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## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL CONTENT IN ELT TEXTBOOKS USED IN EIGHT GRADES OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Abstract:** *With a growing emphasis on teaching English as an International Language (EIL) and on developing learners' intercultural competence, great efforts have been put into diversifying and decentralizing cultural content in English textbooks. This paper uses content analysis to examine the incorporation of local, target, and international cultural content in reading lessons found in three textbooks: Challenges, Way to Go and Project, the only textbooks approved by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science to be used in the eighth grade in primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of this analysis is to determine the countries represented in each reading passage and to examine whether the exercises accompanying the texts encourage learners to reflect on similarities and differences between cultures. Content analysis shows that the three textbooks differ in the representation of the cultural content and require varying levels of learners' engagement.*

**Keywords:** *ELT textbooks, international culture, source culture, target culture*

### INTRODUCTION

Textbooks used in different corners of the world present different cultural content and present cultural content differently. Some include content about English speaking countries, others prefer content which is primarily about learners' local culture, while some incorporate a more international content. Furthermore, some textbooks put emphasis on linguistic competence, thus eliminating or minimizing cultural elements altogether (Aliakbari, 2004). The growing emphasis on teaching English as an international language (EIL) and the issue of depoliticization and denationalization of English has led some teachers to do just that (Buttjes, 1991). However, incorporating elements of culture into language teaching has its benefits as it can help develop learners' motivation for learning the language (Buttjes, 1991; McKay, 2000). Since language is rooted in the context in which it was developed, this context is indispensable when learning and teaching a language. It serves several purposes, from improving the learners' knowledge and understanding of people from different parts of the world to developing their understanding of their own cultural background (Garcia, 2005). However, even though learning about the context in which the language is used can aid language learning and be used as a resource for learning about and understand-

ing other people, it is difficult to determine which/whose cultural content should be brought to the classroom (Garcia, 2005; McKay, 2000).

There is a growing awareness that English is used and learned in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. For many learners who are learning English as a foreign language, the aims of learning the language might be rather varied and have little to do with the countries where it is spoken as the first language. Thus, a learner who wants to move and live in an English speaking country might be interested in learning about the cultural conventions of that country, whereas someone aiming to learn the language solely for international communication might not share the same interest. (McKay, 2000: 8). McKay (2000: 11) points out that English, rather than being owned by one culture, “provides the basis for promoting cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly global village”.

Teaching English as an international language has several pedagogical implications. According to its principles, learners should become familiar with the diversity of environments in which English is spoken and be able to communicate effectively in international contexts (Shin et al., 2011: 264). An important aspect of EIL is developing learners’ intercultural competence.

Development of the intercultural dimension in the context of foreign language learning and teaching, aims to “give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors; and to help them see that such interaction is an enriching experience” (Byram et al., 2002: 10). There are several components of intercultural competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values), but Byram et al. (2002: 12-13) find that attitudes are its foundation. According to this model, development of intercultural competence involves developing attitudes (*savoir être* – openness, willingness to ‘decentre’ and assume that your own perspective and values are not the only correct ones), knowledge (*savoir* – knowledge of social processes and social interaction in both one’s own and the target culture), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre* – ability to analyze the documents and events of a foreign culture and relate them to one’s own), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire* – ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager* – ability to critically evaluate aspects of the foreign as well as one’s own culture). All of these are interconnected.

It has thus become important for textbooks not just to include content about various cultures, including the one(s) of the learners, but also to include tasks that encourage engagement with that content, either in the form of exercises that prompt learners to compare and contrast different cultures or exercises that trigger learners to critically reflect on the content provided by the textbooks (Byram et al., 2002).

The aim of this paper is to analyze three textbooks used in the eighth grade of primary schools in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to determine how diverse their representation of different cultures is and to which extent textbook tasks encourage learners to actively engage with the content.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The growing interest in English as an international language and in intercultural competence has led researchers to analyze textbooks to determine whether these concepts are accepted in practice. The representation of culture in textbooks has received substantial interest. Content analysis is often employed to determine the cultural content presented in textbooks being used in different parts of the world and whether textbooks present target culture material only or include a variety of cultures. Moirano (2012), for example, analyzed textbooks in Argentina, whereas some others examined various textbooks used in Asia, such as in Iran (Aliakbari, 2004; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2012), Hong Kong (Yuen, 2011), Taiwan (Chao, 2011; Su, 2014), Thailand (Nomnian 2013), and Korea (Kim and Paek, 2015), or text-books that are used in more than one Asian country (Shin et al., 2011).

Textbooks incorporate cultural material in a variety of ways. It can be observed that some textbooks do not include much cultural content and focus mainly on linguistic competence, such as the locally-produced Iranian textbooks analyzed by Aliakbari (2004). Some other research indicates that textbooks, when they do include cultural material, show preference for countries where English is spoken as a native language. This can be observed in internationally published textbooks, such as in seven international ELT textbooks used in Asian countries analyzed by Shin et al. (2011), in three international textbooks analyzed by Moirano (2012), and in one internationally published textbook used in Taiwan analyzed by Chao (2011). However, as can be seen from the example of Taiwan, locally-produced textbooks can also demonstrate a preference for target culture content. In her analysis of one locally-produced textbook series, Su (2014) found that the UK and USA were the two countries with the highest representation. Source culture is marginally represented in some textbooks (Chao, 2011), and not represented at all in others (Moirano, 2012). On the other hand, there is also research which indicates that more recently published textbooks do indeed pay more attention to a more varied representation of cultures. Naji Meidani and Pishghadam's (2012) textbook analysis shows notable differences between the representations of countries where English is spoken as the first language depending on their date of publication. Textbooks published more recently include fewer references to these countries and more frequent and varied references to countries where English is spoken either as a second or as a foreign language, bringing them closer to the principles of EIL.

There are multiple calls for a more diverse representation of cultures and tasks that promote intercultural competence, such as comparing and contrasting different cultures. Nomnian (2013) argues for the importance of producing diverse material in coursebooks and introducing learners to varied cultural contexts. In their analysis of five local Korean textbooks, Kim and Paek (2015: 101) noted the lack of material which encourages intercultural interaction. They argue for the inclusion of material that would help learners to "compare the differences and similarities among different cultures and countries through an engagement in various types of

activities, such as case studies, problem-solving, and role-play". Chao (2011) found that even though many speaking activities could be identified as promoting intercultural interaction, they did that by encouraging personalization rather than encouraging comparison and understanding of cultures.

Introduction to and interaction with another culture "creates a personal conflict which stems from the realization that one's own lifestyle, behavior and values, until then taken for granted and perceived as universal, are culturally bound" (Garcia, 2005: 66). The intercultural approach thus helps learners better understand the world around them by contextualizing their cultural assumptions and practices. The resource used in the process of developing learners' intercultural competence is their own experience and their local cultural context (Byram, 1991; Risager, 2005) since the formation of links between the target and source culture may help learners understand better those who are different from them and experiences which differ from their own (Garcia, 2005: 60). Textbooks are thus encouraged to make use of this resource. Crozet and Liddicoat (1999: 117) emphasize the importance of comparison through which learners learn "not only the invisible cultural features of a foreign language but they also learn how to distance themselves from their native language/culture environment to see it for the first time as what it really is, as just one possible world view and not the only world view".

The focus on noticing and analyzing similarities and differences between cultures is emphasized in the English Language Curriculum (2016) approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Canton Sarajevo.

According to the Curriculum, an interculturally competent learner is the one who is:

- able to notice and interpret similarities and differences between cultures;
- empathic, able to adapt, and open to understanding, acceptance, and respect of English-speaking people and their cultures;
- able to communicate with native and non-native speakers of English effectively and in context-appropriate ways, which leads to building harmonious intercultural relationships. (10)

The development of intercultural skills in the eighth grade involves learning about similarities and differences between Bosnia and Herzegovina and English-speaking countries in the field of culture, education, free-time activities, and lifestyle; learning about culture-specific notions of polite communication and behavior; and learning to respect the traditions, customs and habits of others (Curriculum: 110). This paper focuses primarily on the first of these aims – the analysis of similarities and differences between cultures in textbooks.

#### Aim of the study

This paper examines the representation of local, target, and international cultural references in reading lessons found in three textbooks approved by the Federal

Ministry of Education and Science<sup>5</sup> to be used in the eighth grade of state primary schools in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of this analysis is to determine which countries are represented in each reading passage. Focusing on the Curriculum objectives, it will also examine whether the exercises accompanying the texts encourage learners to reflect on similarities and differences between cultures (primarily their own and the target culture).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *TEXTBOOK SELECTION*

The selected English language textbooks are used in the eighth grade of primary education. These are the only three textbooks approved by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science for teaching English as the first foreign language in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the year 2017/2018. In the order in which they appear on the Ministry's list, they are: Challenges 3 written by Michael Harris, David Mower, Anna Sikorzyńska and Asmir Mešić and published by Pearson in 2007; Project 4 by Tom Hutchinson published by Oxford University Press in 2011; and Way to Go by Mirela Vasić, Olinka Breka and Maja Mardešić from 2011, Sarajevo Publishing.

### *DATA ANALYSIS*

Content analysis was used to examine the three textbooks. Only the reading segments in each textbook were selected for analysis. Basabe's (2006) categorization was adapted for coding purposes in order to determine which cultural references are present in a particular text.

Cultural references are sorted as references to

- target culture (TC),
- source culture (SC),
- international culture (IC),
- combination of target and source culture,
- combination of target and international culture,
- combination of source and international culture,
- combination of target, source, and international culture,
- ambiguous cultural reference,
- no cultural reference at all.

For the purpose of this paper, target cultural content is the content related to Kachru's Inner Circle countries where English is spoken as the native language – the

5 The Federal Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Sarajevo Canton are not the same institutions. The former is the ministry which determines which textbooks can be used in schools in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo Canton is one of ten cantons (administrative units) in the Federation of BiH. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Sarajevo Canton develops the curriculum for all school subjects in the Can-ton of Sarajevo. Each canton in the Federation has its own ministry of education.

US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Kachru, 1990: 4). The mention of names and places was often sufficient to code the item as belonging to a particular cultural content. In *Challenges*, for example, letters/questions to a magazine in one lesson are coded as target cultural content since the questions were asked by British teenagers from Cardiff, Leeds, Bristol, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and London (28). The text about the generation gap between teenagers and their parents was coded as a TC content because teenagers were named Andy, Jessica, Edward, Susan, Karen, and George and had problems that could be seen as culturally specific (68). However, the mention of names was not always enough. For instance, in *Way to Go*, the text about attitudes towards the use of mobile phones and perceptions of its usefulness was very general and was thus coded as an ambiguous cultural reference, which means that the mentioned reading passage contains very few references to a particular cultural context. The name Garry that appears in the text was not enough to code it as target cultural content (41).

Texts about Bosnia and Herzegovina were coded as source cultural content and texts about other countries were treated as international cultural content. For example, the text in *Challenges* about school life in Japan (12) is coded as international cultural content and so is the text about vacations in Botswana and Uganda (48). Texts that compare two different countries are coded as combinations. For example, the reading segment in *Challenges* is coded as a combination of target and source cultures because it includes two texts side by side. One is about school life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and another one is about school life in the UK (106). Texts without any cultural reference to any particular country were coded as containing no cultural reference. An example of that is a letter from Earth written by Y3M, an alien, which does not contain any particular cultural reference (*Way to Go*: 4).

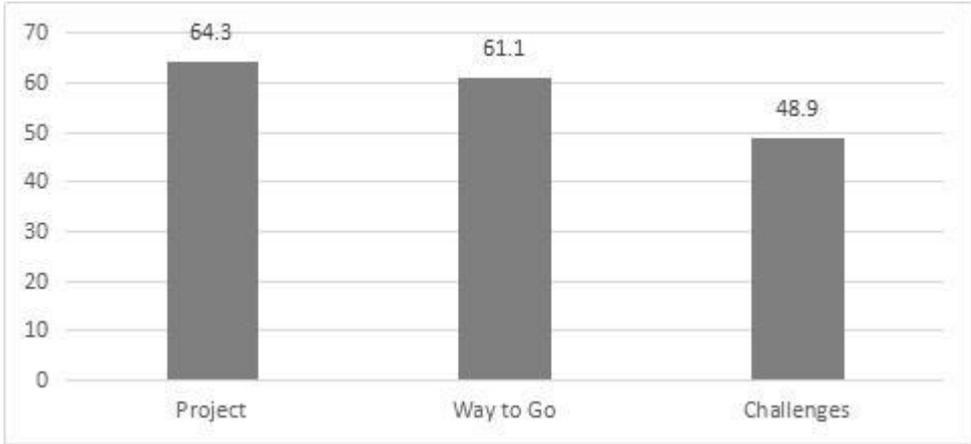
Percentages were calculated after the coding had been completed.

The following questions were asked:

- Research question 1: Which cultures are represented in the three textbooks?
- Research question 2: Do the reading sections in these textbooks encourage learners to notice and analyze similarities and differences between cultures?

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Content analysis was conducted to answer the first research question and it revealed that the target culture was the most highly represented in the reading passages in all three analyzed textbooks. However, the extent of its representation varies – from 64.3% in *Project*, 61.1 % in *Way to Go*, to 48.9 % in *Challenges*. This makes *Challenges* the only textbook with slightly less than half of its cultural content dedicated to target-language cultures, as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** - Target culture representation in three textbooks

In terms of inclusion of source culture, the findings are again in favor of the aforementioned textbook since Challenges is the textbook with the highest representation of source culture-related content – 19.1%, whereas Way to Go and Project have smaller percentages of its representation – 11.1% and 7.1%, respectively, as shown in Table 2.

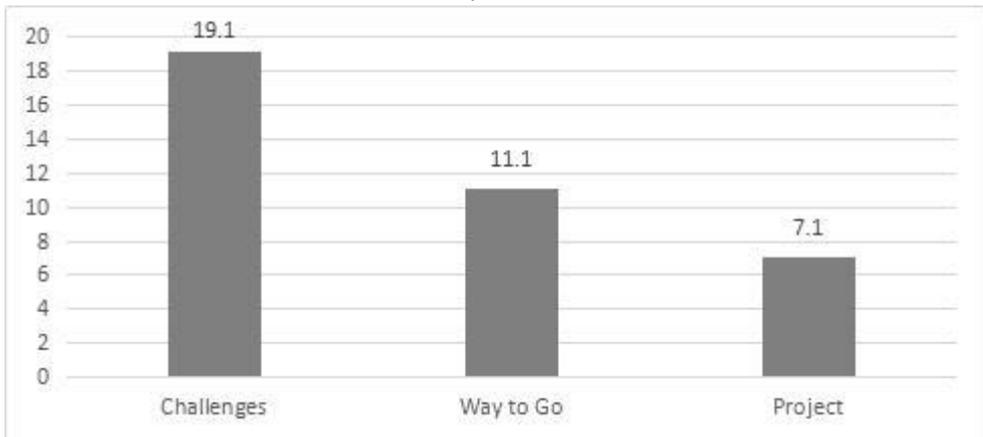
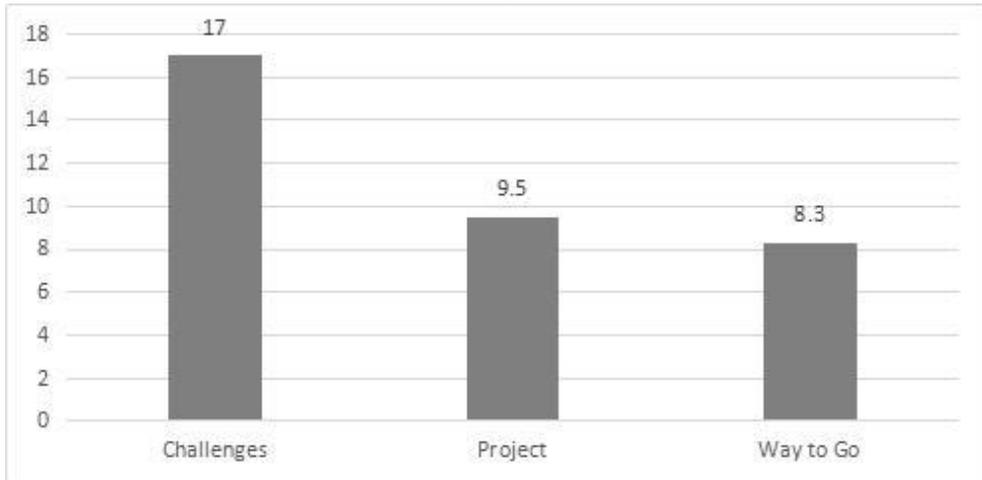
**Table 2.** - Source culture representation in three textbooks

Table 3 shows that there is a difference in representation of international cultural content in the textbooks. Challenges includes 17%, whereas Project features 9.5% and Way to Go 8.3% of texts related to cultures other than target and learners' home cultures.

**Table 3.** - International culture representation in three textbooks

The three textbooks do not include many texts that combine different cultural content. Target culture and source culture are presented together only a handful of times. The analysis shows that only 2.8% of such texts are present in Way to Go, 2.4% in Project, and 2.1% in Challenges.

In order to answer the second research question, the content analysis that follows describes types of tasks that learners are required to do either before or after having read the text.

### *CHALLENGES*

Challenges contains ten modules. They are followed by a Bosnian and Herzegovinian Culture Bank which has ten two-page reading lessons. Each lesson in the Bank is treated as an addition to its corresponding regular textbook module. Challenges also contains five Across Cultures sections which present the international cultural content. These are also two-page reading lessons which can be found in modules 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9.

The textbook opens with a foreword written in the learners' native language which states that the various themes in the book will be accompanied by a discussion of similarities and differences between other cultures and the learner's own (Harris et al., 2007). This acknowledges the requirements set by the Curriculum. Challenges does encourage the learners to make connections between their local context and the content presented in texts. The texts in the first module can be used as an example. For instance, in the warm-up exercises preceding the texts in module 1 learners are asked to compare the information about one school in the US with their own school (6) and between boarding schools in the UK and in their own country (8). In the lesson about boarding schools, comparison is not only used at the beginning but also later on in the lesson when learners, after answering com-

prehension questions about the text, are asked to compare their school with the ones presented in the textbook.

These two countries are not the only countries presented in the texts. As mentioned previously, the textbook contains five Across Cultures sections which, as the name suggests, include texts about various cultural practices from around the world. In the first such section, Across Cultures 1, learners are asked to compare extracurricular activities in their school and a school in Japan and to identify similarities and differences between the two countries (12). In another lesson in this section about coming of age celebrations in different countries, learners are first asked to compare and contrast teenagers' rights in Britain and their own country as an introduction to the topic. After having read the text, they are again invited to discuss questions about similar celebrations in their own country as well as how they imagine they will celebrate their eighteenth birthday (72-73). The lesson thus contains elements of personalization as well as of comparing one's own cultural practices to those of the target and international culture. Another lesson also has a speaking activity at the end which involves personalization and encourages making connections with the content of the text (e.g. asking learners to discuss whether they have ever moved house and whether they would like to live like a nomad after a text about nomads on page 52). However, some texts in this section clearly lack connection to learner's own culture. Some exercises that are presented at the end of the lesson, even though personalized, tend to stray from the topic. Thus, we can find a lesson on unusual food in several countries (such as ants in Colombia and bats in Papua New Guinea) and a speaking activity which asks learners to complete a quiz on healthy habits and a project activity which encourages them to conduct a survey asking other pupils in the school about their eating habits. Similarly, a text about an Indian folk tale does not include any task which asks learners to engage with the cultural elements presented.

Not only in Across Cultures section but elsewhere in the textbook, Challenges dedicates some of its content to information about learners' home culture by incorporating it in exercises which accompany various texts. However, when flicking through the textbook, one can notice that there are no texts about local culture until the very end of the textbook where there is a bank of texts about some aspects of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina called the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Culture Bank. There are ten texts there, one for each module. They treat the same subjects as the modules in the textbook. For example, the first text in the Bank is about schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is an addition to the first module in the textbook which is about schools. Similarly, Module 2, which is about talent, has its addition in the Bank in the form of a text about Muhamed Mešić, a Bosnian who speaks fifty-six languages. The same pattern is applied throughout the Bank. Each text acts as a supplement to a textbook module but treats the subject from the point of view of the local culture. However, since these texts are not incorporated directly into the modules themselves but placed with other additional material at the end of the textbook, right before Grammar Summary section and the Word Bank, it gives the impression that this content can be treated as optional by teachers and learners.

The potential for developing the learners' skill of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) can be found in project tasks – more elaborate tasks that learners are asked to complete and that are later included in their portfolio. Each Across Cultures section incorporates one project task. Even though personalized, they do not require learners to make any reference to culture. However, some project tasks found in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Culture Bank do require engagement with the cultural content. For example, learners are asked to choose a foreign country and explore elements of its educational system (107), compare English to their native language (109), translate a popular traditional Bosnian song to English (121) and compare BiH films to films made in Hollywood (117). Some project activities encourage learners to interview someone older than them about traditional medicine (111) or about the differences between life in the past and contemporary life in Bosnia and Herzegovina (119). Learners are also asked to write a tourist leaflet about their town (115) and about one tourist site in Bosnia (125). The project activities are important since they are often rather elaborate, requiring learners to do some research and reporting. Even though each lesson in the BiH Culture Bank contains a portfolio assignment, the assignments in Across Culture sections could also be altered to incorporate information learners have read about in that very lesson and thus make international cultural content look and feel less random. One of the skills that Byram et al. (2012) consider crucial for developing intercultural competence is *savoirapprendre/faire* (skill of discovery and interaction) which entails the ability to find out new knowledge of a culture. This skill can also be improved by completing project tasks.

It can be observed that Challenges makes considerable effort to encourage learners to engage with the texts they read in activities that precede and follow a text. Personalization is often present and so is the reflection on similarities and differences between the learners' own culture and the one discussed in the text. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian Culture Bank includes content about learners' home country as well as the projects that learners do at home and which provide them with an opportunity to do research on their own and explore a variety of material.

### *WAY TO GO*

Way to Go consists of 4 large units and a total of 24 lessons. Each unit has a Culture Spot section which includes a reading lesson with a focus on culture. Unlike Challenges where local cultural content is found at the end of the textbook, here it is incorporated into regular units. For example, a two-page lesson about the US history (44-45) is followed by a lesson on the medieval period in Bosnia and Herzegovina (46-47). The Appendix contains short texts about holidays and festivals.

The foreword to Way to Go, written in the learners' L1, states that the textbook, apart from teaching language, teaches learners about the cultures of countries where English is spoken as the first language. It also, as it states, includes "elements of Bosnian and Herzegovinian culture and heritage" (Vasić et al., 2011). This seems

very promising and in accordance with the aims stated in the Curriculum. However, local cultural elements, even though incorporated in the textbook, are used to teach either vocabulary or grammar. For example, Lesson 5 about school orchestra contains references to learners' home culture - there are four texts describing the performance of four school orchestras and their names indicate they are from Bosnia and Herzegovina (30). The texts, however, are used to teach adverbs of manner. This also applies to reading passages featuring international cultural content. One example in point is Lesson 18 about traditional weddings. The featured text is about a traditional wedding in China. The warm-up questions ask learners whether they have been to a wedding and who got married and the activity at the end of the lesson asks learners to write about what happens at weddings in their country. The text itself is used to teach reported speech. Even though elements of personalization are present and the learners' own culture is incorporated, there is no attempt at making connections between the two cultures and learners are not encouraged to reflect on the cultural content they have read.

Culture Spots are sections where the focus on developing learners' intercultural competence might be expected. These are pages targeting culture content in each of the four units. Even though they serve the purpose of presenting cultural material, they do not include activities that help learners engage with the content of the text. In Culture Spot 1, for example, there is a text about the US history (44-45) and the next two pages are about the medieval period in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, texts are presented without any warm-up activities and the only activity is a comprehension check requiring learners to match parts of the sentences. Similarly, the only exercise accompanying the text about New York in Culture Spot 3 is a factfile that learners need to fill out, which is again similar to the exercise after the text about California in Culture Spot 4. Some attempt has been made at linking the source and the target culture in Culture Spot 2. The text is about a guided tour of Washington DC aimed at practicing giving directions. The task at the end of the lesson asks learners to help Ana and Adis find their way to Bašaršija in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there is very little meaningful interaction between the two places.

Some examples of exercises that encourage learners to compare cultures and use their own local culture as a resource can be found in the Appendix where there is a seven-page section about holidays and festivals. The texts talk about celebrating various festivities around the world such as Thanksgiving, Ramadan, Christmas, and New Year but also Valentine's Day, April Fools' Day and Halloween. Learners are asked to reflect to some extent on similarities and differences between holidays described in the textbook and the ones in their country. Each text is followed by one or several questions about whether/how a holiday in question is celebrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, after a text about Thanksgiving, learners are asked to write a paragraph about a comparable holiday in Bosnia and Herzegovina (166). A similar task is included after a text about New Year celebrations (primarily those in Scotland and England) where learners are asked to write a report about how the

New Year is celebrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina (170). Even though elements of target and of source cultures can be identified here, interaction between them is very limited in the sense that learners are not encouraged to make any interconnection between the two ways of celebrations. It is also interesting that learners are offered a choice between two tasks, either to write a report about the New Year traditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina or to write about New Year traditions around the world. The two do not interact and a better choice might have been to ask learners to incorporate both in the report. The last page of this section has three short texts on Valentine's Day, April Fools' Day and Halloween. Each of these texts is accompanied by a question whether the holiday is celebrated in their country but no other tasks are included and no further reflection is encouraged.

It can be seen that even though Way to Go includes source cultural material and makes an attempt at connecting different cultures, cultural information throughout the textbooks is mostly decontextualized and predominantly used to teach vocabulary or grammar points. The material in the Appendix offers some activities that can be seen as aiding the development of learners' intercultural competence. However, this material can be treated as optional and might not be used by many teachers and learners.

### *PROJECT*

Project consists of seven units. With its 94 pages, it is the shortest of the three textbooks under analysis. Similarly to the other two textbooks, Project also contains a lesson designated only to culture which can be found in the Culture section in each of the first six units and which consists of a text and comprehension checking questions. The textbook follows the same principle of organization throughout the first six units. The seventh unit follows a different pattern of organization since it consists of Bosnian and Herzegovinian cultural content.

Unlike the other two textbooks, Project does not contain any foreword. What can be noticed right away is that the content throughout the book is overwhelmingly target culture oriented. Out of its seven units, only the last one, Unit 7 (My Country) includes local material.

The texts, on all accounts, are accompanied by comprehension questions without a lot of follow-up activities which establish a connection between learners' local environment and the content of the text. For example, the text about a former contestant on a reality TV show and positive and negative aspects of fame is preceded by questions about whether learners like watching reality TV shows and which one is their favorite (24). Even though there is an element of personalization before the text, learners are not encouraged to reflect on the content of the text after they read it in more detail.

Many texts are used to teach either grammar or vocabulary, or both. The text about stunt doubles focuses on some vocabulary and teaching the difference between present perfect and past simple tenses (20-21). There are several compre-

hension checking questions but there are no warm-up activities familiarizing learners with the topic of the text and no follow-up activities of any kind.

The part of the textbook where some connection with the learners own country is encouraged is the Culture section found in each of the first six units. For example, the text about books popular with British teenagers is followed by activities asking learners about their own reading habits as well as the reading habits of teenagers in their country (28), while the text about sports events in Britain encourages learners to write about important sports events in their country (40). However, this is where all the engagement with the text ends. Moreover, two texts, "The Story of England" (16) and the text about Australia (64), are followed only by comprehension questions and nothing else. The assumption here seems to be that it is enough only to present the learners with cultural content.

The place in the textbook where learners are asked to engage with cultural content to some extent is in the Your Project section at the end of each unit. The textbook offers six projects which are related to the reading passages. The project task in unit 1 encourages learners to write about an event in their country and use pictures and maps to illustrate it (19), the one in unit 4 asks learners to do the same about one of their country's heroes and heroines (55), and the project task in unit 5 involves making a poster about an environmental problem either in their own country or elsewhere (67). What is missing here is the element of comparison.

Similar to the other two textbooks, Project includes texts about learners' home culture. However, even though the seventh unit contains texts on different aspects of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, learners are not asked to reflect on them. The text about the Bašćaršija Nights Festival in Sarajevo and the Edinburgh Festival is used mainly to teach articles, quantifiers, and comparative adjectives (82-83) while the text about marriage customs is used to teach indefinite pronouns (84). In a similar manner, three texts about three towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina are followed by a grammar section on possessive pronouns and adjectives but do include a speaking exercise encouraging learners to speak about their own city (87). All things considered, the only unit that contains content about the source culture discusses that content mainly through comprehension questions and grammar focus. Exercises like these do very little to promote intercultural competence.

It can be observed that the Project textbook in its first six units does not incorporate many exercises that encourage learners to compare aspects of different cultures. Some texts in the Culture section, however, make this connection and the projects in the textbook encourage engagement with the cultural material. Texts about source culture, even though present, are not incorporated throughout the textbook and are used mainly to teach grammar.

## CONCLUSION

According to McKay (2000), teaching culture means "a critical and social process of trying to understand other cultures in relation to one's own" (8). All three textbooks exhibit some attempts to do so. It can be seen that all three textbooks incorporate cultural elements to different degrees. Target-language cultural content

still dominates all three textbooks, albeit less in Challenges than in the other two textbooks analyzed.

For McKay (2000: 11), learners can benefit from learning about their own culture so that they can be able to explain it to others. Unlike Moirano's (2012) analysis of textbooks used in Argentina which showed that textbooks do not present local cultural content but contain personalization exercises instead and urge the learners to do research about their culture (87), all three textbooks analyzed in this paper incorporate content about learners' home culture. However, the texts which include this type of content are usually relegated to the end of the textbook. In Challenges they are in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Culture Bank, in Way to Go they are in the Appendix and in Project they are in the last unit, Unit 7. All three textbooks thus lack the full incorporation of SC elements throughout.

The main problem that has been identified is the presentation of cultural material. It is presented in isolation and learners are not asked to address the content of the text. This is best exemplified in the Way to Go textbook and its texts in Culture Spot section which are not preceded by any introductory activities and which are followed by tasks requiring learners to read the texts for specific information. This is in line with the research by Shin et al. (2011) who found that international textbooks they analyzed presented cultural material on a knowledge-level only (266). It can also be observed in all three textbooks that texts about culture are followed by comprehension questions without further examination and reflection. In Challenges, even though texts are often introduced by warm-up activities asking learners to reflect on similarities and differences between their own and the culture in question, they sometimes miss the opportunity to aid learners to reexamine their initial assumptions after they have read the text. Another related problem is that texts with cultural content, such as the text about the Chinese traditional wedding in Way to Go, or a large portion of texts in Project, are used to teach grammar points without any other type of engagement with the content.

Out of the three textbooks analyzed, only Challenges invests serious effort in developing learners' intercultural competence, in line with the aims of the Curriculum. In the majority of activities preceding and following texts, it encourages both personalization and discussion of similarities and differences between the learners' cultural background and the material they read about.

Textbook selection is a challenging task for various reasons, including the one that if the textbook is deficient in some respect, teachers will need to work harder supplementing the textbook and compensating for its shortcomings, especially if they are required to achieve certain aims or meet certain expectations. Considering the growing emphasis placed on English as an international language and developing learners' intercultural competence, those selecting the textbook will need to evaluate it carefully beforehand and pay close attention not only to the content but whether its incorporation is meaningful in the sense that it encourages learners to reflect on what they learn.

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