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A critical overview of the cultural elements in four EFL textbooks used in Croatian secondary schools

Abstract: The significance of integrating cultural elements into foreign language (FL) teaching has been widely recognized by many researchers (Kramsch, 1998; Byram, 2008; Sercu, 2010). Consequently, in recent years, cultural content analysis of English textbooks has received considerable attention. Impelled by the newly reexamined pedagogical standards and the existing National Curriculum in Croatia, this paper provides a critical overview of the cultural elements in four English textbooks for secondary schools used in Croatian EFL classrooms. As one of the three existing domains in the English Language Curriculum, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is perceived as an inevitable and integral part in successful foreign language learning. The paper is divided into theoretical and analytical sections. The former gives a brief overview of the previous and contemporary research in the field of textbook analysis and the importance of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. The second provides both qualitative and quantitative results of the representations of cultural elements such as topics, visuals, audio material, values and cultural activities. Qualitative analysis of the textbooks is elaborated individually, and quantitative results are presented collectively for all four textbooks. Textbook material is examined against Amanda Hilliard's analytic kit, which combines three frameworks for the most appropriate multi-layered analysis of the cultural content. The results of the analysis corroborate some of the previous research findings pointing at the overemphasis of specific topic areas, representation of ethnic minorities in the visuals, accents in audio materials and overly positive perspectives of the target culture. The article concludes with some practical suggestions for further modernization of the intercultural activities which would strengthen students' skills such as tolerance for ambiguity, empathy and adaptability.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), textbooks, cultural elements, secondary schools

1. Introduction

A number of foreign language (FL) researchers (Kramsch, 1998; Byram, 2008; Sercu, 2010) have increasingly acknowledged the significance of developing learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by incorporating intercultural perspectives into FL teaching. The term ICC refers to the knowledge of another language and culture which allows a learner to interact effectively and interpret or negotiate successfully in cross-cultural communication (Guilherm, 2004). Such a competence helps students perceive similarities and differences, critically examine the relative nature of their own cultural identity and better understand other people's perspectives.

Lack of empirical evidence of the ICC development, both worldwide (Sercu, 2010) and in the Croatian context (Bilić-Štefan, 2008), is acknowledged as a significant void in intercultural language research. In recent years, aside from the research into teacher intercultural competences (Breka & Petravić, 2015) and learners' perspectives (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017), cultural content analysis of English textbooks has received considerable attention (Hillard, 2014; Saputra, 2019; Blažević & Blažević, 2023). The representation and acceptance of social and cultural diversity have become an imperative in educational curricula and school textbooks.

Impelled by the newly reexamined pedagogical standards and the existing National Curriculum in Croatia (Kurikulum, 2019), this paper provides a critical overview of the cultural elements in four English textbooks for secondary schools used in Croatian EFL classrooms.

2. Previous studies

Brugeilles and Cromer (2009, p. 14) define a textbook as "the core learning medium composed of text and/or images designed to bring about a specific set of educational outcomes; traditionally a printed and bound book including illustrations and instructions for facilitating sequences of learning activities". EFL textbooks in particular provide a rare glimpse into the representation of social and cultural values and attitudes from the dominant culture that are embedded in the existing curriculum.

International research continues to remind us of many educational settings around the world in which cultural contents in textbooks are portrayed in all forms of bias and stereotypical ways, fostering negative attitudes, distorted images and false values. Since textbooks are still perceived as the foundation of standardized learning, it is of utmost importance that textbooks be critically examined and evaluated from both a linguistic and a pedagogical point of view (McKay, 2003).

Much research has been done on the portrayal of *Big C vs little c* topics, racial diversity, ethnicity and nationality (Saputra, 2019; Rong et al., 2021), aiming to

disclose potentially hidden stereotypes, ideologies or assumptions. Overall results pointed at a growing tendency towards more equal representation of women and minority groups, but also revealed hidden ideologies, avoidance of sensitive topics and a clear imbalance in the representation of source and target cultures. Similar results were confirmed by Croatian researchers (Bilić-Štefan, 2008; Andraka, 2020; Blažević & Blažević, 2023).

Most of the above-mentioned findings have indicated women's suppressed roles and under-representation in EFL textbooks and called for a more inclusive and modernised approach to gender roles, both in visual images and language. Moreover, the values attributed to women in the textbooks in some educational settings might have serious repercussions on girls' academic choices and distorted self-images (Britton, Lumpkin, 1977) in real life.

Other research findings have suggested the inaccurate and often stereotypical portrayal of minority groups (Taylor-Mendes, 2009). This aspect of under-representation is particularly evident in the textbook images. Visual images have long been considered powerful tools in enhancing language learning, motivation and creativity. When utilized well by the teachers, visual images can be an essential source of information which provide additional context to the written narrative (Elmiana, 2019). However, the authors have not yet reached a consensus on the actual value that visuals should be assigned, claiming that they can often distract of diverge EFL learners from the intended meaning of the textual clues.

Finally, a number of studies (Gray, 2010; Saputra, 2019) have indicated a superficial and overly positive representation of the target culture, prioritizing certain cultural values, such as individualism and consumerism.

3. Methodology and research questions

The purpose of this study was to examine underlying perspectives and values within the texts and to evaluate the general effectiveness of cultural elements and activities in promoting students' intercultural communication. Overall, this study aimed to address the following questions:

1. What aspects of cultural elements are included in English language textbooks used in Croatian secondary schools today?
2. What are the commonalities/differences in the representation of cultural elements between the textbooks intended for intermediate and upper-intermediate English language learners?
3. Are there any values guided towards a certain perspective or unrealistic viewpoints promoted by the English textbooks?
4. To what extent do activities included in the textbooks help students develop their intercultural communication?

To address these questions, four textbooks for secondary schools approved by the Ministry of Science and Education and widely used in Croatia were selected. The analysis was divided into three separate readings for intermediate and upper-intermediate textbooks respectively. For the purpose of this paper, the textbooks will be referred to as Textbook 1, Textbook 2, Textbook 3, and Textbook 4.

The cultural topics were examined and commented on using the analytic kit set by Amanda Hilliard in her *Framework for Analysing Cultural Content in English Language Textbooks*. The framework combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of the representations of culture in terms of the related presence of the topics, visuals, audio material, perspectives, values and cultural activities.

4. Textbook analysis

TEXTBOOK 1: Falla, Tim, and Davies, Paul A. (2012). *Solutions Intermediate Student's Book, 2nd edition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

I. Topics
Solutions Intermediate is structurally divided into 10 general topic-based units which further the student's practice of the 7 allotted language competences, namely by offering 7 lessons per competence. 10 culturally detailed topics are introduced and specified in the textbook's (C) Culture Section. The topics usually revolve around macro-cultural content, but implicitly or explicitly also tackle micro-cultural elements (Figure 1). The topics are organized clearly and in a straightforward manner and include various activities for students, which do not remain unidirectional and eventually lead to the student's contemplation about the topic and mastering the cultural competence and communication. However, the authors of the textbook seem to steer clear of topics which are considered sensitive or controversial and, as such, are not explicitly included.

II. Images
Solutions Intermediate includes numerous culture-related texts which are generally accompanied by illustrations. Unlike some other textbook editions, this textbook seems to steer away from the patriarchal portrayal of white middle-aged men, the number of which is balanced by images portraying women. Furthermore, as this textbook aims to educate mostly B1-2 students, there is also a higher number of girls and boys portrayed. Much like with the audio material, there seems to be a perceived and activated impulse to include ethnic and national minorities in the images provided in the textbook's revised edition. Therefore, next to the Caucasian ethnic group, the designated visual content also portrays a number of Asian, Hispanic, and Black men and women (Figure 2).

III. Accents

Solutions Intermediate is structurally supplemented with 3 Student's Book CDs which cover the textbook's content throughout the total timespan of 3 hours, 38 minutes and 27 seconds. The speakers involved usually include middle-aged men and women, but are nicely balanced by younger generations of speakers, too. The dominant accent is Standard British with some (namely Scottish and Irish) regional markers and instances (Figure 3). There appears to be an inclusion of the Standard North American Accent and its regional variations, as well (here involved are General Southern, Texan, New York, and General Californian accents), following the notion of including other English-speaking countries among the topics offered. The Non-Native accents included usually relate to the speech patterns of some dominant national minorities, either in Britain or the USA (the Italian/Czech accents). However, a seemingly impractical nature of the textbook is that it does not include transcriptions of the (culture-based) texts involved in the form of an Appendix at the end of the textbook.[1]

TEXTBOOK 2: Soars, Liz, and Soars, John. (2014). *New Headway Intermediate Student's Book, 4th edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

I. Topics

New Headway Intermediate is structurally divided into 12 general topic-based units which further the student's practice of the 7 allotted language competences. The textbook does not contain a separate culture section, but is rather oriented towards an integrative approach to cultural content within the activities reserved for other competences. Unlike *Solutions*, *New Headway Intermediate* is somewhat poorer in the overall amount of the designated cultural topics. However, what is apparent is that the cultural topics are evenly balanced on the macro-cultural – micro-cultural[2] elements dyad (Figure 1).

II. Images

New Headway Intermediate introduces cultural content which also includes a hefty amount of visual material, such as photographs, images, drawings, illustrations, and charts. A significant improvement has been made when compared to previous editions of the textbook, mainly due to the development and modernisation of the textbook structuring in general. Therefore, the inclusion of more images portraying women seems to be an activated impulse, much like the importance of having

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[1] They are, however, included in *Solutions Intermediate Teacher's Book, 2nd edition*, which has proven to be a valuable resource in following the structure of the cultural texts presented within the three accompanying CDs.

[2] What seems to be a rather practical addition to this textbook edition is the addendum titled Extra class materials, which either reiterates the previously offered cultural content on the basis of revision, or introduces some additional content and various sets of activities aimed at the development of the student's cultural competences.

ethnic minorities represented in the study materials (Figure 2). Largely included are Asian and the Black ethnic groups, but there is some room for improvement and the addition of more ethnic groups (such as Hispanic). The content is not as youth-oriented as is presented in the previous textbook, but is still age-appropriate, interesting and fresh enough, and of high importance for the development of the students' cultural competence and communication.

III. Accents

New Headway Intermediate is structurally equipped with 2 Student's Book CDs which cover the textbook's content throughout the total timespan of 3 hours, 49 minutes and 55 seconds. The speakers involved, much like with the previously analysed textbook, usually include middle-aged men and women, but are nicely balanced by younger generations of speakers, too. The dominant accent is Standard British with some (namely Scottish and Northern English) regional markers and instances (Figure 3). The Standard North American Accent is represented in several instances, with Canadian being its primary regional marker. Non-Native accents included relate to the speech patterns of some dominant national minorities throughout the Great Britain. The accents with such distinctive speech markers represented the most are Spanish, Indian, and Mexican (-English).

Very practical addenda at the end of the textbook are the transcripts of all the listening tasks included in the sections which cover such activities. This is a practical tool both for the teacher when structuring the use of such activities, but also for the students who may face certain difficulties with understanding the speaker's words. Should such need arise, the student is given the source of the text/ listening activity to look up what was unclear and may be instructed or aided into successfully solving the designated listening task.

TEXTBOOK 3. Falla, Tim, and Davies, Paul A. (2014). *Solutions Upper-Intermediate Student's Book, 2nd edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

I. Topics

Content-wise, *Solutions Upper-Intermediate* is structurally equipped with 10 topic-based units which serve to further the student's practice of 7 allotted language competences by offering 7 lessons per competence. 10 culturally detailed topics are introduced and specified in each of the textbook's (C) Culture Sections. The topics predominantly refer to macro-cultural content, but implicitly or explicitly also tackle several micro-cultural topics (Figure 1). The topics are organized clearly, structured with a logical flow, and are straightforward in both depicting and addressing the content. The activities for students, which either relate to the cultural content provided or are derived from it, are varied in their nature, structure, overall aims, and steps to aid the students in mastering cultural and inter-cultural competence and communication.

A general conclusion to which the user (either the educator or the student) of this textbook may arrive is that it, unlike some of its iterations which generally deal with a more youth-oriented content, focuses on several issues which require the student to be of a certain age so as to understand the depth of the topic and the importance of learning about it. These topics aim to arouse the students' thought processes on ever-present events such as local elections and governmental structures, freedom of speech and information, religious freedom and denomination, not only by enlisting information pertaining to Anglophone cultures, but also by offering activities which require the students to compare these instances in relation to their own cultures. This approach also allows the authors and the educators to steer away from superficial coverage of the target content, and it also allows the students to achieve higher levels of understanding not only of several layers of the designated culture(s), but also numerous instances of their own culture(s).

II. Images

What the reader can infer from the data collected from the textbook's cultural visual equipment and illustrative kits is that it still predominantly offers a lot of areas for the inclusion and portrayal of the Caucasian male population. However, when compared to other textbooks which hinge on such ethnic portrayal at the expense of including other ethnicities and genders, one cannot escape from the realization that the authors of this textbook strive to follow the modern trajectory of including people of various social classes, races, national descents, and cultural identities (Figure 2). This approach also provides an explanation on why members of Asian, Hispanic, and Black population are included as a part of the illustrative kit, especially if one takes into account that precisely these three ethnic groups constitute the largest minority groups in Anglophone cultural (as well as socio-political) identity. According to data collected and much like with the apparent dominant areas for Caucasian males, the male-female ratio still favours the former, but the ever-growing inclusion of the latter seems to follow the previously mentioned modernisation of the illustrative cultural content, which in part arises from the approach to textbook structuring in relation to the feminizing of the content.

III. Accents

Solutions Upper-Intermediate is structurally equipped with three accompanying CDs whose total runtime amounts to 3 hours, 56 minutes, and 33 seconds. Each of the tracks on the CDs systematially matches the cultural material provided in a particular lesson, with Standard British unarguably being the dominant accent (Figure 3). There are a handful of instances wherein regional accents are included in the audio material, namely distinctive markers such as Scottish, Northern English, and Irish. The inclusion of any variation of Standard or Regional (North) American accent seems to be little to none when discussing the actual cultural situations represented in the audio material. Non-Native accents are represented

only by Polish speakers, which seems to be a retrograding trend when compared to the previously analysed entry in the Solutions series.

TEXTBOOK 4. Soars, Liz, and Soars, John. (2014). *New Headway Upper-Intermediate Student's Book, 4th edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

I. Topics

New Headway Upper-Intermediate is structurally divided into 12 general topic-based units which further the student's practice of the 7 allotted language competences. The textbook does not contain a separate culture section, but is rather oriented towards an integrative approach to cultural content within the activities dedicated to other competences. Unlike the previous entry in *the New Headway* set, *New Headway Upper-Intermediate* is richer when it comes to inclusion of the overall cultural content (Figure 1). What is also noteworthy to mention is that both macro-cultural and micro-cultural topics seem to be well-balanced, with only a slight revision advised (though not when it comes to the general representation of the Big C elements, but rather to their treatment, in the sense of a deeper comprehension of some of the constituent cultural elements).

II. Images

New Headway Upper-Intermediate introduces cultural content which abounds in visual material, such as photographs, images, drawings, illustrations, and charts. Even though the general and additional visual kit analysed seems to be the richest when it comes to the representation of men, significant progress has been made when compared to previous editions of the textbook, namely due to the development and modernisation of the textbook structuring in general. What furthers this modernised approach is the ample portrayal of women, the number of which is almost equal to the number of men depicted, as well as the ethnic minorities represented in the study materials. Unlike the previously analysed entry in the New Headway set, this edition provides enough room for the portrayal of various Asian, Hispanic, and Black ethnicities, but there is some scope for an even greater inclusion (Figure 2).

III. Accents

New Headway Upper-Intermediate is structurally equipped with 4 accompanying CD-ROMs which cover the textbook's content throughout the total timespan of 4 hours, 17 minutes and 1 second. The number of the speakers involved in the analysed audio content is generally equally divided amongst middle-aged male and female speakers and teenage speakers. The dominant accent is Standard British/Australian English, with a number of its audible regional markers and instances, namely: Scottish English, Northern English (Yorkshire) and Southern English (Bath). The Standard North American Accent is represented in several instances, with Canadian and one instance of Florida accent being its primary

regional markers. The Non-Native accents represented relate to the distinctive speech patterns of some of the UK's dominant national minorities (namely the Indian ethnic group). Speakers from Greece, Ukraine, Argentina, and Spain are also included in the textbook's CD track-list (Figure 3).

5. Summary of results

For practical reasons and the sheer scope of the study, the quantitative results addressing topics (Figure 1), ethnicity (Figure 2) and accents (Figure 3) are represented collectively for all four textbooks. As the final part of this section, the authors' general preferences between the four analysed textbooks are given and further elaborated.
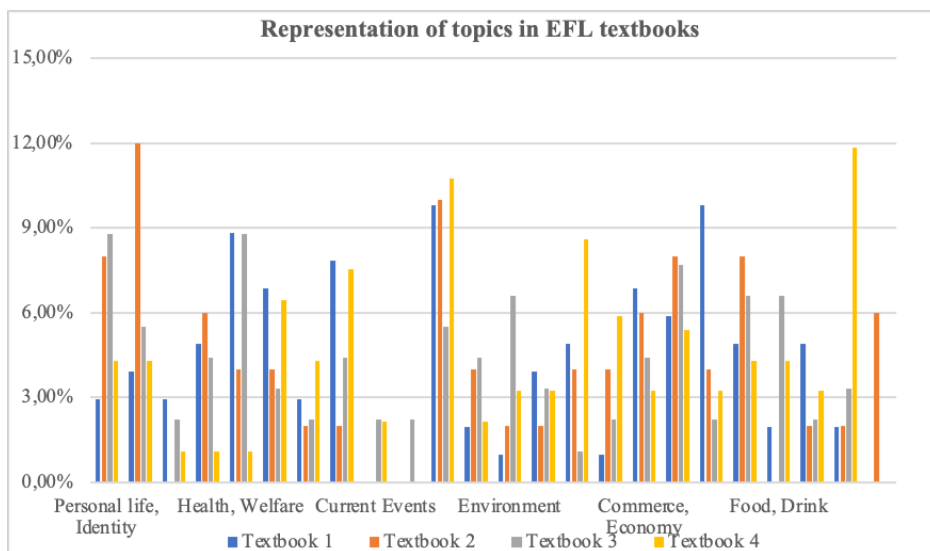

Figure 1. Representation of topics in four EFL textbooks

Based on the results in Figure 1, we have addressed the first research question by stating that topics in all four textbooks are diverse and evenly balanced, slightly more connoted with Big C cultural elements in textbook 1 and 2. In textbook 3 and 4, both Big C and little c cultural elements are equally introduced in a variety of topics.

The distribution of ethnicity in the images of four EFL textbooks is visible in Figure 2. The accompanying visual material mostly shows Caucasians, but due to modern impulse in textbook structuring, other races and ethnic minorities are represented as well. None of the textbooks employs stereotypical characterizations or images, nor do they tackle the offered visuals superficially (or in the sense that they seem out-of-place). The majority of representative areas in both textbooks

is still allotted for men, but the richer inclusion of women is also obvious (with number of images almost as equally included, or at least following the trend of representation and inclusion). Disabled people and some marginal groups in the community are still not thoroughly represented, if at all.
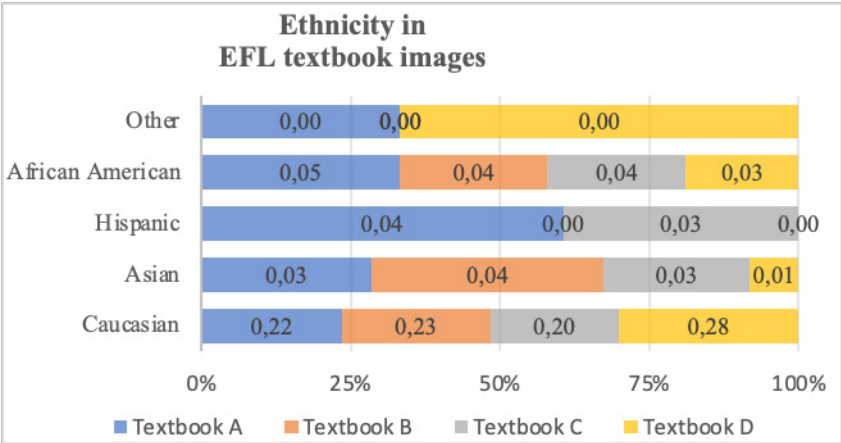

Figure 2. Representation of ethnicity in the images of four EFL textbooks

The predominant accent in all four textbooks is Standard British/Australian, but the Standard North American accent is included, as well. However, various British/Australian and American Regional Accents are included, which showcases the modernised approach and paves way for raising the students' awareness of the multitudes of English language. Non-Native Accents are included as well and are juxtaposed to all the ethnic minorities incorporated in the textbooks' accompanying visual material.
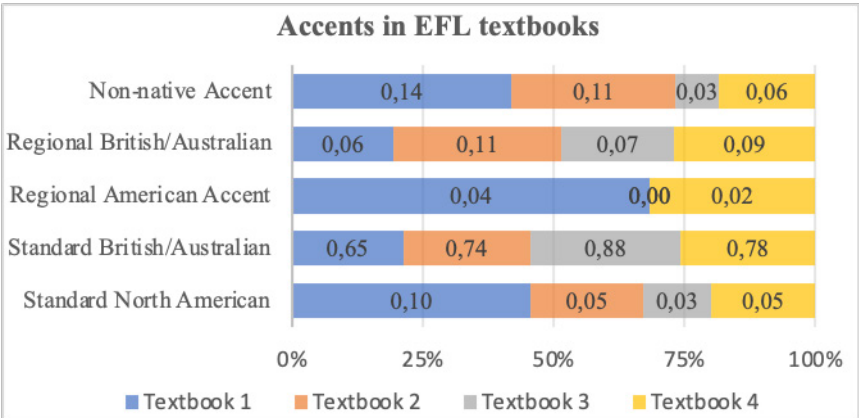

Figure 3. Distribution of accents in audio recordings in four EFL textbooks

In reference to the second research question, the findings reveal both commonalities and differences in the representation of cultural elements between the textbooks designed for intermediate and upper-intermediate English language learners. The commonalities are related to the number and versatility of topics being covered and accents being used, and the differences to the ratio of Big C/ little c cultural content, British/American culture being represented and values being promoted. While topics intended for intermediate English language learners focus mainly on the Big C aspects of British culture, topics intended for upper-intermediate English language learners are more inclusive. This by no means implies that other cultures are not included in the first set of textbooks, but an inclusion of more intercultural content is advisable so as to further deepen the learner's perception of the plethora of cultures which exist in the world.

As for the third research question, all textbooks incorporate cultural content which informs students about global socio-political issues. However, textbooks intended for intermediate level seem to slightly promote and superficially tackle the notions of Western values (egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, money, affluence, success, mobility), while textbooks intended for upper-intermediate level incorporate Western values, but also offer a multi-faceted approach by offering the students at least two scopes of opinion-forming on such cultural content (for instance, British and American labour markets are compared on the basis of their pros and cons, which is also consistent with topics offered and related to future jobs, applications, socio-economic mobility, housing, (un)employment, etc.).

The fourth research question examines the effectiveness of the activities in the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence. The differences are confirmed within the same sets of textbooks. First and foremost, in all textbooks the aim of the activities is to raise students' awareness of other cultures. However, while the first textbook in each set develops the activities thoroughly and offers more possibilities for cross-cultural or intercultural examination of the cultural content, the second textbook attains the same approach, but the realization seems to be of insufficient nature and offers some space for further revisions and restructurings. To conclude, textbook 2 and 4 require slight revisions of activities which would allow students to further improve their communicative cultural competence(s) (namely the inclusion of inter-cultural comparisons, real-life activities and events, role-plays and simulations, etc.).

Based on the collected data, the authors' general preferences between the four analysed textbooks steers towards *Solutions Intermediate Student's Book, 2nd edition* and *Solutions Upper-Intermediate Student's Book, 2nd edition* on the basis that they:

1. cover more cultural content
2. introduce more age-appropriate cultural material, be it within the separate cultural sections or out of the given frame (in fact, almost 90% of the cultural content offered is implicitly or explicitly directed toward teenagers (B1

learners, 16 or 17 years of age), an approach which positions this book as a "teenager textbook")

3. attain a modernised approach by including richer representations of women and ethnic minorities, both in the accompanying visual and audio materials
4. avoid the superficial examination of the designated cultures (as well as the subsequent overemphasis of patriarchal and Western values and "tourist" viewpoints)
5. offer various activities for the students and in its entirety aims to deepen, further, and better their cultural competences and communication
6. are structured in a clear, straightforward manner which makes it easier for the teacher to approach and successfully realize their plans for cultural teaching.
7. Finally, we offer some suggestions on how to approach teaching and help learners develop their intercultural communicative competence:
8. raise awareness and integrate relevant and appropriate intercultural content so as to further deepen the learner's perception of the plethora of cultures which exist in the world
9. integrate diverse and evenly balanced topics, covering both visible and subtle elements of culture
10. offer a multi-faceted approach by offering the students at least two scopes of opinion-forming on such cultural content
11. avoid stereotypical and superficial representations of designated cultures and introduce supplementary authentic materials
12. expose learners to versatile intercultural situations, simulations, role-plays, and real-life events (which have consecutively proven to be practical tools for a richer cross-cultural analysis as a mechanism which serves to broaden the learner's perspectives/viewpoints/opinions/feelings about a particular culture
13. let your learners be "cultural detectives", autonomous researchers and active participants
14. encourage comparing and contrasting, but pose challenging and more complex questions afterwards
15. set an example and strengthen students' skills such as tolerance for ambiguity, open-mindedness, empathy and adaptability.

6. Conclusion

The present results have highlighted the differences in the scope and complexity of cultural topics according to the proficiency and age level of the EFL learners. In terms of activating the pupils' pre-knowledge about the foreign culture, the first textbook offers some cultural content and activities which aim to do exactly that with the topics offered, but such approach is not necessarily applied to the cultural content outside the frame of the lesson's Culture Section. The second textbook

also introduces some cultural content which strives to motivate the student's pre-cognition about a particular culture. This approach is only furthered by the textbook activities, usually inter-connected in the sense that at least two contain meaningful links which instruct the student to work on their cultural competence in a chronological order. The third and the fourth textbook follow the same trajectory as their predecessors in the set, but in so doing, they target a specific audience and their cognitive abilities. The notion of pair or group work organisation is furthered in the latter textbook, as well as its emphasis on the progression from easier to more complex activities and outcomes.

In addressing the learners' attitudes towards their own or the foreign culture, the first and the second textbook both offer at least one activity which usually aims to motivate the individual to freely express their personal opinion about the issues discussed. The former textbook achieves this with at least one activity in the separate Culture Section, whereas the latter integrates it into the general lesson plan. The third and the fourth textbook follow this approach, but take it to another level by introducing various activities which activate the learners' intercultural comparisons and solidify them through exercises related to free or guided composition (in oral or written form).

When discussing theoretical terms, namely the classification of cultural elements into the Big C group and the little c group, the foci of the analysed textbooks both coincide and diverge in their notions. Cultural-related texts in the first textbook are in a separate section and usually revolve around the Big C group, while the cultural content outside this frame usually incorporates the little c elements of culture. The second textbook integrates the cultural subsections into the general activity framework, and it also focuses mostly on topics such as Family life, Education, Salaries, Media and Communication. The third textbook intentionally and predominantly targets Big C cultural elements, to encourage the learners to voice their opinions on texts related to politics, religion, public health, communication, scientific and technological advancements, environmental consciousness, and more. The fourth textbook generally targets the same age group by tackling issues such as politics, economy, the media and communication, occupation and education, but there is some space for their richer inclusion.

Unlike the previous theoretical notion in which the textbooks both diverge and converge, not much can be debated on whether the activities offered are helpful or not. All four textbooks do introduce a number of activities and cultural texts which aim to further the student's ICC, but the first two textbooks also somewhat lack in achieving what they initially set out to do, an approach which makes them more susceptible to more encompassing revisions at a later date. The third and the fourth textbook are intensely focused on extending the learner's previous knowledge of the topic and introducing new pieces of information in their cultural vocabulary. The content they offer allows the learner to compare this extended knowledge to their own culture, which leads to both a deeper understanding of the subject and

a level of progression in voicing one's personal opinions towards their own or a foreign culture.

Moreover, even though it can generally be concluded that the activities offered in all four textbooks are coherently and cohesively well-structured in terms of following the cultural content (textual and visual), there is always room for improvement. The static view of culture should be replaced and updated by supplementary materials which are easily accessible through media and the Internet. One example of how to further modernize the activities would be to introduce more interactive and intercultural situations, dialogues, role-plays, time capsules, or a virtual round the world trip. Cultural text-wise, as already emphasized while discussing several aspects of cultural dimensions, it is advisable to include more diverse historical backgrounds to enrich the learner's understanding of the existence of a profound number of cultures, as well as introduce more colourful cultural content (facts, views, entries, perspectives) for reference and comparison to either Anglo-American or the learner's respective culture. It is also advisable to tackle the issue of accents represented in the textbook's accompanying CD-ROMs, as it necessitates more diverse inclusion of regional and non-native accents, which would then primarily serve to heighten the learner's perception of all the accents related to communication via English language.

As a final note, it should be underscored that all stakeholders of education need to recognize the importance of carefully tailored textbooks which should raise intercultural awareness in a systematic way, promoting inquisitiveness and open-mindedness and embracing and celebrating all aspects of diversity.

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