

Trine Marie Hagfoss

Intercultural Education and Textbooks

A Study of how Intercultural Aspects are presented in Textbooks for Norwegian Middle School Learners of English as a Foreign Language

Bachelor's project in 4-årig grunnskolelærerutdanning for 1.-7. trinn

Supervisor: Marthe Sofie Pande-Rolfsen and Armend Tahirsylaj

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Abstract

Intercultural education is recognized as a key area regarding the development and safeguarding of human rights, democracy and to promote mutual understanding. As our society grows more multicultural and globally connected, obtaining an intercultural education simultaneously grows of importance. A natural environment where intercultural education should be included is in the foreign language classroom which in a Norwegian context is the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that intercultural education is not something which is explicitly explained or mentioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in *the English subject curriculum*. This is the background for the direction of my research, and my research question is the following: *How do three different textbooks for middle school EFL-learners in Norway promote intercultural competence?* The main data source for the research paper is a qualitative document analysis of textbooks for Norwegian EFL-learners. Apart from this, the discussion is based on relevant theory from the field, and steering documents from the Norwegian Directorate for Education. Through the analysis it became clear that the textbooks contain intercultural aspects to some degree, but plenty is still lacking. Elements which can contribute negatively towards the learners' intercultural education are also found. The discussion problematizes how the findings can effect learners' development of intercultural competence, as well as discussing the teacher's role in this. The conclusion reflects around the negative consequences if learners do not receive an intercultural education.

Sammendrag

Interkulturell utdanning er anerkjent som et sentralt område for utvikling og sikring av menneskerettigheter, demokrati og for å fremme gjensidig forståelse. Samtidig som dagens samfunn vokser mer flerkulturelt og globalt blir det enda viktigere å utvikle sin interkulturelle kompetanse. Fremmedspråksundervisning er en naturlig arena hvor interkulturell utdanning burde inkluderes i undervisningen, og i en norsk kontekst vil dette være det engelske klasserommet. Når dette tas i betraktning er det interessant og bemerk seg at interkulturell utdanning ikke er nevnt noen steder i utdanningsdirektoratets sin engelske læreplan. Dette danner bakgrunnen for forskningen min, og problemstilling min er følgende: *Hvordan framstiller tre ulike engelsklærebøker for mellomtrinns elever i Norge interkulturell kompetanse?* Hoveddatakilden for oppgaven er en kvalitativ dokumentanalyse av engelsklærebøker for norske klasserom. I tillegg til dette er diskusjonen basert på relevant teori fra feltet og styringsdokumenter fra utdanningsdirektoratet. Gjennom analysen har det kommet fram at lærebøkene til en viss grad inneholder interkulturelle aspekter, men de mangler fortsatt en del. Det er også elementer som i verste fall kan bidra negativt til elevenes utvikling av interkulturell kompetanse. Diskusjonen problematiserer hvordan funnene kan påvirke elevers utvikling, samt diskuterer lærerens rolle i dette. I konklusjonen reflekteres det rundt konsekvensene av en mangelfull interkulturell utdanning.

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1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background for choice of topic

The world today is becoming more and more multicultural which causes people with different backgrounds and cultures to interact more frequently than ever before. The English language has spread to great parts of the world and it is now the native or second language of numerous countries. Through globalization the language has continued to spread and it is now considered to be the world's first global language (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 11). This means that English is spoken by people from diverse cultural backgrounds, thus having the necessary competence to communicate with people from divergent backgrounds and cultures is important. This competence is referred to as "Intercultural competence". The Council of Europe has a long-standing history of focusing on intercultural education, dating back to the 1970s. The White Paper on intercultural dialogue, adopted in May 2008, identifies intercultural education as:

one of the five key areas where action is needed to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to promote mutual understanding. Intercultural competence is a central precondition for every individual and since it is not automatically acquired, it needs to be developed, learned and maintained throughout life. (Huber, 2012, p. 5-6)

Intercultural competence is undoubtedly something that needs to be taught in schools, as it is a vital competence to acquire in order to optimally participate and function in today's multicultural society. Several researchers agree that language and culture are inextricably intertwined, and that to be able to communicate successfully with others we need cultural awareness and language skills (Galloway & Rose, 2015, pp. 58, 308-309; Byram, 1997, as cited in Munden, 2014, p. 310; Jørgensen, 2011, p. 26; Kramsch, 1993, as cited in Jørgensen, 2011, p. 27). When learning a foreign language, the learners are socialized into foreign cultures which makes the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom an arena for intercultural education (Fenner 2012, as cited in Hoff, 2018, p. 68). Therefore, the EFL-classroom is a natural place where intercultural competence can and should be taught. For this reason, I want to take a closer look into what role intercultural competence has in the Norwegian EFL-classrooms, by looking at textbooks for EFL-learners.

1.2. Research question and limitations

Based on my own experiences as an EFL-learner and through observations during teacher practices, I have noticed that textbooks more often than not, have a great influence regarding what content is taught in classrooms. This causes textbooks to be an important source of information for both learners and teachers. Because of this, I want to see how textbooks in Norwegian EFL-classrooms contribute to an intercultural education. The textbook series usually include textbooks, workbooks, CDs, and other additional resources, and it would be ideal to analyze all the components, however because of the scope of this assignment I have chosen to only focus on the textbooks. For the same reason, I have chosen to limit my research to include three textbooks. The research question for this bachelor assignment is the following: *How do three different textbooks for middle school EFL-learners in Norway promote intercultural competence?*

2.0. Theories and steering documents related to the topic

In order to understand how textbooks can promote intercultural competence, I will introduce theories that explain what intercultural competence consists of. I will also see how intercultural competence appears in *the English subject curriculum* in Kunnskapsløftet (LK06) and the proposed renewal of today's curriculum (Fagfornyelsen). Then I will explain why textbooks are relevant in today's classrooms and out some important elements for cultural teaching.

2.1. What is intercultural competence?

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively with people from a different cultural background than yourself. Barrett (2018) defines intercultural competence as:

the set of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and understanding that are needed for understanding and respecting people who are perceived to be culturally different from oneself, for interacting and communicating effectively and appropriately with such people, and for establishing positive and constructive relationships with such people. (p. 94)

This definition is rooted in an internally heterogeneous perspective (Barrett, 2013b, 2016; Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoin-Gaillard, & Philippou, 2013, as cited in Barrett, 2018, p. 94). Heterogeneity among cultural groups is impossible to avoid. Cultural groups are in constant change and evolution over time, meaning that members of cultural groups have

diverse beliefs and practices which are never constant. It is also important to mention that every individual belongs to multiple cultural groups such as ethnic, religious, national, generational, and familial groups (Barrett, 2018, p. 94). It is imperative to see culture as something that is in constant change, and remembering that culture is not limited to a nation's culture, but several cultural groups exist within a nation.

To understand when intercultural competence becomes relevant in order to communicate efficiently, the terms "interpersonal interaction" and "intercultural interaction" can be introduced. In an interpersonal interaction the participants respond to each other based purely on their own individual characteristics, while it changes to an intercultural interaction as soon as the participants' responses are based on their affiliations to another culture or set of cultures. These responses are usually automatic and implicit which highlights the importance of equipping students with intercultural competence, as it is when intercultural situations arise which intercultural competence becomes relevant (Barrett, 2018, p. 94-95).

One needs knowledge about what values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding involves, to understand how intercultural competence can be developed, learned and maintained throughout life. Several researchers have tried to define what each of the four components involve, and numerous of theoretical models of intercultural competence have been presented over the years. Barrett (2018) points out the appearance of a clear consensus among researchers towards what the most important components are (p. 95). By identifying the core components across the existing theoretical models, Barrett (2018) introduced his own framework, combining the key components of the numerous models. This framework consists of 14 components:

Values

- Valuing human dignity and human rights.
- Valuing cultural diversity.

Attitudes

- Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, worldviews, and practices.
- Respect for other people and for other beliefs, worldviews, and practices.
- Self-efficacy.
- Tolerance of ambiguity.

Skills

- Analytical and critical thinking skills.
- Skills of listening and observing.
- Empathy (in particular, cognitive and affective perspective-taking skills).
- Flexibility and adaptability.
- Linguistic, communicative, and plurilingual skills.

Knowledge and critical understanding

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of culture, cultures, and religions.

(Barrett, 2018, p. 95).

Byram (2008) introduces four key components which similarly to Barrett (2018) extracts from the definition of intercultural competence. Byram's (2008) four key components consist of the following; 1) *Attitude*, where obtaining the traits curiosity and openness are essential. 2) *Knowledge*, which involves obtaining knowledge about social groups, their products and practices in one's own and others countries. 3) *Skills of interpreting and relating*, and *skills of discovery and interaction* are the third components. Here the ability to interpret, explain and relate other culture's documents or events to one's own, and the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and operate knowledge, attitudes and skills during real-time interaction, are included. The last component is 4) *Critical cultural awareness*, where the ability to evaluate critically practices and products in one's own and other cultures/countries is mentioned. This is closely related to one's values (p. 69).

In order to analyze the textbooks, I have chosen to use Barrett's (2018) four categories: *values*, *attitudes*, *skills*, and *knowledge and critical understanding* as the foundation of the analysis. In the following I will present them in more detail based on the explanations of Barrett (2016), and Byram, Gribkova & Starkey (2002).

Values are "general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life" (Barrett, 2016 p. 36). In relation to intercultural competence, valuing human dignity, human rights, and cultural diversity is crucial. It involves a belief that every human is of equal worth, that human rights should be promoted, and it sets the foundation for living together as

equals in a world of justice and peace. Furthermore, it involves a recognition of every individual's right of being different, having their own perspectives, views, beliefs and opinions. (Barrett, 2016, pp. 36-37). For an intercultural speaker the importance of becoming aware of one's values are necessary. They need "critical awareness of themselves and their values, as well as those of other people (Byram et.al., 2002, p. 13).

An *attitude* "is the overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something (e.g. a person, a group, an institution, an issue, an event, a symbol; Barrett, 2016, p. 39). Byram et.al. (2002) assert that the attitudes of the intercultural speaker are the foundation of intercultural competence. Acquiring intercultural attitudes mean "a willingness to relatives one's own values, beliefs and behaviors, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from an outsider's perspective (...)" (p. 12). It also involves respecting otherness, acknowledging that a situation can be interpreted with multiple perspectives, and that one's own perspective is not the only truth (Barrett, 2016, p. 43).

Barrett (2016) defines a *skill* as "the capacity for carrying out complex, well-organized patterns of either thinking or behaviors in an adaptive manner in order to achieve a particular end or goal" (p. 44). To obtain intercultural competence the learner has to develop skills for comparing, interpreting and relating other cultures to one's own. This involves listening and observing skills, and empathy. Active listening and the observation of body language helps the intercultural speaker to understand what others are saying, while empathy enables one to relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and seeing the world from other's perspectives (Barrett, 2016, pp. 46-47). The ability to operate new cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills during real-time interaction is a crucial skill when communicating. Flexibility, adaptability and linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, can be related towards attaining such abilities (Barrett, 2016, p. 47). Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills are vital for effective and appropriate communication. It includes the ability to express oneself, using a shared language to understand each other, and recognize different forms of verbal and non-verbal expressions employed by other social groups and their cultures (Barrett, 2016, p. 47).

When it comes to *knowledge and critical understanding*, it is important to recognize that it is not the knowledge about a specific culture which is the goal, but knowledge about how social groups and identities function. This entails knowledge of social processes, knowledge about

how others are likely to perceive you, and knowledge about other people (Byram et.al., 2002, p. 12). Nevertheless, knowledge is not enough unless the intercultural speaker obtains a critical understanding of the self, language and communication, and culture, cultures and religions. This leads to active reflection on and critical evaluation of that which is being learned. (Barrett, 2016, p. 51).

2.2. Intercultural competence in *the English subject curriculum* and the proposed renewal of today's curriculum

The English subject curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training [NDET], 2013) emphasizes the inseparable relationship between language and culture. Since English is a universal language used for communication between people all over the world an awareness of this relationship becomes significant. In *the English subject curriculum* four main subject areas are found: *Language learning*, *Oral communication*, *Written communication*, and *Culture, society and literature*. Although the term “intercultural competence” is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, there are parts which are closely connected to the term. One example is found in the main subject area *Culture, society and literature*, where learners are expected to get a cultural understanding through learning about topics connected to social issues, literature and other cultural expression in various English-speaking countries. It also involves working with and discussing different texts and cultural forms of expression from different media. The NDET (2013) states that “this is essential to develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of people” (p. 2). Other intercultural components include: learners’ awareness of social norms in different situations, the use of idiomatic structures and grammatical patterns when communicating, and reading a variety of texts to create understanding and acquire knowledge (NDET, 2013, p. 2).

In the proposed renewal of today's English curriculum (Fagfornyelsen), there is also no explicit mention of intercultural competence in the English subject yet some intercultural elements are still present. The main subject areas are called core elements in the new curriculum and are divided into: *Communication*, *Language learning* and *Exposure to English texts* (my translation, NDET, 2019, n.p.). The curriculum emphasizes certain intercultural elements such as developing linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; reading texts which contribute to learners’ knowledge of linguistic and cultural diversity, ethnic groups’ lifestyles, traditions and cultures; and that through critical thinking and reflecting learners should acquire knowledge

about cultures and lifestyles in English speaking countries. Compared to the current English subject curriculum there are plenty of similarities, but the intercultural elements are more prominent in the new curriculum.

Barrett (2016) claims that children start engaging in intercultural situations from the time they start school, thus it is necessary that intercultural competence is taught from an early age (p. 95). However as Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) point out, even though there are aspects in *the English Subject Curriculum* that promote intercultural competence, it is a problem that it does not clarify what intercultural competence is and how it can be achieved (p. 160). The lack of clarification of the term in *the English subject curriculum* can contribute negatively towards the development of learners' intercultural competence.

2.3. Textbooks as a part of an intercultural education

The textbook seems to stand strong in the Norwegian EFL-classrooms (Skjelbred 2003; Juuhl, Hontvedt & Skjelbred, 2010, as cited in Fenner & Ørevik, 2018, p. 334), despite the fact that other learning materials are available, especially in today's technological society. Teachers explain this with practical reasons, for example that the textbook helps them when planning and structuring a course (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018, p. 334). Fenner & Ørevik (2018, p. 335) states that it is important to remember that "textbooks represent the author's subjective interpretation of the curriculum, especially in Norway where the curriculum does not contain detailed lists of content or working methods", and that even if the Ministry of Education no longer approves textbooks, teachers have confidence in the textbook author's interpretations. The amount of work teachers are required to do in addition to the tasks of lesson planning and teaching is increasing. This can cause teachers to rely heavily on textbooks and to follow their plans without reflecting over the content too much (Jørgensen, 2011, p. 12). Jørgensen (2011) also points out that in the school where she teaches the textbooks are the foundation of the local syllabus in English (p. 13). Hence, it is valid to say that the English textbook will in a lot of Norwegian classrooms play an important role, and the degree of intercultural education which learners' receive might depend heavily on the textbook's content.

Today, a norm in textbooks is to portray static descriptions of Western culture, and learners are encouraged to adhere to those cultural identities when communicating in English (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 58). The representation of cultures in today's textbooks for EFL-classrooms

continue “to be presented from a monoperspectival point of view, and culture continues to be conceived as a static, monolithic, idealised, undiversified object of study” (Sercu, 2010, p. 68). Looking back at Barrett’s (2018) explanation of cultural groups being heterogeneous, it is obvious that textbooks should not present culture from a monoperspectival point view, but it should be presented with a view which adequately reflects the heterogeneous world we live in. Sercu (2010) suggests an approach which can ensure that learners gain an adequate view of their own and others cultures. This approach involves presenting the target culture with an insider approach. An insider approach can be explained as going “beyond presenting one perspective on a particular aspect of the foreign culture”, and it investigates the different understanding and attitudes which members of that culture may have (p. 69). Further Sercu (2010) explains that the cultural contents should bring attention to the learner’s awareness of “possible cultural differences and misunderstandings, as well as of the feeling, opinions and attitudes these differences may bring about in people whose intercultural competence is not well developed” (p. 68). This also involves reflecting upon if the content in the textbooks will confirm already existing stereotypes which learners may have. Encouraging learners to reflect on their own culture and what they consider normal can help them relate to other cultures and their traditions, practices, beliefs, etc. (Sercu, 2010, pp. 67-68).

3.0. Method

3.1. Qualitative analysis and hermeneutics

In this research paper a qualitative method has been used to analyze the content of each individual textbook. Qualitative methods are generally more flexible than quantitative methods. The qualitative methods often base the research on a smaller number of data, and thus provide more detailed and expanded information of the selected material where the quality or special traits regarding the researched phenomena are focused on (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, pp. 17-18). Because textbooks are the main data source, I have used a qualitative document analysis as the method to answer my research question. Documents can be “every written source that is relevant for the researcher, and is described as every preserved record of someone's thoughts, actions or creations” (Potter, 1996, as cited in Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 87, my translation). Thus documents can be explained as something that is already written by someone other than the researcher. Regarding document analysis, Thagaard (2009) claims that the research question provides the researcher with guidance towards which documents to

use and how to analyze them. It is also necessary to assess all the relevant literature against the context it is written in, and who the target group is (as cited in Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 88). To conduct this research, I have chosen three textbooks from three different publishers; Gyldendal, Fagbokforlaget, and Aschehoug. The textbooks are written for Norwegian 7th grade EFL-learners, and are written to help learners achieve the competence aims for *the English subject curriculum* in LK06.

In addition to the textbooks it has been necessary to use analytical tools in my research. When analyzing documents it is not sufficient to only use texts as sources, but additional sources such as relevant theory are used as analytical tools in cooperation with the sources in order to create a wholeness (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 88). Therefore, I will discuss my findings in the textbooks up against the theory and steering documents presented in the previous chapter. To be able to answer my research question I have had to interpret the findings, the theory and the steering documents. Nilssen (2012) explains interpretation as “an attempt to find an underlying meaning or express something that seems unclear in a clear manner” (p. 72, my translation). Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, and since interpretation and explanation create the foundation of my analysis, the assignment contains a hermeneutic element. Hermeneutics has challenged the idea of interpretation having to be an absolute truth (Patton, 2002, as cited in Nilssen, 2012, p. 72), to acknowledging that there are no absolute truths, and phenomena can be understood in different manners, depending on the researcher’s background, methods, purposes and focus (Nilssen, 2012, p. 72).

3.2. Choice of textbooks

To conduct this research with the most representative data, I have chosen three textbooks from three different publishers. The textbooks are targeted for 7th graders. In order to narrow the scope of this analysis, I have chosen to only focus on the chapters which introduces English speaking countries. This limitation is set because I think it is intriguing to see how the authors have chosen to represent the target culture, and since culture is a major part of intercultural education, it would be a natural place for the authors to include intercultural aspects. *Quest 7* (Bade, Pettersen & Tømmerbakke, 2016) has two chapters about English-speaking countries where the countries Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and South Africa are represented. India and Pakistan are briefly mentioned. *A New Scoop 7* (Flemmen, Sørheim & Drew, 2008) has three chapters where English-speaking countries are represented. New

Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Canada are in one chapter while Ireland and the U.S. are presented in separate chapters. I have chosen to omit the chapter about Ireland as it will be to redundant to include three chapters in my analysis. In *Explore 7* (Edwards, Omland, Royer & Solli, 2017) Australia and New Zealand are presented in one chapter.

3.3. Categories for the analysis

To conduct the analysis, I have created categories based on the presented theory as this produces findings that are related closely to the theory. This is a deductive approach to analysis. The hallmark for a deductive approach is the movement from the more general to the more specific. The researcher begins with collecting theory related to the topic and proceeds by creating more specific hypotheses. It is then the hypotheses which determine the data collection and analysis (Trochim, 2006, np.). The three textbooks are qualitatively analyzed by using the four predetermined categories; *values*, *attitudes*, *skills*, and *knowledge and critical understanding*. The categories are created based on Barrett and Byram's proposals of what key components in which intercultural competence is developed. These are the main concepts I will look for in the categories:

- *Values*. Do the textbooks encourage learners to reflect critically over one's own and other's values? Do they promote cultural diversity, everyone's right of being different, and everyone living together as equals?
- *Attitudes*. Do the textbooks promote openness, curiosity, and respect towards otherness and to other beliefs' worldview and practices? Do they encourage the learner to see themselves from an outside perspective, and to respect otherness?
- *Skills*. Do the textbooks promote the learners' ability to interpret, explain and relate to other's cultures, and compare it to one's own, and the ability to acquire new knowledge about a culture, and operate it during interaction? The development of listening and observing skills, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, and communicative and plurilingual skills are essential.
- *Knowledge and critical understanding*. Do the textbooks promote the learners' knowledge and critical understanding of the self, language, communication, culture,

cultures, and religions? Here it is the knowledge about social processes, how social groups and identities function which is important. Not knowledge about a specific culture. It is also important to have a critical understanding of this.

3.4. Margin of error

As a researcher conducting a qualitative analysis, I have been aware of the importance of acknowledging that my subjective, individual theories will affect my results. This is called reflexivity, and means that my background, beliefs, values, attitudes, interests, environment, etc. will impact my result (Nilssen, 2012, p. 139). Important elements that will affect my results is: this is the first time I have written a research paper using a qualitative method; I have not analyzed textbooks prior to this; my knowledge and experience with the topic was limited before I began my research; and since I only analyzed parts of the textbooks it is possible that relevant findings could be discovered elsewhere in the textbooks or textbook series. The fact that I had a limited number of textbooks also have to be mentioned as a possible margin of error, as it is not possible to know how the intercultural education is in Norway based on three textbooks. Nevertheless, it can give a glimpse into the direction which the intercultural education seems to be heading. Finally, I have considered the textbooks' year of issue opposed to LK06 and the curriculum revision in 2013. As *Quest 7* (2016) and *Explore 7* (2017) have been issued after the curriculum revision in 2013, while a *New Scoop 7* (2008) was issued prior to this, it can cause the latter textbook to be more outdated than the other two.

4.0. Analysis

4.1. Values in the textbooks

In the textbooks there were several findings of elements which can contribute to building intercultural values in the EFL-learners. There were also some findings that can contribute to the opposite, which is building negative intercultural values in the EFL-learners. In the following, I will give some examples on how these were found in each of the textbooks.

4.1.1. *Quest 7*

In *Quest 7* (Bade et.al., 2016) several countries were included in the two chapters about English-speaking countries which incorporates different cultures. Thus, the learners are presented with a cultural diversity, for instance the Maori, the Aborigines, and Apartheid are mentioned. The

Maori traditional dance, Haka, is presented through a New Zealand rugby team's performance of the dance (pp. 75-76). This shows that the indigenous people have an active part in today's society, as they are not portrayed as an extinct ethnic group. Their rituals are still a part of New Zealand's culture. A Maori legend is also included in the chapter (pp. 84-87). The activities after the Maori related content contribute to building intercultural values. Some of the questions are, "Which other pre-match rituals do you know about", and "What does this legend tell us about the Maori relation with nature". Questions like this can make learners reflect over cultural diversity. Another text which contributes positively to the learners' values is the story about School of the Air (p. 66). School of the Air is a school which Australian Children who live in the outback attends. They communicate with their school through a radio receiver and the Internet. This text gives an example on how school-life can be different in other countries.

The textbook has elements which can contribute to creating judgment and prejudices among the learners. Promoting such values are the opposite of what an intercultural classroom should. An example is the way Jamaica and South Africa are presented. Jamaica is shown as a "popular tourist destination" with reggae music and reggae artists. The picture on p. 100, amplifies the stereotypical image of Jamaicans. It portrays six people who are all playing instruments, and four of them have dreadlocks. Eight of the twelve pages about South Africa are about Apartheid and problems related to black issues, and the remaining three pages are about exotic animals.

4.1.2. *A New Scoop 7*

In *A New Scoop 7* (Flemmen et.al., 2008) every country is presented with their own "well-known"-fact. New Zealand is "the home of adventure activities and thrill sports" (p. 11). Australia is associated with the legend of Ned Kelly (pp. 15-17), Bollywood is the only element tied to India (p. 18), South Africa is associated with slaves, apartheid, and the exotic wildlife (pp. 19-21), and Canada is related to the famous singer, Leonard Cohen (p. 25). The U.S. has its own chapter, and has more facts attached to it such as being a popular tourist destination (pp. 114- 121), 9/11 (pp. 122-126), American football (pp. 127-128), and Native Americans (pp. 129-131). This representation of the countries does display some cultural diversity in the different countries yet it is highly factual based. The danger here is that it could contribute to create judgement and prejudices as it also promotes some of the stereotypes associated with the countries. Similarly to *Quest 7*, here the Native Americans are presented with both historical information and the textbook addresses how they are incorporated in today's society. However, the only picture of the Native Americans is a man dressed in their traditional clothing.

4.1.3. *Explore 7*

In *Explore 7* (Edwards et. al. 2017) Australia is the only English-speaking country presented. The discoveries in this chapter are similar to those of the two previous textbooks. Especially components which can contribute to stereotypical thoughts about the country. For example, the last picture in the chapter portrays several of the typical Australian stereotypes, and since it is the last picture it is plausible to believe it is used to sum up the information from the chapter. Some of the figures in the picture are: a prisoner in chains, kangaroos and other Australian animals, a shark, a guy sunbathing, someone barbecuing, a darker skinned man holding a boomerang (presumably supposed to portray an aboriginal person), and a surfboard (p. 124). There is a story of a young Aboriginal girl from the Stolen Generations which provides the learners with a perspective on the Aboriginals long and tragic history. The text does not mention how Aboriginals are living in the Australian society today.

4.2. Attitudes in the textbooks

The textbooks lack a focus on creating intercultural attitudes among the learners, and I have been unable to discover any findings which I consider to promote such attitudes. Therefore, no findings are presented in this category.

4.3. Skills in the textbooks

Regarding intercultural skills, I have mostly found elements which promote them in the activities connected to the texts. I will therefore start by explaining how the different textbooks have included activities before introducing my findings.

4.3.1. *Quest 7*

In *Quest 7* the activities are divided into two categories; “After reading” and “Talk about it!” Several of the activities in *Quest 7* promote intercultural skills. Throughout the chapter several pages include a language component where grammatical concepts are explained. This is important for the development of linguistic skills. Cooperative activities such as creating role-plays (p. 51) builds communicative skills. Comparing other cultures to one’s own is a part of some activities. For example, relating Canada to Norway (p. 55), and comparing the Australian School of the Air to an ordinary classroom (p. 67). The first activity is more factual based, while the second is more related to having the learner compare her/his own culture to another. Developing empathy is also an important skill which this activity can promote: “What do you

think the Aborigines think and feel about celebrating Australia day” (p. 92). This activity requires the learner to relate to someone from a different cultural group and try to see the world from their perspective.

Something that is important to mention, is that most of the “After Reading” and “Talk about it” activities are not promoting intercultural skills but only requires learners to provide answers which can simply be found in the text.

4.3.2. *A New Scoop 7*

A New Scoop 7 has few activities, both with relation to the text and grammar/lexical exercises. At the beginning of every chapter questions related to the chapter’s topic are included. For instance, before the chapter about the U.S. two of the questions are: “How many states are there?”, and “Do you know any American artists, actors/actresses or athletes?” (p. 110). These kind of questions are highly factual based and do not promote intercultural skills. After the texts there are questions such as, “Can you find at least three difference between American football and soccer?” (p. 127), “How can we say that ‘nine ‘eleven’ changed the world?” (p. 126), and “What strikes you when you think about the USA?” (p. 117). These can in some way be seen as promoting intercultural skills, because it requires learners to compare and use thinking skills.

4.3.3. *Explore 7*

Explore 7 has activities related to most of the texts, and at the end of the chapter the activities are divided into the four categories: “Let’s talk!”, “Let’s write!”, “Let’s explore!”, and “Let’s try it!”. Grammar and writing activities are also included, which can be helpful in developing learners’ linguistic skills. The “Let’s try it” activity is a group activity where the learners are asked to imagine they are a convict from Britain being sent to Australia, and make a role-play of their journey (p. 124). This activity requires the learners to relate to someone from a different cultural group and to view the world from their perspective, thus it develops their empathy skills. It also helps the development of communicative and linguistic skills. Similarly to the previous textbooks, here an overrepresentation of activities which require minimal thinking skills are used. Thus they are not activities which promote intercultural skills, for example one activity asks what the capital city of Australia is (p. 103), while another one asks where coral can be found (p. 120).

4.4. Knowledge and critical understanding in the textbooks

Generally, the textbooks mostly address the different cultures by providing knowledge about the specific countries and the cultures within. The lack of information and/or activities which provide learners with real, intercultural knowledge about the people who live in the various countries is evident.

4.4.1. *Quest 7*

In *Quest 7* all of the countries have an overrepresentation of factual information, e.g. facts about the climate, animals, celebrities, and historical events. For example, the maps of Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, and India have illustrations of elements the countries are well-known for. The map of Ireland has illustrations of a shamrock, a sheep, a leprechaun, and line-dancers, which are items most people relate to Ireland. The majority of the questions related to the texts are asking the learners to reproduce factual information. For example, after a text about Ireland the questions following are: “What is the climate like in Ireland”, “What is the color of an emerald”, “Why is Saint Patrick’s Day celebrated all over the world”, and “How is this day celebrated”. All of these questions can be answered by simply picking the right information from the previous text. India is presented through a tourist-perspective (p. 107) which only provides the learners with an outside-in perspective on the culture.

The textbook has some authentic texts which can offer the learner an inside view of the culture. Some of the questions related to the authentic texts promote reflection and critical thinking.

4.4.2. *A New Scoop 7*

As I mentioned in section 4.1.2., *A New Scoop 7* presents all of the countries in a factual manner. In addition, in the first chapter the countries are mainly connected with one main concept such as India only being related to Bollywood, and how the U.S. is viewed from a tourist perspective by two young people who visits the country. This do not provide the learner with anything more than superficial, factual knowledge about the countries and their cultures. Another issue is how the questions in the textbook are, much like in *Quest 7*, based on answering with factual information. The textbook does provide some authentic texts which give the learner an opportunity to obtain more specific knowledge related to understanding the people behind the culture/country, for example an Indian folk tale (pp. 133-134). This is also shown on p. 13,

when an Australian boy is interviewed, thus learners get an opportunity to get to know the people living in the specific culture.

4.4.3. *Explore 7*

Similar to the other two textbooks, most of the information about Australia is factual information. On the two first pages of the chapter, facts about the country are presented in bullet points. Further into the chapter the learners meet Sophia and Philip who are tourists traveling to Australia. The learners follow their journey through Australia while being introduced to facts e.g. about Sydney, Australia's history, animals, the Australian barbecue, and the Coral Reef. Again, the issue is that learners are not presented with any knowledge about how the people living in the culture actually are. The short authentic text on pages 106-107 is the closest the learners get towards an insight into the actual culture.

5.0. Discussion and conclusion

After analyzing the textbooks, it is clear that they contain aspects which can contribute to learners' development of intercultural competence. However, there are also elements which are lacking, and even elements which can contribute negatively towards this development. In this chapter I will discuss some of the most important findings, and connect them to the presented theory about intercultural education.

5.1. Results

Features which can help learners develop values of importance to their intercultural competence are found in all the textbooks. The presentation of ethnic groups and their history is an example of this as it creates an opportunity for the teacher to create awareness about justice and equal rights among people, while it also represents a cultural diversity within the countries. *In Quest 7* the follow-up questions connected to the ethnic groups are encouraging the learners to reflect over cultural diversity, while these kind of questions are lacking in *Explore 7* and *A New Scoop 7*. On the contrary, in all of the textbooks there is a clear overrepresentation of questions which do not encourage learners to go beyond repeating information that can be found in the text. If students are going to acquire knowledge through critical thinking and reflection it is obvious that it is not sufficient to have questions that only require repetition. If the content is going to encourage reflection the teacher might have to replace the textbooks questions' with more open-

ended ones. Remembering that a lot of teachers often rely on the provided textbooks at the schools, it is plausible to believe this will not happen in most cases. Additionally, the fact that the term “intercultural competence” is not mentioned or explained in *the English subject curriculum* reduces the chances of teachers reflecting over the intercultural content in the textbooks. If teachers are not even aware what intercultural competence is or that it should be a part of the EFL-education, it is not likely that they will replace the activities and questions in the textbooks. Hence, the textbooks alone do not provide enough questions which encourages readers to think in an intercultural fashion and develop their values.

Aspects which can contribute to the development of intercultural skills were connected closely with the activities and questions in the textbooks. In *Quest 7* and *Explore 7* several activities contribute to learners’ linguistic and communicative skills, mostly in the form of explaining grammatical concepts and cooperative activities. In both of these textbooks there are also activities which can promote the learners’ empathy skills through asking the learners to relate to people with another culture than themselves and thus viewing the world from their perspective. In *A New Scoop 7* the activities are mainly factual based. These skills are essential to obtain in order to have a successful intercultural interaction, and therefore it is positive that such activities are to be found in two of the textbooks. Although it is important to mention that the majority of the activities in the textbooks do not promote intercultural skills, but are, like in *A New Scoop 7*, mainly factual based.

An issue that presented itself in all the textbooks were the elements which can contribute to confirm already existing stereotypes, and create judgment and prejudices among the learners. For instance, in *A New Scoop 7* and *Quest 7* South-Africa is generally connected with Apartheid, and in *Explore 7* multiple stereotypical elements about Australia are portrayed. If teachers do not encourage learners to reflect upon such stereotypical images it can contribute to confirm already existing stereotypes. Since nothing in the textbooks encourage such reflection, for the same reasons as stated previously, there is no guarantee that the teachers will provide the learners with other perspectives on the countries. Keeping in mind that culture is internally heterogeneous, this monoperspectival view of countries and their culture does not provide learners with an accurate representation of reality. When learners have to communicate with people from a different cultural background than themselves, ergo having an intercultural interaction, such inaccurate knowledge can lead to misunderstandings, and can result in a breakdown of communication. If learners are going to become successful citizens in our

multicultural society, these stereotypical views of others should be worked against not encouraged by the textbooks.

A common issue in the textbooks is the overrepresentation of factual information about the countries. In addition, the information is mainly presented with an outsider approach. An outsider approach is the opposite of what Secru (2010) called an insider approach to culture. This is seen in *Quest 7* where India is presented through the perspective of tourists, in *A New Scoop 7* where the U.S. is introduced by tourists who visits the country, and in *Explore 7* where the entire chapter is based on two tourists' travels through Australia. The issue with this is that the learners are only presented with one perspective of the particular countries' cultures. Looking back at what components the category *knowledge and critical understanding* consist of, it is obvious that this is the opposite knowledge of what an intercultural education should provide. As it is not knowledge about a specific culture which is the goal but knowledge about how social groups and identities function. Contrarily, some aspects can contribute to the learners' intercultural knowledge. An example is authentic texts which provide the learners with opportunities to see cultures from the inside. This is in accordance with Secru's (2010) insider approach to the target culture. Authentic texts are found in all of the textbooks. The authentic texts in *Quest 7* and *A New Scoop 7* have follow-up questions which requires reflection and critical thinking. While in *Explore 7* they are not encouraging such thinking. Thus, even if there are aspects which promote intercultural knowledge and critical thinking it is overshadowed by the opposite.

A major discovery when analyzing the textbooks is that none of them have aspects which could contribute to the development of intercultural attitudes among learners. As mentioned previously, Byram et.al. (2002) claims that the attitudes of the intercultural speaker are the foundation of intercultural competence, thus it is crucial that learners develop this competence. The fact that the textbooks do not provide learners with this opportunity is problematical for their development as intercultural speakers.

5.2. Final remarks

The research question for this assignment was: "How do three different textbooks for middle school EFL-learners in Norway promote intercultural competence?" I have conducted a qualitative analysis of three textbooks based on the predetermined categories: *values, skills,*

attitudes, and *knowledge and critical understanding*. I have found that there are aspects in the textbooks which promote intercultural competence within three out of the four categories. However, the degree of intercultural aspects differs within the textbooks. Another important finding is that the textbooks contain elements which contribute negatively towards the development of the learners' intercultural competence.

To sum up, it is safe to say the textbooks promote intercultural competence to some degree. Some elements that occur are: authentic texts, cultural diversity, and activities and questions which requires reflection and critical thinking. The problem is the overrepresentation of elements which can contribute to the complete opposite such as: the portrayal of stereotypes, an outsider approach to cultures, a monoperspectival view of cultures, and activities and questions which only requires repetition of factual information. The consequences of this is that if teachers are unaware of how textbooks promote intercultural competence, it can in the worst case scenario cause learners to develop competences which contribute negatively to their intercultural development. Thus it is crucial to make teachers aware of what an intercultural education involves. To ensure this happens, I believe it is necessary to clarify the term in *the English Subject Curriculum* and explain how it can be achieved. The fact that the proposed renewal of today's English Subject Curriculum does not include this term either, is a development which is negative in light of learners' intercultural education.

As mentioned previously, the Council of Europe has included an intercultural education as one of the five key areas where action is needed to protect and develop human rights, democracy, and to promote mutual understanding. It is also reasonable to believe that as our society grows more multicultural, we will be having more intercultural interactions, thus developing intercultural competence may be defining towards becoming citizens which can thrive in our global society. Because of this it is crucial that teachers become aware of what an intercultural education is, and how they can teach it. Additionally, teachers need to have a critical view on the textbooks they use in their classrooms, and reflect over how the content is beneficial towards learners' development of intercultural competence. Taking into consideration the importance of this competence it is worrisome how it does not retain a more explicit part of today's curriculum or is included in the proposed renewal. One major step in the right direction would be to include intercultural education as an explicit part of *the English Subject Curriculum*.

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