

Elements of Culture and Tradition in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Coursebook Analysis

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Diplomski studij Engleskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatskog jezika i
književnosti

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**Elements of Culture and Tradition in Teaching English as a Foreign
Language: A Coursebook Analysis**

Diplomski rad

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Summary

This paper deals with the notion of culture and why it is very important to include it in the teaching of a language, especially English. It starts off with the definition of culture, followed by an explanation of the relationship between language and culture. It proceeds to make its point by showing the teaching of culture throughout history and then goes to discuss culture in the context of teaching and the important role it plays. Cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence are listed and explained as main goals for teaching culture to students so that they become competent to communicate with members of the target culture. The following chapter deals with the types and approaches to the textbooks used for the teaching of English, how they are constructed and how they can be used as a tool for helping teachers to make a quality lesson of language. In the research part there is a list of textbooks currently used in Croatia and cultural topics and their occurrence are analyzed. All the topics are catalogued and briefly explained and cultural dimensions that appear are listed. At the very end there is a summary of the whole investigation that includes a critical evaluation of the textbooks in terms of cultural content.

Key words: culture, teaching English as a foreign language, textbook analysis

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1. Introduction

Cross-cultural communication and globalization have become a necessity in the modern world and the English language has become an instrument that is useful to the whole world. On that note, it is not unusual that the teaching of English as a foreign language is indispensable.

Communication, whether it is in the native or foreign language, is a social event of verbal interaction. Therefore learning a second or foreign language is a socially constructed process and since culture is a part of every society, learning a language should not be isolated from the society that uses it. In other words, language learners should learn about the culture of the target language so that the communication with the members of the target language and culture is successful.

Since textbooks are one of the essential parts of the teaching process it is very important that they are of high quality and suitable for students. This paper explores the extent to which topics focusing on elements of culture and tradition are included in the three sets of English language textbooks currently used in Croatia. The aim is to evaluate their quality and in what way they provide students with a good insight into the magnificence that is the English language and culture.

2. Culture teaching

2.1. Definition of culture

The term culture is a very wide concept and it is one of the most difficult terms to define. There are many definitions that describe it but there is not a single one that can cover its whole meaning. The field that is concerned with the study of different cultures, anthropology, cannot entirely define what culture is.

Brown (1987:122) starts his discussion about culture by saying that culture is a way of life. Culture is the context within which we exist, think, feel, and relate to others. It is the glue that binds a group of people together. Culture is our continent, the collective identity of which each of us is a part.

Maček (2004:52), following the example of many philologists, finds similar descriptions of culture as the one Brown gave. She maintains that culture is the customs, beliefs, art, music and all the other products of human thought made by a particular group of people at a particular time.

Larson and Smalley (1972, as cited in Brown 1987: 164) describe culture as a blue print that: “guides the behavior of people in a community and is incubated in family life. It governs our behavior in groups, makes us sensitive to matters of status, and help us know what other expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations. Culture helps us to know how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is to the group. Different cultures are the underlying structures which make Round community round and Square community square.”

It can be concluded out of all these definitions that culture is a context in which people live and it is shared by the people in the same society. Also, culture is not something we are born with, it is a way of life we learn by living in a community and picking up on certain patterns of behavior, children develop their value systems by interacting with their family and surroundings. Furthermore, culture is communicated through language.

2.2. Language and culture

Brown (1987:138) states that culture is an integral part of the interaction between language and thought. According to him, cultural patterns, customs, and ways of life are expressed in language; culture-specific world views are reflected in language. Furthermore, he observes that

the language teaching profession today has actually attended to a moderate view of Whorfian hypothesis which says: “the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual’s mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade.” To sum up, we cannot teach language without teaching culture of that language too.

2.3. The history of culture teaching

Interest in the cultural dimension of foreign language teaching is not new. In history of language teaching it is visible that there have always been links between language instruction and language teaching. Even the classical languages, Greek and Latin, were studied so that learners could read the works of literature in these languages. This principle was also acknowledged by the Grammar – Translation Method whose main goal for language learning was getting access to the so-called “great works”. The aim of education in general was to educate people who were knowledgeable in history, literature and fine arts. Such people were said to possess culture. Culture, in those days, was used to indicate the refined ways of the elite and powerful. (Kramsch 1996: 4, cited in Saluveer 2004).

In the earlier part of the 20th century, second language learning took place in order for learners to gain access to great literary masterpieces of civilization and the lines between language and culture were carefully drawn (Allen as cited in Purba 2011: 46).

Structuralism, Direct Method, Audiolingualism, Community language learning, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach in the beginning of 1970s neglected culture because these approaches regarded EFL teaching as a matter of linguistics and they put emphasis on structures and vocabulary. In later development of communicative approach it was realized that to communicate effectively, one should adapt the properties of his language use (such as intonation, lexical choice, and syntax) to the social variables (such as class, gender, and race) in which he interacts with others.

Recent studies and writings such as those of Byram (1987, 1994, 1998, 2000) and Kramsch (1993, 1998) strengthened the relationship of EFL teaching and culture teaching. More importantly, English as an international language is growing more and more every day and the inclusion of culture in EFL teaching cannot be avoided.

2.4. Culture in the context of language teaching

It is shown in previous chapters of this paper that including culture in language teaching is inevitable, and there are at least three fundamental reasons.

First, culture and language are inseparable and on that note Politzer (1959, cited in Saluveer 2004: 9) concludes that as language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture (in the social scientists' sense of the word) not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the students attaches the wrong meaning.

Buttjes (1990: 55) summarizes several reasons why language and culture are inseparably connected as follows: 1) language acquisition does not follow a universal sequence, but differs across cultures; 2) the process of becoming a competent member of society is realized through exchanges of language in particular social situations 3) every society orchestrates the ways in which children participate in particular situations, and this, in turn, affects the form, the function, and the content of children's utterances, 4) caregivers' primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of sociocultural knowledge and 5) the native learner, in addition to language, acquires also the paralinguistic patterns and the kinesics of his or her culture.

The second reason can be concluded from the first, since language and culture are inseparable, language teaching is culture teaching. Buttjes (1990) explains that: language codes cannot be taught in isolation because processes of sociocultural transmission are bound to be at work on many levels, for example the contents of language exercises, the cultural discourse of textbooks, and the teacher's attitudes towards the target culture.

The third reason is in the fact that the main goal of foreign language teaching is to achieve communicative competence, and to accomplish this, a learner should have background knowledge of the target culture which would help him relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places.

Also it is very important that cultural learning increases learners' motivation and thus improves the learning process. In many cases, learners like culturally-based activities such as singing, dancing or doing research on other countries and people.

2.5. The role of culture in language teaching

Culture in language teaching has traditionally involved providing cultural information. Such information typically includes at least one of the following dimensions of culture discussed by Adaskou et al. (1990, as cited in McKay 2002: 82):

- a) The aesthetic sense in which literature, film, and music of a target language country are examined
- b) The sociological sense in which the customs and institutions of this country are explained
- c) The semantic sense in which how a culture's conceptual system is embodied in a language is investigated
- d) The pragmatic sense in which how cultural norms influence what language is appropriate for which contexts is examined

Two goals discussed by Kramersch (cited in McKay 2002: 82) regarding culture in language teaching are particularly relevant here:

1. Establishing a “sphere of interculturality”: this line of thought promotes the idea that the learning of culture is more than just the transfer of information between cultures. Rather learning about culture requires that an individual consider his or her own culture in relation to another. Hence, the process of learning about another culture entails a reflection on one's own culture as well as the target culture.
2. Teaching culture as difference: this notion of culture highlights the fact that national identities are not monolithic. Within each culture there exists a variety of national characteristics that are related to age, gender, regional origin, ethnic background, and social class.

Despite the recognition of the importance of teaching culture in the language classroom, it is generally agreed that not enough attention is paid to it. The reasons for the limited treatment of culture might be:

- the vastness of the culture concept
- the problem of goal determination and lack of accessible information
- questions of syllabus design and finding place to culture in predominantly language-oriented curriculum
- questions of teaching procedure (Stern 1992:207)

Learning about another culture does not necessarily mean that one must accept that culture. Knowing about a culture does not mean that one has an obligation to behave in accordance with its conventions but only to know its principles to be able to communicate with its participants.

2.6. Cultural awareness

The term cultural awareness is used by Tomalin and Stempleski (1993:5) to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language use and communication. Cross-cultural awareness in their book covers British and American life and institutions, beliefs, and values, as well as everyday attitudes and feelings conveyed not only by language, but also by paralinguistic features such as dress, gesture, facial expression, stance, and movement. It is based on knowledge of one's own and the target culture.

According to Byram (1998:4), cultural awareness may be seen as an ability to reflect on one's own cultural identity, question values and beliefs taken-for-granted and compare one's own culture with that of the interlocutors. Comparison forms basis for understanding and helps learners to perceive and cope with difference.

Lack of cross-cultural awareness will lead to misunderstandings in second language classrooms. Due to today's world globalization, cultural awareness has a great significance. EFL learners shall also develop an awareness of the cultures belonging to all the English-speaking countries, or even other cultures. Such a cultural consciousness is often referred to as intercultural awareness, which has always been talked about as though it were a "fifth skill" – the ability to be aware of cultural relativity following reading, writing, listening and speaking.

2.7. Intercultural communicative competence

The term competence can be defined as the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions. The ultimate goal of teaching culture is to nurture the intercultural communicative competence that will complement language competence to accomplish to a fuller extent the communicative function of language. According to Byram (2000: 9, 1997: 49-54) it involves five elements:

1. Attitudes: curiosity and openness, suspending disbelief about one's own and other cultures
2. Knowledge: products and practices of one's own and other culture, societal and individual interaction

3. Skills of interpreting and relating: interpreting documents or events from the other culture and relating them to the documents from one's own culture
4. Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge and operate knowledge, skills and attitudes in real-time communication
5. Critical cultural awareness/ political education: ability to evaluate critically practices and products of one's own and other culture.

He concludes: "someone with some degree of intercultural competence is someone who is able to see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or other people. It is also someone who has critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures – someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural." (Byram 2000:9)

2.8.Goals and principles of teaching culture

It was already established in the previous chapters of this paper that the main aim of foreign language teaching is the development of students' abilities so that they can communicate in various situations with all kinds of participants. It was also determined that by teaching culture we are enabling our students for intercultural communication.

Seeleye (1993) has gone so far as to develop a super goal for the teaching of culture. He states that all students will develop the cultural understanding, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture.

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) have modified instructional goals suggested by Seeleye. According to them the teaching of culture should help students:

- to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors
- to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave
- to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture

- to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target culture
- to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence
- to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture
- to stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

They recommend that the teachers keep those goals in mind when they are planning their lessons. Also they advise incorporating them according to the following principles:

1. access the culture through the language being taught
2. make the study of cultural behaviors an integral part of each lesson
3. aim for students to achieve the socioeconomic competence which they feel they need
4. aim for all levels to achieve cross-cultural understanding – awareness of their own culture, as well as that of the target language
5. recognize that not all teaching about culture implies behavior change, but merely an awareness and tolerance of the cultural influences affecting one's own and other's behavior (Tomalin and Stempleski 1993: 7-8)

2.9. What culture to teach?

Now that the goals and principles have been set, it is time to determine a list of cultural topics that would be interesting and important for our students. It is necessary to compile a cultural syllabus that will be defined and classified with different categories such as topics, topic areas and elements of culture.

There is no list with all the cultural topics but there are a few versions made by scholars who tried to include all the most important topics for culture teaching classes. Some of those topics are family, home, money, religion, holidays, flag, clothes, good manners, customs, greetings, music and sports.

Since there are so many topics that can be included, some countries have included their list in the National Curriculum. Also the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) offers a list of categories that are considered characteristic of a particular European society and its culture. Some of them are:

- everyday living (food and drink, holidays and working practices)
- living conditions (housing conditions)
- interpersonal relations (class structure, family structures and relations between generations)
- values, beliefs and attitudes (social class, wealth, regional cultures, minorities and arts)
- body language, social conventions (punctuality, dress and behavioral and conversational conventions)
- ritual behavior (birth, marriage and death)

Maček (2004:52) also provides a list of most common cultural topics that appear in some current English school textbooks published in Croatia. She also states that the authors of these books make inevitable choices of culture topics and some of them are:

- a) popular sites or other points of interest, e.g. the Statue of Liberty, Loch Ness or the Australian marsupials
- b) human stereotypes such as the kilted Highlander or bowler-hatted City of London executive
- c) various symbols, such as St. Patrick, or the Union Jack
- d) literary figures, in the first place the inevitable Shakespeare or the less obligatory ones like Lewis Carroll
- e) pop musicians and their songs, e.g. the Beatles and Harry Belafonte

- f) sports, particularly football.

The more sophisticated ones, aimed at advanced students at the secondary school level, also offer such practical matter as:

- g) making a telephone call or being interviewed for a job
- h) some history, particularly when it elucidates the spread of English in the world today.

The study of British and American/Canadian life and institutions has been a traditional part of school curricula in Europe and North America. These courses emphasize what Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) call the “big C” elements of British and American culture – history, geography, institutions, literature, art and music – and the new way of life. Also they state that what they call the “little c” has been broadened to include culturally-influenced beliefs and perceptions, especially as expressed through language, but also through cultural behaviors that affect acceptability in the host community. The broadening “little c” can be expressed through the following diagram:

Three interrelated categories of culture: products, ideas and behaviors (see Figure 1).

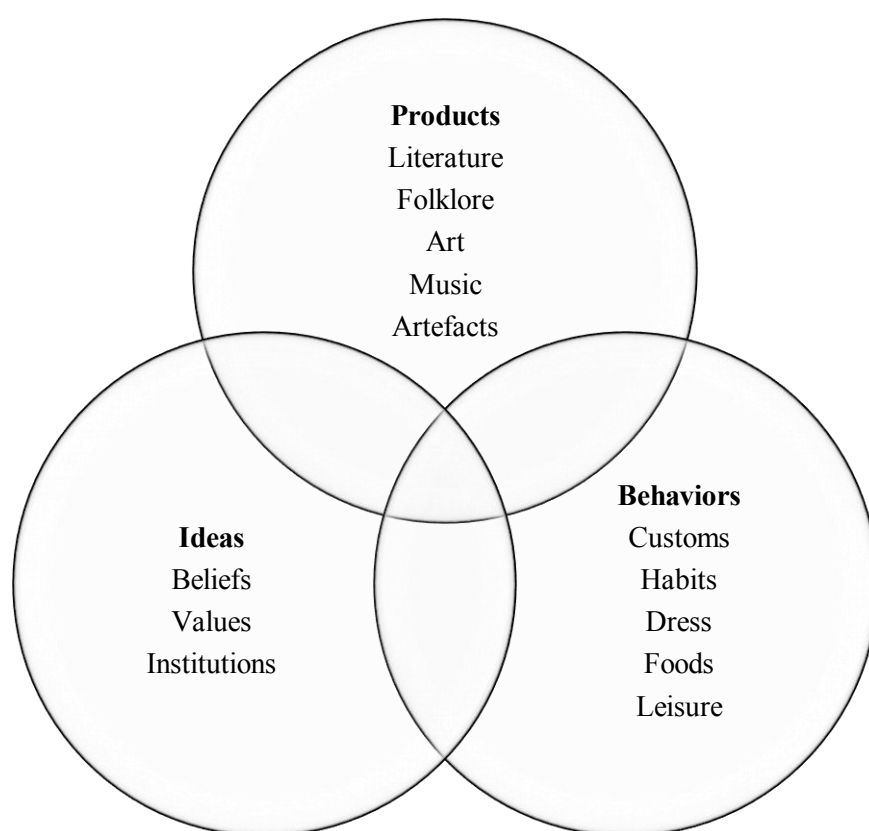


Figure 1. Elements of culture (Tomalin and Stempleski 1993: 7)

The “Big C” culture has benefited from a clearly identified curriculum of topics to be covered, and textbooks which deal with them. The culturally–influenced behaviors which constitute the “little c” culture have usually been treated as peripheral and anecdotal, depending on the interest of teachers and students.

Moran (2001, cited in Saluveer 2004:28) argues that although a threefold distinction is easy to apply, there is an important dimension missing from it, namely people. Therefore he has added two dimensions: communities and people (see Figure 2).

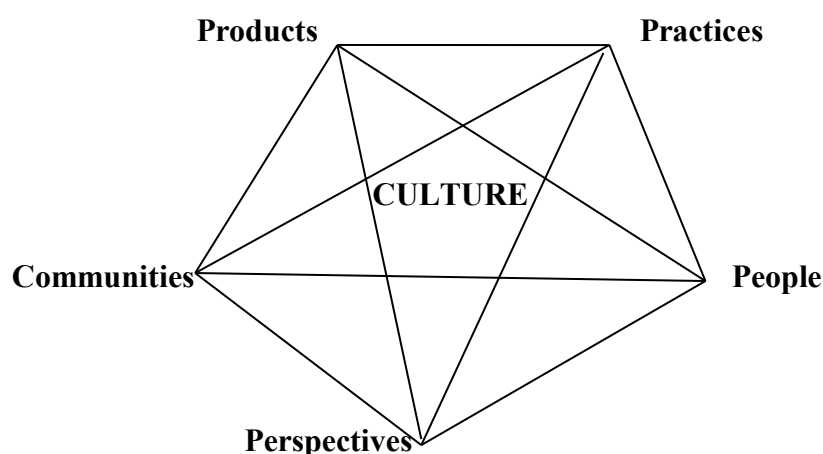


Figure 2. The five dimensions of culture (Saluveer 2004:28)

In his definition products are all artifacts produced by the members of the culture. Practices include language and other forms of communication, and they include notions of time, space and appropriateness. Perspectives represent beliefs, values and attitudes and taken as a whole they constitute a worldview. Communities include social context in which practices occur. People are the individual members who embody the culture in many ways.

It is possible to conclude that having a well-crafted, clear and organized cultural syllabus is very beneficial for the teachers in order for them to provide a quality cultural lesson.

2.10. Ways of teaching culture

When it comes to teaching all the above mentioned topics there are a number of approaches that can be used in addition to activities and techniques. The choice of the right approach and technique depends on several factors and the most important are:

- the situation in which a language is taught
- learner's age and command of a foreign language
- the teacher

Stern (1992:223) distinguishes three different types of situations in which the teaching of culture can take place:

1. Culture is taught in language course where students are removed physically and psychologically from the second culture and in this case culture teaching provides background and context which help students to visualize the reality of the second culture
2. Culture is taught in a situation, which prepares a student for a visit or work in a new environment and even though the student is physically far away from the culture, he or she is psychologically better prepared and more motivated to learn.
3. Culture is taught in the cultural setting (immigrants, students studying in a target language community). In this case students need more help to come to terms with the foreign environment to avoid cultural misunderstandings.

The most important factor in the choice of the approach and method of teaching is, of course, the teacher and his or her level of motivation, knowledge, preference and level of preparation and they also need to be prepared to deal with students who may find the target culture at odds with their own beliefs and opinions.

2.11. The most common approaches to the teaching of culture

The term approach can be defined as the theory and philosophy of a set of teaching practices and they can be classified in different ways. There are a number of approaches that are focused on different aspects and skills they are trying to develop in their students. There are many approaches in contemporary culture teaching and below will be listed only the most valuable and interesting ones.

Saluveer (2004) says that, in very broad terms, they can be divided into two ways:

1. Mono-cultural approach – focuses only (or mostly) on the culture of the country whose language is studied and it is considered inadequate nowadays because it does not consider learners' understanding of their own culture
2. The comparative approach – based on comparing learners' own and the other culture, emphasizes that foreign culture should be related to learners' own; it draws on the learners' own knowledge, beliefs and values which form a basis for successful communication with members of the other culture.

The following approaches concentrate on two aspects, they provide knowledge of the target culture and they encourage students to compare it to their own.

- 1) Theme-based approach: it is based around themes that are typical for that particular culture (ceremony, love, humor, family, liberty, religion, education). It revolves around helping students to understand the target culture better and those who become aware of the underlying themes of the target culture should respond well to cartoons, films and television programs. However, this approach could lead to stereotyping as it only shows a segment of the target culture.
- 2) Topic-based approach: concentrates on more general and cross-sectional topics which involve various cultural issues. It brings life to class and develops a better view of the target culture.
- 3) Problem-oriented approach: aims at getting learners interested in the target culture by encouraging them to do some research of their own. Teacher is the one that sets a problem and guides the students through sources where they can find the answer and their results should be presented in a form of a written or oral report.
- 4) Task-oriented approach: also based on learners' research except that here the focus is on the co-operative tasks where learners work in pairs or small groups discussing given tasks and later on they interpret their results by comparing the target culture to their own.
- 5) Skill-centered approach: more practical than those listed above because it is useful for those learners who have to live in the target culture community. It aims at developing skills which they might need while communicating.

No matter what approach is chosen it is crucial never to lose sight of the learner who is the reason why all of these measures are taken.

2.12. Techniques and activities for teaching culture

It is only logical that if we have a lot of approaches to teaching culture that there are a lot of techniques and activities too. Different scholars group them according to several principles. The following list of techniques and activities was compiled by Saluveer (2004:38–47) in her paper and she explains that they were taken from various sources. The ones that have been chosen for representation in this paper are those that seem most applicable for classroom.

❖ Creating an authentic environment

It is a setting for more memorable learning including displays, posters, bulletin boards, maps and realia. Together they create a visual presence of the target culture, especially in the situation where language and culture are taught far away from the target country.

❖ The slice-of-life technique

In this technique the teacher chooses a small segment of life from the other culture and usually presents it to learners at the beginning of the class and this can be done with a song related to the topic. It is a very good technique because it catches the students' attention and gets them more interested in the topic.

❖ The culture assimilator

It is a brief description of a critical incident of cross-cultural interaction that may be misinterpreted by students. After reading the description, students are presented with four possible explanations, from which they are required to choose the correct one and then they are given feedback why one explanation is right and the others are wrong in a cultural context. A helpful technique because it helps the students create an insight of the cultural diversity.

❖ The culture capsule

It is a technique with a brief description of one aspect of the target culture which is then followed by discussion and comparison with the students' own culture. The information is given by the teacher who presents it orally. The students can also prepare at home and present what they have done in class. The presentation, whether it is given by the teacher or by the students, is combined with realia, visuals and questions to start up a discussion. An advantage of using this technique is that it is compact and it provides the students with the ability to participate in the discussions.

❖ The audio – motor unit

It is considered to be an extension of the Total Physical Response method and it was first developed to provide practical listening comprehension. The teacher gives students a set of commands to which they respond by acting them out. The commands are arranged in an order that will cause students to learn a new cultural experience by performing it.

❖ The quiz

It can be used to test materials that the teacher has previously taught, but it is also useful for learning new information. The right answers can be given by the teacher through reading, listening or a video. It is a good technique because it keeps students involved.

❖ The drama

It has been widely used in teaching culture and is considered useful for clarifying cross-cultural misunderstandings. It is a very good context for exploring cultural values. It involves students in a role-play and it encourages them to put themselves in a role of someone else, a member of the target culture, of course. Its only drawback is that it requires a lot of time and preparation.

❖ Critical incidents- problem solving

It is a technique which includes descriptions of incidents or situations which demand that a participant makes some kind of a decision. Most of the situations could happen to any individual and they do not require intercultural interactions. Students read the descriptions and make the decisions and then there is a classroom discussion where the students have to give reasons why they chose to make the decisions they did. Finally, they are given an opportunity to compare their decisions to those of the members of the target culture.

❖ Student research

It is considered to be one of the most powerful tools that can be used with more advanced students because it combines their interests with the classroom activities. Students are required to search for any aspect of culture they find interesting, in the library or on the Internet. In the following class they have to present their work and be prepared for any possible questions and then later on, their materials and presentations can lead to poster making or research paper writing. It is also a very good technique because it gives students independence and freedom to explore something that interests them and they approach the target culture with an open mind.

❖ The culture quest

It is a web-based activity; it involves students in inquiry-based classroom projects the aim of which is to explore other peoples and cultures. It has three bigger parts which include the planning, implementing and evaluating it. The implementation stage includes writing to students from the target country or culture, obtaining core information and creating a website. The downside to this technique is the lack of equipment in schools.

The field of culture teaching is still unexplored and there is still a lot of room for creativity, there are a lot of possibilities. The process of creating a great lesson can be a cooperation of teachers and students because the main goal is to keep the students, interested, motivated and attentive while learning.

To help us with the creation of valuable culture teaching lessons, Brown (1987: 202) has given a list of questions teachers should ask themselves while they are choosing the appropriate technique:

1. Does the technique recognize the value and belief system that are presumed to be part of the culture of students?
2. Does the technique refrain from any demeaning stereotypes of any culture, including the culture of students?
3. Does the technique refrain from any possible devaluing of students' native languages?
4. Does the technique sufficiently connect specific language features (grammatical categories, lexicon, and discourse) to cultural ways of thinking, feeling and acting?
5. Does the technique in some ways draw on the potentially rich background experiences of students, including their experiences in other cultures?

With all these materials given, it should be possible to incorporate the teaching of culture in almost every lesson, whether it takes only a few minutes or if it takes pre-lesson planning and preparation for lesson long projects. Culture should be an integral part of every foreign language lesson

2.13. Materials for teaching culture

A successful lesson requires preparation and adequate materials. Some of those are textbooks, which are the focus of this paper, photos, maps, music, songs, film, literature and the Internet.

Textbooks play the most important role of all the teaching materials because they are the ones that are available to both students and teachers at the same time and because they are a factor in facilitating the second language teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999, as cited in McKay 2002:88) say that: “the textbook can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner and an ideology”, and also they distinguish three different types of cultural information used in language textbooks and materials.

1. Source culture materials:

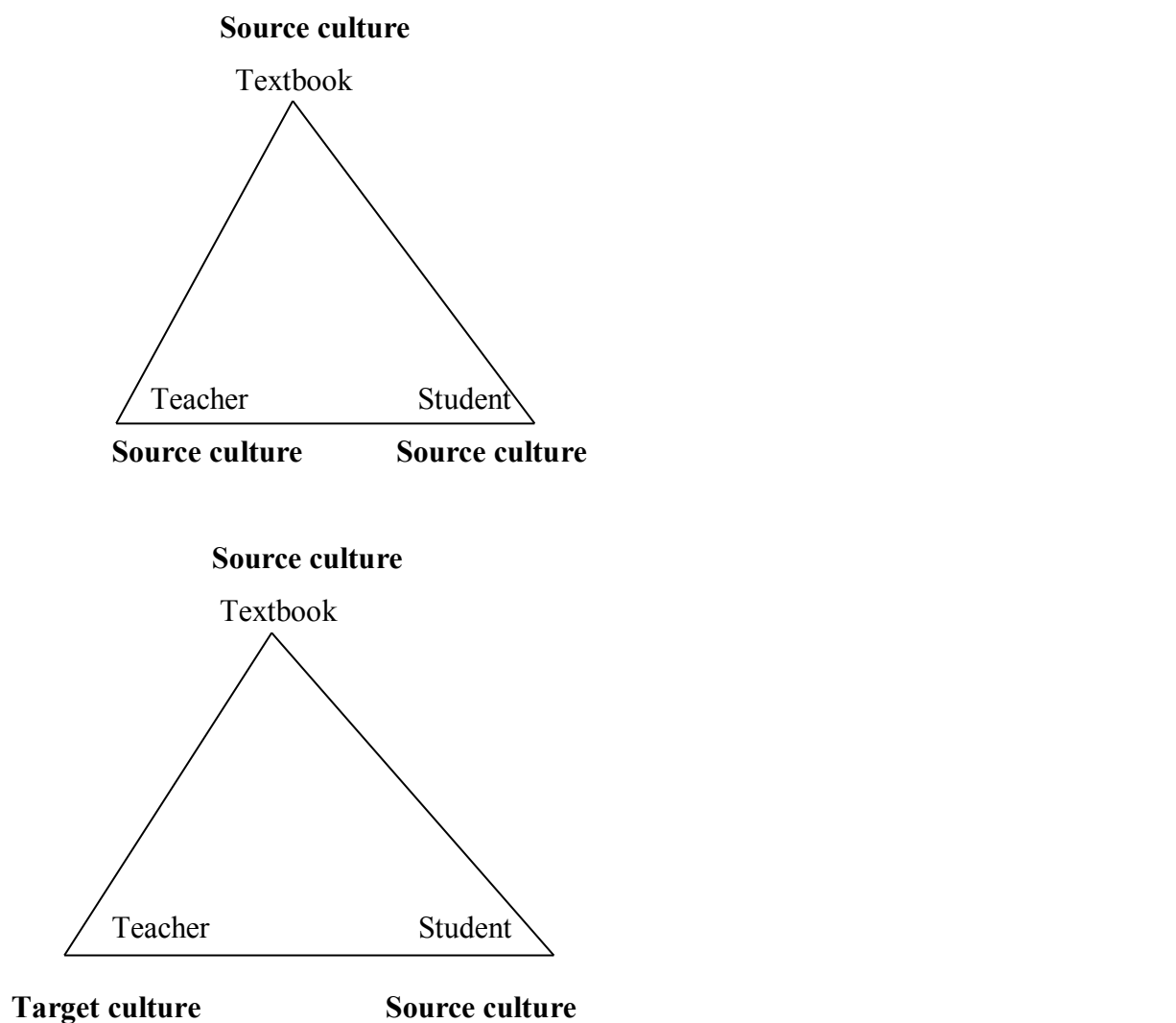


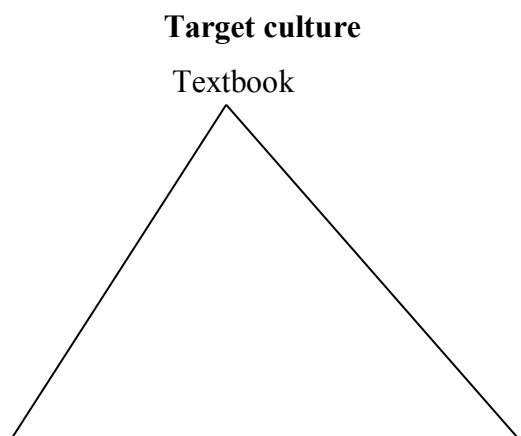
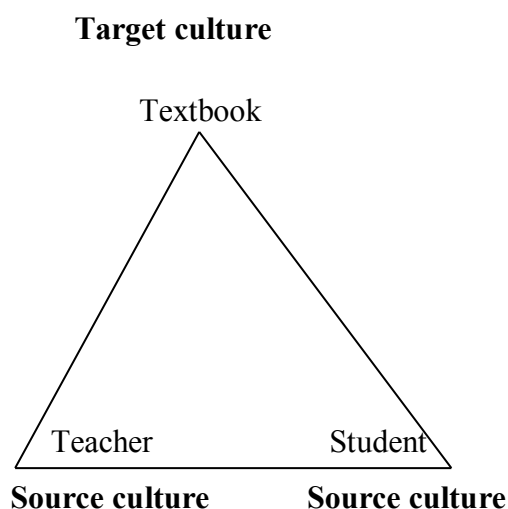
Figure 3: Contexts in which the source culture may be used in an EFL classroom Cortazzi and Jin (1999, as cited in McKay 2002:91)

Figure 3 illustrates contexts in which the source culture may be used in an EFL classroom. In the first case, students, teacher and text all share the same culture. For example, a textbook published and used in Croatia with Croatian students and teacher can ask students to describe

annual Croatian events like commemorating the day when their/our country became independent. Such a context provides the students to learn more about their own culture and to learn the language needed to explain these cultural elements in English. The teacher could also use material relating to the source culture in ways that encourage students to consider how they could explain elements of their own culture to others.

Source culture texts can also be used in contexts where the students come from the source culture but the teacher is from another culture. In such a situation, the teacher, can become a listener and by doing so creating an ideal context for establishing a sphere of interculturality.

2. Target culture materials



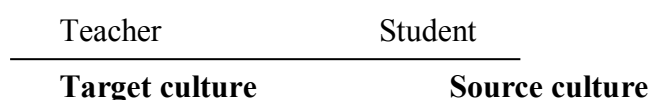
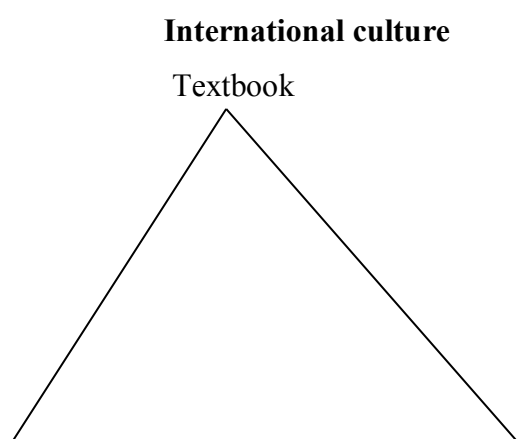
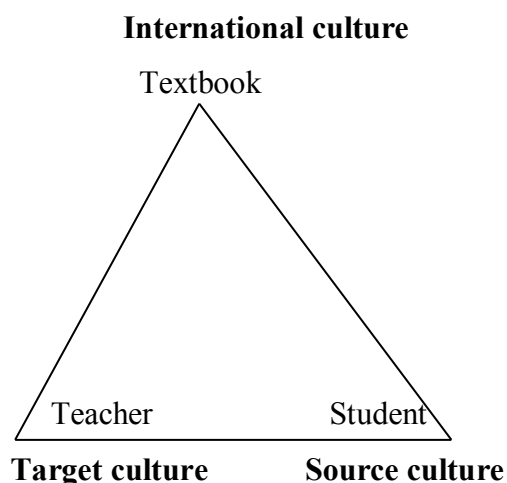


Figure 4: Contexts in which the target culture may be used in an EFL classroom Cortazzi and Jin (1999, as cited in McKay 2002:89)

Figure 4 illustrates two possible contexts in which information about the target culture can be introduced in teaching of EFL. The first case is where the teacher and students come from the same cultural background but the materials used in classroom present cultural information from another culture. For example, there is a discussion on garage sales but this is a context that might be unknown to both students and teacher and the understanding of the discussion is in the ability of the teacher to explain such a thing to his/her students.

A second situation is when students are from the source culture and the teacher is from the target culture. The classroom itself can provide the basis for a cross cultural encounter. An effective approach to establishing a sphere of interculturality would be for the teacher to encourage students to reflect on their own culture in relation to the target culture and to provide additional information on the target culture when students request such information.

3. International target culture materials



Teacher	Student
Source culture	Source culture

Figure 5: Contexts in which the international target culture may be used in an EFL classroom
Cortazzi and Jin (1999, as cited in McKay 2002: 92)

Figure 5 illustrates two contexts in which international target culture materials representing many English and non-English speaking countries might be used. When both the students and the teacher come from a culture not represented in the text it can happen that the students become uninterested or confused by the information in the text and the teachers might not have access to additional materials necessary to explain some of the cultural references.

Most foreign language textbooks used in secondary education in European countries, according to Newby and Freebairn (1997, as cited in Saluveer 2004: 48) fall into two categories: international/global textbooks and local/locally produced textbooks. The first type of textbooks includes such topics that can be set anywhere and the teaching materials are made for the international market. The local textbooks include materials that are prescribed by the national curriculum and they are working on students' awareness of their own and the target culture.

2.14. How to evaluate elements of culture in textbooks?

Since evaluating textbooks is a complicated process there are certain checklists compiled by scholars that teachers can use when they are deciding which textbook to use.

Byram (1987: 73 – 74) offers a list made by Huhn and it includes:

- Factual accuracy and up-to-date information
- Avoidance of stereotype
- Presentation of a realistic picture
- Freedom from ideological tendencies
- Presentation of phenomena in context rather than isolated facts
- Relevance of historical material to contemporary society
- Presentation of personalities as products of their age

Other checklists will be presented in the research part of this paper.

Evaluation of textbooks is subjective, there is no clear formula set so that all the textbooks could be evaluated in the same way. In the end, textbooks are just tools in the hands of teacher and they do not have to be used exclusively as was mentioned before.

3. Elements of culture and tradition in EFL textbooks

3.1.Aim

The aim of this graduation paper is to explore whether there are any cultural elements in textbooks used in Croatia. In particular, the paper focuses on themes that are enclosed, the occurrence and suitability of cultural topics, cultures that are covered, dimensions of culture and their frequency. The hypothesis is that the elements of culture and tradition are poorly represented in the textbooks and that the prevailing cultures are the British and the American.

3.2.Procedure

The first step of this research was deciding on materials that were going to be examined and researched. Textbooks chosen represent two categories previously mentioned, international/global textbooks and local/locally produced textbooks, four of each.

The second step was to develop the criteria upon which the textbooks would be evaluated. The investigation process is reported through briefly cataloguing all the cultural topics found in the textbooks. The final checklist, consisting of thirteen research points, is based on the checklist by Cunningsworth and Sercu (1998, as cited in Saluveer 2004:52) to which several points emerging from the present research have been added. All the topics found in textbooks are analyzed in terms of the four dimensions of culture previously mentioned in the paper. The criteria are represented in more detail in the following chapter.

3.3.Criteria for analysis

The list of points for textbook evaluation and investigation includes the following:

- Do the textbooks give any information, instructions or suggestions about how the book may be used and how the cultural content may be handled?
- Do they include a variety of cultures or just specific ones such as British or American culture?

- What subjects do they cover? Are these specific to the target culture? Are there any topics that might not be culturally suitable for the learners in class?
- What are the activities asked of the learners? Are they familiar to the learners?
- What are the learners supposed to do with the cultural information, are they able to use it actively or just be aware of it for a better understanding of the target culture?
- Are the characters in the book representative of the foreign society with regard to their age, social class, interests, mentality, family situations, etc.?
- Do photographs show ordinary people?
- Does the textbook only present a tourist point of view?
- Do the textbooks include materials/texts written by members of the different nationalities living in the foreign country?
- Is a historical perspective presented and used to explain certain present-day features of mentality or national character?
- Is the information on the foreign culture integrated in the course or is it added at the end of every chapter or even presented in a separate chapter at the end of the book?
- Are discussions used to help learners gain a true understanding of a foreign culture?
- Do the learners get the chance to reflect on their own culture?

The following dimensions of culture discussed by Adaskou et al. (1990, as cited in McKay 2002: 82) are taken into account:

- a) The aesthetic sense through which we examine literature, film, and music of a target language country
- b) The sociological sense through which we explain the customs and institutions of a target language country
- c) The semantic sense through which we investigate how a culture's conceptual system is embodied in a language
- d) The pragmatic sense through which we examine how cultural norms influence what language is appropriate for which context

3.4. Textbooks

Three different sets of textbooks, among which the *Headway* and the *Opportunities* set are internationally produced and the *Log On* set is locally produced. They are as follows:

1. NEW HEADWAY INTERMEDIATE: English language textbook for the first and second year of high school class and 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language, second and third class 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language; fourth year of high school class and 4-year vocational schools, the second foreign language
2. NEW HEADWAY UPPER-INTERMEDIATE: English language textbook for the third and fourth class of high school and 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language; fourth class 4-year vocational school, the first foreign language
3. NEW OPPORTUNITIES INTERMEDIATE: English language textbook for first and second year of high school and 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language, 6th and 7th year of study: 2nd and 3rd, 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language, 7th and 8th year of study: 4th grade of high school, a second foreign language, 4th year of learning
4. NEW OPPORTUNITIES UPPER-INTERMEDIATE: English language textbook for third and fourth year of high school class and 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language, 8th and 9th year of study : 4th grade of 4-year vocational schools, the first foreign language, 9th year of learning
5. LOG ON @ 1 IN FRAME: English language textbook for first year of high school and 4- year of vocational school: 6th year of learning
6. LOG ON @ 2 IN FRAME: English language textbook for second year of high school and 4- year of vocational school: 7th year of learning
7. LOG ON @ 3 IN FRAME: English language textbook for third year of high school and 4- year of vocational school: 8th year of learning
8. LOG ON @ 4 IN FRAME: English language textbook for fourth year of high school and 4- year of vocational school: 9th year of learning

3.5. Results and discussion

3.5.1. Textbook analysis

Textbook 1

Liz and John Soars: New Headway, Intermediate

At the very beginning of the book there is a chapter called *It's a wonderful world* where students have to answer quiz questions about general knowledge of the world and many cultures are represented here. In the same chapter there is an interview with a woman from China who works for the UN and a text about wonders of the modern world. In the next chapter we can see pictures of people from all over the world. Although no specific countries are mentioned, by looking at the pictures you can draw conclusions about their nationalities. Also there are two texts about two men, one from Texas and, one from Iowa who are talking about their jobs. The first one is a lawyer and the second one a newspaper delivery man and they are discussing if they are happy with their life. The third chapter starts off with the story of Gluskap and the baby where we can see the culture of Native Americans. Then there is a text about a woman who works in London and texts about two well-known artists, Picasso and Hemingway. Also we can see pictures of some famous works of fiction and films like *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and many more. More pictures of people from India, Middle East, America and Britain appear on the following pages. In the fourth chapter there is a very interesting text about good manners and how you can and cannot behave around the world. There are examples from Britain, Italy, Thailand, Canada, Mexico, Japan, France and many more and in the task section students get a chance to compare what they read in the text with their own culture. One of the following chapters features texts with a girl from Seoul coming to visit her friend in Melbourne and then we get to see her perspective and the people she is visiting. A brief history of pizza is one of the following texts, which is very interesting because it is one of the most famous foods around the world and it is recognized in almost all cultures. A very useful thing comes next: students learn how to apply for a job and are shown examples from Britain and the USA. Then there are texts about three different jobs, one set in Florida, one in Canada and one in New York. We can also see people tired of the English weather wishing to go to Spain, people winning the lottery in Britain, and charity appeals from around the world (Africa, animal shelters, etc.). British newspaper section with advice for readers and a text about a relationship between a British father and daughter are featured next in the textbook. Toronto, Madonna and a text about how well you know the world (in which a lot of different cultures are represented, such as the Great Wall of China, the oldest tree in Africa, Uncle Sam), and life's great events are rounding up the textbook. In the last chapter we can see even more representations of the British culture in an article about domestic violence in London, a wedding held in Dublin and a woman giving birth in Scotland. At the very end of the textbook there is a poem by W.H. Auden and a song by Frank Sinatra.

Evaluation points

There is no instruction on how the book may be used and there is no mention of how the cultural content may be handled. British and American cultures are the ones mostly represented but there are a few examples of other cultures, not only from the English speaking countries (Italy, Africa, and India). Subjects that are covered in this textbook are mostly specific to the target culture and all the topics are suitable for students and very interesting for this level. All the activities that appear in the textbook are familiar to the learners and every task is clear enough so that the students know what is asked of them. Cultural information is used mostly for a better understanding of the target culture. Characters appearing in the book are very good representatives of the foreign society, there are no stereotypes and all the photographs show ordinary people. There are many points of view in this textbook and just a few of them are touristic. Materials are written by all sorts of people from the foreign culture and the information is integrated in the text but there is no historical perspective. Discussions that are held are very useful for learners because they get a perspective of what it is like to live in the foreign culture that is in question and also they get a chance to reflect on their own culture. In Table 1 we can see how often cultural dimensions occur. Out of twelve chapters in the text book, the aesthetic sense appears in four of them from which is evident that they are represented with only 33.3%, while the semantic and pragmatic sense occur in seven chapters with 58.3% of occurrences. The surprising fact is that the aesthetic sense is so poorly presented. Other dimensions are satisfactorily represented. The sociological sense appears most frequently, in ten of the chapters with a high number of 73%. It is obvious that the authors were thinking about how this textbook will be used internationally so they tried to include many customs and institutions of English speaking countries. Semantic and pragmatic senses have equal representation and both appear in over a half of the chapters.

Table 1. Dimensions of culture found in New Headway, Intermediate

Total: 12 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
4 chapters	10 chapters	7 chapters	7 chapters
33.3 % of occurrence	73% of occurrence	58.3% of occurrence	58.3% of occurrence

Textbook 2

After having analyzed the topics in the textbooks for the intermediate level it was expected that cultures of the world will be even more frequently dealt with, but it was not the case. The first chapter started off with a boy in a camp in America writing a letter to his parents and then later on there is a text about a man from England who went to work in Chile. The next chapter is a little better, as far as culture is concerned. There are two texts, one about Marco Polo and the second about a man travelling from Bangkok to Fiji and Australia. Also there is mention of tourism in Spain, Philippines and the Caribbean. Next, there are pictures illustrating stories about Niagara Falls, the Swiss Alps and a boy from China breaking into the US defense system. One of the few literary topics is next. Students are able to read a chapter from the novel *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood. The topic that follows is very interesting for exploring and discussion. It is about conspiracy theories and in this textbook there are texts concerning the mystery about the death of Lady Diana, landing on the moon and the death of JF Kennedy Jr. Future arrangements are one of the topics students may like. In this textbook we can see people from various cultures making plans. There is also a text about the British airways. Young adults in Britain (a survey with various people from Bristol, London, Edinburgh and Belfast) and students from Cambridge are pictured on the following pages. Jamie Oliver, Starbucks, and Apple Macintosh are all very well known around the world and they are all topics of the next few pages in this textbook. Students learn facts, answer questions and get to experience some of the more mainstream culture in the English speaking world of today. Getting on together and solving conflicts is the next topics and we can see pictures of people from various culture having arguments which are eventually solved, which gives the students a moral lesson too. A brief cultural comparison is featured in the pictures and texts about weddings in India, Britain and America (a Las Vegas wedding) and students have to give an example from their own culture. John Travolta is given as an example of a hobby gone extreme and after that we get to see what it is like to live in extreme conditions in a faraway land in Russia, Chukotka. One of the most interesting topics for students is the one about friendship which, in this textbook, is addressed with a text about the famous show *Friends*. A frozen mummy in the Swiss Alps, how the west was won (Native Americans) and a heartwarming story of a woman getting her PhD in her seventies are topics which finish up this textbook. At the very end there is a very well known song by Frank Sinatra called *That's Life*, sung by Robbie Williams, a well known British singer, in which students have to fill in the gaps.

Evaluation points

Since this is a textbook written by the same authors as the previous one, there is no instruction how to use the cultural content. Here there is even more representation of the British and American cultures but very few examples from other cultures. There are only a few photographs showing some other nationalities and ordinary people, but they are not explicitly mentioned. It could be concluded that the British culture prevails. Subjects are specific to cultures they represent and all the activities are known to the learners. This textbook is also easy to use. Still, cultural information is used only for the purpose of understanding the target culture better. Characters are representatives of their age, family situations and interests. There are only a few instances where there is a tourist point of view and there are only a few examples of foreign people living in the target country and culture. Historical perspective is represented but only with a few minor examples. Cultural information is integrated in the text and all the discussions are very useful for the learners so they get the chance to reflect on their own culture. Table 2 shows that in this textbook the authors paid more attention to the use of the English language, therefore the pragmatic sense is mostly represented, in nine chapters or in 75% of total occurrence. Other dimensions are equally distributed throughout the textbook. The aesthetic sense appears more frequently than in the Intermediate level textbook, in seven chapters or 58.3%. The sociological sense still prevails in most of the chapters, eight of them to be exact, with 66.6% and the semantic sense appears in exactly a half of the chapters.

Table 2. Dimensions of culture in New Headway, Upper-intermediate

Total: 12

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
7	8	6	9
58.3% of occurrence	66.6% of occurrence	50% of occurrence	75% of occurrence

Textbook 3

Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska: New Opportunities, Intermediate

This textbook starts off with a topic that is very well known to students, especially at this level, under the name *Adventure*. It is dealt with in texts about explorers who travelled from London to Antarctica. Later on there is a text about a woman who goes on trips around the world and writes about her journeys to Africa, Turkey and other exotic countries. The next topic is called *Extreme sports* illustrated with pictures of snowboarding, diving, bungee jumping and many

more. What is very interesting in this textbook is that it has a section called *Comparing Cultures* where students have to compare sports in the USA and Britain with those in their own country. However there is a small problem: some of the questions students need to answer might be a little hard because students are not familiar with such facts. For example, there is a question about the number of baseball leagues in the USA. The next chapter, called *Stories*, starts off with talking about famous literary works like *Lord of the Rings* and *Sherlock Holmes*. There is a list of types of literature and there is a biography of Groucho Marx as well as a picture from the movie *Notting Hill* accompanied by a task in which students have to give opinions about films and stories behind them. A myth, a newspaper article and a strange tale are given as examples of storytelling. The section titled *Culture Corner* is entirely devoted to Canada and its geographic features, what it is famous for, the way of life and what students think of the country. Next chapter deals with types of transport, solar car racing in Australia and air pollution due to traffic in Britain. The articles about Leeds, Oklahoma and Derbyshire are featured in the chapter about media in general. Students have to compare the quality of papers in Britain with the ones in their own culture. Under the title *Price of Fame* there are the pictures of John Lennon, Marilyn Monroe, JF Kennedy and his son and Lady Diana. Students have to say what they know about them and then they continue to the topic of shocking advertisements in Britain. In the next *Culture Corner* Ireland is presented. Cultural topics that follow are British and American schools and students have to compare those schools to their own. After that, in the *Culture Corner*, characteristics of Wales are brought forward. Careers, finding a job, going on interviews and examples of extraordinary jobs like trapeze artist and lighthouse keeper are introduced next along with the comparison that has to be made by the students between the text and how to find a job in their own culture. *Culture Shock* section highlights some of the very famous tourist attractions like Big Ben and Grand Canyon. Among the topics such as moving to Australia or from Cuba to Ireland, a text about good manners in various countries such as Italy, Britain, Japan and America can be found. In this text, students can find examples on how to behave while visiting some of the listed countries, what is considered polite behavior during dinner or how to greet people in that particular foreign country. Also, students have to compare people from their own country to the people they read about in the texts. There is also a text about visiting Britain, what is most popular and how it has changed through history (representing the tourism view). In the last *Culture Corner* there is a whole page dedicated to Australia. At the very end of the textbook there is the *Literature spot* which includes the following: *Frankenstein*, *the Knight's Tale*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *A Horse and Two Goats*.

Evaluation points

This is another textbook that has no information or instruction on how to handle the cultural content. Only specific cultures such as the British, American, Australian and Canadian are represented here and the subjects that are covered are therefore specific for the target culture. All the activities are very well known and simply explained so that students do not have problems understanding what they have to do. Teachers using this book do not need specialized training to use it because it is methodically adapted and there is enough information given. The cultural information students get is used only for the better understanding of the target culture. Characters are representatives of their society, class and age and photographs show ordinary people. The tourist point of view is represented in this textbook; all the texts and stories are written in such a way. Members of different nationalities living in the foreign country are represented in the materials and texts. There is a historical perspective. View at the present-day features as well as all the cultural information is integrated in the texts along with special chapters for the cultural topics only. Students get to reflect on their own culture in every chapter in the section specifically made for the comparison of the cultures. All the discussions are very useful because they give students a perspective and instruct them on how to give and express their opinion. Cultural dimensions in this textbook show that the authors find culture as one of very important elements in building a successful language lesson and that can be concluded from Table 3. Almost all the dimensions are equally represented; the sociological sense gets a little more attention than the others, it appears in six of the chapters with 75% of occurrences. That is not surprising because customs and institutions are the foundation of every culture. The semantic and pragmatic sense are covered in five chapters with 62.5% and the aesthetic sense appears in half of the chapters with 50%.

Table 3. Dimensions of culture in New Opportunities, Intermediate

Total: 8 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
4	6	5	5
50% of occurrence	75% of occurrence	62.5% of occurrence	62.5% of occurrence

Textbook 4

Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska: New Opportunities, Upper- intermediate

The introductory chapter, *Identity*, starts off with Anne Frank's autobiography. After that, Britain is analyzed from an identity of a person to an identity of a country and students have the task to compare people from their own country with the people of Britain. Whoopi Goldberg, Robin Williams and Laurel and Hardy are introduced in the next chapter which deals with the topic of laughter. There is an excerpt from C. Dickens' comic novel the *Pickwick Papers*, as well as some funny stories from Britain. Students have to compare jokes and humor in their own culture with those in the British culture. The text about Rowan Atkinson and his famous character Mr Bean concludes the topic. Street art, fashion and body (body piercings) is the next cultural topic in which students have to compare street art in their own country with the one in New York City. What follows is the chapter about beauty that includes poetry, film music and music (a poem by T. Hughes, film music from *Psycho* and *La vita e bella*, music by the Beatles, Rolling Stones, David Gray and Beck). In the *Culture Corner* section there is a text about English around the world. After two chapters that include the world of tomorrow, looking in the future and body parts there is an article about cloning and the famous sheep Dolly. Students are taken on a journey through pictures of the Taj Mahal, Japan and safari as well as a text about a man from Texas going on a trip from Uruguay, Chile to Galapagos. The last text is about the transcontinental train in Canada. In another *Culture Corner* we get the opportunity to find out about the history of the USA and its popular music. The chapter under the name *Global Issues* brings texts about natural disasters all over the world (floods, hurricanes and earthquakes), global warming and the rich and the poor. Next is the topic about society and it is represented with the British society and the golden ages throughout history. We are made aware of the consumer society and a very well known literary work by Thomas More, *Utopia*, describing a perfect society. The last chapter deals with conflict and how to solve it. This is illustrated with various examples (neighbors fighting, war memories). In the culture comparison section students have to say if they think the reason that people deal with conflict differently, is their personality or their culture.

Evaluation points

Just as the previous textbook by the same authors, there is no instruction on how to use the book and its cultural content. This textbook also represents the specific cultures such as the British, American, Australian and Canadian and again the subjects covered are specific for the target culture but there are also a few topics covering some other cultures of the world. Activities are simple to understand and yet they require a lot of work. It is methodologically adapted and teachers should not have any problems using this textbook. The cultural information is yet again

used only for better understanding of the target culture. Characters are good representatives of their class, age and interests and ordinary people are portrayed in the photographs. The tourist point of view is presented but the students are able to enjoy all the cultural content and information even though they do not get the chance to put themselves in the shoes of someone living in the target culture. There is great significance given to the historical perspective in a special section reserved only for cultural information. In addition, cultural information is covered and integrated in the texts. Cultural dimensions, as can be seen in Table 4, are still equally distributed and the sociological sense has an advantage over the others again. Frequency of the pragmatic sense is slightly lower than in previously analyzed textbooks but it is still in half of the chapters, same as the aesthetic sense. The sociological sense emerges in seven chapters with 70%, while the semantic sense is represented in six chapters with 60%.

Table 4. Dimensions of culture in New Opportunities, Upper- intermediate

Total: 10 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
5	7	6	5
50% of occurrence	70% of occurrence	60% of occurrence	50% of occurrence

Textbook 5

Doolan, Hindlaugh, Špaleta: Log on @ 1 In Frame, 6th year of learning

The first impression of this textbook was that it had few cultural elements because the texts in the first nine chapters revolve around issues concerning young people, for example: getting to know someone, attitudes, dealing with teenage problems, describing past events, healthy habits and speculating about the future, which are general topics, not dealing with culture. However, the tenth chapter contains a text about Australia and its climate, environment, political system and animals and all of these are used as examples for students to describe Croatia. The most interesting text in this chapter is the one about Christmas traditions in Australia compared with Scotland, Brazil, Hungary, Italy, Denmark, Croatia and many more. The next chapter is also culture related it is about Canada and its holidays and sports which were again used to help students describe Croatian holidays and sports. A chapter named *A trip around Europe* brings

descriptions of European countries and capitals, as well as an article about Dubrovnik as one of our most famous tourist attractions. Also, students have the opportunity to express how they feel about the European Union and they get to do a project where they have to prepare a guide for their town. Making plans to go and see the movie *Pulp Fiction* is a cultural element found in the chapter *Making plans*. A poem by Rudyard Kipling is used as an introduction to a chapter about imaginary situations. The 19th chapter introduces the USA. There are some facts, differences between British and American English, the American flag and stereotypes about Americans. What follows is a text about educational systems in England, Wales and the USA and students get the chance to compare it with schools in Croatia. A chapter that presented United Kingdom and its history also requires students to compare the main hero from the movie *Braveheart* with the real person in their history. On the last page is a picture of a website of Croatia made for teenagers which gives students a way to round up the whole year and to think about all that they have been learning throughout the textbook.

Evaluation points

Just like the previous two sets of textbooks, this set does not have instructions on how to use the book and its contents. Specific cultures such as the British, American and Canadian are covered in this textbook along with many texts. Examples from Croatia and other cultures of the world are also mentioned. The topics covered are specific for the target culture. Activities are well written and can be easily understood by the students. The textbook has its own rhythm, an introductory part with general topics about the life of young people, a main part with some cultural content, and a closing part with an excerpt from the students' own country. Cultural information that is presented to the students is used only for a better understanding of the target culture. Characters are representatives of their age, social status and interests. All the photographs show young people students can easily relate to. There is a tourist point of view on the culture content. There is some historical perspective included and cultural information is integrated in the texts. In every topic students get a chance to reflect on their own culture through discussions and various tasks. Table 5 clearly shows that cultural dimensions are very rare. The sociological sense is present in half of the chapters. This is followed by the semantic sense which can be found in nine chapters with 40.9% of total occurrences. However, the aesthetic sense is almost completely ignored; it emerges in only three chapters with 13.6% of occurrences.

Table 5. Dimensions of culture in: Log on @ 1 In Frame

Total: 22 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
3	11	9	6
13.6% of occurrence	50% of occurrence	40.9% of occurrence	27.2% of occurrence

Textbook 6

Doolan, Hindlaugh, Ivić- Doolan: Log on @ 2 In Frame, 7th year of learning

This textbook follows the pattern of the previous one, but here the cultural elements appear sooner, in the fifth chapter. It starts with the geography of the United States and first-hand account of visiting places in the States and then, again, students compare the geography of the USA with Croatia. Next chapters cover topics such as creating advertisements, sports; qualities of a good teacher and schools in the future. Then, in a review part, there is a section called *Academy Awards* where students have to guess some movie titles that won the Oscars (e.g. *Casablanca*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Frankenstein*...) and their film genres, and then describe the actors' performance in those movies. The topics in units 9 and 10 revolve around describing personalities, giving an opinion and advice, expressing purpose and going on holiday in the wilderness in Ecuador, India, Costa Rica or Turkey. The topic on schools in Canada is covered in the next chapter along with the story of a girl from Croatia who moved there. The most popular monsters of the wilderness, Sasquatch and Nessie are some of the topics students find appealing. While working on the texts about them, students can also learn a little about the countries of their origin. There is also an article about scary movies and monsters. As part of the discussion/debate section, students are supposed to express their attitudes on cloning people and animals on the basis of the article about the cloned sheep Dolly. Drugs, the planet Earth under attack; aliens are the next three topics. Here, students from various English speaking countries (Canada, USA and Australia) share their opinion about these topics. This is followed by texts on Halloween and haunted places. The textbook ends with the comparison of Croatian, American and British political system.

Evaluation points

In this textbook, specific cultures and subjects are represented as well. But, unlike the previously analyzed textbooks, this one includes Australia. Activities are easily understood, the level is appropriate and teachers would be able to create good lessons with this textbook.

Cultural information is for better understanding of the target culture; characters are good representatives of their age and interests, photographs show ordinary people and the tourist point of view is also included. There is a variety of texts, materials written by visitors in the target country, and some attention is given to the historical perspective. Information on culture is integrated in the texts and students still get many opportunities to reflect on their own culture along with helpful discussions. Table 6 reveals how cultural dimensions are still neglected in this set of textbooks. The aesthetic sense, the one students find most appealing, is almost nonexistent; it surfaces in only two chapters with 9.09% of total occurrences. The other three senses appear in more chapters than in the first textbook, but still in very small numbers, all under 50%. This can be understood because it is a locally produced textbook that focuses mostly on the students' own country. Since Croatia is the students' homeland and it is something they can easily relate to, it is logical that it will be mentioned more than a few times. Nevertheless, teachers should find a balance between the local culture and the target language culture.

Table 6. Dimensions of culture in Log on @ 2 In Frame

Total: 22 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
2	8	7	4
9.09 % of occurrence	36.3% of occurrence	31.8% of occurrence	18.1% of occurrence

Textbook 7

Doolan, Hindlaugh, Ivić- Doolan: Log on @ 3 In Frame, 8th year of learning

Following the pattern of the previous two textbooks, the first elements of culture appear in the fourth chapter where we learn how young people in the UK take a gap year before going to university. Students are also asked to compare their own situation with the one they read about. In the *Review* section there is a text that students have to fill in with appropriate grammar forms

but it concerns the UK history from 1688 until the present. Planning the future and making decisions are covered in the next two chapters which include Hamlet and his famous line “to be or not to be”. The unit *Unsolved mysteries*, a potentially very appealing topic, contains texts on Easter Island and Captain Franklin’s expedition to Arctic, which are not usually covered in the textbooks. This makes it even more interesting for the students to read. *Young people and the law* is a chapter in which students see how young people in the UK have to respect the law in their country. Also students have to compare it all to Croatia. In the chapter about sports, there are texts about people achieving great results in various sports as well as an extensive article about sports in Croatia. *Literary Dynamite* is the name of the chapter that follows. It brings the texts on the Nobel Prize for literature, the writer B. Shaw, the novel *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* and the task to write a book or film review on the basis of the example for the movie *Shrek*.

Evaluation points

Specific cultures and subjects are portrayed in this textbook as well. Activities are easily understood but get more demanding as the chapters go on. Cultural information is still used only for the understanding of the target culture and characters are representatives of their age, interests and social class, photographs show young people relatable to students, and there is again a tourist point of view included. Cultural content is integrated in the texts and materials are provided by various members of the foreign culture. There is some historical perspective and there are many discussions useful for students. Table 7 shows the continued low occurrence of the cultural dimensions, especially the aesthetic sense, only four chapters and 18.1% of total occurrences. The semantic sense appears more frequently than the others with eight chapters and 36.3%. The number of occurrences for all senses is generally insufficient.

Table 7. Dimensions of culture in Log on @ 3 In Frame

Total: 22 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
4	7	8	5
18.1% of occurrence	31.8% of occurrence	36.3% of occurrence	22.7% of occurrence

Textbook 8

Doolan, Hindlaugh, Ivić- Doolan: Log on @ 4 In Frame, 9th year of learning

Unlike the previous three textbooks, elements of culture appear in the first chapter. These include subcultures of Britain (Hippies, Skinheads, and Mods) and their influence on the young generation. There is also an issue of the generation gap and students have to give a perspective from Croatia. What follows are love poems and an extract from a novel (Sir F. Kynaston, Shakespeare, and T. Hardy) that discuss different views on beauty and love. The title *Pride and Prejudice* announces the text about discrimination, gangs, thugs and other violent members of the society along with the mess they cause when they act out. At the end of the chapter there is a literary appreciation section where students can find two war poems and an excerpt from the novel *Lord of the Flies*. In the next chapter there is a discussion about what the future holds for various countries including Croatia (cloning, mechanical devices, genetically modified food, overpopulation). The chapter on media covers newspapers, radio and television influence on people. The following chapter deals with life and death. One of the main topics here is E.A. Poe and his dark works of fiction and poetry. Extreme sports like ice-climbing, base-jumping, sky-surfing, bungee jumping and scuba diving make the basis in the next chapter that gives students an opportunity to give opinions. Things are not what they appear to be and that is what students will be able to discover in the ninth chapter by reading the text about people from various cultures claiming they did something they did not. For example, the controversy about Shakespeare is investigated. The same chapter contains an extract from a play by O. Wilde and a poem by E. Dickinson. Views on education and an extract from the novel by C. Dickens come up next. This is followed by speeches of important people in history, such as Mark Anthony, and a discussion about the English and Croatian language. This textbook ends with texts about life and work of C. Dickens and an article about JF Kennedy's assassination.

Evaluation points

Specificity of cultures is continuing in this textbook along with the subjects that are covered. Activities become even more demanding which is understandable considering the students' level of knowledge. Cultural information is used for understanding the target culture, characters represent their age, people in photographs are ordinary, and the tourist point of view is still respected. There is some historical perspective, especially in the literary section, learners are asked to reflect on their own culture whenever possible and the discussions brought up by the authors are great help for the better understanding of the target and students' own culture. In the Table 8 there is a slight increase in sense frequency but still not enough. Now, the sociological and semantic senses appear equally frequently, in eight chapters with 36.3% and the pragmatic sense is the most frequently represented. That is not a surprise because it is the

last year of high school English and more attention is paid to what language is appropriate for which contexts.

Table 8. Dimensions of culture in Log On @ 4 In Frame

Total: 22 chapters

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
4	8	8	9
18.1% of occurrence	36.3% of occurrence	36.3% of occurrence	40.9% of occurrence

3.5.2. Summary of textbook results

This section brings a summary of all results of the textbook analysis. Common topics and number of cultural dimension occurrences will be compared and discussed.

Table 9. Summary of all cultural dimensions

The aesthetic sense	The sociological sense	The semantic sense	The pragmatic sense
33	65	56	50
27.5% of occurrence	54.1% of occurrence	46.6% of occurrence	41.6% of occurrence

On the basis of the analysis of three different sets of EFL textbooks used in Croatian secondary schools it can be concluded that cultural elements are present to a varying degree. International textbooks have more cultural elements than those locally published. This is logical in some ways because the focus of locally published textbooks is more on the country students live in. As can be seen in Table 11, all of them cover well-known cultures such as British, American, Canadian and Australian.

These are the most popular cultures among students in the world today. In the *Headway* set, there is a slight preference towards the British culture. All of the sets have a few references to cultures around the world, for example China and Turkey. The *Opportunities* set is more culture oriented: it has specific sections dedicated exclusively to culture which is very useful for both students and teachers. In the *Log On* set there are not many cultural topics and their range of cultural elements is not very wide since it focuses only on the most popular English speaking countries.

Table 10. Summary of cultural dimensions in each set of textbooks

	New Headway set	Opportunities set	Log On@ In frame set
The aesthetic sense	45.8% of occurrence	50% of occurrence	14.7% of occurrence
The sociological sense	75% of occurrence	72.2% of occurrence	38.6% of occurrence
The semantic sense	54.1% of occurrence	61.1% of occurrence	36.3% of occurrence
The pragmatic sense	66.6% of occurrence	55.5% of occurrence	27.2% of occurrence

All of three textbook sets deal with the topic of extreme sports, job applications, newspaper articles and ads from different countries. They all offer to students a view into the future (students have to imagine what the world will look like in thirty years) and pictures of cultural landmarks such as Big Ben and Statue of Liberty, flags of the UK, the USA and Canada and, most importantly, they all offer a chance to compare students' native country with the target one. Furthermore, all of them cover relations between people, how to solve a fight or how to communicate better. The British culture dominates others in all the textbooks: British history, music, politics, geography and tourist visits are very frequently dealt with. Only the *Opportunities* set focuses on literature, and special pages are reserved for analyzing chapters from the works by famous poets and novelists. In the *Log On* set literature is represented to a much smaller extent. In the *Headway* set, literature references can be seen in pictures of famous literary works and just a few articles about authors and their works. They all feature the same literary works, namely *Lord of the Rings* and *Frankenstein*, and they all mention the famous American president J.F. Kennedy. History is mentioned in two of the sets, only *Headway* has no particular focus on it. Expansion of the English language, which is also very important for the students, and the significance of the language are only briefly mentioned in all the textbooks that were analyzed here. As for the four cultural dimensions, the sociological sense is very well

developed in all the sets while the aesthetic sense is very much neglected, as can be seen in Table 9. This is surprising because it is the part of culture students may find very appealing.

In the *Headway* set the sociological sense has most representation and the other three are almost equal. Altogether, *Headway* is a set of textbooks with moderate display of cultural elements (see Table 10). The *Opportunities* set is a very good example for representation of cultural elements because, as can be seen in Table 10, all of the cultural dimensions are covered in large amounts, especially the sociological sense. Poor display can be seen in the *Log On* set because here quantities of cultural dimensions are almost negligible.

Table 11. Choice of topics in all the textbooks

	New Headway set	Opportunities set	Log On@ In frame set
History	Native Americans, Marco Polo	British society throughout history, development of United States of America through the years (revolution, flag, presidents)	Facts about origin of the United States of America, heroes in British history,
Customs	Vegas wedding, giving birth in Scotland, getting married in Dublin, job applications		Christmas traditions in Australia, Scotland, holidays in general
Landmarks	Niagara Falls, London, New York	Big Ben, Grand Canyon, Australia, New York,	Flags of various English speaking countries
Literature and film	Hemingway, <i>Frankenstein</i> , <i>Lord of the Rings</i> , <i>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</i>	Dickens, <i>Lord of the Rings</i> , <i>Frankenstein</i> , <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> , <i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	R. Kipling, <i>Lord of the Rings</i> , <i>Frankenstein</i> , <i>Casablanca</i> , <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</i>

Famous people	Picasso, JF Kennedy, Lady Diana, Sinatra	W. Goldberg, JF Kennedy, Lady Diana, M. Monroe	JF Kennedy, Mark Anthony, Shakespeare
Jobs	Job applications (examples from Britain and the USA, lawyer, newspaper delivery,	Extraordinary jobs (trapeze artist, lighthouse keeper)	
Nationalities	Texas, Iowa, London, Edinburgh, Bristol, Belfast	London, Texas, Ireland	Canada, England
Other cultures	Girl from Seoul, Great Wall of China, tourism in Spain, Philippines	Taj Mahal, Africa, Japan	Ecuador, India, Turkey
Sports	Mountain-climbing	Bungee jumping, diving, snow boarding	Bungee jumping, sky surfing, scuba diving, ice-climbing

None of the books gives instructions on how to handle the cultural information that is given. All topics that are covered are suitable for learners, and the activities are familiar. Cultural information that students get (in the textbooks analyzed) is for active use and better understanding of the target culture. Characters in the textbooks are carefully chosen and they are representatives of the foreign cultures textbooks deal with. There are a lot of photographs and pictures in all the textbooks analyzed and they present ordinary people and situations that are related to the topic at hand.

To sum up, the elements of culture occur in all of the three sets researched. They appear frequently enough, but it would be much better for students to increase the amount as much as possible. It is also necessary to mention that cultures, other than those of the English speaking countries should also have their place. Also, more focus should be put on aspects of life, other than those that are much too typical, because it would contribute to students' motivation and interest.

3.5.3. Compliance with the Croatian National Curriculum

One of the many aims of the *Croatian National Curriculum* (2011) for foreign language teaching and learning is to introduce the way of life in foreign countries and thus enhance students' knowledge. Also, it is said that contact with a foreign language facilitates thinking,

memory and encourages imagination. A wide range of different texts forms the basis for treatment of cultural and civilization topics. It can be concluded that the *Croatian National Curriculum* advocates intercultural communicative competence.

The *Croatian National Curriculum* recommends topics that should be dealt with in each of the four high school grades. Topics that are related to elements of culture and civilization are:

- Topics of culture and civilization of English-speaking countries
- Cities and regions of Great Britain, United States of America, Australia and Canada
- Education systems in target countries
- Free time (film, theatre, TV, literature, comics, music)
- Sports, recreation, ecology
- Inhabitation
- Jobs
- Advertisements and their influence on life
- Traditional holidays.

The *Headway* set covers cities and regions of English speaking countries, mostly those in Britain. Culture and civilization topics, advertisements and jobs are also covered in these textbooks. Topics related to sports and education systems are only briefly mentioned in some of the texts and dialogues. Free time topics, those that students love working on most, are rarely mentioned, they appear mostly in photos, while there is no mention of traditional holidays.

The *Opportunities* set includes all the topics recommended by the *Croatian National Curriculum* except traditional holidays. The extent to which this set complies with the recommendations can be seen in the fact that there are special sections reserved for culture and civilization.

Even though the amount of culturally related topics in the *Log On* set is not large, it covers all recommended topics except jobs. This is not a surprise because this is a locally produced textbook and it is logical that it was made in accordance with the regulations. All in all, all three sets comply with the *Croatian National Curriculum*, some of them to a greater extent than others. The *Opportunities* set is an example on how to successfully include elements of culture and tradition into textbooks and classrooms.

4. Conclusion

It has been repeatedly highlighted in this paper that integrating culture into language teaching and learning is a requirement if we want to accomplish intercultural competence, awareness and communication. Even more important is the fact that students will become more aware of their own culture and tradition by comparing it with the foreign one. When successful integration takes place, learners will be able to act flexibly and variously along the lines of cultural norms that they will encounter in the target language and culture. Students' interest is the basic prerequisite for successfully teaching the target culture and its accomplishment is greatly increased with the choice of a quality textbook.

An assumption was made by the author that elements of culture in textbooks used in Croatia are poorly represented and it has been proven by the research. Moreover, it is shown that only the most popular cultural elements are included, such as the main facts about Britain, the United States of America, Canada and Australia.

Students are the focus of the teaching process and so by teaching in the right way we are ensuring a better future for them. Furthermore, the ideal case for teachers would be to create a classroom atmosphere in which questions and discussions about the target culture and comparison to the native one will strengthen students' language learning and understanding.

Teachers should be advised to create more culturally oriented lessons and they should do so not only with quality textbooks but with authentic materials as well. Texts, dialogues, literature, films and music with elements of the target culture should form a basis for a good quality lesson. Resources and possibilities for materials are endless, especially nowadays. Moreover, teachers should inform their students of the benefits they will gain by learning culturally based facts and attractions. Textbook authors should emphasize parts of their textbooks where students will be able to find elements of culture and tradition and they should also instruct further and more detailed research.

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