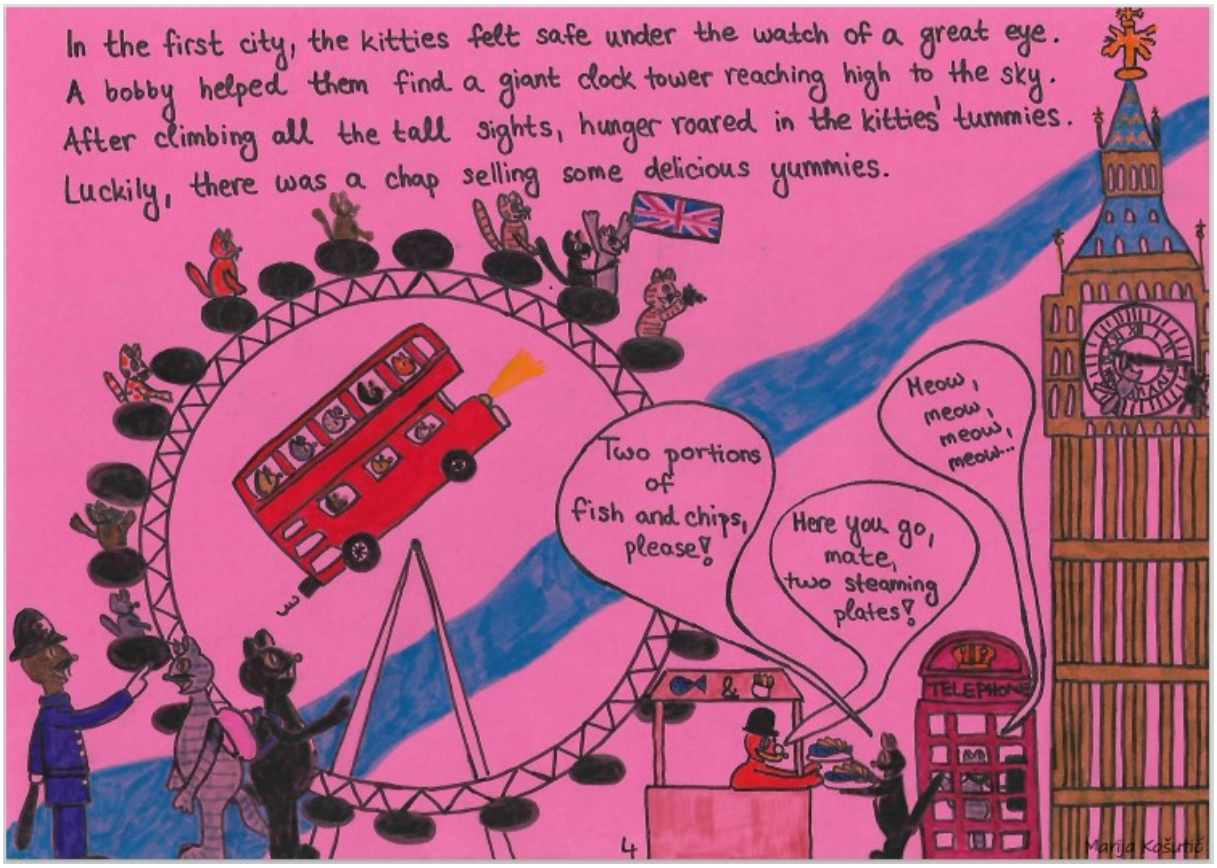


Figure A5

Figure A6

Figure A7

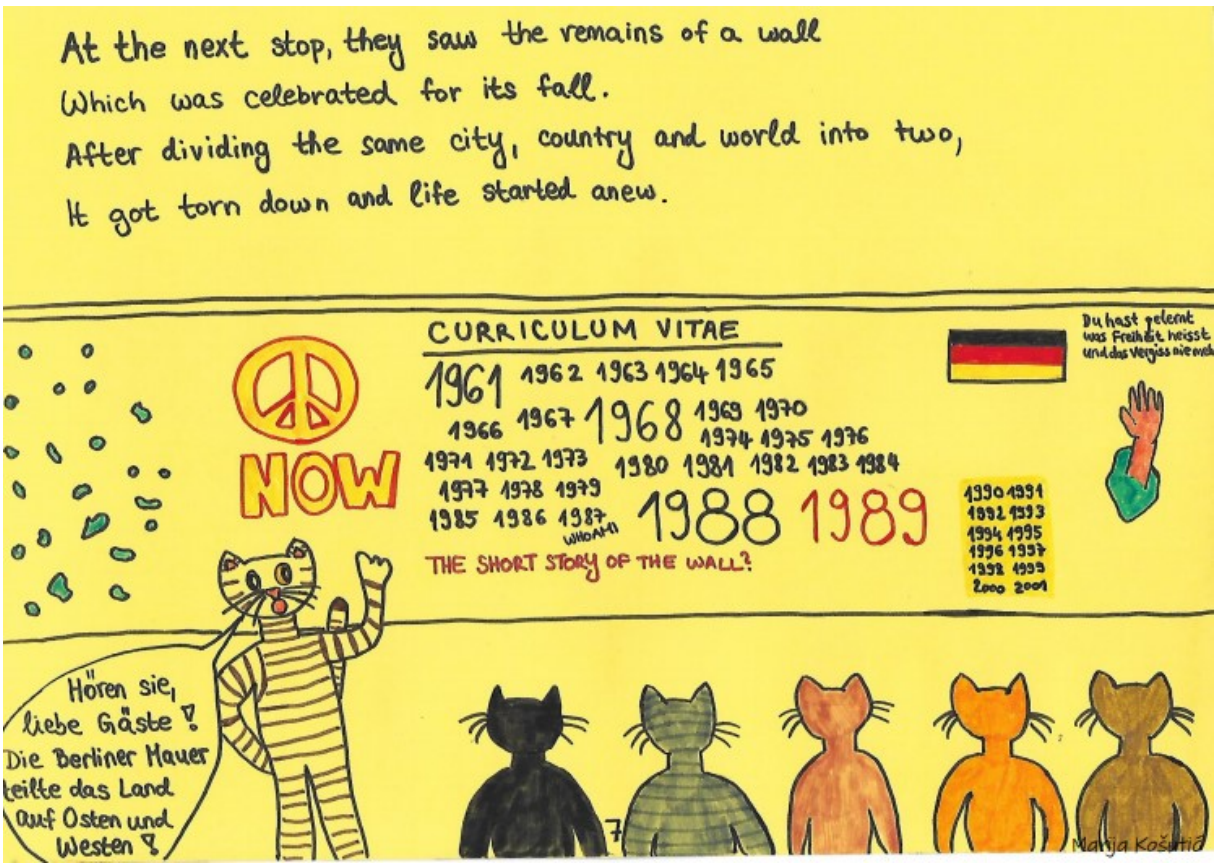


Figure A8

Figure A9

Figure A10

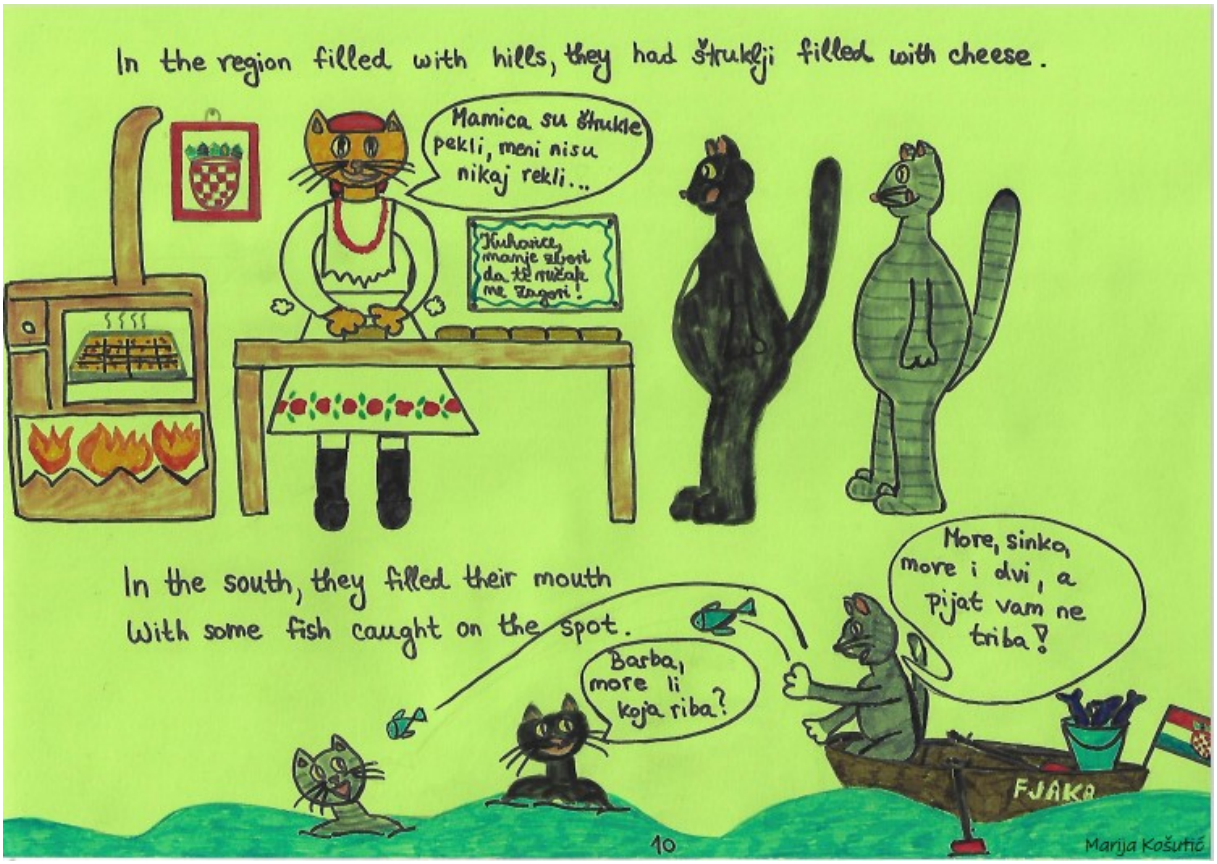


Figure A11

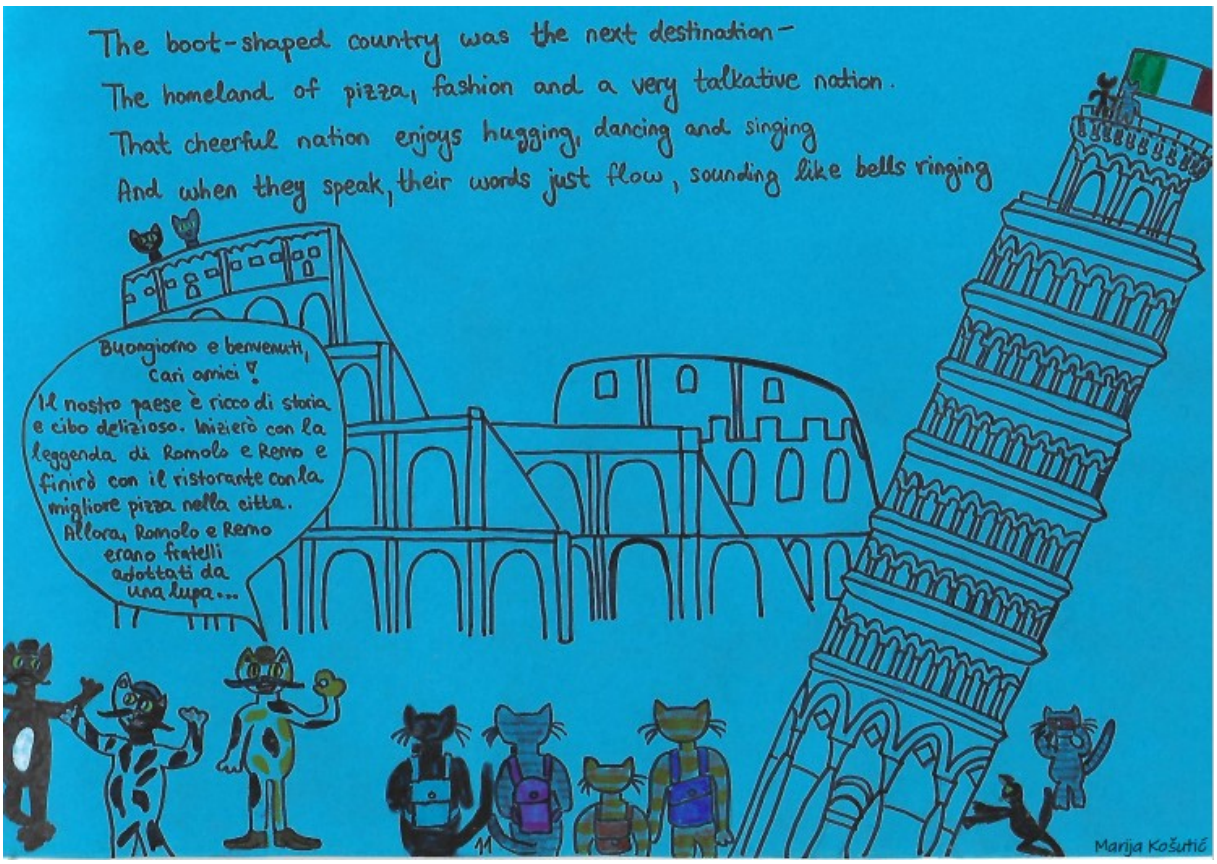


Figure A12

Figure A13

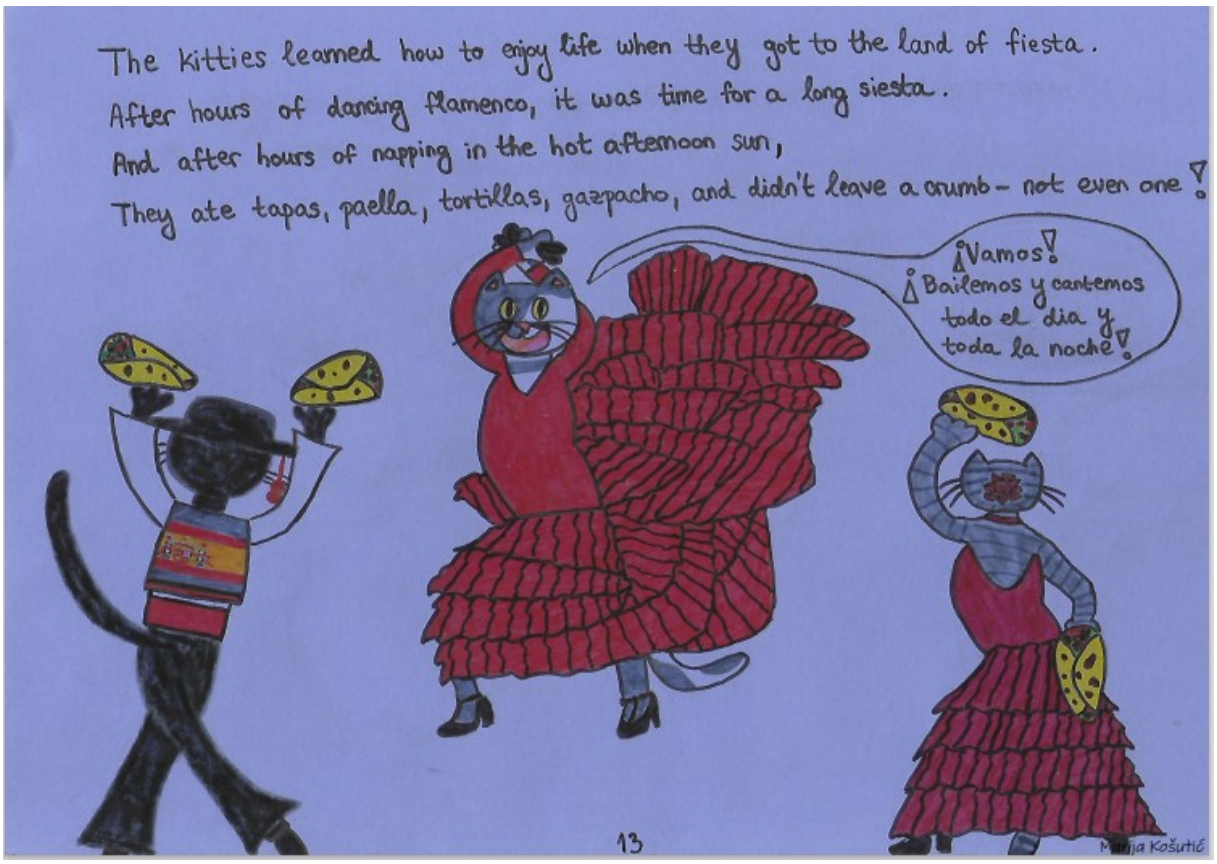


Figure A14

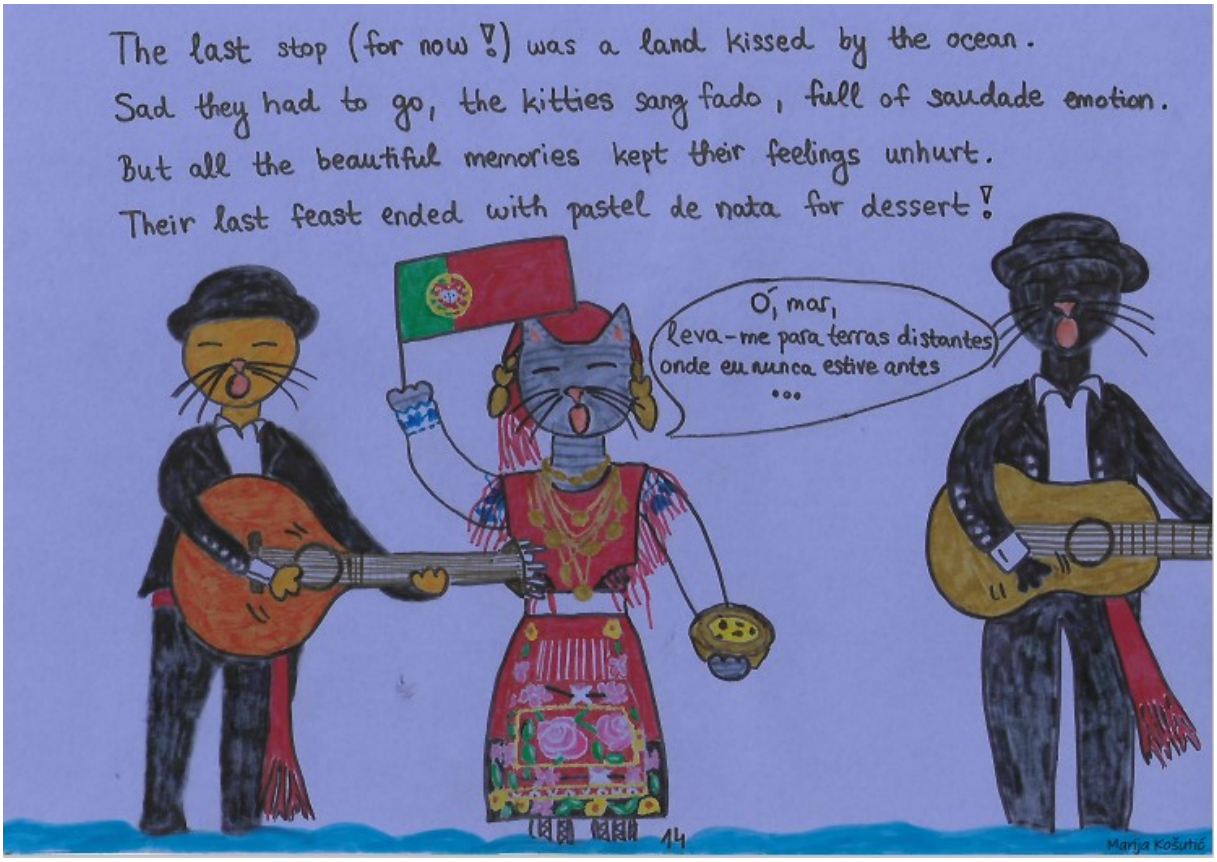


Figure A15

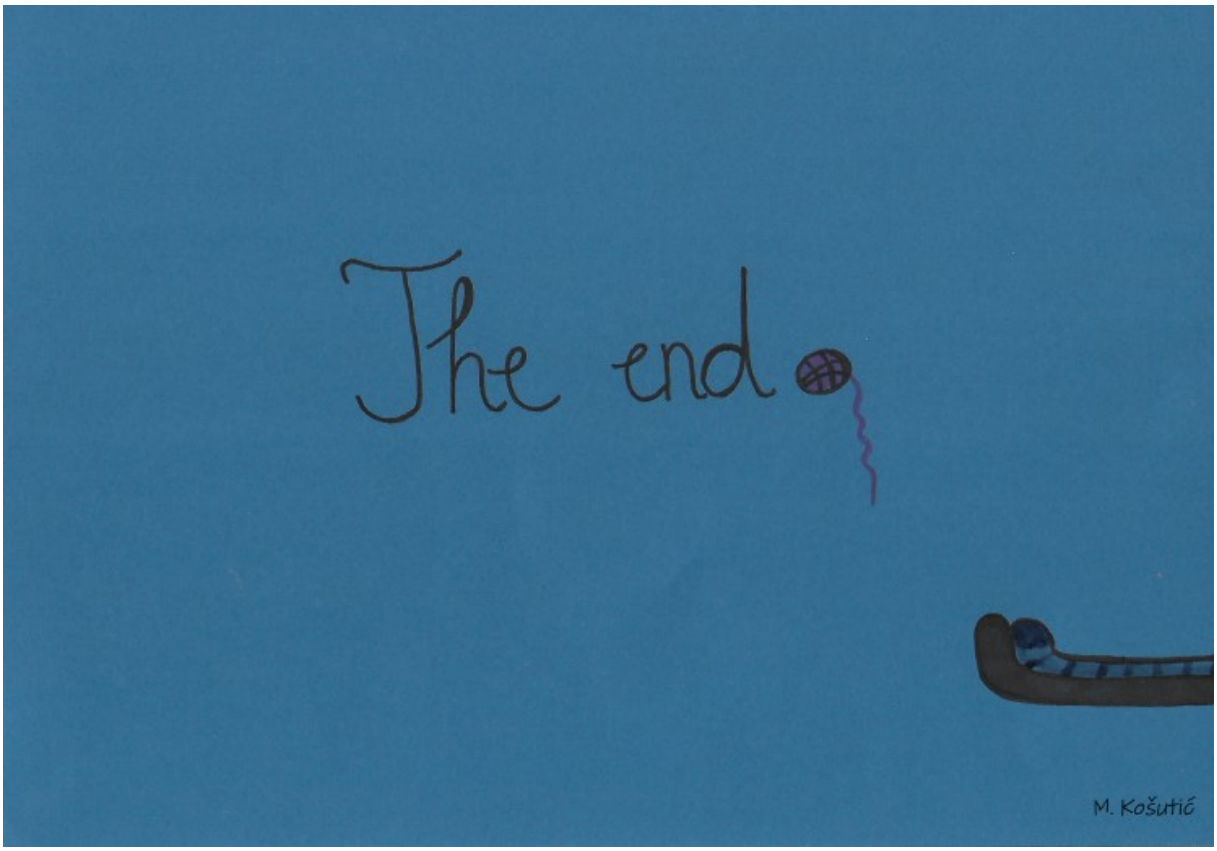
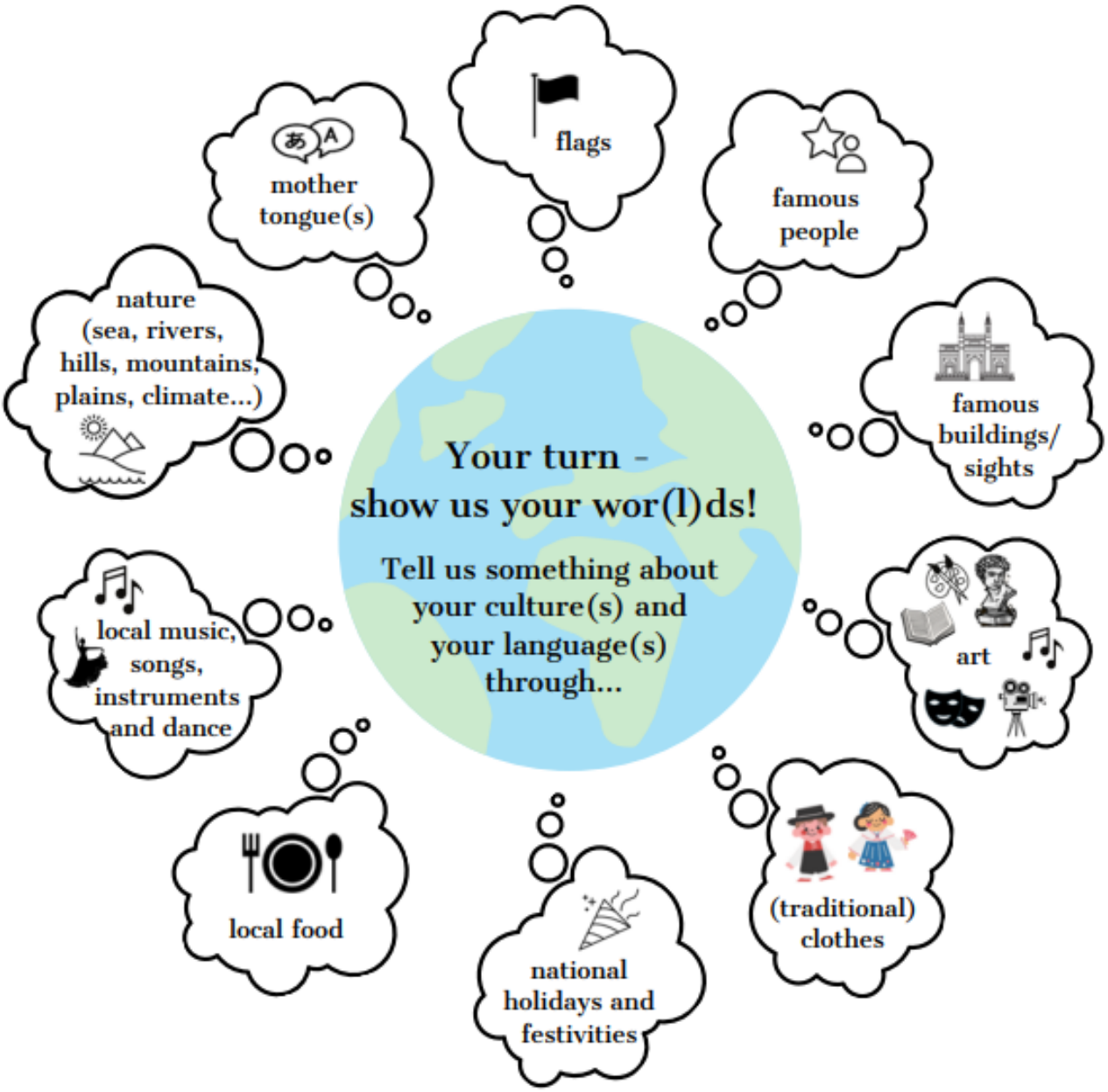


Figure A16

Appendix B

The mind map serving as instruction for the Students' identity texts



Appendix C
The Multicultural and Multilingual Questionnaire

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. My home country/-ies is/are _____

2. Have you lived/spent more than 3 months outside your home country/-ies? If yes, for how long? _____

3. My mother tongue(s) is/are _____

4. What other languages do you know/speak (even if just a little bit)?

_____

5. What languages are used in your family?

THE STORYBOOK

6. What did you learn about your own culture when reading the storybook?

a) Language(s)  *b) Flags*  *c) Famous people* 

d) Famous sights/buildings  *e) Art* 

f) (Traditional) clothes  *h) National holidays and festivities* 

i) Local food  *j) Local music, songs, instruments and dance* 

k*) Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)* 

l) Anything else: _____

7. What did you learn about other cultures when reading the storybook?

a) Language(s)  *b) Flags*  *c) Famous people* 

d) Famous sights/buildings  *e) Art* 

f) (Traditional) clothes  *h) National holidays and festivities* 

i) Local food  *j) Local music, songs, instructions and dance* 

k*) Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)* 

l) Anything else: _____

8. What helped you to recognize the different countries in the storybook?

a) Language(s)  *b) Flags*  *c) Famous people* 

d) Famous sights/buildings  *e) Art* 

f) (Traditional) clothes  *h) National holidays and festivities* 

i) Local food  *j) Local music, songs, instructions and dance* 

k*) Natural attractions (climate, scenery, hills, mountains, sea, rivers, plains…)* 

l) Anything else: _____

9. Please describe how the cats in the storybook dress. _____

10. Why do the cats in the storybook dress that way when they are dancing and singing? _____.

11. Please list the food the cats eat in the storybook. _____.

12. Please list the things that the cats do in the storybook. _____

13. Is your country similar to other countries/cultures in the storybook? If yes, please explain which ones and in what way. _____.

14. Is your country different from other countries/cultures in the storybook? If yes, please explain which ones and in what way. _____.

15. Do all countries in the storybook have something in common? If yes, what would that be? _____.

16. Is there a language in the storybook that you have heard for the first time? If yes, which one(s)?

17. Did the languages you knew from before help you understand the foreign languages in the storybook? How? Can you give an example?

18. Did you recognize the meaning of some words you didn't know before? If yes, which one(s)?

19. Did you notice in the storybook that some words sound/look the same in different languages? Can you give some examples of such words from the storybook?

20. What helped you in figuring out the meaning of foreign words in the storybook?

21. Which of the languages from the storybook did you like best and why?

22. Do you consider some language(s) in the storybook especially difficult or easy to understand? Why?

23. Did you notice in the storybook that some languages sound/look different from each other? Please give some examples.

24. Did you notice in the storybook that some languages sound/look similar to each other? Please give some examples.

25. How does Mixus feel about using foreign languages at the beginning of the storybook (page 3)? Would you feel the same?

26. How does Mixter feel about using foreign languages at the beginning of the storybook (page 3)? Would you feel the same?

27. What advice about using foreign languages would you give to Mixter and Mixus?

28. Did Mixter and Mixus have any problems with speaking all the foreign languages and hanging out with cats from all the different countries? Why (not)?

29. How did you feel when you encountered words you didn't understand in the storybook? Were you worried like Mixus or excited like Mixter?

30. Did it bother you that you didn't understand all the words?

31. If you visited other countries like Mixter and Mixus, how would you behave and talk?

32. It's cool that there are many different countries and cultures in the storybook. If yes, why?

33. It's cool that there are many different languages in the storybook. If yes, why?

34. I want to learn more about my own country/countries. If yes, why?

35. I want to learn more about other countries. If yes, why?

36. I want to learn more languages. If yes, why?

37. Did you like the storybook and the story? Why?

38. What was the best part of the storybook for you?

39. Was it easy or difficult to follow the story? Why (not)?

THE MINI PROJECT:

40. Did you enjoy doing your own mini project? Why?