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Intercultural Competence in EFL Textbooks

A study on the potential promotion of intercultural competence and accommodation of aims and guidelines of LK20 in EFL textbook tasks

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Master's thesis in Didactics for English and Foreign Language Education
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Abstract

This master`s thesis is written in the field of English didactics and aims to investigate the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence in two EFL textbooks and their facilitation of aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20. In today`s globalized world, the acquisition of intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important, as people of various cultures are more likely to interact both in their social and professional lives. Moreover, as discrimination and injustice persist in society today, intercultural competence is regarded essential in promoting inclusion, diversity, and equity. In light of this, it is of interest to investigate how intercultural competence is promoted in EFL textbooks and LK20.

To address the aims of this research, the tasks of two EFL textbooks revised for LK20 were investigated. These were *Engelsk 10* (Haegi et al., 2021) published by Cappelen Damm, and *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021) published by Aschehoug. With a mixed method approach, the textbook tasks were analyzed using an adapted version of Byram`s (2020) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence as a tool for analysis.

Findings of this study show that while intercultural competence has gained increased importance in LK20 compared to previous curricula, this is not fully reflected in both textbooks. While *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021) show relatively high numbers of tasks linked to intercultural competence, the same cannot be said for *Engelsk 10 (Haegi et al., 2021)*. Furthermore, the study found that the IC factors were not equally prioritized in the distribution of tasks linked to intercultural competence. Findings show an extensive emphasis on tasks promoting learners` *Knowledge*. Tasks of this IC factor were found to promote surface level knowledge, which did not require the use of learners` critical thinking and reflection. As LK20 calls for in-depth exploration, reflection, and critical thinking, the emphasis on close-ended tasks promoting surface level knowledge arguably contradicts the aims and guidelines of LK20.

Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven er skrevet innen fagområdet Engelsk fagdidaktikk og har som mål å undersøke omfanget av oppgaver som potensielt fremmer tilegnelsen av interkulturell kompetanse i to lærebøker for engelskfaget og hvordan mål og retningslinjer for interkulturell kompetanse i LK20 er blitt tilrettelagt for. I dagens globaliserte samfunn er tilegnelsen av interkulturell kompetanse stadig blitt viktigere, da det nå er høyere sannsynlighet for å møte og samhandle med folk fra ulike kulturer, både i sosiale og profesjonelle kontekster. Ettersom diskriminering og fordommer fortsatt vedvarer i dagens samfunn, blir interkulturell kompetanse sett på som viktig for å fremme inkludering, mangfold og rettferdighet. I lys av dette er det av interesse å undersøke hvordan interkulturell kompetanse fremmes i LK20 og i lærebøker som brukes i engelskopplæringen.

For å imøtekomme målene med denne forskningen, ble oppgavene i to lærebøker i Engelsk undersøkt, begge revidert for LK20. Bøkene undersøkt var *Engelsk 10* (Haegi et al., 2021) utgitt av Cappelen Damm og *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021) utgitt av Aschehoug. Gjennom bruk av mixed method ble lærebokoppgavene analysert ved hjelp av en tilpasset versjon av Byrams (2020) *model of Intercultural Communicative Competence* som analyseverktøy.

Funn fra denne studien viser at mens interkulturell kompetanse har fått økt betydning i LK20 sammenlignet med tidligere læreplaner, gjenspeiles ikke dette i begge lærebøkene. Mens *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021) viser relativt høyt antall oppgaver knyttet til interkulturell kompetanse, kan ikke det samme sies om *Engelsk 10* (Haegi et al., 2021). Studien fant videre ut at i fordelingen av oppgaver knyttet til interkulturell kompetanse, ble ikke faktorene av interkulturell kompetanse likt prioritert. Funnene viser en omfattende vektlegging av oppgaver som fremmer elevenes tilegnelse av faktakunnskap relatert til Byrams faktor *Knowledge*. Oppgaver knyttet til denne faktoren av interkulturell kompetanse ble funnet å fremme kunnskap på overflatenivå som ikke krevde bruk av elevenes kritiske tenkning og refleksjonsevne. Ettersom LK20 fokuserer på dybdelæring, refleksjon og kritisk tenkning, er vektleggingen av oppgaver som fremmer kunnskap på overflatenivå i strid med målene og retningslinjene i LK20.

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This thesis marks the end of my master`s degree in English didactics at NTNU. Intercultural competence in English language learning education is a topic I am passionate about and, while periodically frustrating, the process of writing this thesis have been interesting and provided me with valuable learning.

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List of abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
IC	Intercultural competence
LK20	The national curriculum of 2020
IC task	A textbook task that has been identified as potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages developed by Council of Europe
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
Engelsk 10	EFL textbook written by Haegi et al., 2021
Stages 10	EFL textbook written by Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021

1 Introduction

Through globalization, migration, and technological advancements, intercultural encounters have become a part of people`s everyday life, thus enhancing the need to acquire intercultural competence for cross-cultural communication. As English continues to be a lingua franca in intercultural communication, it is of importance that English language learners develop intercultural competence. Within Norwegian education, the English subject has shifted from a sole focus on language proficiency to a recognition that this alone is not sufficient for effective communication in intercultural encounters (Hoff, 2020a, p. 71). As a result, the acquisition of intercultural competence has gained increased focus in both national and international education in recent years (p. 79). Accordingly, aims and guidelines of the National Curriculum of 2020, LK20, places significant emphasis on the acquistion of intercultual competence, further underlining its importance (Ministry of Education and Resarch, 2017; 2019). Additionally, within Norwegian EFL classrooms today, textbooks remains essential and utilized sources of learning, despite educational changes and technological advancements (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 347).

In light of this, the present master`s thesis aims to investigate intercultural competence within English language learning education in Norway. The principles of LK20 have substantial influence on what is being taught in the English subject in Norway, as its aims and guidelines are obligatory in Norwegian education. Given that EFL textbooks utilized in Norwegian classrooms claim to cover all the educational objectives of LK20, it is crucial to examine whether this is indeed the case. As such, this thesis will research how intercultural competence and curricular aims are promoted in English language learning textbooks (henceforth referred to as EFL textbooks) revised for LK20. To address the aims of this thesis, an adapted version of Byram`s (2020) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) will be utilized as an analytical tool. The rationale behind its suitability for this study lies in its influence on Norwegian education through its ties with the Council of Europe. Additionally, it has been frequently utilized in past studies, facilitating comparisons and potentially revealing trends or new developments. Through investigating the representation and distribution of the factors outlined in Byram`s (2020) Model of ICC, the study might provide insight into the promotion of intercultural competence in the selected EFL textbooks.

1.1 Background and Purpose

My interest and motivation for researching intercultural competence in the EFL classroom emerged while studying and working abroad. Getting immersed in a new culture for an extended period of time, I began to reflect on my own cultural identity, attitudes, pragmatic skills, and behaviors. Although I thoroughly enjoyed this new cultural setting I was put in, I also realized that some misunderstandings, conflicts, and moments of embarrassment could have been navigated differently through an enhanced acquisition of intercultural competence in previous schooling. Not only did I experience a lack of

intercultural competence in self, but I also realized that the intercultural competence I had gained in the EFL classroom, to some extent, was influenced by stereotypes that do not make for an accurate picture of a culture. Accordingly, this sparked my curiosity and interest into researching the position of intercultural competence in the English subject today.

Looking back to my days as a secondary school student in the EFL classroom, I remember the textbook having a high priority as the primary source of information in the classroom. The classes would often follow the progression of the textbook, and its illustrations, texts, and tasks contributed to shape my understanding of cultures. As highlighted by Fenner and Ørevik (2020), the textbook remains the primary source for material and lesson planning in the EFL classroom today (p. 338). Therefore, with interest in researching the acquisition of intercultural competence in the English subject, I found EFL textbooks as important sources of information. Accordingly, through analyzing EFL textbooks potentially used in classrooms today, it might provide some information regarding what content students are exposed to in connection to the acquisition of intercultural competence. For that reason, I have chosen to analyze two EFL textbooks using a mixed method approach specifically focusing on the tasks of the textbooks.

Furthermore, acquiring intercultural competence and conducting related research are becoming increasingly important in today`s globalized world. The European Commission (2020) points to high levels of discrimination in the EU through a wide range of surveys (p. 3). For example, a Eurobarometer survey of 2019 regarding perceptions of discrimination in the EU shows that over 50% of Europeans believe that discrimination based on ethnic origin, being Roma, and skin color is widespread in their country (European Commission, 2019, p.1). Moreover, recent global movements such as Black Lives Matter acted as important reminders of the reality of injustice and racism in our society today (European Commission, 2020, p. 1). Additionally, the aftermath of COVID-19 and terror attacks serve as examples of how blame often gets unjustly directed towards people with minority ethnic or racial backgrounds (p. 1). In response, plans such as the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025 got developed with the goals of addressing racism and building a life free of racism and discrimination for everyone (p. 2). In this plan, the European Commission (2020) emphasizes the role of education and schools in combating racism by stating that schools have "an instrumental role in helping to reduce racial stereotyping and prejudice among children" and "children should be taught early about equality, respect, and inclusion, and be empowered to promote such values among their peers and in their communities" (p. 11). This further emphasizes the need for, and importance of, the acquisition of intercultural competence in education and schools today to promote equity and diversity. Moreover, underlining the significance and urgency of conducting further studies on intercultural competence in the field of education today.

1.2 Research Questions

The above introduction outlines the purpose of acquiring intercultural competence and conducting related research. Furthermore, intercultural competence has gained increased focus in education, as reflected in the renewed National Curriculum of 2020 (LK20) (Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). As textbooks continue to hold an important position as resources used in schools today, analyzing them might provide insight into the content introduced within Norwegian classrooms (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 338). In light of this, the research questions for the present study are as follows:

1. To what extent do tasks in two EFL textbooks revised for LK20 potentially promote the acquisition of intercultural competence?

    1.1 How many tasks of the selected EFL textbooks can be linked to Byram`s (2020) model of ICC?

    1.2 What aspects of intercultural competence are represented in the tasks of EFL textbooks revised for LK20, and how are they distributed?

2. To what extent do tasks of two EFL textbooks facilitate the curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20?

As listed above, this study features two primary and two subordinate research questions. Research Question 1 aims to explore the potential promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbook tasks. The textbooks addressed in this study is *Stages 10* published by Aschehoug and *Engelsk 10* published by Cappelen Damm (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021; Haegi et al., 2021). Tasks of these textbooks will be investigated through a mixed method content analysis using an adapted version of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC as a tool for analysis. Byram`s (2020) model of ICC consists of five factors: *Knowledge*, *Attitudes*, *Skills of discovery and interaction*, *Skills of interpreting and relating*, and *Critical cultural awareness/political* education (p. 44). These factors and their respective objectives have been operationalized and used as categories to measure frequency. Accordingly, this will allow me to investigate the promotion of intercultural competence in the textbook tasks by investigating the number of tasks associated with intercultural competence and the distribution of IC factors.

The second main research question investigates to what extent the tasks of the analyzed EFL textbooks facilitate curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20. To investigate this, the curricular aims and guidelines of LK20 will be compared to the findings of the analysis, potentially providing information on whether the tasks analyzed in this study successfully facilitate the curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20.

This thesis aims to explore intercultural competence in EFL textbooks and does not investigate their implementation in classrooms. While textbooks serve as valuable educational resources, they cannot replace teachers. Ultimately, the teacher decides

which tasks to incorporate into lessons and how they should be executed. Nonetheless, by addressing the aims of this study, it may provide valuable insight into the textbooks as learning materials used in EFL classrooms today and their compatibility with intercultural competence and curricular aims.

1.3 Previous Research and the Relevance of this Study

Existing research on intercultural competence and textbook analysis has given me valuable insight into this topic that has helped narrow down and place my research into context.

Ragnhild Lund, a professor in English didactics, wrote a doctoral thesis studying culture and context in English language learning textbooks for lower secondary school students in Norway (Lund, 2006). The textbooks included in this research were published between 1997 and 1999 and adapted LK97 accordingly. The findings showed that the cultural content of the textbooks mostly reflect the interests of Norwegian teenage learners` and their backgrounds, addressing topics such as friendship and love (p. 327). Consequently, resulting in a lack of culture specific references (p. 327). Furthermore, the analyzed textbooks focused on the cultures of the UK and the US, resulting in little focus on other English-speaking cultures (p. 323). Additionally, Lund (2006) found that the tasks of the textbooks were predominantly close-ended, which further suggested the need for future textbooks to include more open-ended tasks that could contribute to increasing learners` intercultural understanding and attitudes (p. 331). In 2012, Lund published an article revisiting her doctoral thesis and comparing the results to recent developments of culture and context in textbooks revised for LK06. The findings of this study showed positive changes in questions of culture and context in the selected EFL textbooks revised for LK06 (Lund, 2012, p. 52). However, the textbooks` lack of focus on use of language in different cultural contexts highlights the need for future textbooks to address cultural differences and variations in language use (p. 52).

Following this, additional Norwegian studies have been published analyzing EFL textbooks in the context of culture and intercultural competence. For example, Mosand (2019) wrote a master's thesis studying intercultural competence in tasks related to the chapter topics of the US and South Africa in three 10th-grade EFL textbooks revised for LK06. Using Byram`s (1997) model of ICC as an analytical tool, she found that close to half of the analyzed textbook tasks could be linked to intercultural competence (p. 61). However, as highlighted by Mosand (2019), the number of tasks related to intercultural competence could be influenced by the selection of chapters, and different results might have been expected if all tasks of the textbooks had been analyzed (p. 70). In *Suggestions for further research,* Mosand (2019) therefore encourages research that analyzes all tasks included in EFL textbooks to gain a more extensive overview of the promotion of intercultural competence (p. 73). Moreover, in the distribution of the five factors of Byram`s (1997) model of ICC, Mosand (2019) found that the distribution was uneven, with a majority of the tasks being associated with only one of Byram`s IC factors, namely *Knowledge* (p. 63). Consequently, this resulted in less focus on the remaining IC factors (p. 63). As this investigation was concerned with textbooks adapted

LK06, Mosand (2019) further suggests the need for research conducted on textbooks adapted for LK20 investigating the proportion of IC learning tasks as well as the distribution.

In a similar study, Østrem (2021) investigated intercultural competence and the facilitation of LK20 guidelines regarding intercultural competence in three 8th-grade EFL textbooks. By employing Byram`s (1997) model of ICC as an analytical tool, she found that 30,61% of the tasks in *Engelsk 8*, 28,48% of the tasks in *Enter 8,* and 19,04% of the tasks in *Stages 8* could be associated with intercultural competence (Østrem, 2021, p. 126). Moreover, similar to the results of Mosand (2019), Østrem`s (2021) investigation found that the factors of intercultural competence were prioritized unequally, with an emphasis on tasks that promoted learners` *Knowledge* (p. 127). In *Suggestions for further research*, Østrem (2021) describes a need for further analysis into textbooks of 9th- and 10th-grade revised for LK20 to gain a bigger overview of the promotion of intercultural competence in relation to the guidelines of LK20. My research could thus be located within Østrem`s (2021) suggestions for further research and might, in supplement with Østrem`s research, contribute to greater insight into the overall promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks revised for LK20 potentially used in secondary school (8th-10th grade). To my knowledge, the study of Østrem (2021) is one of few studies with the sole focus on textbooks revised for LK20 in connection to the promotion of intercultural competence. The lack of studies focusing on the acquisition of intercultural competence in textbooks revised for LK20 might suggest a need for conducting this present study to gain further insight into the promotion of intercultural competence in textbooks adapted LK20.

Within Scandinavia, Äijälä (2009) analyzed the promotion of intercultural competence in learning tasks of three Finnish EFL textbooks for upper secondary school. Tasks of the three textbooks were assessed according to criteria adapted from Byram`s (1997) model of ICC. However, Äijälä (2009) did not include Byram`s IC factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education*. The results of this study show that among the 306 tasks analyzed within the EFL textbooks, 33 tasks (10%) were identified as being associated with intercultural competence (p. 51). Moreover, Äijälä (2009) found an unequal emphasis on the different IC factors, in which most of the tasks were linked to the IC factor *Knowledge* (p. 51).

Research on textbooks and intercultural competence has been conducted in regions outside of Scandinavia as well. It should be further addressed that this subchapter only presents a limited selection of the existing international research within this topic area. Additionally, it is possible that important research, by oversight, may been excluded from this overview of previous research.

Kiss (2017) analyzed the promotion of intercultural competence in textbooks used in Chinese higher education. In analyzing the textbooks, Byram`s (1997) model of ICC was utilized with the addition of the category *Savoir de transformer* (Kiss, 2017, p. 84). This additional category focuses on identity development, which Kiss (2017) highlights as an

important outcome of intercultural learning (p. 84). Moreover, through the use of a qualitative coding program in addition to a coding team of four people, six EFL textbooks were analyzed, including both texts and tasks (p. 84). As a result, the study found that the analyzed textbooks minimally contribute to developing learners` intercultural competence (p. 92). Concluding that the books do not offer learners enough possibilities to develop the intercultural competence needed to become intercultural global citizens (p. 93).

Kian (2016) analyzed the promotion of intercultural competence in seven EFL textbooks targeted adult Iranian learners. The tasks of the selected textbooks were analyzed using Byram`s (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, with the exemption of its factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education* (Kian, 2016, p. 843). According to findings, Kian (2016) found that 3-10% of the analyzed learning tasks could be identified as promoting intercultural competence (p. 848). Moreover, the factor *Knowledge* was shown to be the most prominent factor, and that definitions of culture was defined in national terms (p. 848). As a result, Kian (2016) ultimately states that the textbooks did not sufficiently facilitate the needs of the Iranian EFL learners, due to few tasks linked to intercultural competence (p. 849).

In conclusion, numerous national and international studies have been conducted on the promotion of intercultural competence within EFL textbooks. However, only a limited number of studies have been included in this overview. The studies included were chosen based on their close alignment with the aims of this thesis, which includes research on textbook tasks and the utilization of Byram`s model of ICC as an analytical tool. Hence, this overview of previous research is not all-encompassing, and as previously mentioned, important research might have been inadvertently excluded from this research. However, as highlighted in the studies` *suggestions for further research*, there still exists a need for further research in the field of intercultural competence and EFL textbooks (Mosand, 2019; Østrem, 2021). Additionally, with the recent introduction of LK20, I would argue for the relevance and purpose of investigating the newly revised learning materials, as limited research on textbooks revised for LK20 has been conducted yet.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters with corresponding subchapters. The first chapter has introduced the topic and research questions addressed in this thesis and presented previous research within this topic area. The second chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis, including curricular documents of LK20, textbooks, and definitions of culture and intercultural competence. Additionally, special attention is placed on Byram`s (2020) model of ICC as it functions as the primary tool of analysis in this study. The third chapter will explain and describe the chosen methods of this thesis and the implementation of such methods. Followingly, chapters four and five present and discusses the findings of the analysis in connection with previous research and the theoretical framework. Lastly, the sixth chapter will conclude this thesis by summarizing key findings and providing recommendations for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework of this thesis by discussing and defining essential concepts. To address the aims of this thesis, it is necessary to gain a clear understanding of the concepts of culture and intercultural competence. Accordingly, definitions and understandings of culture and intercultural competence will be provided in sections 2.1 and 2.2. Subsequently, section 2.3 focuses on Byram`s (2020) model of ICC since this model serves as the primary tool of analysis within this study. Section 2.4 provides information on the use of textbooks and tasks in Norwegian education. Lastly, section 2.5 concludes the theoretical framework by closely examining the aims and guidelines of LK20, in relation to intercultural competence.

2.1 Culture

Culture as a concept is defined and understood in numerous ways. The complexity of the concept has often led researchers to avoid defining the concept at all (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 52). To thoroughly investigate and understand the promotion of intercultural competence in the selected EFL textbooks, it is necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the term culture in relation to the aims of this thesis.

Multiple attempts have been made to define the notion of culture. One of the earliest large-scale studies in relation to defining culture was conducted by the two anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952. Through critically reviewing 164 cited definitions, they aimed to find a common denominator of the term (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 157). The study`s outcome was that the researchers could not define culture in a way that encapsulated all the numerous definitions (p. 157). Thus, concluding that culture is a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life (p. 157). Nevertheless, despite the study resulting in a rather pessimistic outcome, researchers` interest in defining culture remained strong.

Following such a broad and rather abstract understanding of culture, several researchers have attempted to operationalize the notion of culture. One of the most frequently used operationalizations is the division of culture into *visible* and *invisible* elements, often done through the illustration of an iceberg (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 56). In researching the *Cultural Iceberg Model*, I did not gain a clear understanding of its origin. While Hall (1976) and his book "Beyond Culture" is often referred to as the origin of this model, no mention of an iceberg model or the term *iceberg* itself could be detected in this book. However, links to the components of the Cultural Iceberg Model can be detected in "Beyond Culture" (1976). For example, Hall (1976) often refers to the notion of *hidden culture,* implying that certain elements of culture are easier to perceive than others. Furthermore, Hall (1976) states that "beneath the clearly perceived, highly explicit surface culture, there lies a whole other world, which when understood will

ultimately radically change our view of human nature" (p. 15). It can thus be argued that the features and meanings behind the Cultural Iceberg Model closely align with the ideas of Hall (1976), which will be described in greater detail below.
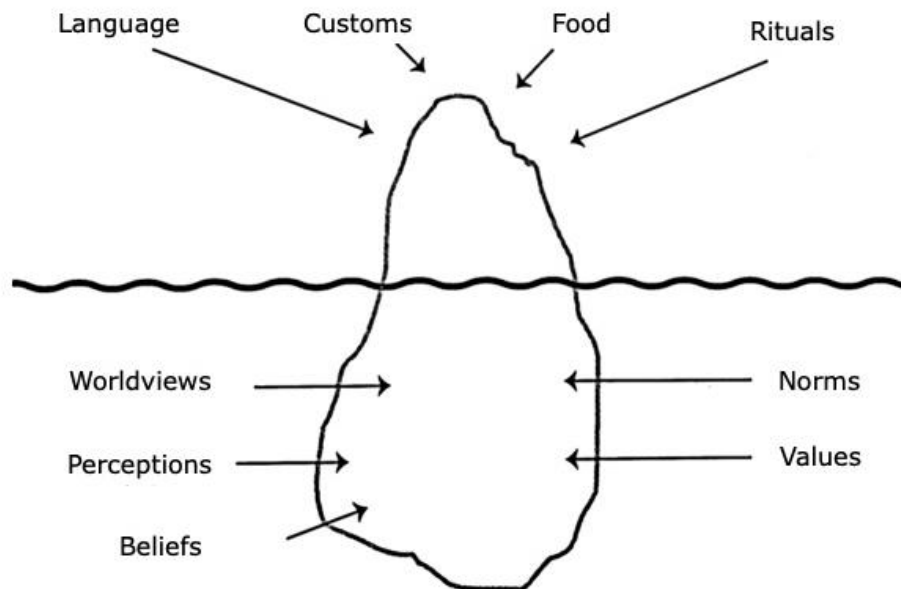
Figure 1: The Cultural Iceberg Model (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 55; own translation)

The Iceberg Model of Culture, as seen in Figure 1, illustrates how culture operates on both the *visible* and the *invisible* levels. *Visible* cultural elements, such as language and food, compromise a small factor of the overall cultural picture (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 55). Contrastingly, the *invisible* cultural elements consist of a large element of culture that lies below the surface as cultural aspects that are less obvious to the members of the culture, such as beliefs, norms, and values (p. 56). As a result, two people that share *visible* traits of a culture might still differ significantly in other cultural aspects less apparent (p. 56). This emphasizes the subjective and intricate nature of culture and underlines the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of cultural phenomena (p. 56). In addressing the aims of this thesis, it is therefore of interest to investigate what elements of culture are given focus within the textbook tasks and whether they promote deeper understandings of cultures which go beyond the *surface* level.

In investigating the textbook tasks and determining their promotion of intercultural competence, it is further necessary to consider the criteria that define what qualifies as a culture. The delineation of culture is a topic of various opinions and stances with no clear universal consensus. Nevertheless, in analyzing the textbook tasks of this thesis, I would argue for the importance of clearly defining the boundaries of culture, as it is essential in providing consistency to the process of analysis. For this purpose, the research of Barrett (2013) was found helpful in further defining and delineating culture in this study.

Barrett (2013) provides a comprehensive definition of culture based on three distinct elements: *Material culture*, *Subjective culture*, and *Social culture* (p. 3). *Material culture* refers to the physical artifacts used by members of a particular human group (p. 3). *Subjective culture* consists of the shared values, norms, and beliefs that are held by members of the group (p. 3). Finally, *Social culture* encompasses the shared institutions and practices of human groups, such as language, religion, and law (p. 3). Accordingly, one of the key elements of Barrett`s (2013) definition is that cultural groups can be formed and distinguished at various levels of society. This encompasses not only national culture but also subcultures formed by factors such as ethnicity, occupation, and generational differences (p. 3). For this reason, the cultural position of individuals is found to be highly specific, with the participation in multiple cultures simultaneously (p. 4). Additionally, Barrett (2013) highlights that the ways in which individuals participate in their various cultures are context-dependent and subject to change over time (p. 4). These cultural changes can be influenced by individuals gaining new experiences or the change of circumstances which might, in response, cause them to adapt or modify cultural practices over time (p. 4). Changes in cultures are further a result of interactions with other cultures, as well as other external influences such as political and economic developments (p. 4). Accordingly, in addressing culture for the purpose of this thesis, it requires a nuanced understanding of the complex and subjective nature of culture, one that spans beyond the national level.

Based on the presented research, this thesis uses a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on culture in the analysis of the textbook tasks. A perspective that acknowledges the broad scope and complexity of culture as highlighted in the research of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), its components existing both above and below the *surface* as illustrated in the Cultural Iceberg Model (see figure 1), and its individual, dynamic and intersectional nature as underlined by Barrett (2013). The adoption of a comprehensive approach to culture, serves a purpose to provide a deeper understanding of culture in the analysis of the potential promotion of intercultural competence in the tasks of the textbooks.

2.2 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence as a term is widely and increasingly used by researchers today. Similar to the definition of culture, intercultural competence is often used without a clear definition grounded in theory and with no universal consensus among researchers (Deardorff, 2011, pp. 65, 66). Building on his previous definition of culture, Barrett (2013) provides a definition of intercultural competence that has been strongly endorsed by researchers:

"Intercultural competence is the set of values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours which are needed for:

- *Understanding and respecting people who are perceived to be culturally different from oneself.*

- *Interacting and communicating effectively and appropriately with such people*

- *Establishing positive and constructive relationships with such people."*

(Barrett, 2013, pp. 5, 6)

In this definition, an intercultural situation is understood as any situation that involves people whom you perceive to be culturally different from yourself (Barrett, 2013, p. 5). Barrett (2013) elaborates on this by comparing an interpersonal situation to an intercultural situation. An intercultural situation is described as an interpersonal situation where cultural differences have been perceived and made salient by either the individuals or the situation itself (p. 5). As highlighted in Barrett`s (2013) definition, being able to navigate intercultural situations successfully requires an understanding of one`s own culture and that of others (pp. 5, 6). This understanding is crucial in facilitating effective and appropriate communication, and the building of intercultural relationships (pp. 5, 6).

Finally, it must be stressed that this thesis is solely concerned with the analysis of textbook tasks, and individual perspectives of the learners are consequently excluded. Hence, perceptions of what constitutes as an intercultural situation in the textbook tasks are dependent on my views as the researcher.

2.3 Byram`s Model of Intercultural Competence

One of the most influential theorists within the field of intercultural competence and foreign language education is Michael Byram, with his model of Intercultural Communicative Competence. Byram`s model is one of numerous theoretical models attempting to define and describe intercultural competence (e.g., Deardorff, 2004; Bennett, 1986; Arasaratnam, 2006). These models might be helpful in gaining an understanding of intercultural competence, and when adding an intercultural dimension to the classroom instruction. Accordingly, in addressing the aims of this thesis, it was deemed relevant to utilize a model as a tool in the investigation of textbooks tasks and their potential promotion of intercultural competence.

In selecting a model for the purpose of this thesis, Byram`s (2020) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was chosen due to its relevance, influence, and opportunities for comparisons to previous research. Byram (2020) and his work with the Council of Europe has greatly influenced the understanding and incorporation of intercultural learning in foreign language education in multiple countries, including Norway (Hoff, 2020a, p. 74). The factors of intercultural competence presented by Byram (1997) could be linked to LK20 through the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2020). The CEFR has had a considerable impact on the intercultural dimension of language learning and teaching in Norwegian education (Hoff, 2020a, p. 71; Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). This framework is further listed in LK20 as one of the suggested sources for working with the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Within CEFR, Byram`s work regarding intercultural competence is referenced (Council of Europe, 2020).

Accordingly, as this thesis is concerned with two EFL textbooks revised for LK20 in Norwegian education, I found Byram`s (2020) model to be suitable for the purpose of this thesis. Moreover, as this model has been frequently utilized as a tool for analysis in previous textbook research (Mosand, 2019; Østrem, 2021; Äijälä, 2009; Kiss, 2017; Kian, 2016), the use of Byram`s (2020) model might facilitate comparisons, possibly detecting trends or new developments concerning intercultural competence in EFL textbooks both nationally and internationally.

Byram`s (2020) model of ICC features five factors, also referred to as *Savoirs,* involved in intercultural communication, namely *Attitudes, Skills of interpreting and relating*, *Knowledge, Critical cultural awareness/political education,* and *Skills of discovery and interaction* (p. 131). Although presented as separate factors within intercultural competence, Byram (2020) underlines the interdependence among the five IC factors (p. 143). Thus, emphasizing the importance of teaching and learning every factor of intercultural competence by stating that "any comprehensive account of teaching and assessing IC must include all the competencies" (p. 61).
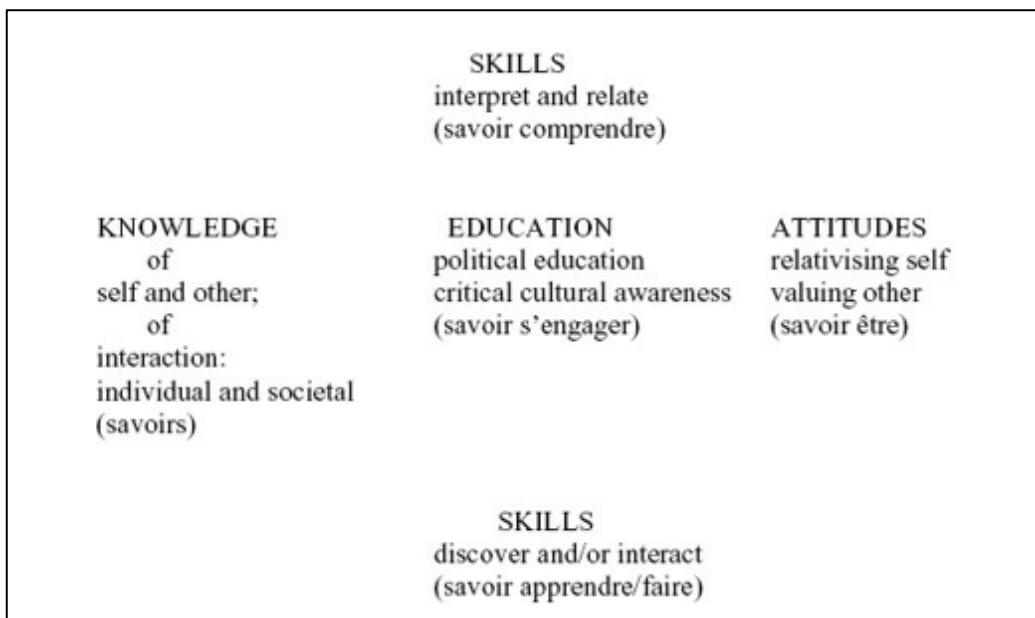
Figure 2: Byram`s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 2020, p. 44)

Byram uses the term "Intercultural Communicative Competence", directly linking intercultural competence to foreign language learning by emphasizing communication with people of another social group in a foreign language (p. 97). For this thesis, the term Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) will be used when directly referencing Byram`s (2020) model, while the term intercultural competence (IC) will be used in a more general sense throughout this thesis in which the factors will also be referred to as IC factors. Additionally, Byram (2020) refers to his factors of IC as *Savoirs,* which is a French word translated into "to know" or "knowing". However, for the sake of simplicity, the word *Saviors* will not be used in this thesis. Furthermore, Byram (2020) elaborates on the five factors of IC by including multiple objectives for each factor. The factors and objectives will followingly be presented and described in detail.

Byram (2020) describes and defines the five factors of IC as:

1. **Attitudes**: *Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one`s own* (Byram, 2020, p. 62).

This factor of IC focuses on the learner`s interests and willingness to discover and explore other perspectives on various cultural phenomena that are both familiar and unfamiliar to the learner (p. 45). Furthermore, the learners need to be willing to question their own values and preconceptions on cultural practices and products (p. 63). Hence, the ability to *decenter* one`s perspectives and question own presuppositions is regarded as important aspects contributing to successful intercultural interaction (p. 63). This factor of intercultural competence is further tied to the reduction or elimination of prejudice in learners` attitudes (p. 45). Prejudice, both positive and negative, can lead to unsuccessful interaction (p. 45). The focus of this IC factor is therefore not on the development of positive or tolerant attitudes towards different cultures but on attitudes of curiosity and openness (p. 45). Moreover, Byram (2020) emphasizes that these attitudes need to be seen in a relationship of equality and not that of a tourist or business partner (p. 63). Hence, the interest is not that of seeking the exotic or monetary profit.

In relation to the aims of the current thesis, it is interesting to investigate whether EFL learners, through working with the tasks of the selected EFL textbooks, get opportunities to challenge their worldviews and decenter their perspectives. Further facilitating the development of attitudes of curiosity and openness necessary for the acquisition of intercultural competence.

2. **Knowledge**: "*Specific knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one`s own and in one`s interlocutor`s country, and of the general knowledge of processes of societal and individual interaction*" (Byram, 2020, p. 63).

The above definition of the IC factor *Knowledge* can be distinguished into two main objectives: the acquisition *of knowledge of social groups and their products and practices*, and *knowledge of the processes of interaction* (p. 63). The first entails knowledge of a country's history, national memory, geography, religion, social and political institutions, social distinctions, norms, and behaviors (pp. 63, 64). This knowledge is usually relational, meaning that it is acquired and presented in contrast to one`s own social group (p. 64). Accordingly, acquiring knowledge of how one`s own culture is perceived in relation to other cultures is considered important within this IC factor (p. 64). Furthermore, as presented in the latter objective, learners need to gain knowledge of processes of interaction in other cultures (p. 64). This includes knowledge of verbal interaction, such as levels of formality used in communication, and non-verbal interaction, such as behaviors, beliefs, and taboos in different situations (p. 87). Additionally, it requires an awareness that their ways of interaction are products of socialization, and that interaction can be expected to differ in other cultures (p. 64).

The knowledge referred to within this IC factor indicates a cultural delineation on the national level through Byram`s use of the word *country*. Byram (2020) elaborates on this by stating that the word *country* is used as a way of simplification and further specifies that the objectives of this factor of IC are relevant for other types of intercultural communication as well, not only that on the national level (p. 77). In relation to the aims of this thesis, it is thus interesting to see what type of knowledge students potentially acquire through the tasks of the selected EFL textbooks.

Furthermore, Byram`s (2020) model presents two skills sets which are necessary for successful intercultural communication: *Skills of interpreting and relating* and *Skills of discovery and interaction*. The first, *Skills of interpreting and relating*, is defined and described as:

3. **Skills of interpreting and relating:** "*Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one`s own*" (Byram, 2020, p. 65).

As presented above, this factor of intercultural competence is concerned with learners` abilities to comprehend and interpret cultural phenomena and documents, and further relate it to own culture (p. 65). This factor is especially concerned with the identification of ethnocentrism, and to develop *Skills of interpreting and relating*, learners need to gain knowledge and be aware of how ethnocentric perspectives are acquired in socialization (p. 65). Moreover, to acquire *Skills of interpreting and relating*, learners need the ability to mediate and identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions in interaction (p. 65). Moreover, they should be able to explain said misunderstandings and dysfunctions in the context of the present cultural systems (p. 65) An example of this is noticing how two people misunderstand each other due to ethnocentric perspectives and further being able to mediate or reduce dysfunction in the communication.

Followingly, *Skills of discovery and interaction* is defined and described by Byram (2020) as:

4. **Skills of discovery and interaction:** "*Ability to acquire new knowledge of cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction*" (Byram, 2020, p. 65).

This skill includes the learner`s ability to establish an understanding of a new cultural environment (p. 66). This could be acquired in real-time as part of social interaction or in the individual`s own time through different sources such as a news article (p. 66). This further entails using one`s *Attitudes*, *Skills,* and *Knowledge* to discover new knowledge while successfully interacting with someone of another culture (p. 66). Byram (2020) compares this to the role of the foreign correspondent of a news channel or the ethnographer entering a new "field of study", in which the acquisition of new knowledge happens during real-time social interaction (p. 66). Hence, as with the factor of

Attitudes, an emphasis on openness and curiosity is also important in the acquisition of *Skills of discovery and interaction*.

Lastly, as placed in the center of the model (see Figure 1), Byram (2020) defines the IC factor of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* as:

5. **Critical cultural awareness/political education:** "*An ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one`s own and other cultures and countries*" (Byram, 2020, p. 66).

As presented in the above definition, this factor focuses on the learner`s ability to analyze documents and events of own and other`s cultures and justify opinions based on conscious processes of reasoning and critical evaluation (p. 66). This is described by Byram (2020) as a crucial element in the development of intercultural competence in general education, symbolized by being placed at the center of the model (See Figure 1) (pp. 58, 59). What distinguishes this factor from the others is the emphasis on criticality. Byram emphasizes that without this criticality, language teaching does not fully contribute to learners` acquisition of *Bildung* (Byram, 2012, p. 9). Moreover, the emphasis on mediation is also shown in this factor, as the acquisition of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* entails the ability to interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges based on reasoning and critical analysis (Byram, 2020, p. 66).

In conclusion, Byram (2020) emphasizes the value of assessment in relation to intercultural competence, in which assessment is considered valuable in tracing learners` weaknesses and strengths and being able to plan lessons accordingly. The importance of assessing intercultural competence is also underlined by Hoff (2020a), stating that while the ethicality of assessing intercultural competence could be questioned, assessment could have a considerable impact on learners` development as human beings (p. 87). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the acquisition of intercultural competence is a lifelong learning process that is never complete as cultures are constantly changing (Byram et al., 2002, p. 11). Accordingly, Byram (2020) emphasizes the importance of developing learner autonomy that can facilitate lifelong learning (p. 91).

2.3.1 Criticism of Byram`s Model of Intercultural Competence

While Byram`s model of ICC has been acknowledged by scholars, it has also faced criticism. As his model is the primary tool of investigation of this study, it is of relevance and importance to present some of the criticism associated with this model. There exist multiple articles criticizing the first version of Byram`s Model of ICC published in 1997. However, limited critique was found on the revised version of 2020, currently utilized in this study. The following section will therefore present criticism deemed relevant to include despite addressing the previous version of the model.

Hoff (2014) has criticized Byram`s (1997) Model of ICC for presenting an overly idealistic and naive picture of interculturality (p. 515). According to Hoff (2014), this naive and idealistic depiction results from a focus on harmony and agreement in Byram`s model (p. 515). As a result, it is argued that the model fails to acknowledge the occasionally uncomfortable and challenging situations which might arise when communicating with someone of another culture (p. 515). This, in turn, might further lead to learners keeping their distance and avoiding such situations, which are described by Hoff (2014) as important in the development of learners` *Bildung,* the perceptions of *self* and *other,* and in identity development (p. 515). Additionally, Hoff (2014) recognizes Byram`s factor of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* as an essential factor that contributes to counterbalance the above concerns, further making the case for regarding all of Byram`s five factors of intercultural competence as a whole rather than separate objectives for learning (p. 515).

The aspect of conflict and resolution is also addressed by Matsuo (2014). Through references to Michael Bahktin and his dialogic theory of human life and character, Matsuo (2014) argues that every culture resolves conflicts differently and utilizes different language in resolutions (p. 8). Building on this, Matsuo (2014) criticizes Byram`s (1997) model of ICC for being normative and for presenting Western principles of human rights and ethics as universal standards for conflict resolutions (p. 8). This aspect of normativity in Byram`s (1997) model of ICC is also addressed by Hoff (2020b), arguing that such interpretations might be at fault for the biased representation of Western values and ethics detected in foreign language textbooks (p. 65). However, making the argument that this biased emphasis on Western values is part of a more general trend in international scholarship of the marginalization of non-Western discourses and tracing such predilections back to Byram`s model alone would be "unfair" (p. 65). Additionally, Hoff (2020b) points out the aspects of critical cultural awareness and the identification of ethnocentrism in Byram`s model as elements especially important in promoting reflection on these issues (p. 66). Further arguing for the relevance of including processes in which learners critically examine their own feelings, biases, and reactions (p. 66). Byram (2020) also reflects on his cultural perspective by emphasizing that his work originated in Europe and in collaboration with the Council of Europe (p. 8). However, mentioning that, his ideas have been utilized in other parts of the world as well, which he argues could either be an indication of a wider applicability or that the users have not sufficiently challenged his ideas (p. 8).

Lastly, Byram`s model of ICC has frequently been criticized for presenting a cultural delineation on the national level. Karen Risager (2022) published a more recent critique of Byram`s model, considering Byram`s revised model of 2020. Risager (2022) argues that while Byram (2020) acknowledges the internal diversity of cultures within national borders, the national paradigm is still emphasized in this model, especially in objectives related to the factor of *Knowledge* (Risager, 2022, p. 9). As a result, Risager (2022) argues for the rethinking of the factor *Knowledge* with the inclusion of the transnational paradigm (p. 12). In which it is important that the model acknowledges how transnational flows affect individuals` self-perceptions (p. 12). Hoff (2020b) also addresses this aspect of the model, arguing that while references to social and regional

identities within national borders are detected in Byram`s work, the complex intersectional aspects of individuals` identities are not given enough importance (p. 58).

Although critique have been raised towards Byram`s model of ICC, it still holds significant influence and importance in the field of intercultural education today. Moreover, as this study is set in the context of the English language learning education in Norway, I would further argue for the suitability of this model in addressing the aims of this thesis as it could be linked to Norwegian education through the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). Furthermore, as it has been frequently utilized in previous textbook research, it facilitates comparisons. However, I believe it is important and necessary to keep the criticism of the model in mind as elements that arguably affect the outcome of this research.

2.4 Textbooks and Tasks in English Language Learning Education

As outlined in the research questions, this study is concerned with textbook tasks and whether they potentially promote the acquisition of intercultural competence. Thus, the following subsection will provide research on textbooks and their role within Norwegian education. Additionally, it will include information and definitions of what is considered a task in this research and their educational importance.

Textbooks in the English subject has a long-standing tradition and status in Norwegian education, dating back to the first textbooks in modern foreign language introduced in Norway in 1782 (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 340). Since then, Norwegian education has undergone extensive curriculum changes, in addition to the emergence of digitalization. Despite these changes, textbooks remain an important source of learning that are still actively utilized in Norwegian classrooms today (pp. 338, 347). One reason for this is connected to practicality, as textbooks can help teachers provide structure a course and thus simplify teachers` work (p. 339). However, as emphasized by Fenner and Ørevik (2020), LK20 does not recommend any specific learning materials and presents aims that are broad and open to different interpretations (pp. 337, 339). As a result, textbooks will be affected by the authors` subjective interpretations of the curricula and, in relation to this study, their understanding of intercultural competence (pp. 337, 339). Accordingly, the authors` perspectives will affect the selection of tasks and texts included in the textbooks. Therefore, it cannot be assured that the materials of the textbooks are sufficient for learners to meet the aims of the curricula (pp. 339, 350). As a result, it could be argued that the assessment of textbooks and other materials used in the classroom is of importance and relevance by raising awareness of the content of learning materials used in Norwegian education today (p. 352). This further underlines the relevance of the current study by providing insight into textbooks potentially used in the EFL classroom.

Learning by the use of tasks hold an essential role within Norwegian education (Skjelbred, 2009, p. 272). The use of tasks in Norwegian education can be linked to a constructivist perspective on learning, where learners construct their knowledge through engagement with tasks rather than receiving it solely through instruction (p. 273). Textbooks are further used as important resources for working with tasks in the classroom (p. 274). Through working with textbook tasks, learners unconsciously gain information about what is considered as important and relevant information from a text and the subject as a whole (p. 279). Accordingly, tasks are shown to be highly influential in shaping the way learners think (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 356).

In addressing the aims of this thesis, it is necessary to define what constitutes a task. Some studies make distinctions between a task, an activity, and an exercise. However, for the scope of this thesis, no such distinction will be made, and the term *task* will be used from now on. Moreover, there exist numerous definitions of what is considered a task. The Oxford Advanced Learner`s Dictionary defines a task as: "an activity that is designed to help achieve a particular learning goal, especially in language teaching" (Oxford Advanced Learner`s Dictionary). This definition proves helpful in acknowledging the purpose of a task, with the purpose being the achievement of a learning goal. However, in addressing the aims of this thesis, this definition appears vague in describing what is considered a task in a textbook. As a result, in order to clearly define what constitutes a task in a textbook, I found the definition provided by Anderson-Bakken and Bakken (2021) to be helpful, stating that a textbook task is: *"(…) a paratext that performs a directive addressed to the student"* (p. 5). This definition implies that a task is a written element in the textbooks that encourages the students to perform an action. Accordingly, these are the elements that will be assessed in the selected textbooks.

When investigating textbook tasks, it is of further relevance to look at the criteria of what makes a successful textbook task. Fenner and Ørevik (2020) emphasize that in the development of intercultural competence and *Bildung* (see section 2.5), textbook tasks should be "open in order to encourage learner involvement through reflection, interpretation, opinion forming and discussion" (p. 351). Moreover, underlining that textbook tasks need to provide learners with opportunities to make choices that facilitate the development of learner autonomy parallel to intercultural competence (p. 357). While LK20 does not provide any specific instructions regarding the materials to be used in instruction, The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (2021) has developed a set of criteria for assessing the quality of materials utilized in the English language learning classroom. As highlighted within this set of criteria, learning materials intended for use in the English subject must provide tasks that allow learners to explore topics and issues in-depth (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2021). Followingly, the tasks need to provide opportunities for reflection, exploration, and creativity. Moreover, regardless of the school subject, learning materials need to accommodate learners` various proficiency levels by including various tasks that could be solved in multiple ways (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2021). These quality criteria provide an understanding of what is considered good quality learning materials, in general, and for use in the English subject. As a result, it is of relevance to investigate whether tasks associated with the acquisition of intercultural

competence within the selected textbooks accommodate the research of Fenner and Ørevik (2020) and the set of quality criteria developed by The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (2021).

2.5 English Subject Curricula and Intercultural Competence

Interculturality was first introduced in the English subject curricula in the 1990s and has since gained increased focus and acknowledgement in Norwegian education (Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). The role of culture in language education was further strengthened by the work of the Council of Europe (CoE) (p. 71). Their work, in collaboration with Byram, has had a considerable impact on the introduction of the intercultural dimension in foreign language learning in multiple countries, including Norway (pp. 71, 74). Moreover, the National Curriculum of 2020 is an important document of legal status in education that teachers must implement in their teaching. Textbooks analyzed in this current study are revised to align with LK20, in which both textbooks claim to cover the curricular aims and guidelines. However, as previously mentioned, LK20 does not include a list of detailed information on materials and methods, and the subjective views and interpretations of the textbook authors will affect the content of the textbooks (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 339). Assessing learning materials is therefore important in determining how well the textbooks meet the aims of LK20 (p. 339). In addressing Research Question 2., which aims to investigate the extent to which tasks in two EFL textbooks facilitate the curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20, it is essential to examine the role of intercultural competence in the current curriculum of 2020.

Firstly, intercultural competence could be connected to the overarching aim of *Bildung* in Norwegian education*.* The Core curriculum emphasizes the responsibility of schools to facilitate the development of *Bildung* in learners of primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Moreover, English is clearly defined as a *Bildung* subject (Fenner, 2020, p. 37). The concept of *Bildung* has developed throughout the years, moving from a focus on the development of the individual personality to the individual personality in interaction with the outside (p. 18). Fenner (2020) provides a self-translated definition of *Bildung* developed by Aase (2005), which is argued to be suitable for present-day education:

"*a socialisation process which leads to an understanding and a mastery of the common, valued cultural forms, as well as the ability to participate in these. This includes ways of thinking, the potential to act and knowledge within a varied field*." (Fenner, 2020, p. 18 cited Aase, 2005, p. 17).

As presented in the above definition, *Bildung* is tied to self-development and ways of thinking and participating in society. Accordingly, with the introduction of the Core curriculum in 2017, it could be argued that *Bildung* has gained increased focus in Norwegian education (Fenner, 2020, p. 6). This is shown in the emphasis on learners` knowledge, skills, and attitudes in developing individual identity as a member of society (Fenner, 2020, p. 36). *Bildung* in LK20 is further connected to the emphasis on critical

thinking and reflection as necessary to shape learners` attitudes and ethical judgment (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Moreover, learners need to be provided with in-depth learning and tasks that allow for participation in varied ways with increased complexities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). These aspects of *Bildung* can be linked to intercultural competence. As presented in Byram`s (2020) model of ICC (see Chapter 2.3), intercultural competence emphasizes self-development through changing perspectives, critical thinking, and reflection. Thus, it could be argued that intercultural competence and *Bildung,* as portrayed in LK20, are, in many ways, inseparable.

Aspects of *Bildung* are further detected in the Core curriculum through an emphasis on lifelong learning through the promotion of in-depth learning, motivation, attitudes, and learning strategies (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Fenner, 2020, p. 6). It is therefore of importance that all school subjects explore topics in-depth rather than on a superficial level (Hoff, 2020a, p. 80). Moreover, as highlighted by Fenner (2020), LK20 portrays a significant focus on the development of learner autonomy through an emphasis on reflection, critical thinking, and evaluation of one`s own learning processes, which are concepts all essential to learner autonomy (p. 300). Taking charge of one`s own learning processes is important in the development of learner autonomy. Regarding textbooks, Fenner (2020) describes that this could be addressed through tasks providing learners with choices through encouraging exploration from other sources, such as the internet (p. 303). Moreover, learner autonomy is also seen as essential in the acquisition of intercultural competence, as it is a lifelong learning process involving cultures that are constantly changing (Byram et al., 2002, p. 11). In addressing the aims of this thesis, it is therefore relevant to investigate whether the tasks associated with the promotion of intercultural competence facilitate the overarching aim of *Bildung* in LK20 through an emphasis on tasks promoting lifelong learning, reflection, critical thinking, and in-depth learning.

Intercultural competence in LK20 is further detected within the interdisciplinary topics. The Core curriculum features three interdisciplinary topics, in which two of them are addressed within the English subject, namely *Health and life skills* and *Democracy and citizenship* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Within the interdisciplinary topic of *Health and life skills*, cultural competence is emphasized as essential in learning to manage new situations and for the development of positive image of self (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Furthermore, the focus on intercultural competence is also detected within the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and citizenship*. This interdisciplinary topic is concerned with "preparing students to become responsible citizens in society" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). This *preparation* involves the promotion of democratic values and attitudes, respect, and peaceful conflict-solving that could contribute to counteracting prejudice and discrimination (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of protecting minority groups and indigenous peoples in which learners need to "develop awareness of minority and majority perspectives (..)" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Hoff (2020a) argues that intercultural competence is implicitly understood as a premise for the participation and preparation of learners as responsible citizens in society, and thus

essential in facilitating aims of the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and citizenship* (p. 80).

Followingly, intercultural competence could be linked to the *Relevance and central values* of the English subject, in which the English subject shall:

"(…) help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns." (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019)

It is further stated that:

"The subject shall develop the pupils` understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent. This can open for new ways to interpret the world, promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudice." (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019)

Accordingly, a focus on the acquisition of intercultural competence is seen through the emphasis on learners` development of intercultural understandings and the acknowledgment that worldviews are culture-dependent. Moreover, intercultural competence is detected through the emphasis on the prevention of prejudice and in the promotion of attitudes of curiosity and engagement. Hence, the acquisition of intercultural competence is emphasized as one of the central values of the English subject. Furthermore, within the section *Relevance and central values*, it becomes clear that LK20 reflect a constructivist perspective on learning (Speitz, 2020, p. 45). Learning is thus understood as a process in which the individual learner constructs new knowledge based on previous knowledge and experiences and in interaction with others (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 348). This perspective can be linked to intercultural competence through the focus on acquiring an intercultural understanding using own cultural background as point of departure (Hoff, 2020a, p. 71)

Additionally, the term *intercultural competence* is presented in the English subject curricula within the core element *Meeting with English language texts* which states:

*"By reflecting on, interpreting, and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence (…)." (*Ministry of Education and Research, 2019*).*

Hence, intercultural competence is understood as integral aspects of working with texts in the English subject. Additionally, it is the first time the term *intercultural competence* has been included in a Norwegian national curriculum, which itself implies an increased emphasis on the acquisition of intercultural competence.

Lastly, within the competence aims of the English subject after year 10, the focus on intercultural competence could be detected in several of the aims. An example of a competency aim that could be associated with intercultural competence is the following aim:

"Explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

As presented in the above competence aim, there is a focus on exploration of cultures. Thus, it invites for the acquisition of deeper understandings of cultures through critical thinking, reflection, and exploration, which are aspects all essential in the acquisition of intercultural competence.

In conclusion, intercultural competence is detected in multiple aims and guidelines of LK20. Within the Core curriculum, this is especially seen in connection to the overarching aim of *Bildung* and the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and citizenship*. Within the English subject, after year 10, the acquisition of intercultural competence is given significant importance as part of the *Relevance and core values* of the subject and within the specific competence aims. Lastly, within the core elements of the English subject, intercultural competence is specifically mentioned in relation to the topic of *Working with texts in English*. Hence, the objectives of LK20 call for the focus on intercultural competence in the teaching of English today. It is thus interesting to investigate whether this is reflected in the tasks of the selected textbooks of this study.

3 Methodology

This chapter will present the methodological framework by discussing and defining the essential methods and procedures of this thesis. Firstly, section 3.1 will present the selection of materials used for the analysis. Secondly, section 3.2 will define and discuss the methods used in this thesis and the application of such methods. Thirdly, section 3.3 will describe how the investigation was carried out, and, finally, in section 3.4, a discussion on the reliability and validity of this methodology will be presented.

3.1 Selection of Materials

As presented in a survey conducted by Gjerustad and Waagene (2015), schools in Norway predominantly take use of five different EFL textbooks for grade 8-10 (p. 34). However, for the scope of this thesis, all textbooks could not be investigated and a selection regarding textbooks had to be made. Firstly, I decided to focus solely on EFL textbooks intended for 10th-grade students. This was chosen due to its proximity with English competence aims after grade 10. Furthermore, little research has been conducted within the field of intercultural competence on tasks from LK20 revised 8-10th-grade textbooks in Norway. Therefore, by investigating 10th-grade textbooks with a focus on tasks, it might bring forth new contributions to the field of intercultural competence in English education today. Followingly, under the hypothetical assumption that these textbooks would likely be utilized in Norwegian classrooms today, I choose textbooks published by two of the most well-known publishers in Norway, namely Aschehoug and Cappelen Damm. Lastly, accessibility also factored into the choice of material, and the textbooks chosen were readily accessible. This resulted in the books *Engelsk 10 (Haegi et al., 2021.* Henceforth referred to as *Engelsk 10)* published by Cappelen Damm and *Stages 10* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021. Henceforth referred to as *Stages 10*) published by Aschehoug.

Engelsk 10 is written by Haegi, Madsen and Mohammad-Roe (2021) as a revised edition adapted to LK20. The book`s description on the publisher`s website claims that the textbook covers all the competence and core aims of LK20 (Haegi et al., 2021). Additionally, the description portrays a clear focus on writing and assessment, in which they underline that every chapter includes tasks related to formative assessment and that each chapter presents topics related to the final exam (Haegi et al., 2021). However, the description does not feature any specific references to cultural learning or intercultural competence. Structurally, *Engelsk 10* spans over 280 pages, divided into five chapters and a reference section. The chapters topics are as follows:

1. Leading and following
2. Earth and pressure
3. Democracy and citizenship
4. Walls and bridges
5. Connecting

The chapters share several structural commonalities, such as a two-page introduction to each chapter featuring a large picture, a small text, and three introductory questions followed by two pages of tasks related to the focus words of the chapter. Furthermore, every chapter ends with a "test yourself"-section that features tasks relating to the chapter topic. The remaining tasks of the book are grouped into: "Before reading" tasks, "Understanding" tasks, "Talking" tasks, "Writing" tasks, and "Grammar" tasks. Lastly, the book provides the learners with a 30-page reference section focusing on elements such as grammatical rules, reading strategies, and critical literacy.

Stages 10 is written by Pettersen and Røkaas (2021) as a revised edition adapted to LK20. In the description of the textbook on the publisher`s website, the authors claim that the book aligns with the aims and guidelines of LK20 (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021). Furthermore, they state that the textbook contains engaging texts and tasks that encourage communication and collaborative learning (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021). There are no specific references to cultural learning in the description. However, the inclusion of cultural learning can be implied through their chapter topics, such as "Indigenous peoples" and "The English-speaking World: Nigeria, South Africa, and Australia". Structurally, *Stages 10* spans over 325 pages divided into five chapters and a "How to use Stages" section that explains some of the book`s structure and task groups. The chapters are as follows:

1. Choices
2. Democracy and citizenship
3. Indigenous peoples
4. The English-speaking World: Nigeria, South Africa and Australia
5. Sustainable development

All chapters end with the sections "Speak & Write", "Language Work", and "Improve Your Writing Part X", featuring both tasks, pictures, and small informative texts. Tasks are grouped into a selection of groups, with the most common groups being "Starting point", "Understanding", "Viewpoints", and "Language lab". Other task groups are less frequent, such as "Listening skills" and "Creative corner" tasks.

To conclude, both textbooks include five chapters, in which the chapter topic "Democracy and citizenship" is shared. Lastly, as both textbooks claim to be in line with the aims of LK20, it can be assumed that this will be reflected in the tasks analyzed within this study.

3.2 Research Methods

The following subchapters will provide information about methods utilized to address the aims of this thesis. The first three subchapters consist of a description of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research, respectively. In light of this, subchapter 3.2.4.

will account for the choice of methods used for analyzing the textbooks and their alignment with the aims of this thesis.

3.2.1 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research is a methodological approach that aims to understand human behavior or the meaning of particular social systems (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Its flexible and interpretative research design allows for in-depth research that might provide insight into human phenomena (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 17). Researchers using a qualitative approach typically gathers data using methods such as observations and interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 34). The qualitative methods tend to be time-consuming, in which the data collection and analysis can span over several weeks or months (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 430). As a result, the products of qualitative research typically feature a descriptive and detailed report of the findings (p. 377). In addressing the aims of this thesis, a qualitative aspect to the analysis of the textbook tasks will be utilized, focusing on an in-depth exploration of meaning.

Qualitative research is a reflexive process that involves the researcher as an active participant in the research. The researcher acts as the key instrument and information gatherer of the research process and is thus influenced by their personal experiences and beliefs (Creswell, 2014, p. 185; Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 430). As a result, qualitative research is often concerned with self-awareness and transparency in the research process to increase its validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 265). In light of this, it has been important for this thesis to show transparency in the process of analysis and self-awareness in my position as the researcher. This is presented in the Chapters *3.3 Process of* Analysis and *3.4 Reflections and Dilemmas*, in which I describe how the analysis was conducted as well as reflecting on my role as the researcher.

Altogether, qualitative research, despite limitations of subjectivity, time, and effort, continues to be a popular approach among researchers today as an important tool for understanding human phenomena (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 17). Moreover, its potential for in-depth meaning exploration through flexible and interpretative research design made this approach suitable for addressing the aims of this current thesis.

3.2.2 Quantitative Method

In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research is a methodological approach that aims to investigate social phenomena through numerical data (Christoffersen & Johannessen, p. 19). Through a structured and systematic approach to data collection and analysis, quantitative research allows for broader studies that can be used to identify patterns or trends in social phenomena (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 53). Commonly used methods and techniques for the gathering and generalization of data are surveys, polls, and questionnaires (Christoffersen & Johannessen, p. 19). In addressing

the aims of this research, a quantitative approach to the analysis of the textbooks is employed through the quantification and analysis of data used to research the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence.

Quantitative research, as with qualitative research, also poses some limitations. Firstly, one cannot follow up with participants further expanding on the questions asked or answers given for deeper understanding (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 17). This makes quantitative research less useful in exploring personal perspectives and meanings about a phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 429). Moreover, quantitative research might also be affected by response bias, in which the overall results are affected by both the respondents and non-respondents (Creswell, 2014, p. 163). Consequently, this could affect the representativity of the results (p. 163). Despite its limitations, the quantitative approach is a highly utilized research approach providing aspects of objectivity, consistency, and ability for broader studies that can be used to discover different aspects of the social world. In light of this, the use of quantitative method in this thesis has been helpful in detecting trends and patterns of intercultural competence within the selected EFL textbooks.

3.2.3 Mixed Method

Mixed method research involves the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single or set of studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 50). Mixed method research can be used in various research contexts, allowing researchers to triangulate their findings which, in turn, could enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research (p. 439). In conducting this study, I found the mixed method approach to be the most suitable for addressing the aims of this thesis.

Using a mixed method approach has proved beneficial in this research for several reasons. By combining the strengths of both methods, mixed method research can provide a more comprehensive answer to a single research question (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 433). Proponents view qualitative and quantitative approaches with complementary strengths, in which a combination can help even out the different strengths and weaknesses (p. 51). Hence, the combination of methods might help improve the overall quality of the research (pp. 50, 430). However, this involves the researcher conducting and gaining information from multiple methods, which could result in a more time-consuming research process.

In light of this, by employing a mixed method approach to this research it might provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the material that cannot be achieved using qualitative or quantitative methods alone.

3.2.4 Choice of Method

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), the overarching rule in research is that "*your research questions should drive your research*" (p. 346). It is therefore necessary to consider the research questions when choosing a method for this research project. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate whether tasks from Norwegian EFL textbooks promote the acquisition of intercultural competence and to what extent the tasks facilitate curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence from LK20. As this study focuses on the analysis of text, a content analysis was utilized. Content analysis is a research technique most commonly used in the analysis of text. This typically involves the analysis of text with the use of predefined criteria and the quantification of data (Weninger, 2018, p. 4). The content analysis of this study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods, with an emphasis on the quantitative.

As presented in research question 1, this study intends to investigate the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence by investigating how many tasks could be associated with intercultural competence and the distribution of IC factors. With the focus on investigating the *extent*, along with *how many* tasks and *distribution* of tasks, the research questions itself invites for a quantitative approach as the use of quantifiable data is necessary to address the aims of this thesis. In conducting a quantitative analysis, categories and central terms are clearly defined before the investigation begins (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2020, p. 166). Concerning this thesis, the tasks were analyzed and categorized based on the predefined categories adapted from factors and objectives of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC. This allowed for further analysis of how many tasks could be linked to an IC factor. As previously mentioned, quantitative research is beneficial for identifying patterns or trends in data material (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 53). As a result, through a quantitative approach to this study, it might prove helpful in detecting patterns of intercultural competence in the textbook tasks. However, as stated by Krippendorff (2018): *"Ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers"* (p. 21). This further suggests the implementation of a qualitative approach to the analysis of the textbooks.

The qualitative approach to this research is shown in the process of analysis through the close reading and categorization of the tasks. As stated by Weninger (2018), in close examinations of texts, "*it is quite common for studies to combine a more quantitatively-oriented content analysis with subsequent qualitative close examinations of text* (…)" (p. 5). In light of this, a mixed methodology was deemed appropriate for analyzing the textbooks according to the aims of this thesis. The tasks of the textbooks were analyzed for meaning based on the adapted criteria of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC in order to investigate the potential promotion of intercultural competence. As a result, I would argue that in addressing the research questions, it invites for the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

As the analysis of this research begins with a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase, a sequential time orientation was employed (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p.

238). Accordingly, this further results in sequential validity, in which the results from the first qualitative phase affect the outcome of the following quantitative phase (p. 275). As previously mentioned, qualitative research is subjective and interpretative, and transparency and self-awareness are therefore important in this phase of the research to enhance validity (p. 265). This entails providing a detailed description and explanation of the process of analysis utilized in this study, which will be presented in the following subchapter.

It should further be acknowledged that the presentation of LK20 in relation to intercultural competence features aspects of a qualitative approach. This is shown in the interpretation of the curricular documents, as the interpretation of LK20 is based on my understanding of the curriculum and intercultural competence. This is presented along with relevant theory in Chapter 2.5.

3.3 The Process of Analysis

Textbooks provide a high density of information with the inclusion of tasks, texts of different sizes, and illustrations. Consequently, due to the scope of this thesis, I have chosen to focus the analysis solely on the tasks of the textbooks. Tasks are, as presented in Chapter 2.4, defined as: "(…) a paratext that performs a directive addressed to the student" (Anderson-Bakken & Bakken, 2021, p. 5). Hence, every written text that encourages students to perform a particular action will be analyzed. In investigating the potential promotion of intercultural competence in textbook tasks, I have chosen to use the factors of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC as criteria for my analysis with the intention of revealing aspects of intercultural competence within the two selected textbooks. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2.3, Byram`s (2020) model of ICC consists of 5 factors: *Attitudes*, *Skills of interpreting and relating*, *Knowledge*, *Skills of discovery and interaction,* and *Critical cultural awareness/political education* (Byram, 2020, p. 131). Moreover, Byram (2020) provides objectives for each factor considered necessary in the teaching and learning of intercultural competence. These factors are all interrelated, and combined, they contribute to the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for successful intercultural interaction (Byram et al., 2002, p. 11). As this model was not specifically designed as an analytical tool, I found it necessary to adapt the model for the purpose of this thesis.

To better achieve the aims of this thesis, the objectives outlined by Byram (2020) have been adapted (pp. 84-90). Firstly, the number of objectives for each factor of IC has been reduced to create an overview that is easy to follow in the process of analysis. Predominantly, this reduction is the outcome of a merging of the original objectives for each IC factor. An example of this is found in the merging and reduction of objectives within the IC factor *Knowledge*. This was the most extensive merge, in which the original 11 objectives attributed by Byram (2020) to this factor of IC are now reduced and merged into only two objectives for the purpose of this thesis (pp. 84-90). In this reduction, I decided to merge the objectives into two objectives that encompassed all the original objectives based on Byram`s (2020) definition of *Knowledge*:

"Specific knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one`s own and in one`s interlocutors country, and of the general knowledge of processes of societal and individual interaction" (p. 85).

Based on this definition, two objectives were formed that encompassed the original 11 objectives: *Factual knowledge* and *Knowledge of interaction*.

Furthermore, some objectives were omitted for irrelevance to this research or for being too alike. An example of such omission concerns the factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education* and its objective:

"*Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges on the basis of a reasoned analysis, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of them by drawing upon one`s knowledge, skills and attitudes*" (Byram, 2020, p. 139).

This specific objective is similar to objectives of the factor *Skills of interpreting and relating* to such degree that it was omitted for the purpose of this thesis. Previous research has shown to often emit the IC factor of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* based on overlap with objectives of other factors (Kian, 2016; Äijälä, 2009). However, this factor of IC adds the notion of critical evaluation of one`s own and other`s cultures (p. 266). Moreover, it is also seen as an essential IC factor in relation to the aims of LK20 and therefore deemed relevant and necessary to include for the purpose of this research. Ultimately, the merging and omission resulted in 1-3 detailed objectives for each IC factor that proved helpful as criteria for the process of analysis.

When utilizing Byram`s (2020) model as an analytical tool, it is important to consider the criticism raised towards it (see section 2.3.1). This has been especially relevant in this analysis when addressing the IC factor *Knowledge*. Within this IC factor, Byram (2020) has been criticized for emphasizing culture on the national level (Risager, 2022, p. 9). Consequently, this thesis has utilized the previously presented definitions of culture (see subchapter 2.1), encompassing individual culture. This includes culture that could be linked to other factors such as sexuality, religion, and ethnicity. Accordingly, tasks do not need to be directly connected to national culture in order to be categorized as a task promoting intercultural competence, as Byram`s (2020) model might imply. As a result, tasks that, for example, invites students to mediate an argument between two neighbors of differing opinions will be considered tasks that promote intercultural competence according to the criteria of Table 1.

The criterion of analysis is presented in the following table, including detailed descriptions of each IC factor with its respective objective (see Table 1). To operationalize the analysis criteria, examples of identified tasks for each of the five IC factors and objectives have been added. Moreover, additional examples are added throughout this subchapter with the intention to provide insight into the process of analysis and my interpretation of the criteria.

Table 1: Criteria for the analysis of tasks in relation to intercultural competence in two EFL textbooks (Byram, 2020)

Factors of Intercultural Competence	Objectives	Description of objectives	Examples of textbook tasks
Attitudes	**1: Changing perspectives**	**1:** The task encourages learners to "decenter" by viewing one`s own and other cultural practices and products from other perspectives.	**1**: «How do you imagine the audience at the march felt when King delivered his speech? Freewrite for a couple of minutes." (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 33).
	2: Question own values and presuppositions	**2:** Tasks of this objective encourages learners to question and express their opinions, attitudes and presuppositions on cultural issues, practices, and products.	**2**: "Some places in the USA celebrate Indigenous Peoples` Day on 12 October as an alternative to Columbus Day. Do you think this is a good idea?" (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 158).
Skills of interpreting and relating	**1: Relating to cultures and cultural phenomena**	**1:** The task encourages learners to interpret features of other cultures and relate it to their own culture or others. Tasks of this objective may ask the learners to reflect on similarities and differences between cultural practices, products and events.	**1**: "What is the difference between inequalities we must fight against in our own society and the inequalities these girls have to face?" (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 53).

	2: Identifying ethnocentric perspectives	2: The task encourages the learners to identify ethnocentric perspectives of cultural practices, events and products, and explain their origins.	2: Look at the news story on page 10. Close read the text and pay special attention to how the social group is portrayed and look for signs of ethnocentrism within the story. How could the news story have been approached differently? (Self-created example task).
	3: Identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator	3: The task invites learners to identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions in interactions and explain them in terms of the present cultural systems to reduce dysfunction. Through these explanations, students are encouraged to function as mediators between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.	3: Identify the misunderstandings that occurred in the interaction between the two main characters in the text and explain the role of stereotypes and biases that contributed to the misunderstanding (Self-created example task).
Knowledge	1: Factual knowledge	1: The task contributes to increasing learner`s knowledge and critical understanding of products, worldviews, practices, events, history, geography, political and economic factors, social system, significant individuals, public and private institutions in one`s own and interlocutor`s culture on societal and individual levels.	1: "Skim read the text again to find the key facts about Majuli Island and Molai Forest. Write a dot-point list." (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 100).

	2: **Knowledge of interaction**	2: The tasks of this objective contribute to increase learners` knowledge of societal and individual interaction such as appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal language.	2: "Reread the text to find examples of African American Vernacular English dialect in the dialogue. Write them down" (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 180).
Skills of discovery and interaction	1: **Acquire new knowledge**	1: The task encourages learners to acquire new knowledge of cultural practices from different sources.	1: "Find information about the situation of Indigenous Australians today. Write one or two paragraphs." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 146).
	2: **Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction**	2: The task encourages learners to use their knowledge, attitudes and skills to interact with representatives of other cultures.	2: "Imagine that you had a chance to interview a member of the Stolen Generations for a school newspaper. Write a list of questions you would ask." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 146).
Critical cultural awareness/political education	1: **Critically evaluate and identify values**	1: The task invites learners to identify, interpret and evaluate values in documents and events in one`s own and other`s cultures critically on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning.	1: "Look at the list of human rights on pages 78-79 in Chapter 2. Do you think the people in this community have basic human rights? Explain." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 31).

For tasks to be identified as potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence, they should reflect the criteria of Table 1. As presented in Table 1, an example of this is the following task retrieved from *Stages 10*: "Find information about the situation of Indigenous Australians today. Write one or two paragraphs." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 146). This task encourages learners to acquire more knowledge on the situations of Indigenous Australians today. As this task requires learners to research and discover new knowledge about a culture, it was assessed satisfactory in matching the criteria of *Skills of discovery and interaction* through the objective of *Acquire new knowledge.* Therefore, the objectives and descriptions presented in Table 1 proved helpful in the categorizations of the tasks, allowing me to determine their potential promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence. After a task was assessed as matching one of the criteria, it was documented for further study.

Although the IC factors are presented as separate entities, they are all considered interdependent (Byram, 2020, p. 143). This interdependence and closeness among the factors suggest that some tasks will apply to multiple criteria. However, with the purpose of finding out how the different factors are represented in the textbooks, I found it necessary to only assign one IC factor per task. Therefore, an effort was made into making clear and detailed objectives that were essential in determining where the tasks belong. To provide more insight into how I assessed the placement of tasks according to the criteria, an example of a task that could possibly promote more than one criterion of intercultural competence is presented in Figure 3, along with an explanation of identification.

> **7** Imagine that you are a sports star, and you want to encourage others to take part in the protest against police brutality by taking a knee during the national anthem. Write a social media post where you explain what the protest is about, why it is important to you, and why other athletes should join in.

Figure 3: Task example (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 97)

The task presented in Figure 3 invites the students to imagine that they are a sports star taking part in the protest against police brutality and encourages them to write a social media post concerning this. Arguably, this task promotes knowledge of a culture by having them gain more information about a particular cultural issue that could align with objectives of the IC factors *Knowledge* and *Skills of discovery and interaction*. However, I would argue that the main objective of the task is for the students to *decenter* and discuss the issue from someone else`s perspective. Therefore, by investigating the overall meaning of the task, it is placed into the factor of *Attitudes,* aligning with the objective *Changing perspectives*.

All textbook tasks have been analyzed in both textbooks to investigate the extent of tasks promoting intercultural competence. This includes tasks such as before reading-tasks, in-between reading-tasks, grammar-tasks, and understanding-tasks. However, tasks requiring additional materials, such as listening tasks and tasks requiring handouts from the teacher, were excluded from this study. This is due to the material not being

readily accessible to learners, in addition to the scope of the thesis, which poses its own restrictions on research time and the amount of data. Presented in Figure 4 is an example of a task requiring extra material which was excluded from this research.
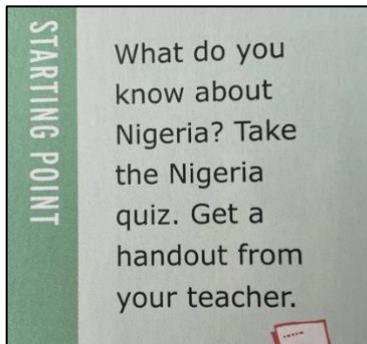
Figure 4: Task example (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 196)

In this task, as presented in Figure 4, the students are asked to take a quiz provided by the teacher regarding their knowledge of Nigeria before reading a text. The topic of the task could suggest a potential promotion of intercultural competence, but without investigating the extra material, such conclusions cannot be made for sure. This is also the case with listening tasks and other tasks that features material from the textbooks` extra additions. Ultimately, this might have resulted in the exclusion of tasks that possibly could be linked to intercultural competence. Moreover, in addressing the aims of this thesis, it is necessary to gain a clear understanding of what constitutes a single task.
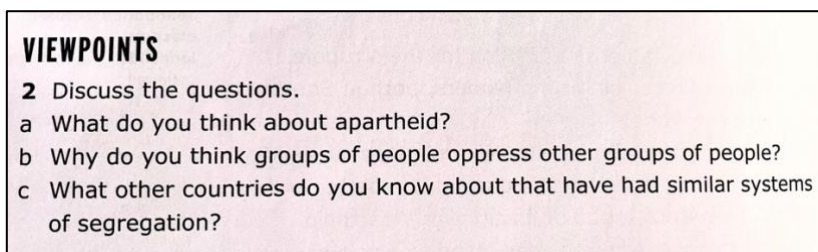
Figure 5: Task example (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 224)

The textbook tasks are frequently divided into sub-questions, such as the Viewpoints task presented in Figure 5. This task features three sub-questions that the students are invited to perform. For the purpose of this thesis, each sub-question will be treated as an individual task as they have the potential to differentiate in terms of the five factors of intercultural competence. Accordingly, the sub-questions in Figure 5 will be analyzed as three individual tasks. By separating the tasks, the chances of having a task belong to multiple factors at once are reduced. As a result, this contributed to provide me with a concise and clear overview of the potential promotion of intercultural competence in the textbook tasks, which could further be used for a quantitative analysis.

Ultimately, after analyzing and documenting the textbook tasks, they were counted and placed into tables and figures for further analysis. This provided me with findings pertaining to the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence, as presented in Table 2.

	Total amount of tasks analyzed	Total amount of tasks identified as potentially promoting IC
Stages 10	1274	330
Engelsk 10	510	68
Both books	1784	398

Table 2: Overview of the number of tasks analyzed and identified as potentially promoting intercultural competence

The findings of the analysis provided grounds for discussing the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence and their facilitation of curricular aims and guidelines. The findings of the analysis will be presented in Chapter 4: *Findings*.

3.4 Reflections and Dilemmas

3.4.1 Validity and Reliability

When determining the quality and trustworthiness of the study, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research. When discussing validity, Postholm and Jacobsen (2020) separate between internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is concerned with the extent to which the results are representable and confirmable (p. 230). This involves determining whether I have measured what the study claims to measure and if I have reasonable grounds for my results based on the analysis (p. 229). The aims of this study are to investigate the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence in two EFL textbooks and how the tasks facilitate the aims and guidelines of LK20. Through a mixed method approach to the analysis of the textbook tasks, it provided me with data that made it possible to address the aims of this research, which itself might suggest increased validity. Furthermore, when determining the internal validity of the research, it is important to consider the study`s confirmability. Confirmability is concerned with the degree to which the findings are evidently derived from the data and could be confirmed by other researchers (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2020, p. 230). Consequently, I made an effort to provide a transparent research methodology with results clearly derived from the findings. The use of consistent criteria for the analysis proved useful in this regard to demonstrate the process of analysis and in providing me with findings used to address the aims of this thesis.

To further determine the validity of this mixed method research, it is important to assess the external validity. External validity is concerned with the transferability of the research and to which extent findings from one study can be transferable or generalized to other settings (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2020, p. 238). External validity in this research relates to the ability of this study to determine the promotion of intercultural competence in other EFL textbooks not included in this research. The transferability of my findings is affected by the limitations of the study. Due to the scope of this thesis, only two textbooks have been included in this research, and their extra materials and teacher guides have been excluded. Therefore, this study is not representative of the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks within education in Norway. However, as previously mentioned, there exist a limited number of EFL textbooks used in Norwegian classrooms

today (see Chapter 3.1). This limited number of textbooks could suggest that, although not representative, this study might still prove useful in providing some insight into the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks in Norwegian education. With a larger timeframe, more textbooks and their extra materials could have been included, as well as involving students and teachers within a classroom. This would have resulted in enhanced context and a more extensive overview of the issue, which would have enhanced the external validity of the study.

The overall quality of the study is further affected by its reliability. Postholm and Jacobsen (2020) link reliability to how the study has been affected by the researcher and the way the research has been conducted (p. 224). This implies a reflection on the researcher`s own biases and impact on the study and whether it can be trusted that the researcher has conducted the research well. For this thesis, all research has been conducted on a subjective basis and by me as the sole researcher. Consequently, considerations in this study are influenced by the context and understanding of which I, the researcher, am a part of, also referred to as researcher bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 265). My preconceptions going into this research are influenced by my former experiences as an education student with a special interest in English and music education in connection to culture. Furthermore, during my time abroad, I also experienced a lack of education in intercultural competence from my previous schooling. Consequently, this could influence the research by leading me to results that support my previous experiences and knowledge. The reliability of the study would have been strengthened with the inclusion of more researchers offering other perspectives on the material. However, by being aware of these challenges of subjectivity, it might also lead to an enhanced critical view and a more detailed analysis. Continual reflection and transparency have therefore been important throughout the research to increase the overall quality and trustworthiness of this study.

3.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Although this study does not involve any direct interaction with people, some ethical concerns are still worth mentioning. When analyzing and comparing textbooks, it is important to remain respectful towards the textbook authors. Consequently, I focused on conducting a thorough and fair analysis that was not overly critical. Furthermore, this study is solely analyzing the tasks and their potential of promoting intercultural competence, which does not consider any of the other qualities that the textbooks might carry. Hence, this study does not intend to determine the overall quality of the textbooks and does not attempt to advertise or recommend one textbook over the other for use in the EFL classroom.

4 Findings

The previous chapters have introduced the theoretical background and methodological approach of this thesis. The following chapter will present the findings of the analysis of the two selected textbooks: *Engelsk 10* and *Stages 10.* In which the textbook tasks were analyzed for their potential in promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence. As described in the previous chapter, this was done through a mixed method approach using a modified version of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC as criteria for analysis.

4.1 Total Amount of Textbook Tasks Potentially Promoting the Acquisition of Intercultural Competence

The tasks of two EFL textbooks were analyzed with the purpose of revealing the extent of tasks that might potentially promote the acquisition of intercultural competence. In total, 1784 textbook tasks were examined for this study, 1274 tasks in *Stages 10* and 510 tasks in *Engelsk 10*. Any task identified as aligning with one of the adapted factors of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC was classified as an IC task.

Total amount of IC tasks

	Stages 10	Engelsk 10	Both textbooks
■Tasks included in research	1274	510	1784
■Intercultural tasks	330	68	398
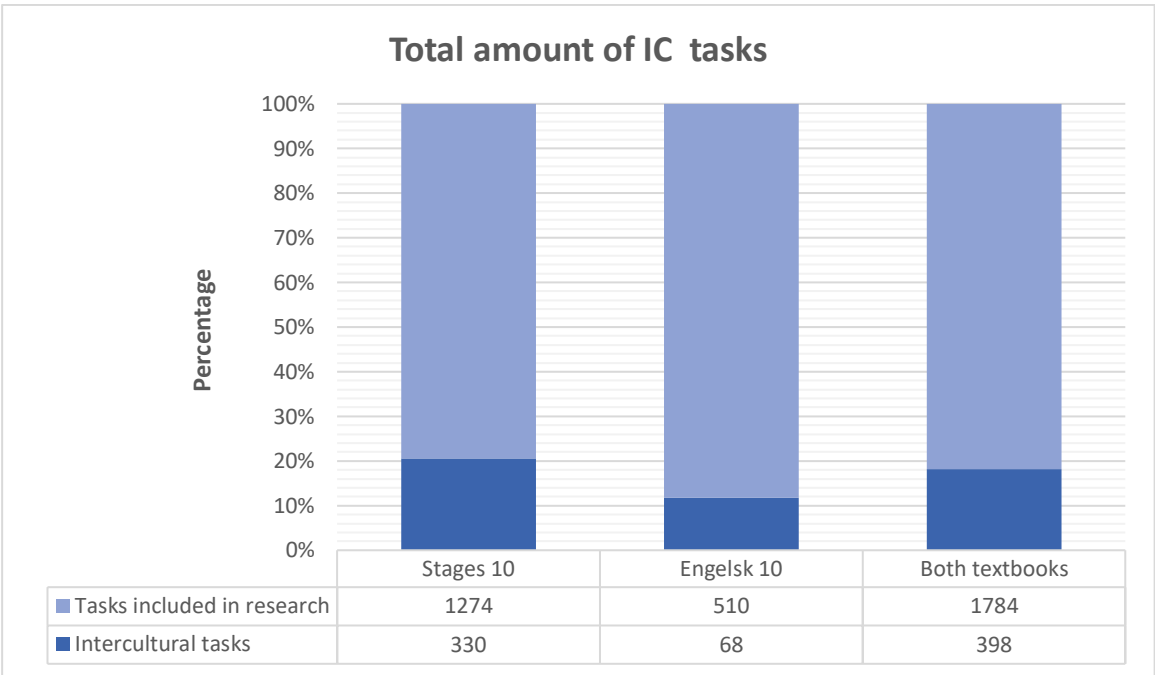
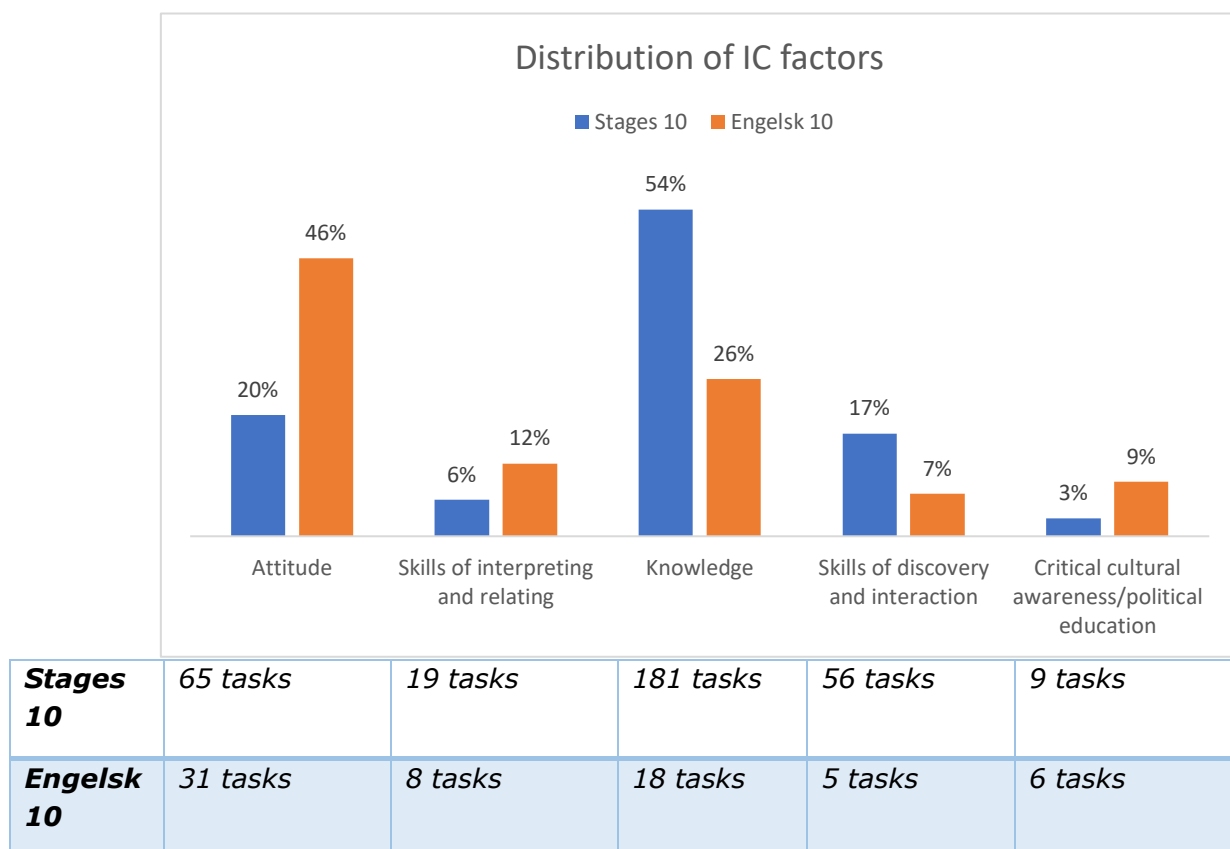**Figure 6: IC task ratio compared to the total amount of tasks analyzed in the textbooks**

Between the two textbooks, *Stages 10* has the highest ratio of tasks linked to intercultural competence. 330 out of 1274 tasks analyzed in *Stages 10* were identified as potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence, resulting in an IC task ratio of 26% (see Figure 6). Likewise, 68 of 510 tasks analyzed in *Engelsk 10* show

linkage to the potential promotion of intercultural competence, resulting in an IC task ratio of 13% (see Figure 6). Combined, this resulted in a total IC task ratio of 22% which equaled 398 out of 1784 tasks.

4.2 Distribution of Textbook Tasks Linked to the Factors of Intercultural Competence

4.2.1 Overall Distribution of Tasks Linked to the Factors of Intercultural Competence

All tasks identified as potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence were linked to one of the IC factors adapted from Byram`s (2020) model of ICC. In which some factors were found to be more frequent than others.

	Attitude	Skills of interpreting and relating	Knowledge	Skills of discovery and interaction	Critical cultural awareness/political education
Stages 10	65 tasks	19 tasks	181 tasks	56 tasks	9 tasks
Engelsk 10	31 tasks	8 tasks	18 tasks	5 tasks	6 tasks

Figure 7: Distribution of IC factors within the analyzed textbook tasks

The factors *Attitude* and *Knowledge* are the most frequent of both textbooks (see Figure 7). *Attitude* is the most frequent factor in *Engelsk 10* with 46% of the identified IC tasks associated with this factor. In *Stages 10*, *Knowledge* is the factor most frequent encompassing 54% of the total amount of IC tasks. Other differences between the books are seen within the two IC skills: *Skills of interpreting and relating* and *Skills of discovery and interaction.* To which *Stages 10* has a higher percentage of tasks connected to *Skills of discovery and interaction*, while *Engelsk 10* have a higher percentage of tasks connected to *Skills of interpreting and relating*. Lastly, the factor *Critical cultural*

awareness/political education has a relatively small number of tasks associated with it in both textbooks.

Distribution of IC factors identified in the textbook tasks

Attitude

Skills of interpreting and relating

Knowledge

Skills of discovery and interaction

Crititcal cultural awareness/Political education

4%
15%
24%
7%
50%
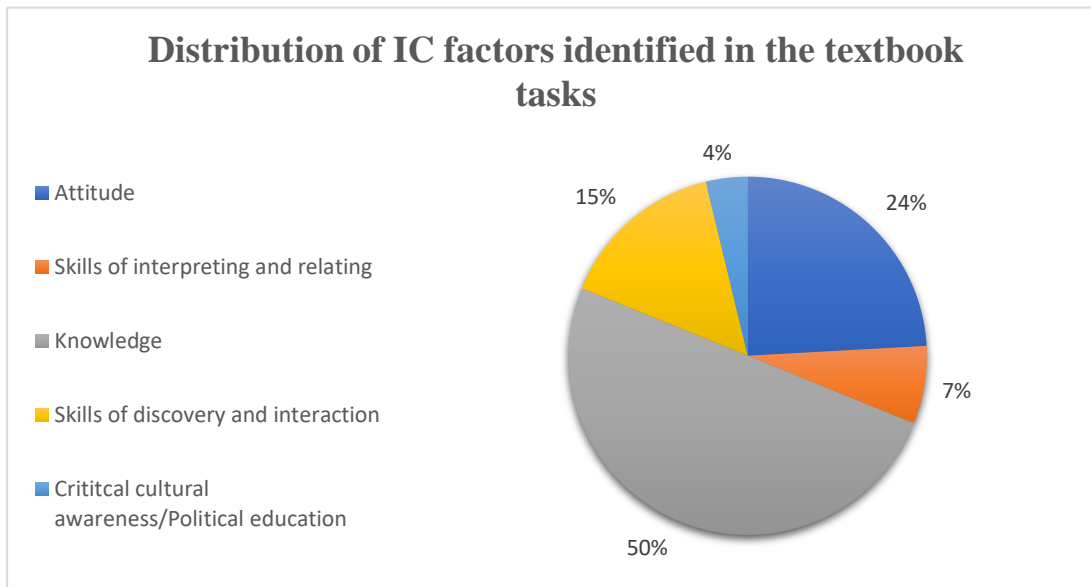
Figure 8: The overall distribution of IC factors identified in the textbook tasks

The overall number of tasks linked to each factor of intercultural competence were found to be distributed unevenly. A large majority (50%) of the tasks identified as promoting intercultural competence were connected to the IC factor *Knowledge* (see Figure 8). Second most frequent is the IC factor of *Attitude*, with 24% of the total amount of identified IC tasks being linked to this criteria. Following, the criteria of *Skills of discovery and interaction* were connected to 15% of the tasks while the criteria *Skills of interpreting and relating* were connected to 7% of the tasks. *Critical cultural awareness/political education* was the factor linked to the least amount of textbook tasks in proportion to the total amount of identified IC tasks with a ratio of 4%.

4.3 The Amount of Tasks Linked to the Objectives of Intercultural Competence

4.3.1 Tasks Linked to the Objectives of *Attitudes*
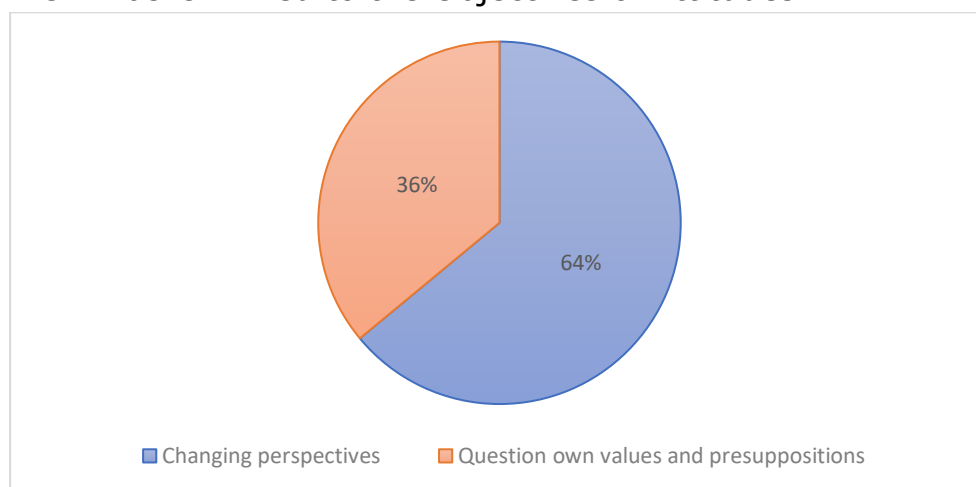
Objectives of Attitudes	Number of tasks	Percentage
Changing perspectives	61	64%
Question own values and presuppositions	35	36%
Total	96	100%

Figure 9: Distribution of objectives of *Attitudes*

The factor of *Attitudes* was addressed through the objectives *Changing perspectives* and *Question own values and presuppositions*. The objective *Changing perspectives* were the most frequent within the textbook tasks, with 64% of the tasks of *Attitudes* linked to this objective. Accordingly, the remaining 36% of the tasks were classified into the objective *Question own values and presuppositions*. The tasks associated with the objective *Changing perspectives* encouraged learners to "decenter" and view one`s own and other cultural practices and products from other perspectives. An example of a task connected to this objective is:

"Write a story about an Indigenous teenager who feels torn between the traditional culture of his or her people and a more modern way of life" (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 182).

This task encourages learners to change perspectives and write a story from the perspective of an Indigenous teenager. Altogether 61 tasks were linked to this objective.

The tasks linked to the objective of *Question own values and presuppositions* were identified as encouraging learners to question and express their opinions, attitudes and presuppositions on cultural issues, practices, and products. An example of a task connected to this objective is:

"The USA and Norway differ greatly when it comes to gun control. In the USA, the right to "bear arms" is seen as a basic human right. (…) Discuss the topic using arguments you agree with personally" (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 183).

In this task the learners are asked to share opinions on the topic of gun control, which is presented with the context of gun laws in the USA. Altogether, 35 tasks were linked to this objective.

4.3.2 Tasks Linked to the Objectives of *Skills of interpreting and relating*
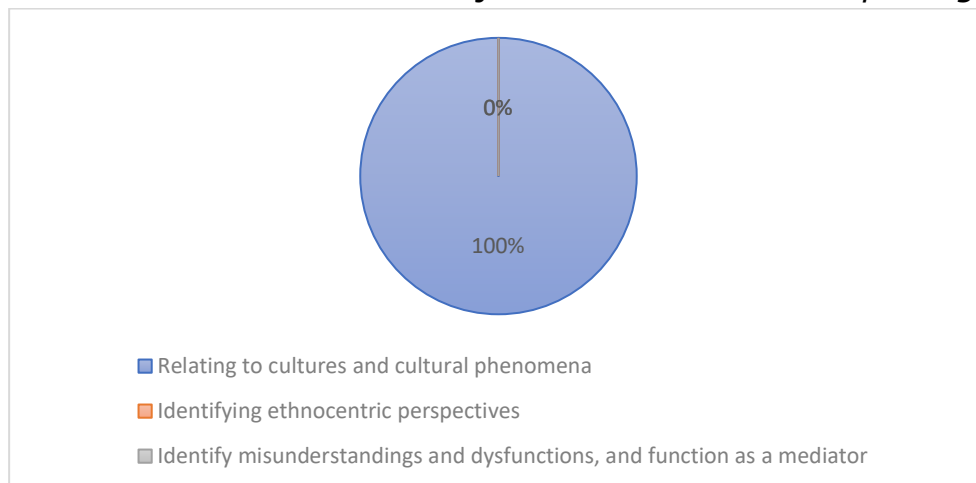
Objectives of Skills of interpreting and relating	Number of tasks	Percentage
Relating to cultures and cultural phenomena	27	100%
Identifying ethnocentric perspectives	0	0%
Identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator	0	0%
Total	27	100%

Figure 10: Distribution of objectives of *Skills of interpreting and relating*

The IC factor of *Skills of interpreting and relating* was addressed in the form of the objectives *Relating to cultures and cultural phenomena*, *Identifying ethnocentric perspectives* and *Identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator*. All tasks of this factor were linked to the objective *Relating to cultures and cultural phenomena.* Tasks classified into this objective encouraged learners to compare and contrast features of other cultures to own or other`s culture. An example of a task connected to this objective is found in *Stages 10* in which learners first read about an American girl of color whose parents had a talk with her about the police, before answering the task: *"Have your parents had this talk with you? Why or why not?"* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 102).

As the task encourages comparison between cultures on the topic of police brutality, it was thus identified as a task linked to the objective *Relating to cultures and cultural phenomena*. The remaining two objectives of *Identifying misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator* and *Identifying ethnocentric perspectives* were not linked to any of the analyzed tasks in the selected EFL textbooks. Furthermore, these are the only objectives of Byram`s (2020) IC factors not represented in any of the books.

4.3.3 Tasks Linked to the Objectives of *Knowledge*
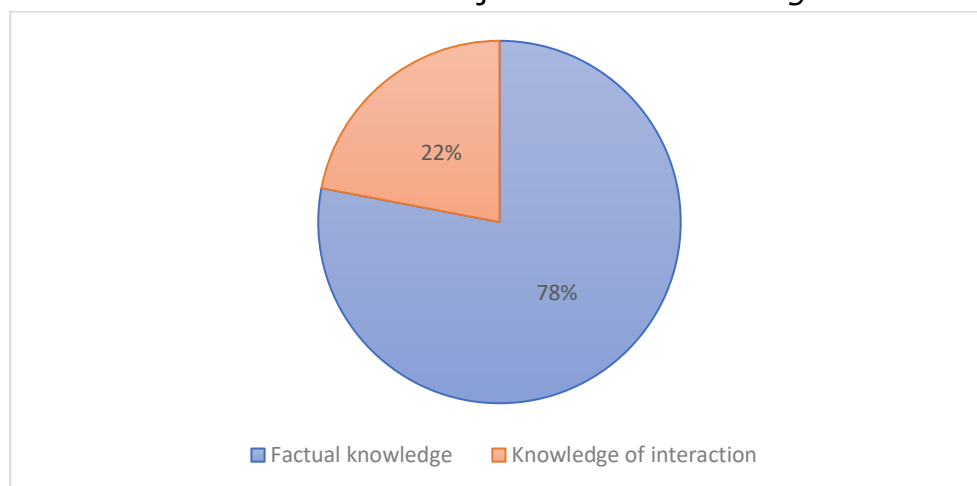
Objectives of Knowledge	Number of tasks	Percentage
Factual knowledge	156	78%
Knowledge of interaction	43	22%
Total	199	100%

Figure 11: Distribution of objectives of *Knowledge*

The IC factor *Knowledge* was addressed through the objectives *Factual knowledge* and *Knowledge of interaction.* The vast majority of the tasks were linked to the objective *Factual knowledge* with a ratio of 78% of the total tasks connected to the factor *Knowledge*. Accordingly, the remaining 22% were linked to the objective *Knowledge of interaction*. Tasks classified into *Factual knowledge* contributed to increasing learners` knowledge and understanding in topics such as cultural practices, products, history, significant individuals, and geography. An example of a task connected to this objective is found in *Engelsk 10*:

"True or false? If it is false, write what is true. Most Maori live on New Zealand`s South Island." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 149).

This task was linked to the objective *Factual knowledge* as students are asked a true or false question about the location of the Maori people in New Zealand, potentially contributing to increasing their factual knowledge of the Maori people.

Tasks of the objective *Knowledge of interaction* might potentially contribute to increasing learners` knowledge of societal and individual interaction, both verbal and non-verbal. An example of such task is found in *Stages 10: "We tried to get to town, but ended up in the___."* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 155). In this task learners are encouraged to learn Kiwi slang words and their meanings by a fill-in-the-blanks task accompanied with a list of slang words and definitions. Accordingly, this task was linked to the objective *Knowledge of interaction* through the learners` gaining knowledge on the verbal interaction of New Zealand.

4.3.4 Tasks Linked to the Objectives of *Skills of discovery and interaction*
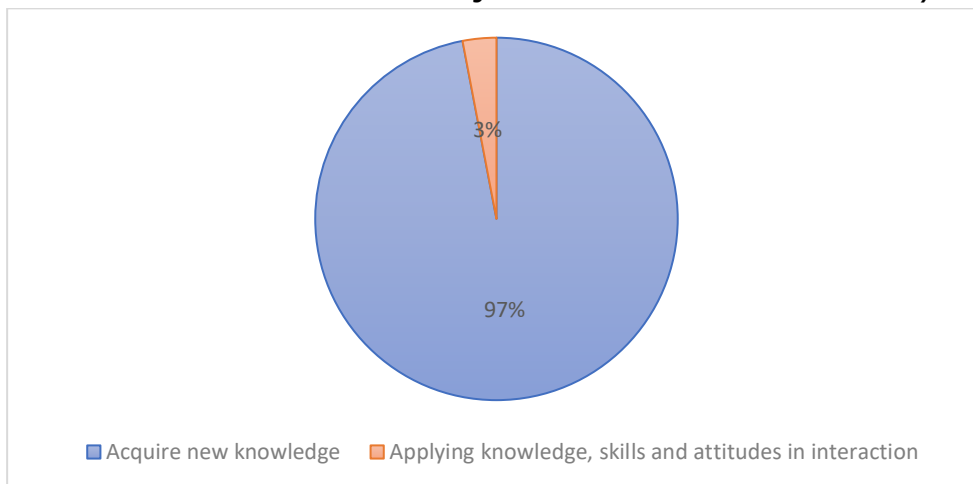
Objectives of Skills of discovery and interaction	Number of tasks	Percentage
Acquire new knowledge	59	97%
Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction	2	3%
Total	61	100%

Figure 12: Distribution of objectives of *Skills of discovery and interaction*

The IC factor *Skills of discovery and interaction* included the objectives *Acquire new knowledge* and *Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction*. Similar to the IC factor *Skills of interpreting and relating*, one objective is linked to the majority of the tasks. Accordingly, the objective *Acquire new knowledge* is connected to 97% of the tasks, while 3% of the tasks are linked to the objective of *Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction*. Tasks associated with *Acquire new knowledge* encouraged learners to explore and acquire knowledge from various sources, predominantly by using the internet. An example of a task associated with this objective is found in *Stages 10*:

"The New Zealand Herald is the largest newspaper in the country. Go to the newspaper`s website (nzherald.co.nz) and use the site`s search function to find articles about the Maori people. What did you find? Write the headlines of at least five articles and read one of them. Tell a partner about the article you read." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 149).

This task was linked to the objective *Acquire new knowledge* as the learners are encouraged to explore news articles about the Maori people, potentially contributing to increasing learners` knowledge about the Maori people.

Two tasks were linked to the objective *Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction.* These tasks encouraged learners to interact with representatives of other cultures potentially increasing their abilities of intercultural interaction. An example of a task linked to this objective is found in *Stages 10* in which students were asked to:

"Imagine that you had a chance to interview a member of the Stolen Generations for a school newspaper. Write a list of questions you would ask." (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 146).

Although this task does not encourage interaction with someone in real-time, it was still linked to this objective as potentially increasing their abilities of interaction through pretending to interview someone of the Stolen Generations.

4.3.5 Tasks Linked to the Objective of *Critical cultural awareness/political education*

■ Critically evaluate and identify values
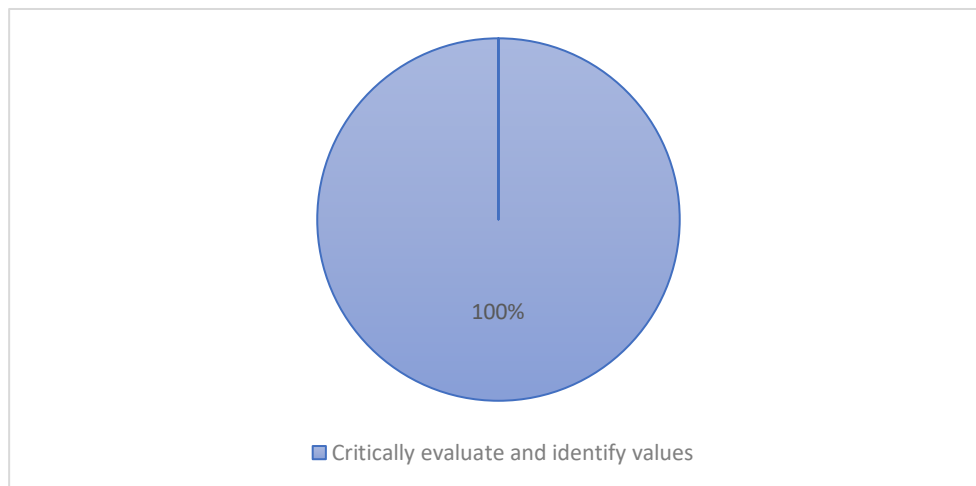
Objectives of Critical cultural awareness/political education	Number of tasks	Percentage
Critically evaluate and identify values	15	100%
Total	15	100%

Figure 13: Distribution of the objective of *Critical cultural awareness/political education*

Within the IC factor of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* there was only one objective, hence all tasks of this factor were linked to the objective *Critically evaluate and*

identify values. In which a total of 15 tasks were identified as encouraging learners to identify, interpret and evaluate values in documents and events in one`s own or other`s cultures critically (Byram, 2020). An example of a task associated with this IC factor and objective is found in *Engelsk 10*:

"How can the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples make a difference?" (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 133).

To perform this task, learners need to interpret the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and draw on previous knowledge and experiences on the topic to explain and evaluate how it can make a difference. This task was linked to *Critical cultural awareness/political education* through its potential of encouraging learner`s evaluation, critical thinking and drawing on previous knowledge, skills and attitudes.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In investigating the extent of textbook tasks linked to the possible promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence, the findings revealed differences between the two books. Among the analyzed tasks, *Stages 10* had the highest ratio of IC tasks, with 26% of the tasks identified as potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence. In comparison, *Engelsk 10* were found to have a lower IC task ratio, encompassing 13% of the total amount of analyzed textbook tasks. Both books combined, the overall ratio of tasks identified as potentially promoting intercultural competence in this study was found to be at 22%.

Findings of the analysis further show that *Knowledge* was the most emphasized factor of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC in *Stages 10*, while *Attitudes* was the most emphasized factor in *Engelsk 10*. In combining results, *Knowledge* was found to be the overall most emphasized factor of intercultural competence with a ratio of 50% of the total identified IC tasks. Second most emphasized factor was *Attitudes* with a ratio of 24% of the total identified IC tasks. Followingly, the remaining three factors were found at the following ratios: *Skills of discovery and interaction* with 15%, *Skills of interpreting and relating* with 7%, and lastly *Critical cultural awareness/political education* with 4%.

In further analyzation of the objectives of each IC factor, some objectives were found to be more frequent than others. The most frequent objective was *Factual knowledge* of the IC factor *Knowledge* linked to a total of 156 tasks. Second most frequent was the objective *Changing perspective* of the IC factor *Attitude,* linked to a total of 61 tasks. Contrastingly, two objectives were not linked to any of the analyzed textbook tasks, namely I*dentifying ethnocentric perspectives* and *Identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator*. These objectives both belong to the IC factor *Skills of interpreting and relating*. As a result, findings of this study show an unequal distribution of IC factors and objectives in the tasks of both textbooks.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, findings will be discussed in connection to theory and previous research presented in Chapters 1 and 2 to address the research questions of this study. Firstly, in subchapter 5.1, I discuss the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence following the analysis. Secondly, in subchapter 5.2, I discuss the representation of IC factors and objectives present in the *Engelsk 10* and *Stages 10*. Additionally, subchapter 5.2.1 will discuss the operationalization of Byram`s (2020) model and definitions of culture and intercultural competence in connection with the conducted textbook analysis. Lastly, in subchapter 5.3, findings are discussed in accordance with Research Question 2, discussing the facilitation of aims and guidelines of LK20 in the analyzed textbook tasks.

5.1 The Extent of Tasks Potentially Promoting the Acquisition of Intercultural Competence

This section discusses the extent of tasks potentially promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence by addressing Research Question 1.1:

How many tasks of the selected EFL textbooks can be linked to Byram`s (2020) model of ICC.

As textbook tasks play an essential role in portraying what constitutes as important learning, it is useful to investigate the extent to which they promote intercultural competence and whether it is considered important learning within tasks of *Engelsk 10* and *Stages 10* (Skjelbred, 2009, p. 279).

Findings from the analysis show that the promotion of intercultural competence in the textbook tasks is emphasized differently between *Engelsk 10* and *Stages 10*. Out of the total amount of tasks analyzed in *Stages 10*, 26% were identified as potentially promoting intercultural competence according to the analysis criteria (see Figure 6). Comparably, findings show that out of all the tasks analyzed in *Engelsk 10,* only 13% could be associated with intercultural competence. This might suggest that intercultural competence as an aim in the textbook tasks is emphasized more in *Stages 10* than *Engelsk 10*, with an IC tasks ratio difference of 13% between the textbooks. In combining the results of both textbooks, findings show that a total of 398 out of 1784 textbook tasks examined for this study were identified to potentially promote the acquisition of intercultural competence, resulting in an overall IC task ratio of 22%.

As previously mentioned, textbooks continue to play an essential role as a source of learning in Norwegian classrooms, as they provide teachers with content, structure, and organization to a course (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, pp. 347, 339). The choice of textbooks might therefore influence what learning students are exposed to. Specifically, findings suggest that learners are exposed to fewer tasks contributing to the potential acquisition

of intercultural competence in *Engelsk 10* than in *Stages 10*, under the hypothetical assumptions that these textbooks are utilized in the classrooms. Moreover, as tasks are essential in providing learners with information on what is considered important learning from a text, the learners might gain differing perceptions of the importance of intercultural competence depending on choice of textbook.

As similar research has been conducted both nationally and internationally, I find it relevant to investigate how the findings of this study compare to the findings of previous textbook research. As presented in Chapter 1.3, Äijälä (2009) analyzed three EFL textbooks used in Finnish education, in which her findings show IC task ratios ranging from 9-15% in the analyzed textbooks. Additionally, Kian (2016) analyzed seven EFL textbooks used in Iranian education, in which the IC task ratios range from 3-10% in the analyzed textbooks. Compared to this present study, the IC task ratio of *Stages 10* at 26% is found to be significantly higher than that of Äijälä (2009) and Kian (2016). In contrast, the IC task ratio of *Engelsk 10,* at only 13%, is more aligned with their ratios. Scholars and policy makers in recent years have emphasized the important role of education promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence, this is also reflected in LK20 through and increased focus on learner`s development of intercultural competence (Hoff, 2020a, p. 69). In light of this, I had assumed that *Engelsk 10* would feature a significantly larger ratio of tasks that could be associated with intercultural competence compared to IC task ratios of textbook research completed in 2009 and 2016 (Äijälä, 2009; Kian, 2016). This might suggest that the recent increased focus on intercultural competence in education is not reflected in the tasks of *Engelsk 10*.

In a more recent study, Østrem (2021) analyzed the extent of IC tasks in three 8th-grade EFL textbooks revised for LK20 used in Norwegian education. Her results show IC tasks ratios ranging from 19,04%-30,61% within the textbooks *Engelsk 8* (Madsen & Mohammad-Roe, 2020), *Stages 8* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2020), and *Enter 8* (Diskin et al., 2020). In comparison to Østrem`s (2021) study, this current study also analyzed a textbook of the *Engelsk* series published by Cappelen Damm, *Engelsk 10*. Consequently, it is surprising that the IC task ratio of *Engelsk 10* in this current study is shown to be considerably lower than that of *Engelsk 8* included in the research of Østrem (2021). This might suggest that intercultural competence is emphasized more in the 8th-grade book than in the 10th-grade book of the *Engelsk* textbook series, despite accommodating the same curricular aims of LK20. Further raising questions on the total intercultural competence potentially acquired when utilizing textbooks within the same textbook series through grade years 8-10. Therefore, I would argue that this implies the need for further textbook research on intercultural competence as findings portray varied promotion of intercultural competence between books of the same textbook series.

In conclusion, the number of tasks that could be connected to the promotion of intercultural competence varied between *Engelsk 10* and *Stages 10*. Textbook tasks hold an essential role in expressing to learners what is considered important learning (Skjelbred, 2009, p. 279). The differing IC task ratios between the textbooks suggest that learners might be given the impression that intercultural competence is more or less important depending on the textbook used in class. Compared to previous studies on

textbook tasks and intercultural competence, *Stages 10* was found to be on the higher limits of IC task ratios compared to previous research. This might suggest that the strengthened role of intercultural competence in educational reforms nationally and internationally is reflected in *Stages 10* (Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). However, this was not reflected in *Engelsk 10*. As LK20 calls for increased focus on intercultural competence in the English subject, it was thus surprising that only 13% of the tasks in *Engelsk 10* could be connected to intercultural competence. It is further worth mentioning that while the textbooks combined present an IC task ratio of 22%, the remaining 78% of the tasks analyzed mostly focused on linguistic competence. This does not attempt to deny the importance of linguistic competence but merely sheds light on the limited focus directed towards intercultural competence. Furthermore, intercultural competence is complex and multifaceted, and simply investigating the number of tasks potentially promoting intercultural competence is inadequate. Therefore, it is of relevance to investigate what factors of intercultural competence are found within the tasks of the textbooks and how they are distributed.

5.2 Representation and Distribution of the Factors and Objectives of Intercultural Competence

The following section discusses the potential promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence by addressing Research Question 1.2:

What aspects of intercultural competence are represented in the tasks of EFL textbooks revised for LK20, and how are they distributed?

As presented in Byram`s (2020) model of ICC, the acquisition of intercultural competence requires the development of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes. These factors are intrinsically linked and considered necessary for the acquisition of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, p. 12). Hence, I would argue for the importance of textbook tasks providing opportunities for learner`s to acquire all aspects of intercultural competence. Accordingly, by analyzing the distribution of IC factors and objectives, it might provide information pertaining to which factors of intercultural competence, as understood in this thesis, are represented and distributed in the analyzed textbook tasks.

According to findings, the combined overall distribution of tasks linked to the different IC factors and objectives is highly uneven. Within the total identified IC tasks of both textbooks, *Knowledge* is connected to 50% of the tasks. The remaining four IC factors are allotted the following ratios of tasks compared to the total amount of tasks linked to the promotion of intercultural competence: *Attitude* (24%), *Skills of discovery and interaction* (15%), *Skills of interpreting and relating* (7%), and lastly *Critical cultural awareness/political education* (4%). Considering the importance of every IC factor in the acquisition of intercultural competence, it is thus of concern that the analyzed textbook tasks portray such unequal distribution of IC factors with a significant emphasis placed on only one factor. Although *Knowledge* is the factor of the highest ratio overall, the differences between the textbooks are worth mentioning. According to findings, *Knowledge* was the most prominent factor in *Stages 10,* while *Attitude* was the most emphasized factor in *Engelsk 10*. Moreover, the distribution of the different IC factors is found to be more equal in tasks of *Engelsk 10* compared to tasks of *Stages 10*. However,

while *Knowledge* is not the most emphasized IC factor in tasks of *Engelsk 10*, findings show that it is still an IC factor of focus as the second most emphasized factor linked to 26% of the identified IC tasks of the textbook. It is thus of interest to discuss what learning is gained from these tasks in relation to intercultural competence and whether *Knowledge* should be the factor of the highest ratio in total.

The factor of *Knowledge* consists of two objectives: *Factual knowledge* and *Knowledge of interaction*. The overall distribution between these two objectives was also found to be unbalanced, in which 78% of the tasks were linked to *Factual knowledge* while the remaining 22% of the factor tasks were linked to *Knowledge of interaction*. An example of a task linked to the objective of *Factual knowledge* is the following task retrieved from *Engelsk 10*:

50 Key facts
Skim read the text again to find the key facts about Majuli Island and Molai Forest. Write a dot-point list.

Figure 14: Example task linked to *Factual knowledge* (Haegi et al., 2021, p. 100)

The task presented in Figure 14 encouraged learners to gain information on Majuli Island and Molai Forest by skimming the accompanied text for the answers. As exemplified, tasks of this objective were often in the form of short questions with one-word answers, listing of facts, true or false, or multiple choice, in which solutions could be found by skimming the accompanied texts. Consequently, tasks associated with the objective *Factual knowledge* were found to be close-ended and offering few opportunities for reasoning, reflection, and discussion. This could be seen as a contradiction to the research of Fenner and Ørevik (2020) and the quality criteria developed by The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Research (2021), in which it is emphasized that textbooks should focus on including tasks asking open-ended questions and providing learners with opportunities to inquire about topics through reflection and reasoning, while strengthening critical thinking skills. Thus, it is of concern that this focus is not reflected within the analyzed textbook tasks associated with intercultural competence in the two textbooks.

Furthermore, tasks connected to the objective *Factual knowledge* mainly addressed culture on the surface level, as previously illustrated in the Cultural Iceberg Model (see Figure 1). Surface culture includes visible cultural elements such as food, clothes, and geography of a country. An example of a *Factual knowledge* task that could be linked to the promotion of surface level cultural knowledge is the following task retrieved from *Stages 10*:

VOCABULARY
5 There are different kinds of head coverings used by Muslim women. Match the description of each covering to its picture.

Figure 15: Example task linked to *Factual knowledge* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 36)

As exemplified in Figure 15, this task encourages students to match pictures of different head coverings used by Muslim women with a descriptions of what the head coverings look like. Thus, pertaining to the *visible* element of clothing in a culture. Hall (1976) emphasizes the importance of going beneath the surface and exploring cultural aspects such as beliefs, perceptions, and values. As Hall (1976) states could result in an understanding that "radically changes our view of human nature" (p. 15). Going beneath the surface level of a culture is also highlighted by Dypedahl and Bøhn (2017) as essential in gaining a deeper understanding of cultural phenomena. Consequently, by placing focus on tasks addressing surface culture, it might result in learners potentially gaining a superficial understanding of culture. As tasks are essential in providing learners with notions of what constitutes as important information, it is thus of concern that the textbooks place such a high emphasis on cultural learning on the surface level. This does not attempt to deny the importance of tasks contributing to *Knowledge* in the acquisition of intercultural competence but merely sheds light on the issues of superficiality that could arise when *Knowledge*, especially through the objective *Factual knowledge*, becomes a highly prioritized element in the acquisition of intercultural competence.

Additionally, the emphasis on tasks promoting the acquisition of *Factual knowledge* arguably contradicts with the aims of LK20. This is shown through the overarching aim of *Bildung* in LK20. As mentioned in Chapter 2.5, the overarching aim of *Bildung* has been central in Norwegian education throughout history (Fenner, 2020, p. 18). The current curriculum places an increased focus on developing learners *Bildung,* and the English subject is clearly defined as a *Bildung* subject (Fenner, 2020, pp. 36, 37). *Bildung*, in LK20, promotes independent critical thinking skills through in-depth exploration of issues and topics rather than superficiality (Hoff, 2020a, p. 80; Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Contrastingly, the tasks associated with *Factual knowledge* are found to be highly close-ended and promote knowledge on a superficial level. Further contradicting the aspects of *Bildung* and the constructivist perspective on learning reflected in LK20 (Speitz, 2020, p. 45). It is thus of concern that *Factual knowledge* is the aspect of intercultural competence that is overall most emphasized in the textbook tasks as it can be argued to contradict the aims of *Bildung* in LK20.

The emphasis on close-ended tasks linked to the IC factor *Knowledge* is further reflected in findings of previous research (Mosand, 2019; Kian, 2016; Äijälä, 2009; Østrem, 2021). This might indicate a trend among EFL textbooks nationally and internationally. As LK20 asks for deeper cultural understandings, it is thus of concern that textbook tasks of the revised textbooks analyzed within the present study, along with the textbooks analyzed by Østrem (2021), remain focused on close-ended tasks promoting surface level knowledge. Further problematizing the emphasis on *Factual knowledge* as the objective linked to the highest number of IC tasks within this current study.

As also highlighted by Østrem (2021), possible explanations of the emphasis on *Knowledge* in the textbook tasks might relate to issues of assessment. *Knowledge* is perhaps the IC factor that is easiest to assess and less likely to pose any challenges in terms of time and complexities. Most of the tasks associated with this IC factor feature only one correct answer. In contrast, tasks linked to the IC factor *Attitudes* encouraged

learners to express opinions and change perspectives. Accordingly, the task performance of tasks related to the IC factor *Attitudes* is subject to the personal thoughts and opinions of the individual learner and will feature differing solutions based on the individual learner. These factors of intercultural competence might further require assessment over a period of time as attitudes and values are subject to change as the individual gain new knowledge and experiences, ultimately, making the assessment more complex and time-consuming (Hoff, 2020a, pp. 86, 87). Additionally, as the assessment of attitudes and values is shown to be more challenging and personal, it could be questioned whether it is ethically right to assess these qualities of intercultural competence (pp. 86, 87). However, as emphasized by Hoff (2020a) the teaching and assessing of all aspects of intercultural competence carries the potential to affect learners on a personal level which could "have a profound effect on young individuals` development as human beings" (p. 87). Therefore, I would argue that this also needs to be reflected in the textbook tasks through a more extensive inclusion of tasks encouraging learner`s personal engagement through opportunities of interpretation, reasoning, and reflection.

As all factors are considered necessary in the acquisition of intercultural competence, the representation of the remaining factors, and their respective objectives, will be discussed in the following sections. The IC factor with the second highest IC task ratio overall is *Attitudes,* encompassing 24% of the total amount of identified IC tasks. Tasks associated with this IC factor encouraged students` personal involvement through providing opportunities to *change perspectives* and *question own values and presuppositions*. An example of a tasks connected to the IC factor *Attitudes* is the following task retrieved from *Stages 10*:

5 Write a diary entry.
Imagine that you are Junior, or another child growing up in unfortunate circumstances. Write a diary entry with the heading "I deserve better."

Figure 16: Example task linked to *Attitudes* (Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021, p. 182)

In this task, the learners are encouraged to write a diary entry from a different perspective, discussing the heading "*I deserve better*". By changing perspectives to that of Junior or another child growing up in unfortunate circumstances, learners are encouraged to connect with the content on a personal level and reflect on what it would be like to grow up under such conditions. Consequently, tasks of this IC factor carry the potential to challenge learners` worldviews and promote attitudes of openness and curiosity. Furthermore, the ability to change perspectives and express opinions could be linked to the overarching aim of *Bildung* in LK20, emphasizing the development of attitudes and the understanding of other points of views (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). As the second most emphasized factor of IC within the analyzed textbook tasks, both books contained multiple tasks contributing to the change of perspectives and sharing of opinions on a range of cultural topics. Ultimately, this might contribute to potentially engaging learners on a personal level and promoting the development of *Bildung*, as highlighted in LK20.

Findings show that the IC factor with the third highest IC task ratio overall is *Skills of discovery and interaction,* accounting for 15% of the total IC tasks. Most of the tasks connected to this factor were linked to the objective *Aquire new knowledge*. Tasks of this objective encouraged learners to explore and acquire knowledge on cultural practices or issues through a variety of sources. Similarities can be detected between this objective and the objectives of the IC factor *Knowledge,* with an emphasis on students gaining cultural knowledge. However, I would argue that there is more reflection involved when working with tasks relating to the objective *Acquiring new knowledge.* Moreover, tasks of this objective carry the potential of promoting learners` curiosity and allowing them to define their own areas of interest by exploring topics that are not covered in the textbook. Byram (2020) portrays the promotion of curiosity as essential in the acquisition of intercultural competence (p. 62). The importance of tasks promoting this aspect of IC is further strengthened through aims of LK20, which emphasizes the exploration of cultures and the promotion of curiosity (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Furthermore, in accordance with LK20, tasks of this objective carry the potential to promote learner autonomy by providing students with more choices in their learning (see section 2.5). As a result, both textbooks feature multiple tasks providing learners` with choices and encouraging exploration and attitudes of curiosity, further aligning with the aims of LK20.

In contrast, the other objective of *Skills of discovery and interaction*, namely *Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction* is barely represented, with only two tasks linked to this objective. The lack of tasks connected to this objective suggests that the textbooks are insufficient in encouraging students to interact with representatives of other cultures. A possible explanation for this could be the time and resources needed to perform tasks of this objective. However, I would argue that intercultural interaction could be encouraged through online platforms or through the individual cultures present within the classroom. Arguably making it more efficient to accommodate tasks of this objective. Consequently, findings suggest the need for additional materials accommodating for the lack of tasks associated with the objective *Applying knowledge, skills and attitudes in interaction*.

The factor with the second lowest IC task ratio is *Skills of interpreting and relating,* encompassing only 7% of the total amount of tasks linked to intercultural competence. The representation of this factor overall is concerning, as it would suggest that students get few opportunities to compare, contrast and relate to other cultures. Additionally, as this factor features a higher number of objectives compared to the other IC factors, I had expected to find more tasks associated with this factor. Also of concern is the fact that two out of three objectives in this IC factor were not represented in tasks of either of the textbooks. According to findings, the students were not given any opportunities to *identify ethnocentric perspectives* or *identify misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediators (*see Figure 10*)* within the analyzed textbook tasks. Byram (2020) emphasizes the importance of this IC factor in making learners aware of ethnocentric perspectives and how these perspectives can contribute to dysfunction in communication (p. 137). I would further argue that this factor is especially important in the prevention of discrimination and prejudice, as ethnocentric views are arguably contributing factors in shaping prejudice and discriminatory attitudes. The prevention of

prejudice is emphasized within the aims and guidelines of LK20, specifically mentioned within the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and citizenship* and in the *Central values and relevance* of the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; 2019). Thus, it is of concern that no tasks contributed to *identifying ethnocentric perspectives* or *identifying misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and function as a mediator.* The lack of tasks linked to these objectives further suggests the need for supplemental material in the full promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence.

The IC factor least emphasized in the textbook tasks is the factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education,* with an IC task ratio of only 4% of the total number of tasks linked to the promotion of intercultural competence. This equals 15 tasks overall, nine in *Stages 10* and six in *Engelsk 10*. As presented in Table 1, this factor had the smallest number of objectives, with only one objective: *Critically evaluate and identify values*. This might have contributed to a lower number of tasks associated with this factor. However, I would argue that the value attributed this factor by scholars is not adequately reflected by the small number of tasks connected to it. This factor of intercultural competence can be tied to the aims of LK20 in multiple ways, one of which is the promotion of critical thinking and ethical awareness found as one of the core values in LK20 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). The Core curriculum highlights critical thinking as a necessary element of education, contributing to new insights through criticizing and assessing established ideas "by using theories, methods, arguments, experiences and evidence" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). This could be directly linked to the definition and purpose of *Critical cultural awareness/political education*, in which learners need to acquire the " *(..) ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries*" (Byram, 2020, p. 180). Accordingly, the ability to think critically to make good judgments in intercultural situations is emphasized. Furthermore, as highlighted by Byram (2020), this IC factor is highly connected to the notion of *Bildung*. Byram (2020) states that without this factor of intercultural competence, *"language teaching does not contribute to its full potential to education of Bildung, and it is the notion of criticality which makes the difference."* (p. 9). Thus, in his model of ICC, he emphasizes this by placing the factor of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* symbolically in the center of the figure (see Figure 2) (Byram, 2012, p. 9). It is thus concerning that this factor is barely represented within the textbook tasks. As a result, the tasks of the textbooks fail to provide learners with sufficient opportunities to engage with the factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education* which is important in developing learners` critical thinking and cultural awareness*.* Further suggesting a need for teachers to supplement learners with extra materials that could contribute to the acquisition of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* in intercultural competence and the increased alignment with the aims and guidelines of LK20.

In conclusion, the quality of intercultural competence promoted through the textbook tasks can thus be questioned based on an unequal representation of IC factors and objectives with an emphasis on close-ended tasks addressing surface level culture. Furthermore, the results of this study, in comparison to previous research, show that although positive qualities pertaining to intercultural competence have been detected

within the analyzed textbook tasks, the promotion of intercultural competence continues to be flawed in textbooks revised LK20.

5.2.1 The use of Byram`s Model of ICC and Definitions of Culture

As the results of this study are highly influenced by Byram`s (2020) model and the selected definitions of culture, I find it relevant to briefly discuss the implementation of such theories in relation to the conducted analysis.

While it is possible to divide intercultural competence into factors and objectives, intercultural competence should be viewed as a process with interdependent factors (Byram, 2020, p. 143). Thus, the suitability of using categories to assess intercultural competence can be questioned. The symbiotic relationship between the factors also became apparent during the process of analysis, as I would come across tasks arguably promoting more than one IC factor. Because of this, my findings may have been influenced by my own personal interpretations in determining what IC factor the tasks most aligned with. Furthermore, Byram`s (2020) model was chosen as an analytical tool for this research as I found it to be the most suitable through its close connection to foreign language learning along with its ties to CEFR and, accordingly, LK20. Additionally, it was chosen out of convenience as it has been frequently utilized in previous research, potentially allowing me to draw comparisons and detect trends among EFL textbooks. However, there exist multiple other models of intercultural competence and utilizing a different model may have resulted in different findings. While Byram`s (2020) model proved useful as an analytical tool in this research, it is important to be mindful of its critique and limitations and acknowledge the existence of other models of intercultural competence which might also have been suitable for this research.

Moreover, the definition of culture used in this research proved somewhat challenging in the operationalization of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC. By utilizing a broad definition of culture that encompassed the complex and multilayered nature of individual culture, it was sometimes challenging to distinguish between social competence and intercultural competence. The operationalization of the criteria might have been easier if culture had been defined at the national level. However, by doing so, I would be disregarding the intercultural situations that exist within national borders, which I believe is essential to include when discussing the acquisition of intercultural competence. Barrett (2013) states that the difference between an interpersonal and an intercultural situation is a matter of perceived cultural differences between the individuals involved or the situation itself (p. 5). Thus, it can be questioned whether it is possible to use such a multifaceted and complex perspective of culture while at the same time not including the views of the individual learner for textbook analysis.

5.3 The Extent of IC Tasks Facilitating Aims and Guidelines of LK20

The following section will elaborate further on the facilitation of the aims and guidelines of LK20 within the analyzed IC tasks by addressing Research Question 2:

To what extent do tasks of two EFL textbooks facilitate the curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20?

As emphasized in the textbooks` descriptions on the publisher websites, both textbooks claim to align with the aims of LK20 (Haegi et al., 2021; Pettersen & Røkaas, 2021). Accordingly, it is of interest to discuss whether this is reflected in the findings of this study.

Intercultural competence as an educational aim is shown to have gained increased focus in LK20 compared to previous curricula (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019; Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). As previously mentioned, intercultural competence is found to be an emphasized element within the tasks of *Stages 10*, with over ¼ of the tasks being associated with the promotion of intercultural competence. However, *Engelsk 10,* through an IC task ratio of 13%, is shown to place less focus on the promotion of intercultural competence. Compared to previous research, the low IC task ratio could indicate that intercultural competence has not been given as much focus in this revised version of the *Engelsk 10* textbook as LK20 demands. As a result, I would argue that *Engelsk 10* contradicts this added focus on intercultural competence in LK20, further suggesting the need for additional materials to accommodate for the increased emphasis on the acquisition of intercultural competence in LK20.

Further concerns are raised when considering the distribution of the different factors of intercultural competence. According to findings, the overall combined distribution of IC factors and objectives in the textbooks are unequal, with a strong focus on the IC factor *Knowledge* and its objective *Factual knowledge*. Tasks of this IC factor was shown to contradict with aspects related to the overarching aim of *Bildung* and the constructivist perspective on learning in LK20. Additionally, the factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education* was identified as the IC factor of the lowest proportion of tasks attributed to it, encompassing only 4% of the total identified IC tasks. This factor was also discussed in light of *Bildung* and has been promoted by scholars as perhaps the most important factor of intercultural competence contributing to the development of *Bildung*. Moreover, no tasks encouraged learners to *identify ethnocentric perspectives,* as presented as an objective within the factor *Skills of interpreting and relating*. Tasks encouraging the *identification of ethnocentric perspectives* along with tasks contributing to learners` *Critical cultural awareness/political education* might be regarded as especially important in the accommodation of aims and guidelines of LK20 through the focus on prevention of prejudice. The prevention of prejudice is clearly stated within the interdisciplinary aim *Democracy and citizenship* and within the *Relevance and core values* in the English subject. Thus, the lack of tasks contributing to *identifying ethnocentric perspectives,* along with the low number of tasks contributing to increasing learners` *Critical cultural awareness/political education,* arguably contradict the focus placed on the prevention of prejudice in LK20. Ultimately, the strong emphasis on close-ended tasks

promoting surface level knowledge in combination with few tasks contributing to learners` development of critical thinking and the identification of ethnocentric perspectives suggest that the textbooks do not sufficiently facilitate the aims and guidelines of LK20.

The emphasis on close-ended tasks promoting superficial cultural knowledge in the textbooks further contrasts with the aims regarding lifelong learning and learner autonomy in LK20. As mentioned in Chapter 2.5, intercultural competence can be linked to the overarching aim of *Learning to learn* in LK20. The aim is for students to become lifelong learners by promoting the acquisition of in-depth learning, learning strategies, attitudes, and motivation (Fenner, 2020, p.6). The emphasis on lifelong learning is also apparent in the work of Byram (2002), in which he emphasizes intercultural learning as a dynamic lifelong process to which the development of learner autonomy is essential (Byram et al., 2002, p. 11). I would argue that the emphasis on close-ended tasks exploring intercultural competence on the superficial level contradicts this aspect of LK20. However, both textbooks included multiple tasks providing learner`s with choices. As mentioned in Chapter 2.5, to develop learner autonomy, accommodating learner`s choice in the selection of material is necessary. Learner`s choice is emphasized as an important element in LK20, promoting the development of learning strategies and, thus, learner autonomy (Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 357). This includes providing learners with opportunities to choose, design and evaluate learning activities (p. 357). Learner`s choice can be encouraged in the textbooks by including extra materials such as the internet (Fenner, 2020, p. 303). Accordingly, findings suggest that tasks of the IC factor *Skills of discovery and interaction* might be especially equipped to promote learner autonomy. Tasks of this factor encouraged learners to make choices and explore using other sources, such as exploring a museum website or do independent research on a topic of choice within a specific theme. I would therefore argue that while the aims of lifelong learning and learner autonomy might appear deprioritized through a focus on close-ended tasks promoting surface level knowledge, it can still be detected in the analyzed textbooks through the multiple tasks linked to the IC factor *Skills of discovery and interaction*.

In alignment with the aims of LK20, both textbooks provided learners with tasks that encouraged the change of perspectives and expression of opinions. The ability to change perspectives and express opinions is highlighted in LK20 as essential to learners` development of *Bildung* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). These aspects were emphasized in the textbooks through tasks associated with the IC factor *Attitudes*. Compared to the other factors, *Attitudes* was the second most frequent IC factor identified in the textbook tasks. Accordingly, developing learners` *Attitudes* were found to be a focused element within the identified IC tasks, providing learners with multiple opportunities to change perspectives and express opinions within a variety of cultural situations. As a result, these tasks might contribute to develop learners *Bildung* in accordance with LK20.

In conclusion, while findings suggest that both textbooks can function as good resources for providing tasks potentially facilitating the aims and guidelines of LK20, it is important

to take into account their shortcomings. In *Stages 10*, this is most apparent in the focus on intercultural learning on a superficial level through a strong emphasis on tasks linked to the objective *Factual knowledge* combined with the lack tasks encouraging reflection and critical thinking. This might be viewed as a contradiction with the overarching aim of *Bildung* in LK20 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). While *Engelsk 10* also portrays this emphasis, the most concerning element of *Engelsk 10* is the low ratio of tasks associated the acquisition of intercultural competence, as it arguably contrasts with the added focus of intercultural competence in LK20. However, it should further be mentioned that both textbooks also show considerable strengths in relation to the facilitation of curricular aims of intercultural competence. Especially through tasks contributing to the change of perspectives, sharing of opinions, and providing learners` with choices. Hence, both textbooks provide tasks suitable in the facilitation of aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20. Nevertheless, it is important to consider their limitations and that there are examples in which the tasks of the textbooks contradict the aims of LK20. Altogether, suggesting that the textbooks cannot be relied on exclusively in the facilitation of curricular aims and guidelines of intercultural competence in LK20. To accommodate these weaknesses, it would therefore be useful to provide learners with extra materials that promote in-depth learning and critical thinking which might contribute to students gaining the intercultural competence needed to become global citizens.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Key Findings and Discussion

This thesis aimed to investigate the promotion of intercultural competence in tasks of two EFL textbooks and their facilitation of the aims and guidelines of LK20. Through a mixed method approach, the tasks of the textbooks were analyzed using an adapted version of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC as a tool for analysis. This provided findings making it possible to address the research questions of this study.

The extent of tasks potentially promoting intercultural competence differed between the two textbooks. 26% of the tasks analyzed in *Stages 10* were identified to potentially promote the acquisition of intercultural competence, which was found to be on the higher limits of IC task ratios of previous textbook research. In contrast, only 13% of the analyzed tasks in *Engelsk 10* could be linked to the promotion of intercultural competence. As textbook tasks hold a significant position in influencing learners on what is considered important information and learning, the low IC task ratio of *Engelsk 10* is cause for concern (Skjelbred, 2009, p. 279). Consequently, the differing IC task ratios between the two textbooks would suggest that learners might be influenced to consider the acquisition of intercultural competence as less important when working with tasks of *Engelsk 10* compared to *Stages 10*. Furthermore, intercultural competence has gained increased importance in the aims of LK20 compared to previous curricula (Hoff, 2020a, p. 79). Accordingly, while this focus is found to be adequately reflected within the tasks of *Stages 10*, the same cannot be said for *Engelsk 10*. This further suggests the need for additional materials in accommodating the increased emphasis on intercultural competence in aims and guidelines of LK20. However, as intercultural competence is complex and multileveled, it was further necessary to investigate the representation and distribution of the different IC factors and objectives to gain a more detailed understanding of the promotion of intercultural competence within the textbook tasks.

The five factors of intercultural competence are intrinsically linked, and all considered important in the acquisition of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002, p. 12). However, this was not reflected in the textbook tasks due to the unequal distribution of IC factors. This was especially evident within the tasks of *Stages 10*. Altogether, findings showed that a majority of the total identified IC tasks were linked to the IC factor *Knowledge* with a ratio of 50%. In the acquisition of intercultural competence, all factors are important in order to successfully partake in intercultural interaction. It could therefore be problematized that such a large majority of the identified IC tasks were associated with only one IC factor. Moreover, a large majority of tasks linked to the IC factor *Knowledge* were connected to the objective *Factual knowledge*. Tasks of this objective were found to be close-ended and promoting culture on the surface level, which in turn offered few opportunities for critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection. Additionally, it is of further concern that the IC factor *Critical cultural awareness/political education* was barely represented in the analyzed textbook tasks. This factor has been

described as perhaps the most important factor in the acquisition of intercultural competence and the development of learners` *Bildung*. This is emphasized by Byram (2020) through the symbolic placement of *Critical cultural awareness/political education* in the center of his model (p. 126). The emphasis on tasks promoting knowledge on a superficial level and the lack of tasks contributing to learners` critical thinking could be seen as a contradiction to the aims of LK20, which promotes the development of deeper cultural understandings through critical thinking and reflection—further suggesting the need for supplemental material in the full coverage of aims and guidelines of LK20.

Furthermore, in the distribution of IC factors and objectives, three objectives were found to be omitted or barely represented. The findings of this study show that two objectives of the factor *Skills of interpreting and relating* were not detected in any of the textbook tasks analyzed in this research. Hence, the students were never provided any opportunities to *function as mediators* or to *identify ethnocentric perspectives*. The latter was discussed in relation to the prevention of prejudice, an emphasized element of LK20. Thus, it was surprising that no tasks could be linked to the identification of ethnocentric perspectives. Moreover, the objective *Applying skills and knowledge in interaction* of the IC factor *Skills of discovery and interaction* was barely represented in the textbooks, with only two tasks linked to this objective. Considering the opportunities for interaction both online and within the cultures of the classroom, it was surprising to find such a low number of tasks linked to this objective. As a result, findings suggest that the textbooks alone do not sufficiently promote all aspects of intercultural competence.

While both textbooks, portray weaknesses in the potential promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence and in the facilitation of curricular aims, they also portray certain strengths. Firstly, as the third most frequent IC factor, both textbooks included multiple tasks contributing to potentially increase learners` *Skills of Discovery and interaction.* Tasks of this IC factor were seen as especially relevant in the promotion of lifelong learning by providing learners with choices and opportunities for exploration. This was further linked to the aims and guidelines of LK20, which emphasize the importance of learner`s choice in aiding students to become lifelong learners (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Fenner & Ørevik, 2020, p. 357). Secondly, both textbooks featured multiple tasks associated with the IC factor *Attitudes*. Tasks of this factor encouraged learners to change perspectives and express opinions. This aligned with the aims and guidelines of LK20, which stresses the development of attitudes and the understanding of other points of views (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). As a result, both textbooks portray significant strengths in the potential promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence and in the facilitation of curricular aims. Ultimately, I would argue that while teachers cannot rely solely on the tasks of the textbooks in the full promotion of intercultural competence and coverage of curricular aims, the tasks of the textbooks still provide valuable learning contributing to potentially promote learners` acquisition of intercultural competence in line with aims of LK20.

Finally, the use of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC and the lack of clear universal definitions of culture were discussed in relation to the conducted analysis. Byram`s (2020) model of ICC was found to be a helpful tool in investigating the extent of tasks

potentially promoting intercultural competence and the representation and distribution of the factors of intercultural competence. Furthermore, as a frequently used tool in previous EFL textbook research, the use of Byram`s model offered opportunities for comparisons, potentially detecting trends in the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks. However, it could be questioned whether the promotion of intercultural competence should be measured through a model. The acquisition of intercultural competence features factors highly interdependent on each other, and the categorization of such factors arguably contradicts this perspective (Byram, 2020, p. 143). This was shown to be a challenge in the process of analysis as I occasionally encountered tasks that were found to promote more than one factor simultaneously. Lastly, the use of a complex definition of culture, encompassing that of individual culture, provided challenges in the distinction between social competence and intercultural competence. Ultimately, it can be discussed whether it is possible to make such distinctions without the inclusion of the perspectives and cultures of the individual learner.

6.2 Limitations

Despite the potential contributions of this study, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The most apparent one is perhaps the lack of investigation into how the textbook tasks are carried out in the EFL classroom. Textbooks cannot replace teachers, and their implementation in classrooms are relevant and important to consider when investigating the promotion of intercultural competence in EFL education. Accordingly, there is no guarantee that tasks linked to the promotion of intercultural competence in this study contribute to the acquisition of intercultural competence, as it depends on how they are implemented in the classroom. Moreover, this thesis has not investigated the teacher guides or extra materials, which could have contributed to insight into how the textbook authors intended for the tasks to be used.

Another limitation worth mentioning is the lack of investigation into other elements of the textbooks. As this study was solely concerned with tasks, other elements, such as pictures and literary texts, were excluded. The inclusion of other element of the textbooks would have resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of the promotion of intercultural competence in the textbooks. However, this was not deemed attainable within the scope of the study.

Lastly, the use of Byram`s (2020) model of ICC could also be regarded a limitation itself. Byram`s (2020) model has been highly influential within this research as the primary tool of analysis. Accordingly, it is important to take into account the critique placed towards it. As highlighted by Hoff (2020b), non-Western discourses have been marginalized within international scholarship on language and communication (p. 65). Unfortunately, this has resulted in less diversity and an emphasis on Western discourses within this field of research. Arguably, this also affects the results of this present study, as findings are products of the chosen definitions and model, with a predominantly Western approach to the understanding of culture and intercultural competence.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

As mentioned above, to get an overall picture of the potential promotion of the acquisition of intercultural competence in EFL textbooks, it would be beneficial to conduct a multi-modal analysis of all the EFL textbooks used in Norwegian schooling today, including extra materials and teacher guides. Moreover, it would be of interest to research how these tasks are addressed by teachers and utilized in the classroom. This could be done through interviews and observations in the EFL classroom. Additionally, through interviews with the textbook authors, additional information might be provided regarding their intentions behind the textbook tasks.

As previously mentioned, textbooks remain important resources used in EFL classrooms today, and without clear curricular guidelines pertaining to the specific content of the textbooks, they will ultimately be affected by the interpretations and subjective views of the authors. Hence, I would argue for the importance and relevance of conducting textbook research providing insight into the content of the textbooks. This study is restricted to only two EFL textbooks, both adapted 10th-grade learners. To gain a greater overview of the potential promotion of intercultural competence and accommodation of curricular aims in EFL textbooks, there is a need for further investigations into textbooks revised for LK20 and adapted different grade levels. It is my hope that this present study will inspire and contribute to more research into this important topic.

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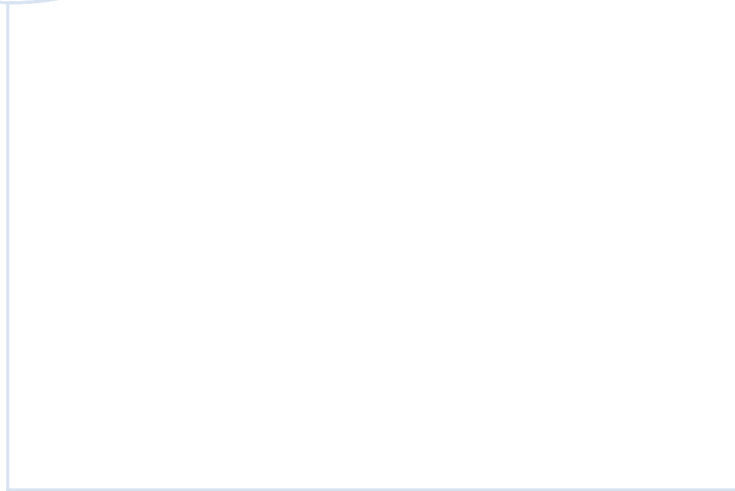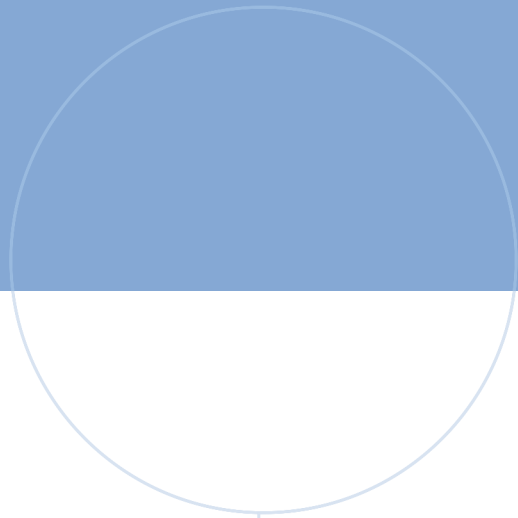
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