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Culture in the EFL textbooks in primary school

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CULTURE IN EFL TEXTBOOKS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Table of content

Abstract	5
1 Introduction.....	6
2 Culture in English language teaching and English textbooks.....	7
2.1. What is culture?	7
2.2. Teaching culture from 1960s to present day.....	8
2.3. Textbooks and culture.....	9
3 Previous research	11
4. Study	14
4.1. Aim	14
4.2. Sample.....	14
4.3. Procedure	14
5. Results and discussion	16
5.1. Types of culture	16
5.3. Elements of culture	22
5.4. Big “c” and small “c”	29
6. Conclusion	33
7. References.....	35

Abstract

This study investigates the representation of culture in English textbooks for primary schools in Croatia, written by both Croatian and British authors. The aim of the study is to investigate the role of culture in English textbooks prescribed by the Ministry of Education and the differences between Croatian and British textbooks. This is done using three models for analysing culture. The first, based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999), investigates which type of culture is the most dominant: source, target or international culture. The second investigates which elements of culture, as proposed by Yuen (2011, cited in Arnis 2015), are the most frequent; products, practices, perspectives or persons, and, the third model examines whether Big “c” or small “c” is more prominent in the textbooks, as proposed by Paige et al. (1999). Research shows that the target culture (British) is the most dominant, with practices being the most frequent element of culture and instances of Big “c” being more numerous than small “c”. British textbooks put more emphasis on culture, especially on the small “c”, or the everyday lives of native speakers.

Key words: EFL textbooks, culture, Big “c”, small “c”, elements of culture, types of culture

1 Introduction

Learning a foreign language consists of many different elements, such as reading, writing, spelling, grammar, pronunciation, but also culture. Knowing the culture of the foreign language and its norms and regulations is one of the key components of successful communication with native speakers. Knowledge of the international culture, on the other hand, can be very helpful in communicating with other non-native speakers of said language. In the words of Bennet, Bennet and Allen (2003, pp 237), “the person who learns a language without learning culture risks becoming a fluent fool”. This quote clearly explains how we can know all the words in a specific language, its grammar and spelling, but without knowing culture, we cannot expect to communicate successfully with other speakers of that language, especially the native speakers.

Therefore, teaching culture in a language classroom should be emphasized. Although teachers may use various methods for teaching culture, English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks are usually their main source, and therefore the means of presenting the target language culture to students. Therefore English textbooks are the focus of this particular study. Depending on the author and the country of origin, textbooks will put focus on different cultural elements, and the main purpose of this paper is to discover these elements and point to the difference in the approach to culture.

This diploma paper consists of two parts. The first part of the paper will present the changes in English language teaching (ELT) through time, culture in ELT and previous research on the subject of culture in EFL textbooks. The second part of the paper will present the study and its results, followed by the discussion and conclusion based on the presented data.

2 Culture in English language teaching and English textbooks

2.1. What is culture?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, culture is “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations”, as well as “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time”. These two definitions immediately point out that there are more ways to view culture. Firstly, culture is art, music, theatre, film, history, customs and traditions of a certain society. Secondly, culture is the way people live, their routines and everyday lives.

Kramsch (2001, pp. 3) claims that “language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in context of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.” In other words, we cannot use language without using culture. Moreover, people can communicate because they share certain knowledge of the world. This is evident in Whorf’s research into non-western languages (Whorf, 1939-40, as cited in Henle 1966). His study of the Eskimo languages has shown that they have a variety of words for different kinds of snow, while English has only one. German, for example, has more words for different types of machines and how to operate them than Croatian, while French has more words for food and ways of cooking. Therefore, to understand people who speak other languages, we must resort to more background information, since the knowledge of the language simply is not enough for successful communication.

When learning a language, people come into contact with different types of culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) propose three types, target, international target and source culture. Some researchers believe that emphasis should be placed on teaching the target culture, while others think that the emphasis should be placed on international target culture. According to Mendez Garcia (2005) there are five main reasons to learn the target culture, meaning the culture of the language that is being learned: (1) it enhances the learners’ knowledge of the world and the foreign society, (2) it acquaints learners with the prominent

behaviour of the target community, (3) it fosters respect and tolerance, (4) it promotes one's concept of their own culture, (5) it enhances intercultural communication competence. Basabe (2006) believes that target culture is making way for source and international target culture in ELT since English is nowadays being viewed as an international language, and therefore not related to any particular culture.

2.2. Teaching culture from 1960s to present day

Historically, culture began to appear more prominently in language teaching in the 1960s when cross cultural communication became one of the goals of language education (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Before the 1960s, language textbooks served mainly to fulfil the linguistic goals of foreign language teaching (Andraka 2016). Since the 1970s, communicative approaches in language teaching have furthered the incorporation of language and culture (Canale and Swain, 1980, cited in Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh and Kafipour, 2014), through the development of stereotype theory, socialization theory and culture bump theory (Andraka, 2016). The 1990s have brought on the demand for a more international approach, resulting in a shift from the Big "c" to small "c". Today, there are different views on how to teach English. Whether to teach it in a way that brings students close to native speakers, or as a lingua franca, or as an international language, or by incorporating English with other subjects (Content and Language Integrated Learning or CLIL) etc.

In Croatia, language teaching is defined by The National Curriculum Framework and the National plan and programme for primary schools. The National Curriculum Framework states the importance of teaching and acquiring intercultural competence, in order for students to learn to respect their own as well as other cultures, to acknowledge the existence of stereotypes and prejudice and in spite of that to be tolerant and emphatic in conversations with people of different nationalities. Student will learn facts about other cultures and be able to compare them to their own experience to be able to communicate with members of other cultures in an appropriate way.

The National plan and programme for primary schools written in 2013 also states the importance of culture in foreign language learning. It states the importance of learning foreign languages which include sociocultural and intercultural elements, as well as the knowledge of literature. In particular, through learning English, student should become familiar with the countries where English is spoken, as well as with their cultural diversity.

2.3. Textbooks and culture

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) claim that textbooks are an important link between the curriculum, students and teachers, and are crucial in determining the main goals and principles in language teaching. It may not be the only source that students nowadays have for learning a foreign language, but it is still the main tool used in Croatian schools for teaching a foreign language (Andraka, 2016). Many researchers (Byram 1993, Byram 1997, Kramsch 1993, Kramsch 1998, Sercu 2000) who advocate incorporating culture into language teaching, claim that textbooks should not focus only on developing language skills, but should encourage learners' participation in discussion, debate and exchange of information. According to Andraka (2016) textbooks should develop awareness about conventional behaviour in everyday situations (Andraka, 2016), present stereotypes in an unbiased way (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993), provide relevant information (Hinkel 1999) and present a realistic picture of culture, without any ideological tendencies (Andraka, 2016)

Culture is, as we have seen, an integral part of language learning, therefore culture is present in most foreign language textbooks. In English textbooks, cultural content is mostly connected to British and American culture, but it can also include Australian, Canadian or Irish culture. Textbooks usually present the culture of the source country, in this case Croatian, as well as cultures from various other countries. Depending on the authors and their country of origin, certain types of culture will be more or less accentuated. In this respect, there are two types of textbooks; local and global (Edmondson, 1999). Andraka (2014) claims that both have its advantages. Local authors will better anticipate the needs of their users, while a global approach naturally includes a larger number of experts in the

field. Local textbooks usually contain more source culture materials. Global textbooks, on the other hand, are made for a broader market, and usually contain elements of various cultures.

3 Previous research

The notion of culture in ELT has been the subject of many research papers and books since the 1960s. There have been various models for analysing culture: Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis (1989), Ramirez and Halls' model of textbook analysis (1990), Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (1997). However, this paper will focus on the following three models.

Chastain (1988), Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), Pulverness (1995), Paige et al. (1999) have divided culture into Big "c" and small "c" (Xiao, 2010). Lee (2009, pp. 78) claims that the Big "c" is "easily seen and readily apparent to anyone and memorized by learners and has been utilized heavily by many L2/FL/ELT language practitioners to teach a target culture". These "easily seen" elements refer to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs. While Big "c" is rather noticeable, small "c" is not so easily seen. It "refers to the invisible and deeper sense of a target culture" according to Lee (2009 pp. 78), found in the daily lives of the native speakers of a certain language.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have divided culture into three types: target culture, international target culture and source culture. Target culture belongs to the native speakers of a certain language, in this case English. Therefore, target culture refers to all the countries where English is spoken as the first language, including Great Britain, USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia etc.. International target culture refers to all other cultures where English is spoken as a second language. Finally, source culture refers to the culture of the foreign language learners, in this case, Croatian culture.

Yuen (2011, cited in Arnis, 2015) proposes a model of *four Ps* for analysing culture. This model consists of four elements of culture - products, practices, perspectives and persons. Products are tangible culture objects like films, TV shows, travel destinations, historical sights and so on. Practices refer to customs, traditions, daily life, sports, school life and festivals. Perspectives refer to inspirations, values, myths, world views and beliefs, while persons are about famous individuals, figures, characters, etc.

Research into culture in EFL textbooks is numerous, studying culture from many aspects, therefore, only some of the research conducted in this field will be mentioned. Research listed below is chosen since the topics it investigates are relevant to this paper.

Aliakbari (2004) wanted to find out whether the available English materials in Iranian secondary schools provide sufficient content for students' cultural understanding and make them ready for intercultural communication or whether the "culture" taught merely familiarizes students with their native culture. Using Ramirez and Halls' (1990) model of textbook analysis he classified sentences into 4 categories according to cultural references (1) no reference, culture free sentences, (2) no reference, culture specific statements, (3) sentences with culture general references, (4) sentences with culture specific references. The conclusion of the study was the following - the textbooks in Iran are not designed to improve students' intercultural competence, cultural content in these textbooks is extremely limited and basic, almost all cultural content is related to science, there is almost no source of reference in reading section of the books and very few cultures are depicted.

Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh and Kafipour (2014) also analysed textbooks used in Iranian schools. Their aim was to discover the relations between the Big "c" and the small "c" and to place them in three categories based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999), target, source and international target culture. Pictures, dialogues and activities were analysed in three English textbooks for intermediate level learners. The data was then classified into categories and types of culture. The study shows that in two textbooks target culture was the most represented, while the source culture is preferred over other categories in one textbook. Both small "c" and Big "c" were present in the textbooks, with small "c" being more dominant.

Arnis (2015) conducted a study on two English textbooks prescribed for secondary schools in Indonesia. The aim was to investigate whether the representation of culture supported intercultural communicative competence. Five models were used in this study. The first model used was proposed by Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990) based on the types of cultural information. The second model, proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) found that source culture is the most dominant, followed by target culture, culture free and international target culture materials. The third model also relies on Adaskou, Britten and

Fahsi (1990) and their four senses of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic). Aesthetic sense, which relates to the Big “c”, is the most frequently used, while sociological sense (the small “c”) is the second in use. Elements of culture, based on Yuen (2011, cited in Arnis, 2015), constitute the fourth model, with products as the dominant element. The fifth model is based on Byram’s (1997) levels of intercultural competence. The analysed textbooks were categorized as Level 1, which is basic cultural awareness. Arnis concluded that comparisons and contrasts among cultures were not found, therefore, intercultural competence was not achieved.

Kirkgoz, Agcam (2011) have investigated the locally published textbooks for primary schools in Turkey. Their aim was to investigate the extent to which locally published textbooks contain source, target and international target culture, based on the framework proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). They found that all of the categories were represented to a similar extent, but with source and target culture being more dominant than international target culture.

There has not been much research in Croatia on the topic of culture in English textbooks. The most relevant research in this respect was conducted by Marija Andraka, in her doctoral thesis titled *Culture and intercultural aspects in Croatian primary coursebooks of English* (2014). The aim of her research was to investigate representations of culture, source, target and other cultures, in textbooks from 1950 onwards. Culture was analysed based on five aspects: (1) overall presentation of cultural contents, (2) distribution of culture over cultural topics, (3) ratio of source, target and other cultures, (4) distribution of target cultures and (5) degree of realism in culture presentation. The research has shown that most of the textbooks were designed based on the relevant theories in language teaching at the time. Earlier textbooks (1950s and 1960s) put more emphasis on source culture. There was a shift in 1970s and 1980s from the source culture oriented to more target culture oriented textbooks, while 1990s again emphasised the source culture. The dominant target culture is in almost all textbooks British, while the newer textbooks present various target cultures, as opposed to the older ones. She concludes that even though there is a high proportion of cultural content in all textbooks, it still is not sufficient for the development of student’s cultural awareness or intercultural competence.

4. Study

4.1. Aim

This study investigates the differences between British and Croatian textbooks with regards to culture. The focus of this study is threefold. Firstly, this study aims to discover which types of culture (target, source, international) are more dominant in EFL textbooks. Secondly, which elements of culture (products, persons, perspectives, practices) are mostly used and, finally, whether Big “c” or small “c” is more dominant. The same elements will be investigated in both Croatian and British textbooks, considering the changes between older and newer editions as well.

4.2. Sample

The Ministry of Science and Education has approved five different EFL textbooks for Croatian primary schools. These are *Project Fourth Edition* and *Spark*, written by British authors, and *Way to Go*, *New Building Bridges* and *Dip in*, written by Croatian authors. This study will analyse textbooks series, one written by Croatian authors and one by British authors. Two textbooks will be taken from each series, for the fifth and seventh grade. Croatian textbooks are *New Building Bridges* for the fifth grade, written by Borka Lekaj Lubina, Jasna Pavuna and Danka Singer, published in 2013 and *Building Bridges* for the seventh grade by Mirta Jelenac, Vida Lukić and Jasna Pavuna, published in 2008. A British author, Tom Hutchinson, wrote *Project Fourth Edition*, published in 2014 for the seventh grade of primary school and *Project Third Edition*, for fifth grade, published in 2008. Both older and newer editions were used in this study, to examine whether there were some changes in the perception of culture over time.

4.3. Procedure

The primary focus of this study are EFL textbooks for primary schools, and since we decided to analyse only two of these, we needed to determine which textbooks are mostly

used in primary schools. There are no official records that show which textbooks teachers prefer, so we did our own analysis based on the information gathered from an online site (udzbenik.hr) that sells textbooks for primary and secondary schools. Based on that information we have chosen the textbooks, which will be analysed in this study. Textbooks were analysed on the level of texts and not on the level of individual words, meaning that all text were read and put into different categories. Categories were determined based on three different models, namely the model of the Big “c” and the small “c” proposed by Paige et al. (1999), the elements of culture as proposed by Yuen (2011, cited in Arnis, 2015) and the types of culture as proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). Based on these categories, quantitative and qualitative data were combined to arrive at the results presented in the next section of the study.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Types of culture

The first category to be discussed is related to the types of culture, based on the classification by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). They divided culture related materials into source culture, target culture and international target culture. In this study the source culture is Croatian, the target culture refers mostly to British and American culture and the international target culture refers to all the other countries where English is spoken as an international language.

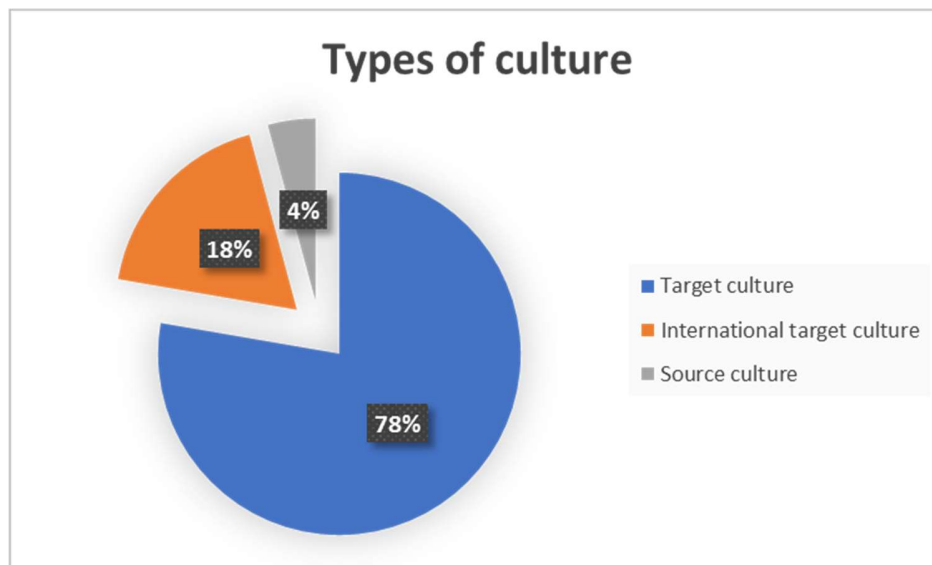


Figure 1 Types of culture in all four textbooks

When looking at the overall results, the target culture is the most dominant in all textbooks, as can be seen in Figure 1, with 78 percent of texts dealing with British and American culture. International target culture is second with 18 percent of texts dealing

with non-English speaking countries, while source culture is present in only four percent of texts.

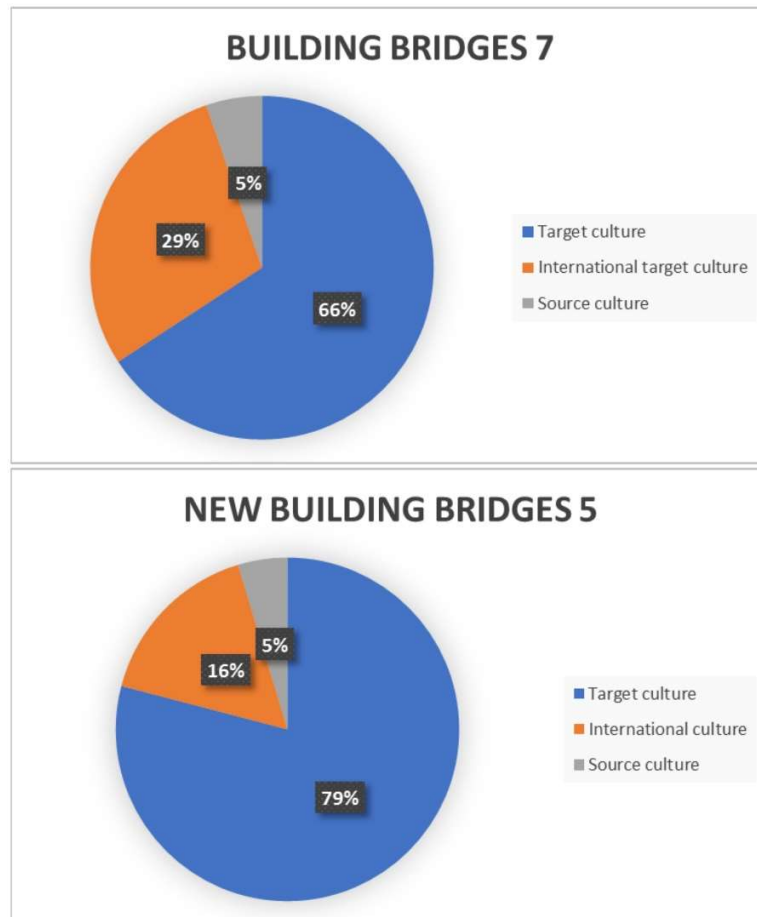


Figure 2 Types of culture in New Building Bridges 5 and Building Bridges 7

In *Building Bridges 7* target culture is present in 66 percent of texts, or 25 out of 38 texts relating to culture, as seen in Figure 2. The dominant target culture is British with 80 percent, followed by Irish culture with 12 percent and American culture with eight percent. International target culture is present in the third of the texts, or 11 out of 38, while source culture is present in only two texts, which is five percent of all texts. In *New Building Bridges 5*, one can detect certain shifts in focus, with target culture taking up almost 80 percent of the texts, or 34 out of 43, while international target culture is present in only 16 percent of texts, or seven out of 43 texts. Texts containing source culture remain at five

percent, or two out of 43 texts. The dominant target culture is again British culture , with 85 percent, followed by American culture with 15 percent.

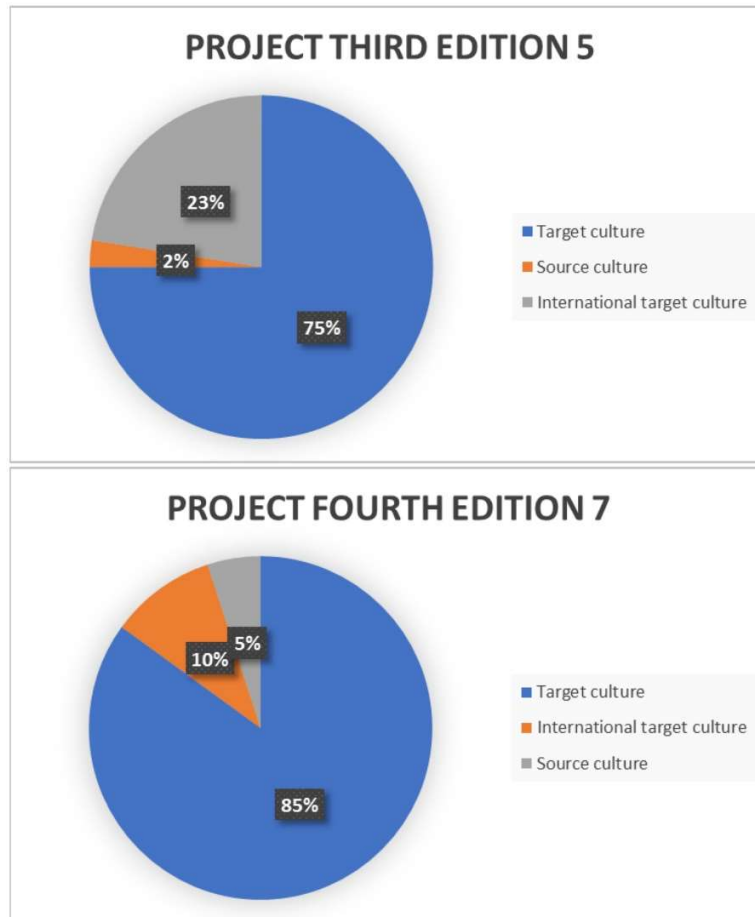


Figure 3 Types of culture in Project Third Edition and Project Fourth Edition

The case is similar with *Project Third Edition 5* and *Project Fourth Edition 7* as can be seen in Figure 3. The target culture is dominant in *Project Third Edition 5* with 75 percent of texts or 30 out of 40 texts. British culture is again dominant with 84 percent, American culture is the second with 13 percent and Australian culture is the third with three percent. International culture makes almost a third of texts with 23 percent, or nine out of 40 texts, while source culture is at two percent with only one text about Croatia. In *Project Fourth Edition 7* we can see the same shift towards the dominance of target culture texts as in *New Building Bridges 5*, with 85 percent of texts being about British (77 percent)

or American (23 percent) culture. This puts international target culture texts at 10 percent with only four texts out of 40 and source culture at five percent, with two texts.

In *Building Bridges 7* and *Project Third Edition 5* we can see that target culture is the most dominant, with over 60 percent of texts belonging to that category, and international target culture texts are more frequent than in the newer editions *New Building Bridges 5* and *Project Fourth Edition 7*. There is a shift from more internationally oriented textbooks to almost exclusively target culture oriented textbooks, especially in *Project* textbooks, where the percentage of international target culture texts has dropped from 23 percent in older edition to only 10 percent in the newer.

The target cultures mentioned in all analysed textbooks are British, American, Australian and Irish. The overall results, as seen in Figure 4, show that the British culture, in both Croatian and British textbooks, is by far the most represented, with 82 percent. This is consistent with the research conducted by Andraka (2014). Since the schools in Croatia mostly use the British standard pronunciation, which was always considered more prestigious than American (Andraka 2014), it is not surprising that British culture is

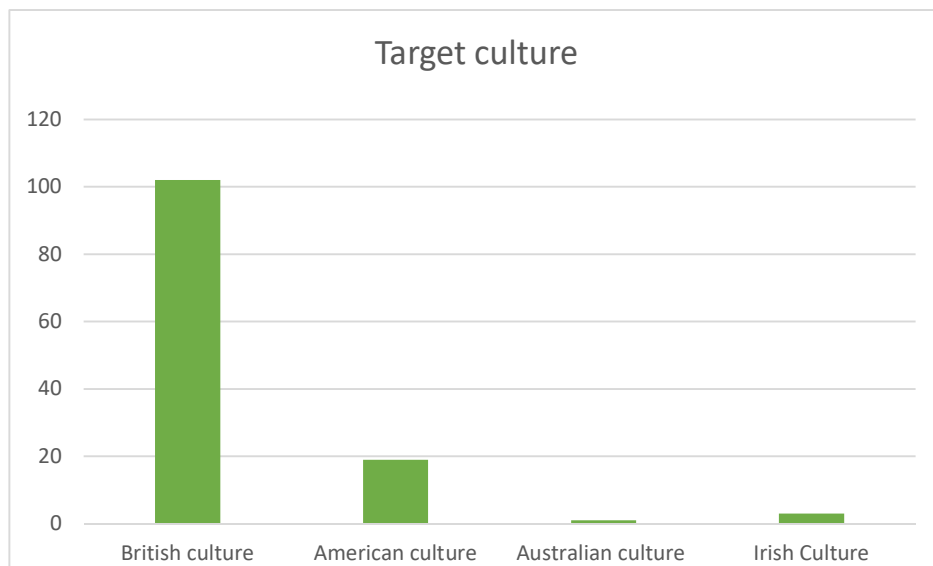


Figure 4 Target culture in all four textbooks

prevailing, however it is a bit surprising to see the huge difference between the percentages of British and American culture related texts. This difference is probably more unusual when one thinks of the prevailing influence of the American culture in the media and in

everyday life in Croatia. Australian and Irish culture are only briefly mentioned. Australia is not explicitly mentioned, but one nursery rhyme belongs to Australian culture, named *Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree* (in *Project Third Edition 5*). Irish culture is explicitly mentioned in *Building Bridges 7* through the quiz about Ireland, its geography, language, stories, saints etc. Irish tradition can be found in a text about the origin of Halloween:

(...) Halloween is a Pre-Cristian tradition. It started in Ireland. The Celts celebrated the end of the first half of the year, the golden summer, and prepared for the beginning of the cold, dark winter. They believed that on that night the dead visited our world, and that ghosts mixed with living people. To keep the dead happy they left them food – fruit and nuts. People were also afraid of the dark, evil things that walked the earth that night. To keep them away they made big fires. They also dressed up and put masks on their faces to look like them. (...) (Building Bridges 7, pp. 126)

International target culture is present in 18 percent of texts, ranging from topics about the history, literature, theatre, folk tales, food and geography to daily habits and holidays. Texts about history are mostly about famous individuals, as can be seen in the following example about a famous Ancient Egyptian pharaoh:

Tutankhamun was a king in Ancient Egypt. He lived 3,300 years ago. He lived a short life. He died when he was only 18 years old. He was 6 or 7 when he got married and he was king when he was 9 years old. That is why many people call him the Boy King. He was not a very important king, but today everybody knows about him. Why? (New Building Bridges 5, pp. 124 – 125)

Source culture is almost non-existent in all these textbooks, with only four percent of all texts being about Croatian culture. If we were to examine individual words in the textbooks, we could see that there are more instances of source culture present with a famous person from Croatia here and there in the text, but only one or two whole texts containing source culture are present in each textbook. However, this study is concerned with the whole text, so individual words, which would go in favour of source culture, are not included. There was a slight increase in the number of texts about Croatia in the Project textbooks, in the new version, which indicates that the author wanted to bring the textbooks closer to the Croatian market, in particular Croatian teachers and students. In the appendix of the textbook *Project Fourth Edition* (which was not present in the previous edition) there are six texts related to literature and film, including a text about a film producer Branko Lustig:

You have probably heard of epic films like *Gladiator* and *Kingdom of Heaven*, but did you know that they were produced by a Croat? Branko Lustig is the first and only Croat who received an Oscar for his work as a film producer. Alongside Goran Višnjić and Rade Šerbedžija, he is probably the best known Croatian citizen in Hollywood. Because of his achievements, he is sometimes affectionately referred to as “the grandfather of the Croatian film industry”. (...) (Project Fourth Edition, pp. 83)

What is interesting about this text is the fact that all of the specific Croatian letters were used (š, ć, dž), which are often not present in texts written by non-Croatian writers.

To sum up, there are three types of culture that are present in all four textbooks. The target culture can be found in the majority of texts, with British culture being the most frequent. Other target cultures appear only in a few texts which shows the dominance of British culture in both Croatian and British textbooks. While the target culture’s dominance is constant in both older and newer editions, it is visible that the percentage of international target culture has dropped in newer editions. Only a few texts contain source culture, both in British and Croatian textbooks. It is interesting to note that similar research from other countries has produced both similar and completely different results. Arnis (2015) has found that in Indonesian textbooks source, target and international target culture are well balanced, while source culture is more dominant. The research conducted by Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh and Kafipour (2014) shows that some Iranian textbooks emphasise target culture, while others put more stress on the source culture. Kirkgoz and Agcam (2011) have found that locally published textbooks for primary schools present all three types of culture equally.

5.3. Elements of culture

The next category to be discussed is related to the elements of culture. According to Yuen (2011, cited by Arnis, 2015), there are four elements of culture, namely products, practices, perspectives and persons.

The four elements of culture are present in all analysed textbooks, and the results are very similar. In *Project Third Edition 5* practices are the dominant element of culture as can be seen in Figure 5, with 19 texts or 49 percent, which makes almost half of all the texts in the textbook. Products are in second place with 16 texts or 41 percent, while the perspectives and persons share the same percentage (5 percent), with only two texts each. Slight differences are found in *Project Fourth Edition 7* (Figure 5), with 21 texts (47 percent) being in the domain of practices, 15 texts (33 percent) being in the domain of products and two (four percent) in the domain of perspectives. The most notable difference, however, is in the element of persons with three times more texts (seven, or 16 percent) being about famous people or fictional characters than in *Project Third Edition 5*.

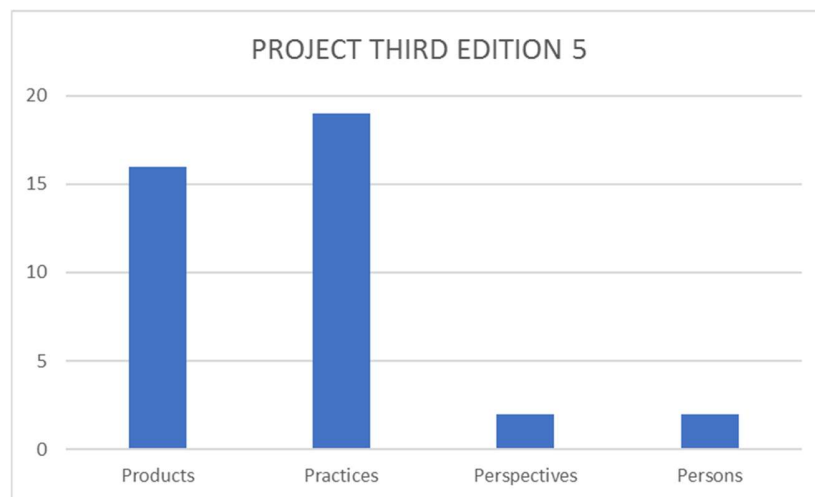


Figure 5 Elements of culture in Project Third Edition 5

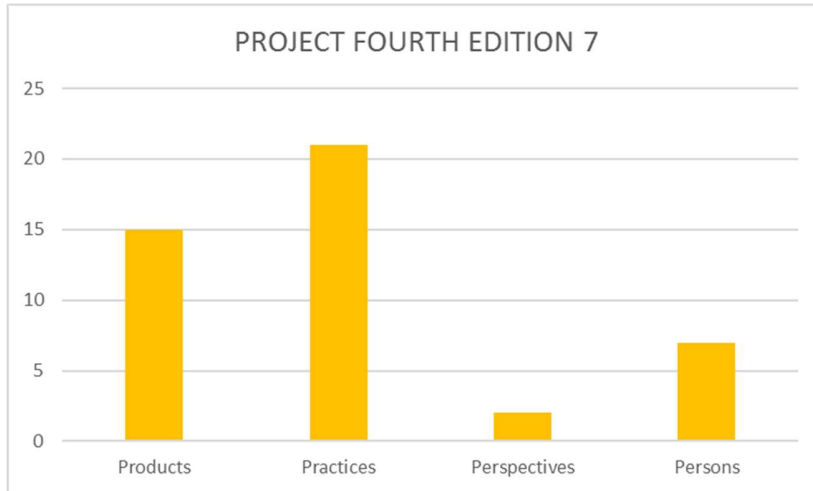


Figure 6 Elements of culture in Project Fourth Edition 7

In *New Building Bridges 5* we can see a similar order of elements as in *Project Third Edition 5*, with practices as the dominant element (18 texts or 46 percent), while products follow with 14 texts or 36 percent, then perspectives with four texts or ten percent and persons with three texts or eight percent, as seen in Figure 7. *Building Bridges 7* follows a similar pattern as *Project Fourth Edition 7*, with 17 texts or 47 percent being about

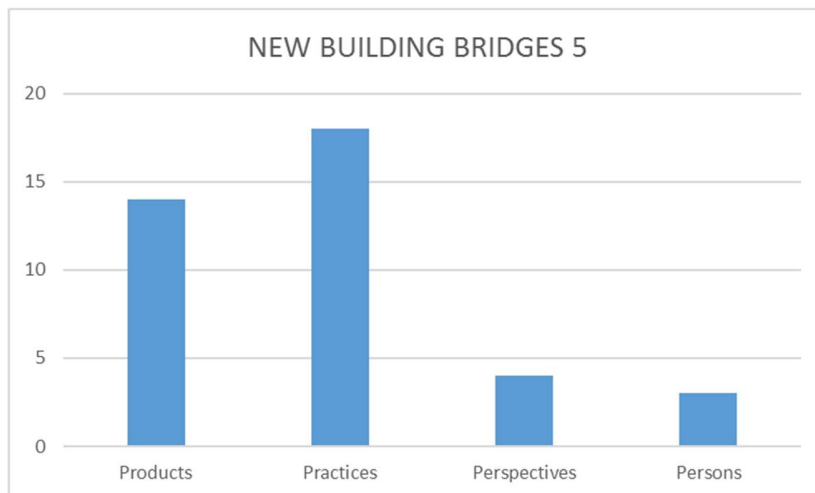


Figure 7 Elements of culture in New Building Bridges 5

practices, seven texts or 19 percent about products, five texts or 14 percent about perspectives and seven texts or 19 percent about persons, as seen in Figure 8.

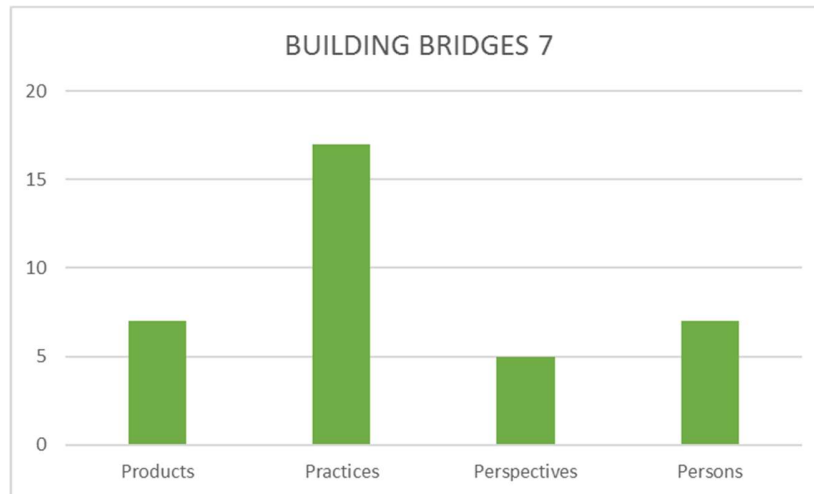


Figure 8 Elements of culture in Building Bridges 7

From the presented data, it is clear that the element of practices is the most frequent in all the textbooks, as is evident from Figure 9. Practices are represented through daily habits, school life, teenage problems, festivals (Christmas, Halloween, Easter, Valentine's day), holidays and sports. Here is an example of a text about daily habits and school life:

My name is Jessica Poole. I'm twelve years old and I live in London. I go to Watermead High School. I'm in class 8B. My favourite subjects are Chemistry and Geography. I don't like French or Maths. I take the bus to school with my friends. We meet at the bus stop at quarter past eight. School starts at quarter to nine and finishes at half-past three. After school, I go home and I do my homework. In the evening, I watch TV or go on the Internet. I practice the clarinet, too. On Wednesdays, I don't go home at half past three. I play table tennis in the school gym. I'm not very good, but it's fun. I like sport. On Saturday mornings, I have a clarinet lesson. I've got a brother. His name's Cameron. He doesn't go to the same school as me. He's only ten years old, so he goes to a primary school near our house. He walks to school. Their lessons start at nine o'clock, so Cameron leaves home at ten to nine. (Project Third Edition, pp. 8)

From this text, we can learn a lot of information about British schools and the daily lives of British children, for instance information about the school hours, their free time and types of schools in England. This text and many similar ones, give Croatian children

information about the life in the target culture of the language they are learning, which in turn brings English language and culture closer to them.

Festivals that are discussed are Christmas, New Year, Easter, Halloween and Valentine's day. All of these festivals are celebrated around the world, but they are presented from British and American perspectives, as can be seen in the following example:

Sam: Hi, Ana! Have you got any plans for the evening?

Ana: No, I haven't. Why?

Sam: It's Halloween. We can all go trick-or-treating. You can meet a lot of spooky creatures in the street.

Ana: I'll have to ask my mum first. And I haven't got a costume or a mask to wear.

Ella: Take one of mine. I've got a lot of spooky costumes at home.

Ana: Ok. Thanks.

Ella: Come to my Halloween party after that. We can dance and play bobbing for apples.

Ana: Bobbing for apples? What kind of game is that?

Ella: Come and see. We'll have good fun!

Sam: And Ana, don't forget to put a pumpkin lantern in your window!

Ana: I won't. I'm so excited. It's my first Halloween in England! (New Building Bridges 5, pp. 148)

In this text we can see the practice of celebrating Halloween in England, their costumes and games. Holidays are also present as a topic in the textbooks, mainly represented through postcards, like in the following example, where we see a postcard from Portugal:

Hi Brad

Greetings from Portugal. It's great here. We travelled by boat to northern Spain and then we drove down to Portugal. It was a long journey, but we played computer games in the car and we stopped to visit some places in Spain on the way. We had a problem yesterday, because I lost my wallet. I left it on the table in a restaurant and then I forgot it. Luckily someone found it.

Hope you're OK. John (Project Third Edition, pp. 37)

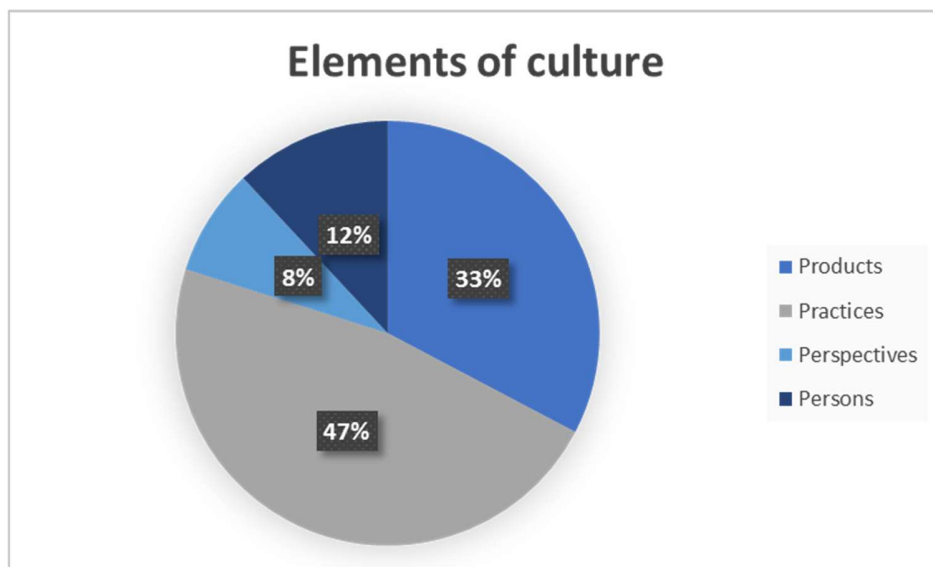


Figure 9 Elements of culture in all four textbooks

Products are the second most frequent element in the textbooks. They are present in songs, texts about films, theatre, TV shows, food, geography, animals, history, art, superheroes, music, sightseeing and clothes. A few of these topics will be discussed at more length, based on the number of occurrences in the textbooks. Songs are present only in the *Project* textbooks, mainly by British or American popular singers and bands, like *The Cure*, *The Beatles*, *Stevie Wonder*, *Nina Simone*, *Marvin Gaye*, *Queen* and others. There are also nursery rhymes like the *Kookabura sits in the old gum tree* (Australian nursery rhyme) and the *Runaway train* (British nursery rhyme).

The topic of films, theatre and TV shows occurs sporadically throughout the textbooks, with 10 percent of texts in *Project Third Edition 5* being about films, theatre or TV shows, 13 percent in *Project Fourth Edition 7* and three percent in *Building Bridges 7*. Theatre is mentioned in *Project Third Edition 5*:

People in Ancient Greece enjoyed dancing and singing and they also liked plays. Almost every Greek city had a theatre.

The Greeks built theatres in the open air, often on hillsides. They called them “amphitheatres”. The amphitheatres were very big. (...)

All the actors in the Greek theatre were men. They wore masks with a big hole for the mouth. There were masks with happy faces for comedies and masks with sad faces for tragedies. Tragedies were often about the past. The actors in tragedies usually wore dark colours. Comedies were funny and told stories about everyday life. The actors in comedies often wore light colours.

Two of the most famous playwrights were Euripides and Aristophanes. (...) (Project Third Edition 5, pp. 77)

From this text, we have learned some information about the Greek theatre, how it looked like, who the actors were, who the most famous playwrights were and so on. The topic of history is also present in this text, but since the topic of theatre is more dominant, it is classified in this category. Texts about history are present in all four textbooks and cover the topics on the history of England, early materials, Stone Age people, child labour and Ancient Egypt. An example of such a text can be found in Building Bridges 7 on page 51 where children learn what it was like to be a child in the 19th century:

In this photograph we see a child who is working in a factory. In the early part of the 19th century life in England was very hard. There was a lot of poor people who couldn't feed their families so some of them started stealing or sent their children to work in factories. Children worked there for 15 hours a day for very little money. Many parents didn't allow their children to work, so orphans worked for factory owners. They bought the children and took them to factories in the country where they kept them as workers until they were 21.

The element of products, as can be seen, encompasses a number of interesting topics, many more than any other element of culture. Some topics, like songs, film, theatre and TV shows and history are more popular and appear more often than others. Since other topics related to products do not appear so often in the analysed textbooks, they will not be discussed in this section.

The third element to be discussed are persons with the occurrence of 12 percent, as shown in Figure 9. Persons refer to famous individuals, real or fictitious. Some of the real famous people include *Charles Dickens*, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, *Auguste Renoir*, *Levi Strauss*, *JMW Turner*, *Branko Lustig*, *Orlando Bloom*, *Johnny Depp*, *Charlie Chaplin* and others. Fictional characters include characters from books, films and comic books, like *Clark Kent (Superman)*, *Peter Pan*, *Harry Potter*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Wizard of Oz* and many others. Most of these names should be familiar to students,

from popular culture, or from other school subjects. However, some are for sure unknown to them, like *Auguste Renoir* or *JMW Turner*, and probably need to be discussed further in class.

Perspectives, as the final element of culture, encompass world views, folk tales, myths and fables. World views or opinions are found in only one text in *Building Bridges 7*, where children discuss their attitudes towards certain topics like mobile phones, school success, bullies at school and appearances. Here are some examples:

Sarah: I always leave my mobile phone at home. I think school's not the place for mobile phones.

Celia: I don't think so. What if we have to call our parents during the break?

Sarah: We can use the public phone. If we have our mobiles we forget ourselves and start sending messages.

Sarah: I agree with this. I have good grades at school but it's because I want it myself, not because my parents want it.

Celia: I don't agree. I believe parents are right to push their children. Kids are lazy.

Sarah: Speak for yourself. (*Building Bridges 7*, pp. 20 – 21)

Practices, as was mentioned earlier, can be found in myths, folk tales and fables, which in certain ways represent world views and ideals of the people and the time from which the stories originate. Like the stories of King Arthur and Robin Hood, Icarus and King Midas, fables of the Tortoise and the Hare and folk tales of Stone Soup or Chicken Licken.

To conclude, practices are the most dominant element, followed by products, persons and perspectives in all four textbooks. This is not consistent with other similar research. Arnis (2015) found that products are the most dominant element in Indonesian textbooks, followed by practices, perspectives and persons. Yuen's study (2011, as cited in Arnis, 2015) also found that products are the dominant element, followed by practices, perspectives and persons.

5.4. Big “c” and small “c”

The concept of the Big “c” and the small “c” was taken from Paige et al. (1999). The Big “c” can be found in texts related to arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a certain culture. The small “c”, on the other hand, is about lifestyles, daily lives and routine aspects of a society (Xiao 2010). According to Lee (2009, pp. 78) “it is particularly essential, chiefly because certain ways of thinking, behaving and using a language are a direct result of socio-cultural values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions”. Therefore, people learning a foreign language need both the knowledge of the Big “c” and the small “c” to understand the native speakers of the target language, so neither should be neglected in teaching a foreign language.

In all four textbooks, there are texts containing the Big “c” and the small “c” as well as culture free texts, with no reference to culture. In *Project Third Edition 5* we can see that Big “c” and small “c” occur in almost the same number of texts. Big “c” is present in 19 texts, while small “c” is present in 18 texts. There are 12 culture free texts, as seen in Figure 10. Big “c” can be found in texts about geography, history, festivals, film, theatre, folk tales and in songs. Small “c” is present in texts about daily habits, school, holidays, animals and food.

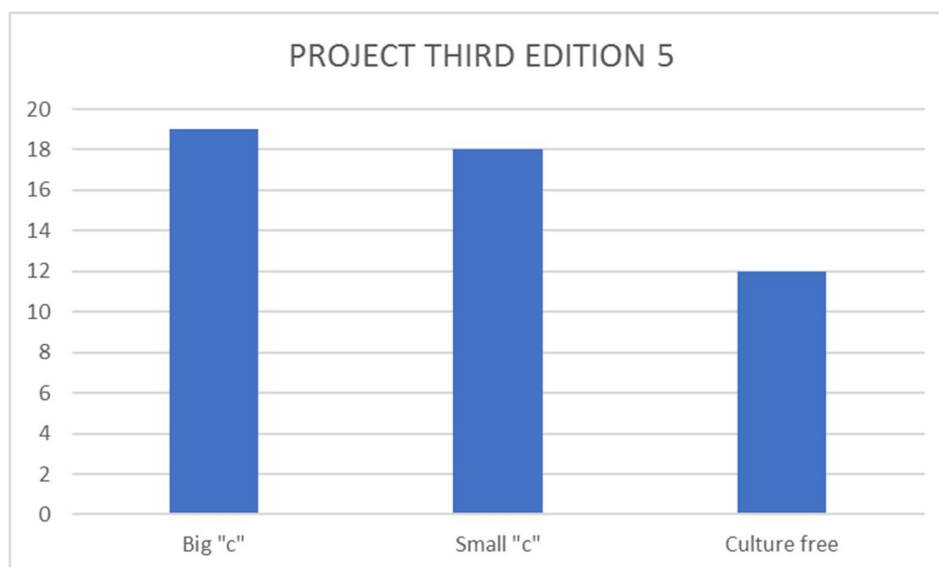


Figure 10 Big "c" vs small "c" in Project Third Edition 5

In *Project Fourth Edition 7* there are 23 texts relating to the Big “c”, 19 texts relating to the small “c” and 16 culture free texts, as seen in Figure 11. As in *Project Third Edition 5*, there are more instances of the Big “c” than of the small “c”. The Big “c” texts are about history, film, literature, sports, folk tales and songs, while the small “c” texts are about daily habits, teen problems, jobs, school and lives of reality TV stars.

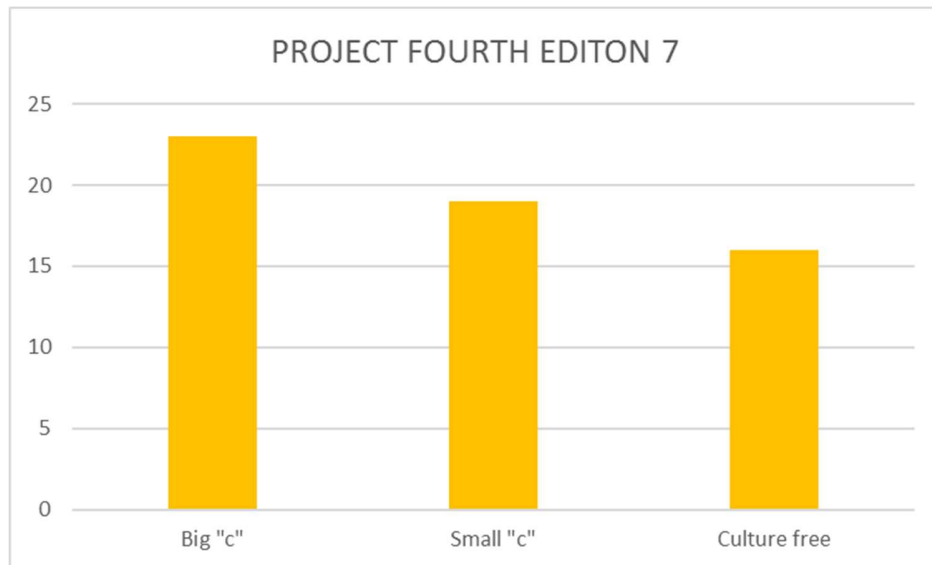


Figure 11 Big "c" and small "c" in Project Fourth Edition

The Croatian textbooks differ from British ones in several areas. As can be seen in Figure 12, in *New Building Bridges 5*, there are 23 texts containing the Big “c” elements and 22 texts containing culture free elements. As opposed to British textbooks, where the number of texts with the Big “c” and the small “c” is very similar, in *New Building Bridges 5*, there are only 14 texts about the small “c”. The Big “c” texts are about geography, festivals, literature and history, while the small “c” texts are about school, daily habits, pets, food and clothes.

Almost the same situation can be found in *Building Bridges 7*, where there are 24 texts containing the Big “c” and 23 culture free texts. The number of the small “c” texts is even lower than in *New Building Bridges 5*, with only 12 texts, as seen in Figure 13. The Big “c” texts relate to music, films, history, myths, literature, festivals and geography and the small “c” texts are about world views, sports, free time, holidays, school and teen problems.

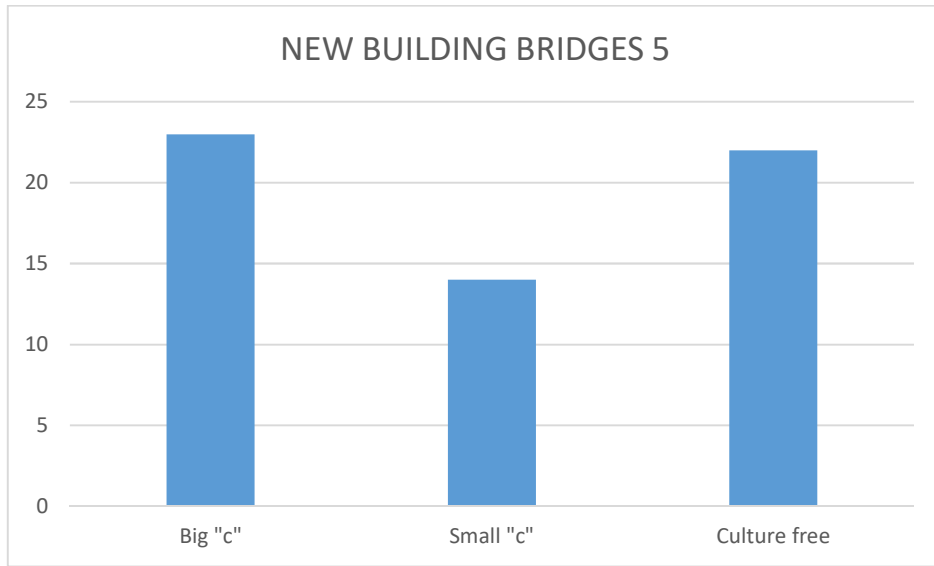


Figure 12 Big "c" and small "c" in New Building Bridges 5

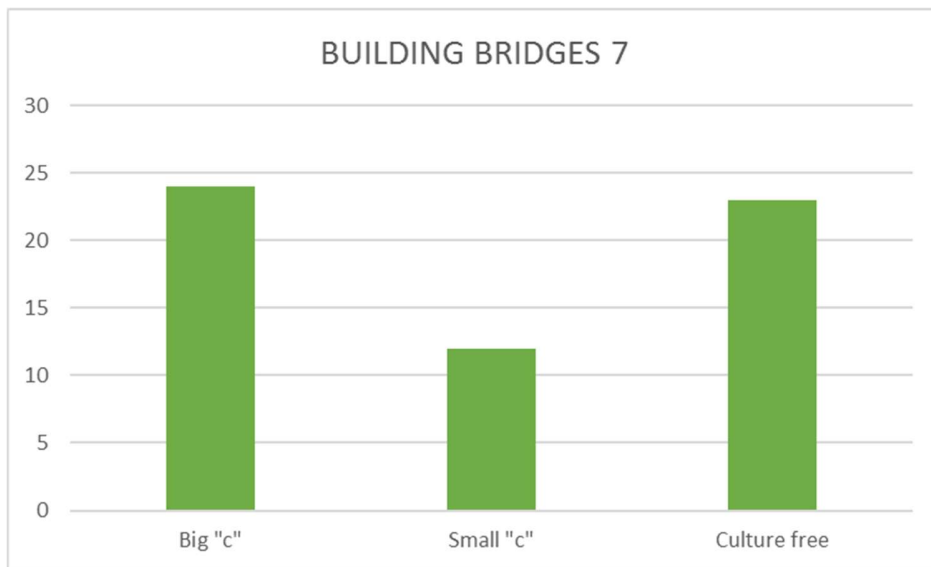


Figure 13 big "c" and small "c" in Building Bridges 7

The Big “c”, as was already mentioned, refers to the arts, history, landmarks, stories. These are the things that one thinks of when talking about a target culture. An example of the Big “c” can be found in *Project Third Edition 5* in a text about a famous actor, Charlie Chaplin:

Charlie Chaplin was the first international film star. He was born in London, but when he was 23 years old he went to the USA. He worked in the theatre at first and then moved to Hollywood. He starred in several silent movies. In most of his early films he played “the little tramp”. People all over the world loved his films. His most famous film was *The Kid* (1921). (Project Third Edition, pp. 76)

The small “c”, on the other hand, is about the daily lives of people, about social norms and customs, about what is and is not acceptable in a certain culture. These are not the things that would first come to mind when talking about a certain culture, they would be considered normal and usual for people from that culture, but they are crucial for understanding the target culture. The small “c” is harder to learn and to teach, because it does not represent the obvious signs of a culture like the Big Ben or Shakespeare, but the everyday lives of ordinary people. The small “c” can be found in a text about a fundraiser in a school in Britain:

My name’s Bill. My friends and I are helping with the fundraising day. We usually _____ (play) football on Saturday mornings, but we _____ (not play) today. We _____ (cook) hamburgers and sausages, and we _____ (sell) them to the people. It’s quite hard work, but we _____ (enjoy) it. Actually, at the moment, I _____ (not do) anything, because I _____ (have) a break. One of my friends _____ (cook) now. Mrs Matthews _____ (help) us. She _____ (teach) Cookery here at school. I _____ (think) the fundraising day is a great idea because we all _____ (want) to help our friends in Kenya. (Project Fourth Edition 7, pp. 5)

From the presented data, it is evident that Big “c” is the most dominant in all four textbooks. The small “c” is the second in the *Project* textbooks, while only third in *New Building Bridges 5* and *Building Bridges 7*. Arnis (2015) reports that the aesthetic sense (consistent with the notion of the Big “c”) is more frequent in Indonesian textbooks than the sociological sense (or the small “c”). Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh and Kafipour (2014), on the other hand, have found that the small “c” is more present in Iranian textbooks than the Big “c”. Both British and Croatian authors wrote about history, geography, famous people, films, literature etc., relating to the target, international and source culture. However, British textbooks included more texts about daily lives and routines of people from the target culture than Croatian textbooks. It is evident that British authors put far more emphasis on the small “c” than Croatian authors, who have included more culture free texts about everyday life, school etc.

6. Conclusion

Culture has become an integral part of the language teaching process, which is especially important in this era of high mobility and intercultural communication. It has been debated whether English language learners should be prepared for conversing with native speaker, or international speakers of English and whether they should learn how to speak about their own culture in English. English textbooks serve as good guidelines for both teachers and students in this respect. When speaking of Croatia, the National Curriculum Framework is a starting point for language teaching and it promotes learning the target language culture, but with a special emphasis on acquiring international competence in a foreign language.

This study was conducted in order to find out more about the topic of culture in EFL textbooks, written by Croatian and British authors. Types of culture, elements of culture and the Big “c” and small “c” were investigated. Based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999) there are three types of culture: target, international target and source culture. The most dominant type of culture in all four textbooks was the target culture, followed by the international target and source culture. The percentage of target culture textbooks is higher in textbooks published in 2014, while the overall percentage of target culture is higher in *Project* textbooks. Textbooks written by Croatian authors show a slightly larger percentage of source texts than *Project Third Edition 5*, while *Project Fourth Edition 7* has the same percentage of texts including source culture as textbooks written by Croatian. Both *Building Bridges 7* and *Project Third Edition 5*, that is, textbooks published in 2008, have a higher percentage of international target culture than textbooks published in 2013/2014. The target culture that is most represented in all the textbooks is British, followed by American, Irish and Australian.

There are four elements of culture present in the textbooks; products, practices, perspectives and person, based on Yuen’s model (2011, cited by Arnis, 2015). Practices, which relate to customs, everyday life, sports, school and festivals, occur most frequently in all four textbooks, followed by products, through texts about films, theatre, food, geography, history, art, music, sightseeing etc. Persons are third in *New Building Bridges*

5 and fourth in other textbooks, while perspectives are fourth in *New Building Bridges 5* and third in other textbooks. It is visible that there is no big difference in this respect between textbooks written by British and Croatian authors, or between textbooks published in 2008 and 2013/2014.

The concept to the Big “c” and the small “c” was proposed by Paige et al. (1999). The Big “c”, representing monuments, art, music, film, geography etc. is more dominant than the small “c”, which includes the everyday life of people, in all four textbooks. However, there are differences between textbooks written by British and Croatian authors regarding the small “c”. Textbooks published in Great Britain put more emphasis on the daily habits of British children, school life, routines etc. than Croatian textbooks. In turn, textbooks published in Croatia include more culture free texts about daily life in general, not specific to any culture or county.

To sum up, textbooks written by British and Croatian authors are mostly similar, when considering the analysed parameters. They all prefer target culture over international and source culture. The element of products and the Big “c” are dominant in all textbooks. The biggest difference between textbooks written by British and Croatian authors is related to the small “c”. Textbooks published in Great Britain describing the way people live there to a greater extent than the ones published in Croatia. There are some differences between textbooks published in 2008 and 2013/2014, mainly considering the international culture, which is more present in the older textbooks.

This study was conducted to investigate how different textbooks present culture, but further research is necessary to discover how these textbooks are used in class and in what way teachers utilize these textbooks as a tool for teaching culture.

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