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“Intercultural Communicative Competence in the EFL Classroom. An Evaluation of Austrian Coursebooks.”

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------|
| BMUKK | Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur |
| CEFR | Common European Frame of Reference |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| ELF | English as a Lingua Franca |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| FLT | Foreign Language Teaching |
| | |
| L | Laser B1 |
| MYW | Make Your Way 5 |
| NH | New Headway 5 |

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1 Introduction

"[...] we might want to think less of teaching 'culture' than of developing in our students an intercultural competence steeped in a deep understanding of their historicity and subjectivity as language learners"

(Kramersch 2013: 60).

Without doubt, because of the growing awareness and relevance of intercultural competence, this very concept has gained a lot of attention in the last few decades. Intercultural competence seems to be ubiquitous in the contexts of education, the economy and politics. According to Kramersch (2013: 69), the emergence of the term 'intercultural competence' reflects an effort "to increase dialogue and cooperation among members of different national cultures within a common European Union or within a global economy". Consequently, the promotion of intercultural competence also plays a central role in the foreign language teaching and learning context. It has now been widely acknowledged that a successful language learner does not only need knowledge and skill in the grammar of language, but also needs to know how to use the language in a socially and culturally appropriate manner (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 7). In fact, various disciplines have contributed to this field of inquiry: second language acquisition, pedagogy, social anthropology and Cultural Studies. This has however led to the fact that intercultural competence is still regarded as a somewhat fuzzy concept entailing no clear and straightforward definition. Concomitantly, teachers are often unsure of what the concept of intercultural competence exactly means and how to promote a student's intercultural competence. But as Byram, Gribkova & Starkey (2002: 7) emphasise: "[A]n Intercultural Dimension does not mean yet another new method of language teaching but rather a natural extension of what most teachers recognise as important".

It will become clear in the line of argument of this thesis, that coursebooks and their cultural content occupy a pivotal role in fostering the students' intercultural competence. The main focus of this thesis is thus the presentation of an analysis of three commonly used coursebooks for English foreign language teaching and learning in the Austrian context. The analysis aims at investigating the cultural content presented in the

coursebooks and their degree of realism in doing so. Therefore, the following research questions will be addressed in the study:

What potential do the investigated coursebooks have for developing the students' intercultural communicative competence in terms of their presentation of the cultural content?

- How do the investigated coursebooks present the cultural content with regard to their degree of *realism*?
- Do the investigated coursebooks still focus on the native speaking target cultures or do they show awareness of the usage of English as a lingua franca?

Before embarking on the actual analysis it is necessary to provide a sound review of the relevant literature in both the fields of intercultural communicative competence and coursebook evaluation. Chapter 2 is concerned with the concept of intercultural communicative competence in the English language teaching (ELT) context. First, this thesis will provide a short overview on how the notions of culture and culture teaching in ELT have changed in the past few decades. Furthermore, by referring to Byram's model of *five savoirs* as well as Kramsch's concepts of the "intercultural speaker" and "third place", a common definition of intercultural communicative competence will be reached. However, as stated before, due to the various disciplines that have contributed to the field, intercultural competence has drawn blurred boundaries, resulting in a number of critical voices on the very concept. These critical voices will be equally discussed. Last, the aspect of English as a lingua franca and its underlying implications for culture teaching and the presentation of the cultural content in particular will be outlined.

Chapter 3 centres on how culture and the notion of intercultural competence are realised in curricula and coursebooks. First, it will be investigated how the concept of intercultural competence is implemented in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as well as in the Austrian AHS upper secondary curriculum for foreign languages. Second, a discussion of the implementation of ideological content in ELT coursebooks as well as of the 'global coursebook' will be provided. The chapter will end with the presentation of some relevant research on cultural content in teaching materials. The work of Risager (1991), Byram (1993) and Sercu (2000) will be discussed since they will play an essential role in my own study.

Chapter 4 marks the beginning of the second part of this study and the actual coursebook analysis. First, the methodology and procedure will be introduced along with the criteria for evaluating the coursebooks' cultural content. Furthermore, the structure of the coursebook database as well as the selected coursebooks will be presented.

The data analysis and results obtained in the study will be presented in chapter 5. First, the external evaluation stage will focus on the claims made by authors and the table of contents in the students' and teachers' books. Second, the internal evaluation stage will investigate the coursebooks' degree of realism in presenting the cultural content. Here, it will be examined how coursebooks distribute culture over cultural topics, levels of culture and the concentric circles of English as well as the perspectives they adopted. Additionally, the presentation of the coursebooks' population and of intercultural contacts will be scrutinised.

Finally, chapter 6 summarises the main findings of the analysis and provides a discussion of the results with reference to the research questions. It further outlines some implications for teaching.

2 Intercultural Communicative Competence in English Language Teaching

Since the 1980s, in addition to the acquisition of communicative competence, intercultural learning has been established as an important objective in foreign language teaching (FLT). Intercultural competence however cannot be regarded as an “expendable fifth skill tacked on” to the four basic language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing (Kramsch 1993: 1). On the contrary, it has been argued that culture needs to be deemed fundamentally important in communicative language teaching and that teaching for communicative competence should thus be an integrative part of teaching for intercultural competence (Sercu 2000: 32; Pulverness 2003: 426-27).

Nevertheless, intercultural competence has not always been in the centre of interest in ELT and culture teaching in particular. The following section aims at providing a short overview of how the notions of culture and culture teaching have changed in the ELT context over the past few decades.

2.1 Changing notions of culture and culture teaching in ELT – from static to dynamic

Generally, culture is a highly complex notion stemming from various perspectives which have led to a substantial number of definitions from all kinds of fields. Perhaps the best-known and most commonly used definition of culture has been put forward by Clifford Geertz in his *Interpretation of Cultures*, in which he defines culture as a “historically transmitted semiotic network constructed by humans and which allows them to develop, communicate and perpetuate their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about the world” (Geertz 1973: 89).

Regarding the language teaching and learning context, “[c]ulture [...] is usually defined pragmatically as a/the culture associated with a language being learned” (Byram & Grundy 2003: 1). Therefore, culture in ELT has been closely related to the culture of what Kachru (1985) coined the “inner circle” countries, i.e. countries where English is used

as a first language, like Great Britain and the United States¹.

In a globalising world, however, we are confronted with the loss of former certainties and "essentialist view[s] of culture", where culture is perceived as a homogenous entity within a clearly bordered space:

The most common essentialist view of culture is that 'cultures' are coincidental with countries, regions, and continents, implying that one can 'visit' them while travelling and that they contain 'mutually exclusive types of behaviour' so that people 'from' or 'in' French culture are essentially different from those 'from' or 'in' Chinese culture. (Holliday 2005: 17)

Holliday (2005: 18) stresses the problematic nature of essentialism as people are constrained and defined by the culture they live in, which in consequence, leaves no space for individual agency anymore. Without doubt, an essentialist view of culture equally reinforces stereotypes and fixed cultural images like "the friendly, happy or lazy members of a national group" (Pennycook 1999 qtd. in Vodopija-Krstanovic 2008: 194-95). Although stereotypical generalisations, which can be often found in teaching materials, à la 'The Scots are very friendly' aim at fostering positive attitudes towards foreign cultures, they depict people as homogenous implying that everybody in a country or city has the same characteristics, traits and interests (ibid.).

Holliday therefore proposes a "non-essentialist view" of culture which refrains from looking at culture as "a geographical place which can be visited and to which someone belong", but sees it as "a social force which is evident wherever it emerges as being significant" (Holliday 2005: 23). In this context, the static notion of culture is abandoned in favour of a dynamic concept, and culture is understood as "something that flows and shifts" between people by equally binding and separating them (ibid.).

Nonetheless, in ELT, the view of culture has mainly remained essentialist. Thus, culture was solely reduced to a mixture of what Allen & Valette (1977: 325) call "culture with a big C" and "culture with a small c". The former manifests itself in "art, music, literature, architecture, technology, scientific discoveries, and philosophy". On the other hand, "culture with a small c" refers to phenomena of everyday-life of people: "

¹ Kachru (1985: 12-15) came up with three concentric circles of English: The "inner circle" represents the "traditional bases of English", the countries where English is the primary language. The "outer (or extended) circle" encompasses the regions where English plays an important role due to historical reasons, and has the status of an official language. The "expanding circle" refers to those countries where English is used as a foreign language or lingua franca.

[...] when and what they eat, how they make a living, the way they organize their society, the attitudes they express towards friends and members of their families, how they act in different situations, which expressions they use to show approval and disapproval, the traditions they must observe, and so on. (ibid.)

Similarly, former culture teaching approaches have been characterised as so-called “facts transmission approach[es]” (Vodopija-Krstanovic 2008: 190) or ‘Landeskunde’ in the German-speaking context. Following a fact-based ‘Landeskunde’ approach, the cultural data – merely facts and figures about the target culture’s history and institutions (like Britain and U.S.) – is presented as “tangible, unproblematic and stable” and is therefore easy to demonstrate, quantify and test (ibid.). It was equally claimed that culture teaching which deliberately avoids expounding multiperspectival views and potentially conflict-laden issues, and which therefore entirely focuses on the positive facets of the target culture, mainly aims at preparing the students for their future role as tourists in English-speaking countries (Delanoy & Volkmann 2006: 12). The traditional ‘Landeskunde’ instruction has also been criticised on the grounds that it pursues to reveal the ‘whole truth’ of the target culture (Sercu 2002: 9), and that students are expected to take this truth for granted without further reflection or challenge (O’Dowd 2006: 15). Consequently, Sercu (ibid.) warns against presenting cultural content from an authorial monoperspective, as hereby culture remains a static, monolithic, idealised and undifferentiated object.

In the 1980s, a fundamental change in cultural learning and teaching occurred in German-speaking countries. Traditional ‘Landeskunde’ concepts and facts transmission approaches were replaced by intercultural-learning approaches. With the advent of intercultural-learning approaches, the traditional notion and conception of culture was radically challenged, too. Firstly, culture was seen from a non-essentialist point of view, as highly complex entities which are constantly being changed, reactivated and redefined by concrete people. Additionally, in cultural learning a shift was demanded “towards the *intercultural*, i.e. the processes of meaning creation happening *between* representatives of the target culture and their addressees in other countries.” (Delanoy & Volkmann 2006: 12-13 [original emphasis]). And most importantly, language learners could no longer be considered mere “‘receptacles’ to be filled with factual information” (Delanoy & Volkmann 2006: 13). Instead, they were encouraged to self-reflectively discover English-speaking cultures and to co-construct cultural meanings. Consequently, cultural practices

were defined as “a process of communication”, where language and culture are closely interrelated². Instead of gaining a factual body of knowledge of the target culture, the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence was suggested as (one of) the main objective(s) of foreign language learning (ibid.). Sercu (2000: 40-42) advocates this paradigm shift and calls for a so-called “Sichtwechsel”:

The field of culture-and-language teaching seems in need of a genuine ‘Sichtwechsel’, a change in perspective. [...] [L]earners of culture can no longer be perceived as passive recipients as yet completely unfamiliar with an ‘essential’ body of knowledge. They need to be conceptualised as active participants in a process of increasingly autonomous construction of cultural meaning. The static opposition of ‘them on their territory’ versus ‘us on our territory’ has to be left for a dynamic model of constructive interaction between different cultural frames of references and identities. (Sercu 2000: 40-41)

Figure 1 summarises the main components of the two models of culture teaching and illustrates the so-called “Sichtwechsel” towards a dialogic model where intercultural communicative competence is seen as a goal to aim for:

| Monologic model culture as a product | Dialogic model culture as process |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Static model of culture out there Meaning taught by teacher Teacher-authority directed model Learning outcomes directed model Cognitive development (foremost cognitive objectives) | Dynamic model of construction of meaning Meaning is constructed by learner Learner-autonomy directed model Learning process directed model Holistic development (cognitive, affective, behavioural, learner autonomy, strategic and awareness objectives) |

Figure 1: Two models of culture teaching (Sercu 2000: 41)

² Note the implementation of the hyphenated term language-and-culture in Byram & Morgan (1994).

2.2 Defining Intercultural Communicative Competence

The previous chapter looked at the paradigm shift in culture teaching from a static towards a dynamic model of culture, and from 'Landeskunde' approaches towards the development of intercultural communicative competence. The following section aims at reaching a definition of intercultural communicative competence.

In fact, Byram (1997: 70-71) makes a distinction between 'intercultural competence' and 'intercultural communicative competence'. According to Byram, the former describes the ability to interact with members of other cultures in *one's own language*, whereas the latter refers to the competence to communicate with representatives of other cultures by using a *foreign language*. However, as intercultural communicative competence and intercultural competence are often used synonymously in the literature, both terms will be applied interchangeably within this thesis.

Nevertheless, the definition of such a complex notion as intercultural communicative competence is not a simple matter. In her study, Deardorff (2006) endeavoured to reach an extensive but common definition of intercultural competence. She therefore invited 23 leading intercultural scholars (Michael Byram among others) to rate several key elements of intercultural competence. The top-rated definition of intercultural competence was "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Deardorff 2006: 247). This gives rise to the question of what knowledge, skills and attitudes are involved in intercultural competence. The most comprehensive specification of the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to interact effectively in intercultural encounters has been provided by Byram (1997). His model of *five savoirs* has been highly influential and will be fully exploited in the following section.

2.2.1 Byram's model *five savoirs*

Byram's (1997) model of *five savoirs* has been widely adopted by scholars all around the world. Byram (1997: 31) explicitly states that his model should be accessible and helpful for teachers of foreign languages, in order to facilitate the teacher's task of putting the model into practice in the classroom. Indeed, Byram's model has already been put into use extensively, since it served as a basis for the definition of intercultural competence in the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR), and in the Austrian curriculum.

The *five savoirs* can be regarded as an interplay of knowledge, attitudes, skills and values which are crucial for successful interaction in intercultural encounters, and are formulated as follows: *savoirs*, *savoir comprendre*, *savoir apprendre*, *savoir être* and *savoir s'engager*.

Attitudes (*savoir-être*):

According to Byram (1997: 34), the foundations or pre-conditions for successful intercultural interaction are supposed to be attitudes³ of "curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours." He further stresses the importance of "a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging" (ibid.). This can be further understood as an "ability to 'decentre'", i.e. "*to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange*" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 19 [original emphasis]).

Knowledge (*savoirs*):

The knowledge brought into intercultural encounters can be broadly sorted into two categories, on the one hand, the "knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country" (Byram 1997: 35), and on the other hand, "knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (ibid.). In brief, this knowledge is not chiefly meant to be knowledge of a specific culture, but rather knowledge of how social groups and identities function and of what is included in intercultural encounters.

Skills (*savoir comprendre & savoir apprendre/faire*):

Additionally, intercultural communicative competence consists of two sets of skills: The skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) means the "ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 13). The second set of skills are those of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), implying the "ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge,

³ Note that these attitudes do not necessarily have to be positive, as even positive attitudes/prejudice can prohibit mutual intelligibility (Byram 1997: 34). For more insights about the "Role of Positive Attitudes" refer to O'Dowd (2006: 27-29).

attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (ibid.).

Values (*savoir s'engager*):

Finally, Byram (1997) stresses the necessity to build a critical cultural awareness of values (*savoir s'engager*). Basically, it means the "ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 13). In brief, in the EFL classroom it is crucial "to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country" (ibid.).

Byram's model clearly shows that intercultural communicative competence is comprised of an affective domain (attitudes), a cognitive domain (knowledge), and a skills domain, which are closely intertwined. Moreover, as Figure 2 illustrates, Byram relates those aspects of intercultural competence with Van Ek's (1986) model of "communicative ability" and his concepts of 'linguistic competence', 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'discourse competence'. This implies that the model of intercultural communicative competence does not neglect linguistic competences, but sees them as crucial components in achieving intercultural communicative competence.

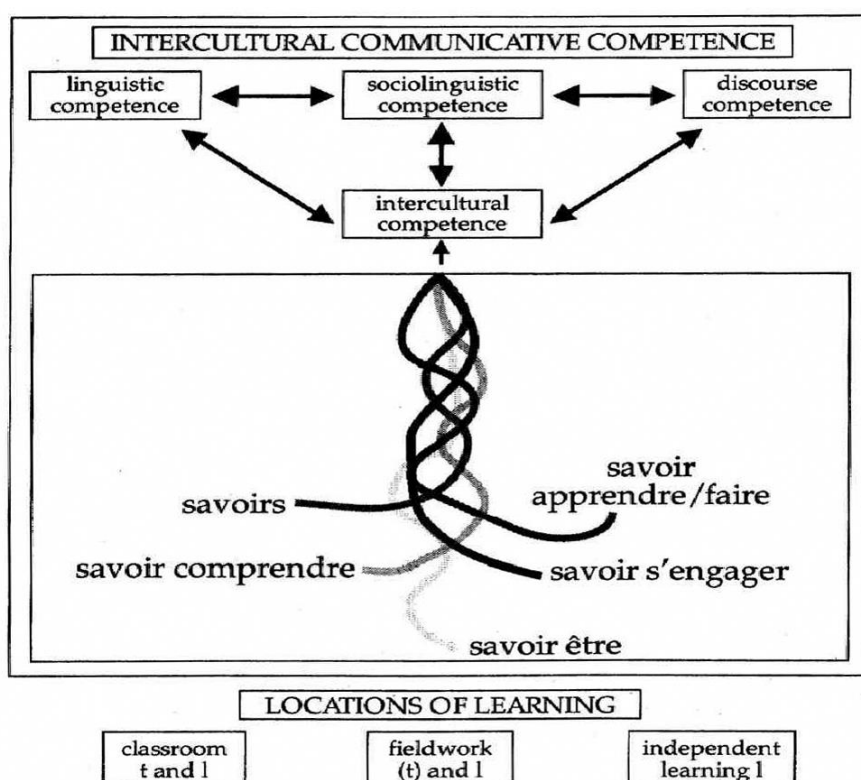


Figure 2: Model of intercultural communicative competence after Byram (1997: 73)

Corbett (2003: 31) states that “[t]ogether these [Byram’s] *savoirs* indicate the student’s ability to reach Kramsch’s ‘third place’ [...], a vantage point from which the learner can understand and mediate between the home culture and the target culture”. The concept of ‘third place’ as well as the concept of the ‘intercultural speaker’ will be further discussed in the following section.

Nonetheless, it is still important to point out that “intercultural competence is never complete and perfect” which implies that one can never be fully or definitely interculturally competent (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 11; Byram & Hu 2013: 346). The authors explain that it is simply unfeasible to acquire all the cultural knowledge one might probably need for communication with foreign people in the future – also because those cultures are themselves dynamic and in constant change. Therefore, the authors conclude:

[I]t is not possible to anticipate the knowledge language learners need and this has been the main failure of the emphasis on knowledge in [...] *Landeskunde*, because whatever is taught it is inevitably insufficient. (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 11 [original emphasis])

2.2.2 Kramsch’s concepts of the “intercultural speaker and “third place”

The concept of the “intercultural speaker” (Byram 1997; Kramsch 1998; Byram & Fleming 1998) is closely associated with intercultural communicative competence, and has been widely taken up by other scholars (Bredella 1999; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002; Gray 2010). The intercultural speaker evolved from the criticism of using models of communicative competence, which are based on native speaker proficiency, as a target for language learners to aim for:

We have judged the best language learner to be the one who comes nearest to a native speaker mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of the language, and who can therefore ‘pass for’, or be identified as, a native, communicating on an equal footing with natives. (Byram & Fleming 1998: 8)

Byram (1997: 7-9) emphasises that the leading work on communicative competence by Canale & Swain (1980) and Van Ek (1986) had been founded on Hymes’ (1972) critique of Chomsky’s notion of ‘competence’, which itself referred to native speakers. Here, Hymes’ description was misleadingly transferred into the FLT context, and language learners have been expected to “model themselves on first language speakers, ignoring the significance of the social identities and cultural competence of the learner in any

intercultural interaction" (Byram 1997: 8). Byram (1997: 11) sees two reasons why setting native speaker norms as a goal for language learners is not appropriate in the FLT context. First, by using the native speaker as a model to approximate, one sets an unattainable target, which consequently implies inevitable failure. Second, he claims that it implies learners to become linguistically and culturally "schizophrenic".

In her article 'The privilege of the intercultural speaker', Kramsch (1998) maintains that the term 'native speaker' is "an outdated myth" because of developments such as the multicultural nature of contemporary societies as well as the increased use of English as a lingua franca (cf. chapter 2.3) (Kramsch 1998: 23). According to Kramsch (1998: 26), "[t]he notion: one native speaker, one language, one national culture is, of course, a fallacy." She therefore advocates the idea of the intercultural speaker, who is not expected to follow the rules of a particular social group, but who is able "to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use" (Kramsch 1998: 27). An intercultural speaker is therefore not expected to assimilate but to *mediate*, i.e. being able to establish relationships between culturally different groups as well as to explain and accept that difference. An intercultural speaker is also an *ethnographer*, i.e. being able to learn by observing and to relate the existing knowledge of cultures and social identities to unfamiliar cultural contexts. Still, as mentioned before, an intercultural speaker will never be fully proficient, which means that also teachers themselves continue to learn and acquire their abilities as intercultural speakers (Byram & Fleming 1998: 8-9).

Out of the considerations regarding the intercultural speaker, Kramsch (1993) developed the concept of "third place", which is supposed to be a position occupied by the language learners "where they see themselves from the inside and from the outside" (Byram & Hu 2013: 62). 'Third place' can be perceived "as a metaphor for eschewing the traditional dualities on which language education is based: L1/L2, C1/C2, NS/NNS, Us/Them, Self/Other" (Kramsch 2009: 199). However, Kramsch (2009: 248) warns of the fact that the concept of third culture "is prone to romanticizing marginality and hybridity" and might therefore become "a static place between two dominant cultures" being "reified [and] essentialized into a stable third culture". This is why Kramsch enlarges the concept of third place to "symbolic competence"⁴.

⁴ For further insights on 'symbolic competence' see Kramsch (2009a).

2.3 Critical voices on the concept of intercultural competence

Intercultural learning and the notion of intercultural competence have indeed gained a lot of attention in a wide range of fields, particularly in the context of FLT. A lot of research has been published on the topic. Nevertheless, taking into account some weak descriptions of this fuzzy concept, a few critics have raised their voices. Auernheimer (2013: 7) for example, claims the inflationary usage of the “buzzword” intercultural competence. House (1996: 1) describes intercultural learning as a “[...] sinnentleertes Modewort” and Edmonson & House (1998) even regard it as “[...] ein überflüssiger Begriff”. In fact, Edmonson & House (1998) and House (1996) have led the criticism of intercultural learning and intercultural competence as educational concepts.

Generally speaking, learning and teaching objectives in FLT have traditionally been divided into cognitive, affective and skill-based domains⁵. Although literature on the topic suggests that these domains make up integral parts of intercultural communicative competence (cf. Byram 1997 in chapter 2.2.1), House (1996: 3) criticises that the “mainstream”-conception of intercultural competence in FLT firmly insists on the affective domain:

Sehr häufig wird „interkulturelle Kompetenz“ rein affektiv-verhaltensorientiert gesehen und mit Aussagen wie „die fremde Kultur verstehen“, „Vorurteile abbauen“, „zu Toleranz fähig sein“, „ethnozentrische Sichtweisen vermeiden“ usw. umschrieben. (House 1996: 2)

Although House acknowledges these aims as important objectives in FLT, she laments that the prime focus on the affective domain has played down the other two domains, namely the linguistic and skills aspects of foreign language learning (House 1996: 2-4). House even calls the usefulness of the term intercultural competence into question when she argues:

Wenn wir nun den Begriff „Interkulturelle Kompetenz“ ohne diese emotionale Einstellungskomponente begreifen, dann – so glaube ich – brauchen wir ihn eigentlich nicht mehr, denn eine umfassend verstandene Kommunikative Kompetenz beinhaltet alles andere, was man mit interkultureller Kompetenz dann noch meinen kann. (House 1996: 4)

Obviously, this stark criticism has not remained uncommented. Bredella & Delanoy (1999: 11), for instance, reject House’s claim that the term “interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht” might be tautological, because they maintain that by following this line of

⁵ Cf. the pioneering work by Bloom (1956) quoted in House (1996: 3).

argument, audio-lingual and communicative language teaching would be tautologies as well. But this is not the case, and communicative language teaching has indeed emerged from a growing awareness that language teaching methods and practices were not communicative at all. Therefore, they state that intercultural language teaching rather implies that very often opportunities for intercultural learning are not fully taken advantage of in the classroom. Bredella & Delanoy further argue that House's concern over the linguistic aspect being displaced by the intercultural component is not justified:

Ein interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht verdrängt nicht die linguistische und kommunikative Kompetenz [...] Er lenkt den Blick vielmehr nur darauf, daß wir beim Fremdsprachenlehren und -lernen drauf Rücksicht nehmen müssen, daß die Lernenden die fremde Sprache und Kultur aus ihrer eigenen Perspektive wahrnehmen und daß es daher darauf ankommt, diese Differenz nicht zu überspielen, sondern ins Bewußtsein zu heben. (Bredella & Delanoy 1999: 11)

2.4 The aspect of English as a lingua franca in culture teaching

Nowadays, English has reached the status of a global lingua franca and serves as the primary medium of international and intercultural communication. Estimated figures on 'speakers of English' show that non-native speakers of English have now clearly outnumbered native speakers of English, and that 80% of all communication including the use of English as a foreign or second language does not involve any native speakers of English at all (Crystal 2003, Beneke 1991 qtd. in Seidlhofer 2011: 2).

Although there is growing uneasiness and criticism of setting the native speaker as a target for the language learners (cf. chapter 2.2.2), the ongoing practice in ELT still strives for a 'Standard English' native speaker model and therefore "prepare learners for interaction with native speakers of English in a monolingual, i.e. target language environment where native speaker knowledge of the language and culture serves as a yardstick for success in the foreign language" (Illés 2011: 4). Seidlhofer (2012: 75) similarly criticises the fact that a successful language learner is not only expected to acquire the linguistic standard code, but they are also expected to relate it to the culture of the target native community.

Here, we are faced with a further dimension of complexity in ELT, because given all the different cultural contexts in which English is used, English is not only a *lingua franca* but also a *cultura franca* (Gilmore 2007) or multicultural language (Honna 2012). Hence,

English can no longer be regarded as inextricably bound to the inner circle, and the inner circle can no longer assume sole ownership of the language (Widdowson 1994).

Alptekin & Alptekin (1984: 16) therefore strongly advocate suggestions to "'de-Anglo-Americanize' English", both linguistically and culturally. The argumentation reads as follows:

How relevant, then, are the conventions of British politeness or American informality to the Japanese and Turks, say, when doing business in English? How relevant are such culturally-laden discourse samples as British railway timetables or American newspaper advertisements to industrial engineers from Romania and Egypt conducting technical research in English? How relevant is the importance of Anglo-American eye contact, or the socially acceptable distance for conversation as properties of meaningful communication to Finnish and Italian academicians exchanging ideas in a professional meeting? (Alptekin 2002: 61)

Alptekin & Alptekin (1984: 15-17) do not, however, only dismiss the "cultural load of the target language" as irrelevant, they even warn of a form of cultural imperialism, where "the host country runs the risk of having its own culture totally submerged". Alptekin (1993: 140) concludes that instead of stubbornly insisting on the inseparability of the English language and its target cultures, "it would be more realistic to speak of one language which is not always inextricably tied to one particular culture, as is the case with English". Obviously, the aspect of ELF has profound influence on design decisions on the cultural content in teaching materials.

As regards the cultural content of language classes, however, the rise of global English has created a new situation. Cultural topics relating to countries where English is spoken as a native language, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States, have to be complemented by topics dealing with other parts of the world in order to do justice to the global use of English in classroom teaching. (Gnutzmann 1999: 165)

The aspect of ELF in teaching materials will be again explored in chapter 3.2. For now we will look at how culture and intercultural communicative competence are implemented in curricula and coursebooks.

3 Culture and Intercultural Competence in Curricula and Coursebooks

3.1 Intercultural competence in the Common European Framework of Reference and the Austrian curriculum

The following section aims at investigating how intercultural communicative competence is implemented in the CEFR as well as in the Austrian AHS upper secondary foreign language curriculum.

Intercultural competence in the CEFR

The CEFR, which was devised by the Council of Europe in 2001, desires to provide not only a "common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks etc. across Europe" but also a description of "what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (CEFR 2001: 1). On that account, the CEFR offers descriptors for language proficiency in the four skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening. Apart from the focus on the four language skills, the CEFR also gives considerable importance to intercultural learning and the promotion of intercultural competence. It will be recalled from chapter 2.2.1, that the CEFR was greatly influenced by the model of *five savoirs* proposed by Byram (1997). When describing the learner's general competences, the CEFR (2001: 101-107) elaborates on the *savoirs*, describing them as "*declarative knowledge (savoir), skills and know-how (savoir-faire), personality traits, attitudes etc. (savoir-être) or ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)[...]*" (CEFR 2001: 135 [original emphasis]). In fact, the implementation of an intercultural approach in the CEFR is emphasised on the opening page:

In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture. (CEFR 2001: 1)

Although it is stressed that an intercultural approach should foster the individual learner's development in terms of personality and identity, one must not forget that "the CEFR is clearly a policy document bearing values and intentions" (Byram & Parmenter 2012: 4

[original emphasis]). This fact becomes especially apparent when reading the political objectives the CEFR wishes to accomplish:

- To equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry.
- To promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication.
- To maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages, including those less widely taught.
- To meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which requires a sustained, lifelong effort to be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies.
- To avert the dangers that might result from the marginalisation of those lacking the skills necessary to communicate in an interactive Europe. (CEFR 2001: 3-4)

Without doubt, foreign language learning and teaching aims at pursuing not only educational goals but also economic and political goals. Hu (2012: 66) for instance, talks about "the dynamics of neo-liberal, international, political-economic developments, not least in the education sector". Apart from linguistic competences, intercultural competences also play a significant role in international economic and political success as they enable "more intensive communication and interaction, better access to information and deeper mutual understanding" in a "multilingual and pluricultural Europe" (Rönneper 2012: 54).

Another useful tool that should be briefly mentioned in this context is the **European Language Portfolio** (ELP), equally developed by the Council of Europe. The ELP is basically constituted of three parts, namely a language passport, a language biography and a dossier. It aims to document the learner's achievements and experience in language and cultural learning. The ELP is said to be particularly useful in developing intercultural competence since it offers the students the opportunity to record and consider their own linguistic and cultural background as well as their experiences in intercultural encounters (<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/> (18.3.2014); <http://elp.ecml.at/UsingtheELP/Understandingtheportfolio/tabid/2745/language/en-GB/Default.aspx> (18.3.2014); (CEFR 2001: 5).

Generally speaking, the CEFR has formed the basis for the design of foreign language curricula in various countries (cf. Byram & Parmenter 2012). Even in Austria, the curricula planning for foreign languages followed the recommendations formulated in the CEFR. The following section shall therefore look at how intercultural competence and its three components, namely the cognitive, affective and skills domain (cf. chapter 2.2) have been implemented in Austrian curricula.

Intercultural competence in the Austrian curriculum for AHS

In the 1990s, the teaching principle of 'intercultural learning' was implemented in Austrian curricula. It is emphasised that intercultural learning should run through all subjects like a common thread instead of confining itself to one particular subject (http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/interkult_lernen.xml (18.3.2014)). In the general curriculum for all subjects, the intercultural learning principle is headed under "Allgemeine didaktische Grundsätze" and reads as follows:

Interkulturelles Lernen beschränkt sich nicht bloß darauf, andere Kulturen kennen zu lernen. Vielmehr geht es um das gemeinsame Lernen und das Begreifen, Erleben und Mitgestalten kultureller Werte. Aber es geht auch darum, Interesse und Neugier an kulturellen Unterschieden zu wecken, um nicht nur kulturelle Einheit, sondern auch Vielfalt als wertvoll erfahrbar zu machen. Durch die identitätsbildende Wirkung des Erfahrens von Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden der Kulturen, insbesondere in ihren alltäglichen Ausdrucksformen (Lebensgewohnheiten, Sprache, Brauchtum, Texte, Liedgut usw.), sind die SchülerInnen und Schüler zu Akzeptanz, Respekt und gegenseitiger Achtung zu führen. (BMUKK 2004a: 5)

Here we can clearly perceive the shift from 'Landeskunde' towards intercultural communicative competence as the goal to strive for. It will be recalled from chapter 2.1 that, in an intercultural learning approach, learners can no longer be regarded as passive receivers of factual information, but instead are invited to actively discover and co-construct cultural meanings. These considerations are clearly implemented in the Austrian curricula. It is stressed that sole knowledge of other cultures is not sufficient anymore. Instead, the learners are supposed to understand, to experience as well as to construct cultural values. Furthermore, by fostering the students' interest and curiosity towards cultural differences, the affective domain of intercultural competence is strongly addressed.

Turning to the Austrian AHS upper secondary curriculum for foreign languages, it becomes apparent that intercultural competence makes up a central teaching and

learning responsibility. According to Hu, in the German education standards, which have been established by the Kultusministerkonferenz, intercultural competence is conceived as follows:

Gefasst werden darunter z.B. auf der **Wissensebene** die Kenntnisse spezifischer Kommunikations- und Interaktionsregeln sowie Sicht- und Wahrnehmungsweisen des eigenen und des fremdkulturellen Landes, auf der **Einstellungsebene** die Entwicklung von Neugier und Offenheit gegenüber Fremdem und kultureller Vielfalt und auf der **Handlungsebene** kulturangemessenes Verhalten ebenso wie die Kompetenz, z.B. Missverständnisse durch Aushandlungsprozesse zu überwinden. (Hu 2010: 77 [emphasis added])

A detailed analysis of the implementation of intercultural competence in the English curricula of the 16 German federal states was carried out by Göbel & Hesse (2004). They found that the cognitive domain is far more often addressed in the curricula than the affective and skills domain.

In the Austrian curriculum, the formulation of the promotion of intercultural competence amongst students reads as follows:

Interkulturelle Kompetenz

Durch interkulturelle Themenstellungen ist die Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die Sprachenvielfalt Europas und der Welt zu verstärken, Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Nachbarsprachen – bzw. gegenüber Sprachen von autochthonen Minderheiten und Arbeitsmigrantinnen und –migranten des eigenen Landes – zu fördern und insgesamt das Verständnis für andere Kulturen und Lebensweisen zu vertiefen. Die vorurteilsfreie Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees, die bewusste Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten sowie die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen bzw. mit österreichischen Gegebenheiten sind dabei anzustreben. (BMUKK 2004b: 4)

When talking about the apperception of similarities and differences as well as the critical examination of the learner's own experiences and circumstances, the curriculum addresses the cognitive domain of intercultural competence. The curriculum further states that "[d]urch entsprechende Auswahl der Unterrichtsmittel ist für grundlegende Einblicke in Gesellschaft, Zivilisation, Politik, Medien, Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Kultur und Kunst des betreffenden Sprachraums zu sorgen" (BMUKK 2004b: 4). Furthermore, the students' knowledge of specific communication and interaction strategies should be developed by discussing various subject areas („Sprache und ihre Anwendungsmöglichkeiten“, „kulturelle und interkulturelle Interaktion“ among others) (BMUKK 2004b: 4).

Like the general curriculum for all subjects, the curriculum for foreign languages states that the affective domain of intercultural competence should be addressed by fostering openness towards and understanding of other cultures and languages. Additionally, the reflection upon prevailing cultural stereotypes and clichés amongst students is something which educators should aim for.

Exploring the skills domain of intercultural competence, it was found that generally speaking, the Austrian curriculum formulates "handlungsorientierte Fremdsprachenkompetenz" as a central teaching goal. It says:

Ziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts der Oberstufe ist es, die Schülerinnen und Schüler zu befähigen, in der jeweiligen Fremdsprache grundlegende kommunikative Anforderungen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens zu erfüllen und sich in den Fertigungsbereichen *Hören, Lesen, Sprechen, Schreiben* in einer breiten Palette von privaten, beruflichen und öffentlichen Situationen sprachlich und kulturell angemessen zu verhalten. (BMUKK 2004b: 1 [original emphasis])

In brief, all three components, namely the cognitive, affective and skills domain of intercultural competence are implemented in the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages. However, as similarly found in Göbel & Hesse (2004), the Austrian curriculum tends to focus slightly more on the cognitive component. Nonetheless, how exactly to foster intercultural learning, what intercultural topics to address and how they should be dealt with in class, is not clearly stated in the curriculum. As Teske (2006: 26) concludes: "[...] the culture-specific part of the learning process remains elusive; even the processes and strategies necessary for intercultural learning are not clearly defined in the official guidelines given to teachers."

The following chapter investigates the role culture and ideology plays in ELT coursebooks.

3.2 Culture and Ideology in ELT coursebooks

Coursebooks often constitute the core material in the EFL classroom. A great number of teachers rely on the coursebook, which can therefore heavily influence what and how teachers teach. Consequently, the coursebook plays an important role in terms of culture teaching as well. Joiner (1974: 242) for instance, calls the textbook an “influential cultural bearer”. Students who start to learn a foreign language already have a certain concept about and attitudes towards the foreign language and the foreign culture in mind. Therefore, the textbook has a lot of responsibility since it “may serve to correct his [the student’s] misconceptions, to increase his cultural understanding, or to confirm him in his prejudices” (ibid.).

Cortazzi & Jin (1999: 200), who explore various functions of coursebooks, call it “an authority”, which is often regarded as “reliable, valid, and written by experts”. Consequently, the cultural content presented in the books is often taken uncritically at face value, or even regarded as the only interpretation.

But, in comparison to most other schoolbooks whose content (e.g. themes, facts, concepts, situations etc.) is defined and delimited by the course discipline itself, in the ELT coursebook, the selection of themes and situations through which language input is presented remains open. This in fact leaves enough space for positioning ideological content (of both the textbook author and the publisher) and particular sets of social and cultural values (Dendrinos 1992: 152-53). Cunningsworth (1995: 90) refers to this as ‘hidden-curriculum’:

It [the ‘hidden curriculum’] may well be an expression of attitudes and values that are not consciously held but which nevertheless influence the content and image of the teaching material, and indeed the whole curriculum. (Cunningsworth 1995: 90)

Cunningsworth (ibid.) thus expresses the necessity of critically evaluating the coursebooks to “unearth” those unstated values as they “can influence the perceptions and attitudes of learners generally and towards learning English in particular.”

In fact, the presentation of cultural content in ELT coursebooks has been subject to a lot of criticism. Firstly, coursebooks are said to portray cultural content which is alien, bland and often irrelevant for learners. Coursebooks are further criticised for their “neutral, safe and forever harmonious” tone when hardly ever looking at issues from different angles (Tomlinson 2013: 453). Secondly, coursebooks have been blamed for presenting the target country/countries in an unrealistic way. Pennycook (2000: 100) for

instance, claims that “many ESL textbooks still work with a 1970’s Kellogg’s® vision of the family”. Dendrinos (1992: 153) equally states:

[...] EFL books, whose aim is to present today’s reality in Great Britain over-represent the white middle-class population with their concerns about holidays abroad and leisure time, home decoration and dining out, their preoccupation with success, achievement and material wealth. Absent, or nearly absent are the great variety of minorities, people of African, Indian, Pakistanese descent who make up a considerable part of the population; and the problems of the homeless and the unemployed, of the socially underprivileged, [...] are rarely or never mentioned. [...] Generally, an idealized version of the dominant English culture is drawn, frequently leading populations of other societies to arrive at distorted conclusions based on the comparison between a false reality and their own lived experience in their culture.

Tomlinson (2013: 453) argues that the depicted bland neutrality as well as the lack of realism in coursebooks fail to provide students with opportunities to get affectively and cognitively engaged - a process which is crucial for language acquisition.

Finally, coursebooks have been blamed for solely focusing on the inner circle target countries, which, regarding nowadays’ status of English as a lingua franca, is no longer tenable (cf. chapter 2.3). However, it has been found that ELT textbooks do not necessarily have to focus on the target language culture. Cortazzi & Jin (1999: 204-10) distinguishes three types of coursebooks: coursebooks based on ‘source culture’, ‘target culture’ and ‘international target cultures’. Apparently, there are advantages and disadvantages to all three types, which shall be explored in the following section.

3.2.1 Source culture, target culture and international target culture coursebooks

Source culture textbooks

In a ‘source culture’ context, the teaching material is based on the students’ own culture. Those textbooks, which are commonly produced on a national level, portray and describe geographical and historical features, food and weather of the source culture, but in the English language. Basically, learners are confronted with members of their own culture, in their own context with the only difference that they all speak English. Source culture coursebooks mainly aim at preparing students to communicate with foreign visitors of their country, for instance with tourists. By providing examples where such source culture textbooks are used, the authors refer to Venezuela, Turkey and Saudi Arabia (Cortazzi & Jin 1999: 205). Although it is widely stated that source culture materials might aid the

students in developing their own cultural identity, Cortazzi & Jin argue that paradoxically often the reverse is true:

Since the materials mirror mainly their own culture, students have little opportunity to engage in intercultural negotiation with a text portraying another culture, so they are unable to engage in a dialogue with the text to identify and confirm their own cultural identity, or to ascertain its similarities and differences with that of another cultural group. (Cortazzi & Jin 1999: 207)

Byram (1991: 18) similarly points out that source culture material might neglect the students' natural curiosity in foreign cultures and might foster the belief that all cultures work more or less the same way as their own.

Target culture textbooks

Coursebooks based on the target culture(s) typically mirror the culture of Western English speaking cultures such as Great Britain and the U.S. They can be seen as "the traditional fare in the ELT industry", as well as "the obvious place to exploit authentic texts" (Gilmore 2007: 105). Nonetheless, the fact that English operates as a global language, and that a wide variety of cultures call the language their own, renders the situation much more complicated. The cultural content relating to the target culture may be unimportant or uninteresting to some students, or even cause cultural conflicts (McKay 2002: 89). For instance, Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990: 7), who conducted interviews with Moroccan English teachers on the cultural content in English courses, note that most teachers believe that the presentation of the target culture might "contribute to the students' discontent with their own material culture and to the yearning for the big city and the fleshpots of Europe". The teachers further suppose that most Moroccans would prefer their young people not to see certain behaviour patterns existing in Britain and America. And finally, the teachers assume that their learners would be more, not less, motivated to learn English if the language is contextualised in a frame that relates to their own lives as young adults rather than one of an English-speaking country.

International target cultures textbooks

Last but not least, the third category is comprised of books that refer to a great variety of cultures located in English-speaking countries or other countries where English is not spoken as a first or second language, but as an international language (Cortazzi & Jin 1999: 209). On the one hand, the use of this kind of material may develop the students'

intercultural competence, as they are confronted with a great number of unfamiliar behavioural patterns or examples of cross-cultural miscommunication in diverse ELF contexts. But, the discourse definitely has to reflect authentic, non-native – non-native interaction, because “contrived dialogues written by native speakers of English are unlikely to capture the true flavour of NSS-NNS [non-native – non-native] interactions” (Gilmore 2007: 106). On the other hand, Gilmore (ibid.) warns of the risk of offering students “dumbed down” models of English and therefore ignoring the full potential of the language. Although international target cultures coursebooks provide “interesting cultural mirrors” (Cortazzi & Jin 1999: 210), the cultural information might be at the same time trivial, puzzling or inaccessible to the students and the teachers (McKay 2002: 92).

To the best of my knowledge, research about what the students actually want is scarce. A study among Greek students conducted by Prodromou (1992) showed the following results: Among 300 respondents, the majority of students still wanted to focus on target cultures (60% on British culture, 26% on American culture). Nevertheless, 36% expressed the wish to deal with “the culture of other countries”, and 27% with their ‘source culture’, namely Greek culture.

3.2.2 The global coursebook

With the global status of English and the expansion of ELT all around the world, ELT publishing has undoubtedly grown into a profitable and highly competitive “multi-million pound industry” (Sheldon 1988: 237). According to Gray (2002: 157), coursebooks can be seen as “commodities to be traded”, and are thus “the result of the interplay between, at times, contradictory commercial, pedagogic and ethic interests”.

Due to the fact that ELT coursebooks have to cater to not only an extensive market range, but also to various contexts and cultures (Vodopija-Krstanovic 2008: 193), the “global coursebook”, as Gray (2002), (2010) calls it, can be characterised as “subtly deterritorialized”, being now much less exclusively located in the inner circle countries, but shifted to international settings. Furthermore, in order to better address the global market, ELT publishers set out content guidelines which coursebook authors are expected to follow. These guidelines tend to reach two areas, namely “inclusivity” - referring to a non-sexist approach - and “inappropriacy” - referring to those topics to avoid so as not

to offend or disturb potential customers⁶ (Gray 2002: 157). Gray (2010: 9) further explains that ELT publishers' requirements extend far beyond methodological and language syllabus issues. He goes on to report that the authors of the internationally successful *Headway* series claimed that "the degree of 'political correctness' required of them by their publishers was a source of dispute" (ibid.).

Gray (2002: 157) concludes that modern coursebooks have become "*feminized* for ethical reasons" and "*sanitized* for commercial purposes" and "now resemble each other, not only in terms of glossy design but also in terms of content" (ibid.). Hence, Gray (2002), (2010) and Pulverness (2003) clearly reject the "one size fits all" philosophy in ELT publishing, and call for more regionally based ELT publishing projects. The global coursebook could be substituted by a so-called "*glocal* coursebook" (Gray 2002: 166 [original emphasis]), which caters for the students' need by offering locally produced supplementary material. Tomlinson (2013: 453) sees likewise the advantage of local projects for materials development. Being well aware of specific cultural sensitivities, local coursebook authors can take more risks in including provocative and normally taboo topics. Here, a diversification of topics and a realistic portrayal of the foreign culture would be ensured. Additionally, unlike source culture materials, locally produced textbooks take the target language culture into account as well, and might therefore better promote the students' cultural awareness (Skopinsjkaja 2003: 42).

When looking at the situation in Austria, it becomes apparent that a lot of locally produced ELT coursebooks or globally published textbooks that are slightly adapted for the Austrian context, are used in teaching⁷. Skopinsjkaja (2003: 43) for instance, states that "[...] in view of strict prescriptive curriculum requirements for each schools, only local textbooks may be employed (for example, [in] Norway, Romania and Austria)". Generally speaking, in Austria, textbooks conforming to the curriculum requirements will be officially approved by the Ministry of Education as suitable for in-class teaching and will then be listed on the so-called 'Schulbuchliste'. Given all the different types of (vocational) schools in Austria (AHS, BHS, BMHS, NMS, HS⁸), each which has their own

⁶ The acronym PARSNIP (politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms and pork) can here serve as a rule of thumb for the topics to be avoided (Gray 2002: 159).

⁷ Cf. Schulbuchliste: http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/23926/1314sbl_1000.pdf (28.11.2013).

⁸ AHS = Allgemein bildende höhere Schule; BHS= Berufsbildende höhere Schule; BMHS = Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schule; NMS = Neue Mittelschule; HS = Hauptschule.

curriculum, without doubt, locally produced textbooks might better cater to all various contexts and foci of schools.

Returning to the aspect of ELF in ELT and the inherent criticism of target culture materials, various researchers call for a “necessary modification” of the cultural content (Doyé 1999: 95; Gnutzmann 1999; Skopinsjkaja 2003). According to Gray (2010: 188), here, too, the decision of what kind of cultural content might be appropriate is best reached locally. As the cultural content should always be ‘meaningful’ to the learner, Gray (ibid.) believes “that the form cultural content takes is best decided by locals for whom English may have a range of meanings other than those determined for them by British ELT publishers”.

3.3 Previous research on cultural content in teaching materials

There have been several studies to evaluate the cultural content in FLT coursebooks, the great majority of which claim the cultural aspect to be insufficiently presented in coursebooks. As O’Dowd summarises:

[...] there does appear to be a great degree of consensus in the literature on the general failure of textbooks to deal adequately with the sociocultural aspects of language learning in general and the development of ICC [intercultural communicative competence] in particular. (O’Dowd 2006: 46-47)

It has to be mentioned that most of the significant studies do not focus on the ELT context, but on the FLT context in general. The following section deals with some of the research done in teaching material evaluation. The presented studies are of great importance for my own study.

A widely cited study on cultural references in FLT textbooks was carried out by Karen Risager (1991). She examined textbooks in order to look at how the presentation of the cultural content has changed since the 1950s. Although the analysed textbooks were used in Scandinavia, it is stated that “the overall tendencies seem generalizable to the whole of Western Europe” (Risager 1991: 183).

For her study, Risager (1991: 182-83) designed an analytic framework consisting of four categories, namely the micro level (phenomena of social and cultural anthropology), the macro level (broad social, political, and historical matters), international and intercultural issues, and the point of view and style of the author(s). Due to the fact that

Risager's framework will constitute an important part of my own study, a detailed description of the different levels will be provided later in chapter 4.1.1.

For now, I solely want to focus on the outcome of Risager's study. She found that in the social and geographical definition of coursebook characters, in the recent textbooks, the people presented are mainly middle-class, young and individualised people (rather than family members), living in urban centres. The characters are predominantly occupied with leisure activities or consumer situations. Generally, human relations are depicted as smooth, neutral and friendly, and the characters hardly ever show feelings such as anger, love, disappointment, hatred or fear (Risager 1991: 183-86). Concerning the analysis of broad social facts about contemporary society, the study shows that recent textbooks include more geographical information than former ones, although there is practically no information on cultural geography given. However, broad socio-political issues like women's work outside home, immigration, youth unemployment, violence and racism, which had not been touched upon in former textbooks, seem to have found their way into the more recent ones - even though most of the issues are still only mentioned in passing. Risager (1991: 186-87) further found that little historical background, cultural comparisons or mutual relations are presented. The target countries are still considered in isolation. Finally, the study revealed that the predominant point of view and style of author(s) is "objective, pragmatic, [and] tending to avoid expressions of attitudes towards sociocultural issues" (Risager 1991: 188).

Another valuable contribution to the research on cultural content in teaching materials was made by Byram (1993), who, in cooperation with a group of researchers, analysed five coursebook series for teaching German in England. The authors aimed at investigating the image of Germany presented to English students and whether this image is able to promote an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the foreign culture. The research group compiled eight categories of a "minimum content of knowledge about a foreign country and culture for textbooks in secondary education" (Byram 1993: 31). Figure 3 illustrates Byram's minimum cultural content for coursebooks.

- *social identity and social groups*
(social class, regional identity, ethnic minority etc.)
- *social interaction*
(conventions of behaviour in social interactions at differing levels of familiarity, as outsider and insider)
- *belief and behaviour*
(routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group, moral and religious beliefs, daily routines etc.)
- *social and political institutions*
(state institutions, healthcare, law and order, social security, local government etc.)
- *socialisation and the life-cycle*
(families, schools, employment, ceremonies marking passage through stages of social life, divergent practices in different social groups, national auto-stereotypes of expectations etc.)
- *national history*
(historical and contemporary periods and events which are significant in the constitution of the nation and its identity)
- *national geography*
(geographical factors seen as being significant by members)
- *stereotypes and national identity*
(notions of what is typical, origins of these notions, symbols of national stereotypes etc.)

Figure 3: Byram's (1993: 34-35) minimum cultural content for coursebooks

The first category of the minimum cultural content is *social identity and social groups*. This category includes social classes, regional identities, and ethnic minorities who "demonstrate the complexity of individuals' social identities and of a national society" (Byram 1993: 34). The second category is *social interaction* which implies convention of behaviour in social interaction at differing levels of formality. *Belief and behaviour* constitute the third category entailing daily routine actions, as well as moral and religious beliefs within a social group. Byram's fourth category is *social and political institutions*, meaning the depiction of state institutions, and provision for health care, for law and order, for social security, for local government etc. *National history* establishes the fifth category, meaning historical and contemporary events and periods which are important in the nation's constitution and identity. The sixth category comprises *national geography* referring to "geographical factors [...] which are significant in members' perception of their country" as well as "factors which are [...] essential to outsiders in intercultural communication" (Byram 1993: 35). The final category includes *stereotypes and national identity* dealing with notions of what is 'typical', the origin of these notions, as well as symbols of national stereotypes and their meanings.

Beside the issue of minimum content, which in the study is summarised under the heading 'Representativeness', the researchers also aimed at examining to what extent the author's views are realised in the books, and to what extent the books give opportunities to explore the English and Welsh National Curriculum "areas of experience" (Byram 1993: 38). They furthermore explored whether the factual detail is accurate ('Accuracy'), and whether the culture presented is real, i.e. whether a variety of perspectives on specific issues is provided ('Realism'). Finally, they investigated the 'Educational potential' of the textbooks i.e. whether the content is sufficient in promoting intercultural learning (Byram 1993: 38-39).

The outcome of the study was highly diverse. Some textbooks were successful in presenting a realistic, varied and representative image of Germany, cf. Vanstone & Mennecke (1993), Wheeler & Doyé (1993), while others completely fail by showing a "Phantombild, ein Bild eines Landes ohne Probleme und Konflikte" (Lees & Fritzsche 1993: 193).

A comprehensive study focusing on intercultural communicative competence in textbooks was contributed by Lies Sercu (2000). In her dissertation, "Acquiring Intercultural Communicative Competence from Textbooks", she investigated six coursebook series for teaching German as a foreign language used in Flanders, Belgium, in order to examine the textbooks' potential for promoting the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence.

The study consists of two parts. The first part is a content analysis of the six textbook series focusing on the cultural content and the adopted teaching approaches by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The second part investigates the students' attitudes towards, perceptions of and contacts with foreign and German cultures, which were derived from questionnaires and interviews. A total of 592 students in 36 language classes were reached in the study. For the textbook analysis, Sercu (2000: 261-66) designed a detailed analytic framework for evaluating the cultural content and teaching approaches adopted in the respective coursebooks. The analysis approach in my study will be based on Sercu's analytic framework, and will therefore be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

By complementing the textbook findings with the students' data, Sercu could make a judgement on the textbooks' potential for promoting the acquisition of intercultural

communicative competence. The outcome of the study showed that the investigated textbooks do not seem to have a sufficient impact on developing students' intercultural communicative competence. She found that coursebook authors predominantly present monoperspectival views on a restricted scope of cultural topics. They further refrain from dealing with negative aspects of culture which consequently result in presenting the foreign culture in a primarily favourable light. The analysis further revealed that some coursebooks tend to prefer to present culture on the micro level, whereas others manage to more or less evenly distribute culture on the micro and macro level. Nonetheless, all coursebooks clearly fail to depict the foreign culture as part of an international community. Concerning the presentation of the coursebook population, it was found that all coursebooks are successful in presenting a balanced picture of gender groups, whereas the distribution of people over age groups is rather poor. Finally, the coursebooks were found to model only few intercultural contact situations (Sercu 2000: 296-97).

4 Design of the Study

Although Sheldon (1988: 245) states that “coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick”, the necessity for teachers “to adopt a critical stance in relation to the material they are expected to use” (McGrath 2002: 12) is often stressed. In that line of thinking, Tomlinson (2013: 453) argues that teachers are often influenced by design features, like appealing colours and photos, up to date topics and current celebrities, and are therefore tempted to make an impressionistic choice of the textbooks. Much of the literature presents checklists to assist teachers when evaluating and selecting coursebooks, e.g. McDonough & Shaw (2003), McGrath (2002), Cunningsworth (1995), Sheldon (1988). The following chapter aims at presenting the methodology used in my own study.

4.1 Methodology and procedure

The overall approach for my study will be guided by the two-step model of external and internal evaluation by McDonough & Shaw (2003).

The primary aim in the external evaluation is to examine the organisation of the material along with the publisher’s/author’s aims. At this stage the claims made by the author, the introduction and table of contents are scanned. The external evaluation is important as “the claims made for the materials by the author/publisher can be quite strong and will need critical evaluation in order to see if their claims can be justified” (McDonough & Shaw 2003: 63). The external evaluation stage is then followed by the internal evaluation or “in-depth investigation into the materials” (McDonough & Shaw 2003: 66). During this stage, it is crucial “to analyse the extent to which the aforementioned factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal constituency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher” (McDonough & Shaw 2003: 66-67).

The internal evaluation in my study will be based on Sercu’s (2000) approach, introduced in chapter 3.3. In her approach, Sercu followed Holsti (1969), who proposed ‘theme’ as the most useful unit of analysis. Therefore, Sercu introduced 33 ‘themes’ based on Byram’s (1993: 34-35) ‘minimum content’ list of culture in coursebooks (cf. chapter 3.3).

Sercu's 'themes' were comprised of the following: *Animal, Body culture/Fashion, Commerce/Economy, Culture, Education, Environment, Family, Feasts & Ceremonies, Food & Drinks, Foreign language, Geography, History, House/Home, (Im)migration, International relations, Language, Law, Leisure, Life cycle, Media/Communication, Mentality, Multiculturalism, National symbols, Norms & Values, Occupation/Profession, Personal identity, Politics/War & Peace, Religion, Science, Society/Social life, Stereotypes, Third world, and Transportation* (Sercu 2000: 275). Beginning with these 'themes', each relevant cultural reference will be fed into a database, which, along with the procedure of filling the database, will be fully explained in chapter 4.1.2.

For the internal evaluation, only the student's coursebooks will be scrutinised. The student's workbooks will be not incorporated. The cultural information in the workbooks was not found to be relevant since most of the cultural input solely served as contextual backdrops to language tasks (cf. also Pulverness 2003: 429). All written and visual material in the student's coursebook will be included in the analysis. Likewise, I will also consider transcriptions of listening comprehensions since they carry a great amount of cultural information. However, unlike Sercu, I will not consider the adopted teaching approaches.

Since the actual space coursebooks devote to a particular theme is regarded as influential, the emphasis (or 'weight') of each categorised item will be calculated: the measuring unit of textual items is 'line', the one of visuals 'cm²' (Sercu 2000: 263).

Although the content analysis will be predominantly guided by quantitative investigation methods, qualitative methods will be applied when commenting on striking features. In the following chapter, the criteria for evaluating the coursebooks' cultural content will be elaborated.

4.1.1 Criteria for evaluating the coursebooks' cultural content

The criteria for evaluating the coursebooks' cultural content will be based on those proposed by Sercu (2000: 253-54). She points out that for intercultural communicative competence to be developed, pupils should be able to relate to the given content matter, as well as regard it as being interesting for potential real-life contacts with the foreign culture in the future. Therefore, "[...] *the degree to which pupils can recognise the culture(s) portrayed in the textbooks to be real* will [...] constitute our main criterion against which to

assess the respective textbook[s'] [...] subject matter" (Sercu 2000: 253) [original emphasis].

By referring to work done by Risager (1991), Doyé (1991), Byram (1993), Mennecke (1993) and Fritzsche (1993), Sercu (2000: 253) examined that in FLT textbook research, the term 'realism' in content matter has been operationalized in terms of "'presenting multiple perspectives on particular issues'; 'representing controversial issues as controversial'; 'depicting characters as characters with feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems'; 'offering a balanced view' or 'providing a historical dimension'".

When working out the investigative framework for evaluating the textbooks' cultural content, Sercu largely focused on Risager's (1991) four-dimensional normative framework because of its central focus on 'realism', and its operative power. The framework is illustrated in Figure 4.

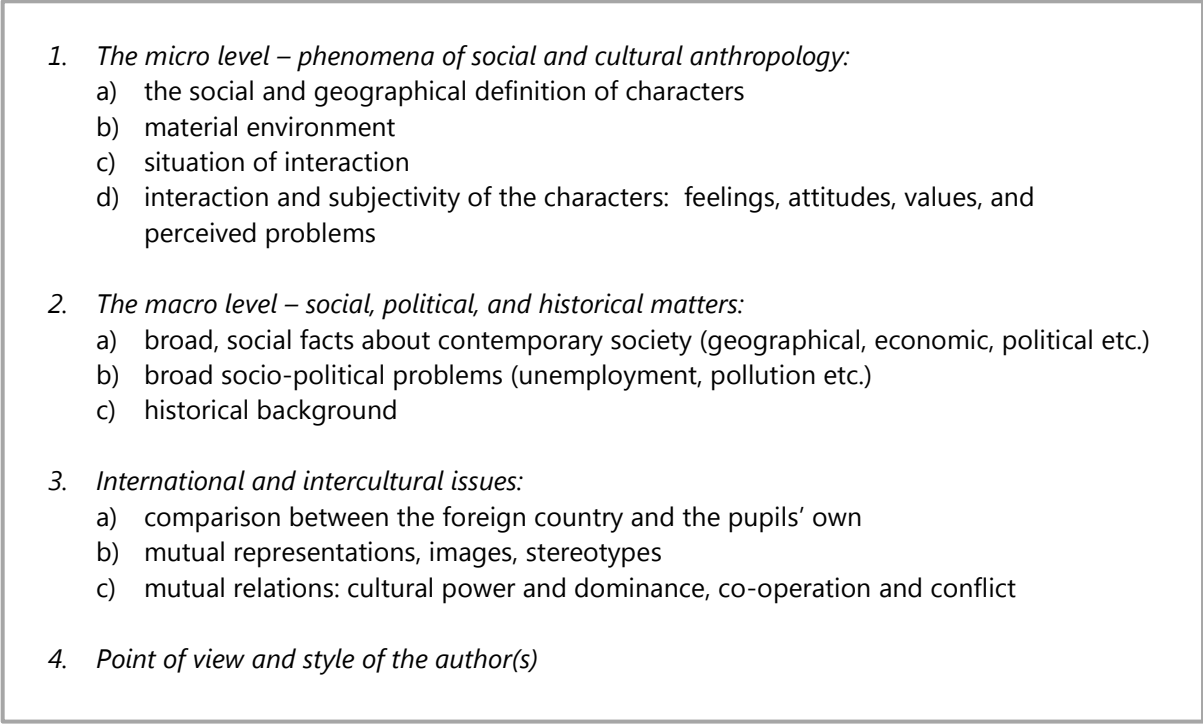
- 
1. *The micro level – phenomena of social and cultural anthropology:*
 - a) the social and geographical definition of characters
 - b) material environment
 - c) situation of interaction
 - d) interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems
 2. *The macro level – social, political, and historical matters:*
 - a) broad, social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economic, political etc.)
 - b) broad socio-political problems (unemployment, pollution etc.)
 - c) historical background
 3. *International and intercultural issues:*
 - a) comparison between the foreign country and the pupils' own
 - b) mutual representations, images, stereotypes
 - c) mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict
 4. *Point of view and style of the author(s)*

Figure 4: Risager's (1991: 182-83) framework for describing cultural content

First, on the *micro-level*, Risager's model investigates "real people, with real emotions, attitudes, values and perceived problems, represented in natural interactions and in an environment that can be perceived as real" (Sercu 2000: 253). Second, on the *macro-level*, the cultural content should contain "broad social facts about contemporary society and broad socio-political problems, preferably in their historical contexts" (ibid.). Third, "issues such as mutual representation, images and stereotypes" as well as "*international and intercultural issues*, such as international conflicts and co-operation" should be

incorporated in order to realistically present the culture and people (ibid.). And last, the model evaluates the *point of view and style of the author(s)* by looking whether coursebook authors express “attitudes – positive, negative, critical – towards the country and the people” (Risager 1991: 254). This last point is of great importance as Risager (1991: 188) found that the “predominant style [in coursebooks] is objective, pragmatic, tending to avoid expressions of attitudes towards sociocultural issues”. This critique is endorsed by Mennecke (1993: 47), who states that coursebooks are “conflict-free and harmonising ad nauseam”.

By operationalizing the criteria for evaluating the cultural content in the coursebooks, Sercu (2000: 259) could formulate the following research questions which – in a slightly adapted fashion - will equally serve for my textbook investigation:

1. How much cultural information do the coursebooks contain, and how much emphasis do they put on that information?
2. To what degree do the coursebooks present the foreign culture as being ‘real’?
 - a) How do coursebooks distribute culture over cultural topics?
 - b) How do coursebooks distribute culture over the micro-, macro- and international/intercultural levels of culture?
 - c) How do coursebooks distribute culture of the concentric circles of English?
 - d) How do coursebooks present their characters?
 - e) What points of view do coursebooks take on the foreign culture? Do they offer multiple perspectives on issues?
 - f) How do coursebooks portray intercultural contact situations?

The database and statistical analysis will be compiled with the program ‘IBM SPSS Statistics 21’.

4.1.2 Structure of coursebook database

The structure of the database to which observations from the investigated coursebooks will be added is based on Sercu (2000: 263-64), but has been slightly changed in order to fully adjust it to my own study: The field *Theme – cultural topic* was included. Furthermore, the fields *Ethnicity of character*, *Occupation of character* and *Subjectivity of character* were added in order to gain a more detailed picture of the characters presented. Furthermore, the concentric circles of English proposed by Kachru (1985) were

added to the field *Countries*. Figure 5 illustrates the structure of the coursebook database.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| I Location | | | |
| 1.1 Title of book | | | |
| 1.2 Page | | | |
| 1.3 Unit | | | |
| 1.4 Task number | | | |
| II Theme – cultural topic (see p.31-32) | | | |
| III Characters | | | |
| 3.1 Age of characters | | | |
| 3.2 Gender of characters | | | |
| 3.3 Ethnicity of characters | | | |
| 3.4 Occupation of characters | | | |
| 3.5 Situation of interaction of characters | | | |
| 3.6 Subjectivity of characters | | | |
| IV Cultural dimensions represented | | | |
| | micro level | macro level | international and intercultural issues |
| Dimensions of culture addressed | x | x | x |
| V Countries represented | | | |
| 5.1 inner circle countries | | | |
| 5.2 outer circle countries | | | |
| 5.3 expanding circle countries | | | |
| VI Intercultural contacts | | | |
| 6.1 Type of intercultural contact | | | |
| 6.2 Type of background for intercultural contact | | | |
| 6.3 Type of intercultural information | | | |
| VII Didactic approach | | | |
| 7.1 Point of view of authors | | | |
| 7.1.1 Multiperspectivity – monoperspectivity | | | |
| 7.1.2 Qualitative direction of point of view | | | |
| 7.2 Text-types used | | | |
| 7.2.1 Text-types | | | |
| 7.2.2 Visuals | | | |
| VIII Space | | | |

Figure 5: Structure of coursebook database based on Sercu (2000: 263-64)

- The field *Location* is supposed to trace the cultural reference in the coursebook.
- The field *Theme* identifies the cultural topic.
- In order to present (a) culture(s) realistically, the population has to be presented realistically, too. Therefore, the field *Characters* allows exploration of the *characters' age*⁹, *gender*, *ethnicity*, *social class*, *occupation* and *situation of interaction* presented in the books. 'Characters' refer to the people and figures represented both visually and textually.
- The field *Cultural dimensions represented* reflects Risager's framework elaborated in chapter 4.1.1. Whenever possible, each cultural reference was classified into the micro level, macro level or international and intercultural issues field.
- The field *Country* allows identifying the (foreign) country a reference addresses. The database further distinguishes inner circle countries, outer circle countries, and expanding circle countries. Thus, the amount of information provided on the different circles can be examined.
- The field *Intercultural contacts* pertains to contacts with foreign cultures. The first sub-field *Type of intercultural contact* allows characterising the intercultural situation as a tourist contact, a visit to friends, a pen pal contact etc. The second sub-field *Type of background for intercultural contact* provides space for information concerning the country in which the intercultural situation is presented, and whether the intercultural contact takes place between an Austrian and British person or a British and Asian person etc. The last sub-field *Type of intercultural information* is meant to specify whether cultural information was being exchanged, a cultural misunderstanding illustrated, cultures compared etc.
- The fields *Multiperspectivity – Monoperspectivity* and *Qualitative direction of point of view* were designed to identify the coursebook authors' point of view taken on the foreign culture, as well as to classify them as negative or positive/neutral.
- Information on the emphasis (or 'weight') of the cultural reference was entered into the field *Space*. As stated before, the measuring unit of textual items is 'line', the one of visual items is 'cm²'.

⁹ Four 'age categories' were devised, namely *children (0-12 years)*, *teenagers (13-19 years)*, *adults (19+ years)* and *elderly adults (70+ years)*.

Whereas these categories form the columns in the database, the cultural references traced in the coursebooks form the rows. The procedure of filling the database is as follows: First, the coursebooks were scanned page-by-page for relevant cultural references both in visual and textual format. Second, whenever according to at least one of the 33 'themes' proposed by Sercu (cf. p. 32), the cultural reference was fed into the database by trying to assign it to as many categories as possible and, thus, fill as many columns as possible. Finally, the 'weight' of the textual or visual reference was calculated.

In total, the database contains 1233 rows designating the number of cultural references found in all of the three coursebooks (*Laser*: 419 rows, *Make Your Way*: 396 rows, *New Headway*: 418 rows). Please note however that, because I worked with the references' 'weight' ('lines' or 'cm²') in the calculation, the number of rows does not correspond to the total number of lines in the tables in chapter 5.

4.2 The selected coursebooks

As a future AHS teacher I decided to solely focus on AHS coursebooks. Of each series, the volume designed for the 5th grade of the upper secondary as well as the teacher's book were analysed in the study, namely:

- **Laser B1**. 2008. Oxford: Macmillan [Hueber].
student's book, teacher's book
- **Make Your Way 5**. 2010. Vienna: öbv.
student's book, teacher's book
- **New Headway 5**. Pre-Intermediate. AHS edition. 2010³. Oxford: OUP; Linz: Veritas.
student's book, teacher's book, Serviceteil für LehrerInnen

In total, three coursebooks and four teacher's handbooks were investigated. The coursebooks were chosen due to the following reasons: First, they have been approved by the Ministry of Education as suitable for in-class teaching, and can be found on the 'Schulbuchliste 2013/14'¹⁰. Second, according to the information I obtained from the BMUKK via email, they are among the five most frequently used coursebooks in the upper secondary in Austria and evidently, a great number of teachers and students are working with them. The *New Headway* and the *Laser* coursebook series can be classified as global coursebooks since they have been published for a broad international market.

¹⁰ Cf. http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/23926/1314sbl_1000.pdf (28.11.2013).

However, the *New Headway AHS edition* has been slightly adapted for the Austrian market by offering preparation material for the Austrian 'AHS Matura'. The *Make Your Way* series on the contrary has been solely produced for the Austrian market and can therefore be classified as a locally published coursebook.

5 Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the results of the page-by-page analysis of three coursebooks in terms of their presentation of cultural content. The presentation of the findings will begin with the results of the external evaluation which explored the claims made by authors and the table of contents of the coursebooks. Finally, the chapter will describe the results of the internal evaluation, which focused on the coursebook's degree of realism in presenting the cultural content.

5.1 External evaluation

As stated in chapter 4.1, the external evaluation focuses on the claims made by authors and publishers on the cover and introductory pages of the student's and teacher's books. Therefore, the student's book cover, table of contents, and the introductory pages of the teacher's handbook have been analysed in order to find out "what the books say about themselves" (Cunningsworth 1984: 2) in terms of their cultural content.

5.1.1 Claims made by authors

Neither the *Laser (L)*¹¹ book cover nor the introductory pages of the teacher's book give any information on the cultural content presented in the book. The information is limited solely to the integrated development of the four skills and the grammatical and lexical syllabus.

Similarly, the *Make Your Way (MYW)* coursebook back cover does not disclose any information concerning cultural content. However, the picture of London on the front cover depicting the river Thames and Tower Bridge is fairly prominent. On the other hand, the introductory pages of the teacher's book are more explicit in terms of culture learning. The authors state that the topics and texts in the coursebook are intended to impart linguistic and cultural "Bildungsinhalte" (MYW. Teacher's Handbook 2010: 3) as well as to stimulate the students' prior knowledge and promote active involvement with the English language and cultures of the English-speaking world. The *MYW* teacher's handbook reads as follows:

Die Themen und Texte des Lehrwerks bauen auf den alterstypischen Interessen und Vorkenntnissen der Schülerinnen und Schüler auf und regen sie zu einer aktiven

¹¹ For space-saving reasons, abbreviations for the coursebooks will be used throughout the analysis. Please refer to the 'List of abbreviations' at the beginning of this thesis for clarification.

Auseinandersetzung mit der englischen Sprache und den Kulturen der englischsprachigen Welt an. (MYW 5. Teacher's Handbook 2010: 3)

Nevertheless, the authors remain vague what is meant exactly by "Kulturen der englischsprachigen Welt". This inspires one to further investigate whether *MYW* confines the English-speaking world to the inner circle or whether it also addresses the outer and expanding circles of English.

The examination of the *New Headway (NH)* book cover and introductory pages reveals that no information regarding cultural content is communicated. Similar to *L*, the information provided in the blurbs and the teacher's handbook is restricted to the teaching of the four skills, grammar, and vocabulary.

In brief, a first glance at the claims made by authors and publishers showed that only *MYW* explicitly mentions culture teaching, stressing the cultures of the English-speaking world. As stated before, the authors do not elaborate whether the English-speaking world is confined to only the inner circle or whether they also take the outer and expanding circles into account. Furthermore, none of the books provides any descriptive information on the cover regarding the cultural content. Still, *MYW* features a quite prominent picture of London on the front cover. It might be therefore concluded that *MYW* will provide the reader with a strong focus on the inner circle countries of English, probably very much concentrating on Great Britain.

5.1.2 Table of contents

In a further step, the table of contents of the selected coursebooks were analysed. McDonough & Shaw (2003: 65) state that

[t]he table of contents may sometimes be seen as a 'bridge' between the external and internal stages of the evaluation and can often reveal useful information about the organization of the materials.

Therefore, it is worth looking at the coursebooks' table of contents to see whether they treat cultural information in separate 'Culture Sections' or whether it is embedded in the offered texts and activities. It might also be possible to deduce the book's intended direction by focusing on 'small c culture' (i.e. the micro level in Risager's (1991) sense) or 'big C Culture' topics (i.e. the macro level in Risager's (1991) sense) as well as on particular (English-speaking) cultures.

The *L* table of contents shows that the book is made up of 16 units including revision pages after every second unit. There is no separate 'Culture Section' found in the book. Generally speaking, the table of contents gives little to no information on the cultural content treated in the book. Similarly, information about actual activities and topics is very scarce. The table of contents only reveals the discussion of topics like i.a. 'shopping', 'travel', 'employment' or 'relationship'. The examination of the table of contents also seems to indicate that 'big C culture' is completely omitted. The book also makes no reference to particular (target) cultures.

The *MYW* table of contents demonstrates that the book is divided into 6 longer 'extensive units' and 7 shorter 'compact units'. There is no separate 'Culture Section' included. Having a closer look at the actual topics, it becomes obvious that the book seems to deal with a mixture of 'big C culture' topics (i.a. pop music, poetry, soap operas, schools) and 'small c culture' topics (i.a. travel, where we live, food, shopping). However, considering topics like 'Child workers in India' (extensive unit 4) 'Soap opera addiction' (compact unit 2), or 'Teenagers, consumerism and advertising' (compact unit 5) might indicate that the book will also explore various controversial topics. The before mentioned assumption of focusing on inner circle target cultures, especially Great Britain, is also further reinforced. Some units will deal with 'Education in the UK and the US', 'British houses', 'British Breakfast', and the famous British soap opera 'EastEnders' among others. Nevertheless, by devoting a whole unit to India, special prominence is given to a representative of an outer circle country. Additionally, by referring to 'Shopping experiences in England and Austria' or 'Soaps on Austrian TV', the source culture of the students is taken into account.

The *NH* table of contents demonstrates that the book is divided into 12 units and one 'Extra Unit' on 'Education'. The topics seem again to be quite typical for EFL coursebooks, ranging from shopping, travelling, work, relationship and the like. The thorough examination of the table of contents reveals that the focus on culture appears to lie on the presentation of individual people's lifestyles for example, 'Tale of two cities' – two people talk about their two homes in different countries (unit 2); 'I bought it on eBay! – three people talk about things they have bought on eBay (unit 4); 'Jobs for the boys ... and girls' – two people who have crossed the gender gap' (unit 8). Obviously, the book also tries to deal with controversial topics when talking about '24/7 society' and

'night workers' (unit 2), 'immigrants in your town' (unit 6), 'men's and women's jobs' (unit 8) 'the highs and lows of travel' or the 'danger of tourism' (unit 9). Finally, the analysis of the table of contents indicates that the *NH* coursebook authors do not seem to concentrate on a particular concentric circle of English. However, there are references found to inner circle countries for instance, a reading activity on London as a cosmopolitan city (unit 6) and schools in England and in the U.S. (unit 12).

It is certainly premature to make any judgement on the coursebooks' potential for developing intercultural communicative competence after the external evaluation as some coursebooks give more explicit information in the blurbs and table of contents than others. However, some expectations can be expressed. *L* and *NH* in particular, are expected to present 'small c culture' (micro level) topics and focus on the individual people's lifestyle. 'Big C culture' (macro level) topics appear to be rather neglected by both coursebooks. On the other hand, the *MYW* table of content reveals that the book might deal with topics on both the micro and macro level. Moreover, whereas *L* does not give any hints in its table of contents concerning the treatment of controversial topics, *MYW* and *NH* can be expected to raise contentious issues. Finally, whereas *L* and *NH* do not seem to favour any particular English-speaking target cultures, *MYW* appears to strongly focus on Great Britain (and England in particular). *MYW* is further expected to refer to Austria quite frequently.

5.2 Internal evaluation

The internal evaluation phase means a close scrutiny of the cultural content. Since I have conceived of culture as a dynamic and broad concept, all textual and visual materials in the coursebooks were scanned and each relevant cultural reference was then fed into the database. The following section aims at presenting the results obtained in the analysis in terms of the presentation of the cultural content with regard to visual and written material, the degree of realism in the cultural content, and the presentation of intercultural contact situations.

5.2.1 Amounts of culture

First, I will investigate how much cultural information the investigated coursebooks contain. Sercu (2000: 268) argues that

[t]he more culture a [coursebook] series contains, the greater the chances are the learners will perceive culture as an essential component of learning [...] [and] the higher the chances that learners will be able to perceive the world presented to them as real i.e. as one to which they can relate and with which they can enter into a communicative dialogue.

The textbooks will be compared with regard to their proportions of textual and visual items containing cultural information. Table 1 and Table 2 show that whereas *L* and *NH* show quite similar patterns, *MYW* seems to distribute the cultural information differently. From all three coursebooks, *MYW* conveys most cultural information through texts (49.7%), but introduces few visual items (18.5%). Both *L* (40.7%) and *NH* (40.8%) show a great number of visuals, but, in comparison to *MYW*, contain rather little cultural information in texts (25.6% for *L* and 24.7% for *NH*). This also explains the fact that in the following tables, *MYW* features the highest 'total number of lines' most of the time. *MYW* is not longer than the other two coursebooks, but simply features more textual than visual cultural items.

| | L | MYW | NH | Sum |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Textual items | 25.6% | 49.7% | 24.7% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 1392 | 2708 | 1345 | |

Table 1: Distribution of textual items containing cultural information across coursebooks

| | L | MYW | NH | Sum |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Visual items | 40.7% | 18.5% | 40.8% | 100% |
| n = total number of cm ² | 18143 | 8259 | 18205 | |

Table 2: Distribution of visual items containing cultural information across coursebooks

5.2.2 Degree of realism in cultural content

The following section aims at presenting the results of the cultural content analysis presented in the investigated coursebooks. It will be recalled that when establishing the criteria for evaluating the coursebooks' cultural content in chapter 4.1.1, it was stated that the degree of 'realism' of the cultural content would serve as the main criterion against which to investigate the coursebooks' potential to promote intercultural communicative competence. The coursebooks' degree of realism has been examined not only in terms of their distribution of cultural topics (cf. chapter 5.2.2.1), but also in term of the extent to which coursebooks distribute cultural information across the micro-, macro- and international/intercultural level of culture (cf. 5.2.2.2) as well as across concentric circles of English (cf. chapter 5.2.2.3). Furthermore, the degree of realism was determined in terms of the realistic portrayal of the coursebooks' population's various gender, age, ethnical and occupation groups (cf. chapter 5.2.2.4). Moreover, for learners to perceive the cultural content as real, coursebooks should adopt multiperspectival views on different cultural aspects (cf. chapter 5.2.2.5) as well as portray a great variety of intercultural contact situations (cf. chapter 5.2.2.6).

5.2.2.1 Distribution of culture across cultural topics

The analysis of the cultural topics aims at getting an insight into the degree to which the investigated coursebooks portray a diversified and realistic image of the foreign culture. The data in Table 3 below gives an overview of the distribution of culture across cultural topics. In the table, the topics are sorted according to their mean value. It will be recalled that the 33 cultural topics were proposed by Sercu (2000) and are based on Byram's (1993) minimum content of cultural information. I will also follow Sercu in referring to a '5%-threshold of prominence' for topics to be reached since it is assumed that topics below that threshold may go unnoticed by pupils, or that the prominence of particular topics may cast a shadow on other topics (Sercu 2000: 274). For illustration, topics surpassing the threshold have been underlined.

As can be seen, the number of topics reaching the 5% threshold of prominence never surpasses nine in all three coursebooks. *NH* gives nine different topics a certain degree of prominence, whereas *L* and *MYW* do so with only eight different topics. Strikingly, the data also reveals that *L* only needs four different topics in order to present 50% of its cultural information. Also, the number of different topics needed to reach 50%

of cultural information in the other two coursebooks does not amount to more than five in *NH*, or six in *MYW*.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Education | <u>11.3%</u> | <u>9.0%</u> | <u>15.9%</u> | <u>12.1%</u> |
| Occupation/profession | <u>16.4%</u> | 4.8% | <u>8.7%</u> | <u>10.0%</u> |
| Leisure | <u>14.0%</u> | 2.8% | <u>10.8%</u> | <u>9.2%</u> |
| Personal identity | <u>12.6%</u> | <u>7.6%</u> | <u>6.6%</u> | <u>8.9%</u> |
| Media/communication | <u>9.6%</u> | <u>13.3%</u> | 1.6% | <u>8.2%</u> |
| Commerce/economy | <u>5.7%</u> | <u>6.9%</u> | <u>5.5%</u> | <u>6.0%</u> |
| Society/social life | 2.3% | <u>5.7%</u> | <u>8.6%</u> | <u>5.5%</u> |
| Culture | 0.1% | <u>8.1%</u> | <u>7.7%</u> | <u>5.3%</u> |
| Language | <u>6.8%</u> | 3.6% | 0.6% | 3.7% |
| Environment | <u>6.9%</u> | 3.7% | 0.0% | 3.5% |
| Food & drinks | 0.0% | <u>8.4%</u> | 1.5% | 3.3% |
| Geography | 0.4% | 0.1% | <u>9.2%</u> | 3.2% |
| Family | 2.2% | 2.6% | 4.2% | 3.0% |
| Science | 4.9% | 2.6% | 0.9% | 2.8% |
| Life cycle | 0.0% | 0.6% | <u>6.6%</u> | 2.4% |
| House/home | 0.2% | <u>5.1%</u> | 1.8% | 2.4% |
| Animal | 0.0% | 1.6% | 4.4% | 2.0% |
| Law | 4.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.6% |
| Stereotypes | 0.0% | 0.8% | 3.3% | 1.4% |
| History | 0.9% | 3.1% | 0.0% | 1.3% |
| Transportation | 0.0% | 3.2% | 0.5% | 1.2% |
| Multiculturalism | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 0.8% |
| (Im)migration | 0.0% | 2.2% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| Mentality | 0.0% | 2.0% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| Foreign language | 0.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Religion | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| Norms & values | 0.0% | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| Body culture/fashion | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% | 0.1% |
| Politics/War & Peace | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.1% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 3: Distribution of culture across cultural topics

NH addresses the topics of *education, occupation/profession, leisure, personal identity, commerce economy, society/social life, culture, geography* and *life cycle* most prominently. In *L*, topics of *education, occupation/profession, leisure, personal identity, media/communication, commerce/economy, language* and *environment* are most frequently touched upon. *MYW* strongly focuses on topics of *education, personal identity, media/communication, commerce/economy, society/social life, culture, food & drinks* and

house & home. The analysis of cultural information depicted in visuals made it similarly apparent that images most frequently cover aspects of *leisure, education, geography, personal identity* and *occupation/profession*.

The topics which *all* coursebooks frequently address are *education, personal identity, commerce/economy* and *society/social life*. Still, the investigated coursebooks differ markedly in how they address cultural topics, and show some interesting particularities. For instance, whereas the topic of *leisure* is given strong prominence in *L* (14.0%) and *NH* (10.8%), it is rarely touched upon in *MYW* (2.8%). Similarly, the topic of *occupation/profession*, which is the most covered topic in *L* with 16.4%, and is also fairly often dealt with in *NH* (8.7%), only reaches 4.8% in *MYW*, remaining below the 5% threshold. On the contrary, the topics of *food & drinks* and *house & home* are given considerable importance in *MYW*, but are rarely or never addressed in the other two coursebooks. Furthermore, only *NH* sees the need to look at the topic of *geography* (9.2%), whereas the proportions in *L* (0.4%) and *MYW* (0.1%) remain very low. Also, topics dealing with *environment* gain special prominence in *L* (6.9%), *MYW* seems to randomly discuss environmental issues (3.7%), whereas *NH* does not consider them at all (0.0%).

In all three books, the list of rarely mentioned topics includes *politics/war & peace, body culture/fashion, norms & values* and *religion* among others. The topic of *(im)migration* is not mentioned at all in *L* and *NH*, but at least found its way into *MYW* with a still low proportion of 2.2%.

By analysing the total number of different topics addressed in each coursebook, it can be observed that *MYW* compares favourably with the other two coursebooks: *MYW* explores 26 different topics, *NH* 20, and *L* coming in last by covering only 17 different topics. It can therefore be stated that *MYW* might present learners with a more expansive image of culture than *NH* or *L*.

However, given the above observations, no coursebook was found to successfully depict a fully diversified and real image of the foreign culture. Based on Sercu's (2000: 276) argumentation, it can be therefore concluded that from a topic diversification point of view, the investigated coursebooks have to be assessed low in terms of realism.

5.2.2.2 Distribution of culture across levels of culture

The following section aims at investigating how cultural information is distributed across the micro-, macro-, and international/intercultural levels of culture.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Micro level | 67.7% | 57.7% | 61.2% | 62.2% |
| Macro level | 22.4% | 31.4% | 26.1% | 26.6% |
| International level | 9.9% | 10.9% | 12.7% | 11.2% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 800 | 1805 | 779 | |

Table 4: Distribution of culture across the micro-, macro- and international levels of culture

Based on Table 4 and Figure 6 it can be observed that all three coursebooks show very similar patterns for distributing cultural information across levels of culture. All of the coursebooks indicate a clear preference for presenting cultural information on the micro level of culture, with proportions varying between 67.7% for *L* and 57.7% for *MYW*. The macro level is the second most prominently addressed level. Aspects on the macro level of culture are most frequently discussed in *MYW* (31.4%), followed by *NH* (26.1%) and *L* (22.4%). The international level is the least-represented level in all coursebooks, with proportions varying between 12.7% for *NH* and 9.9% for *L*.

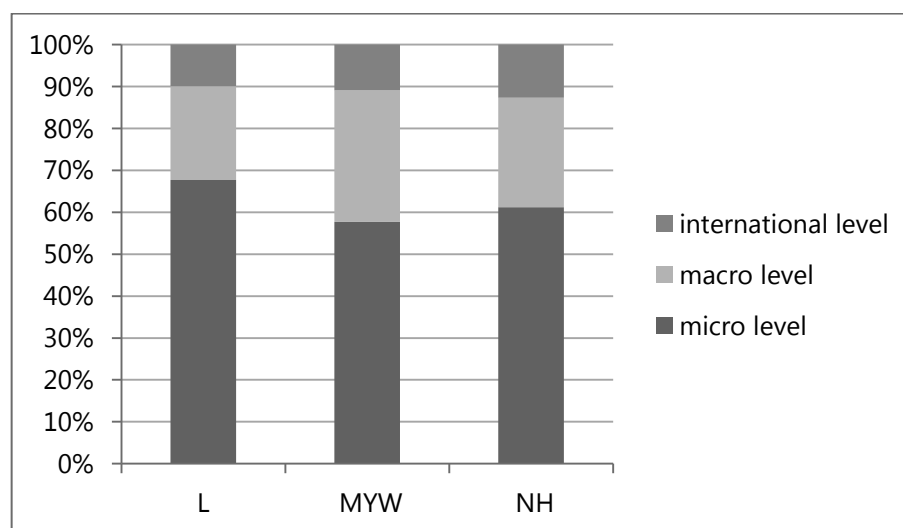


Figure 6: Distribution of culture across the micro-, macro- and international levels of culture

Figure 6 clearly illustrates that *MYW* achieves the broadest distribution across levels of culture of all three coursebooks. *L* seems to lag behind by showing the most uneven distribution.

The next step is to enquire how particular topics are distributed across levels of culture. Looking at individual topics will further enhance the understanding of the coursebooks' degree of realism. Since they both reached the 5% threshold of prominence in all three coursebooks (cf. chapter 5.2.2.1), the topics of *education* and *commerce/economy* were investigated. According to Sercu, "*education* would need to be presented from a day-to-day school life-point of view (*micro-level*), from an educational system- (*macro-level*) as well as from an international/intercultural point of view (*international/intercultural level*)."

(Sercu 2000: 281 [original emphasis]). The same is true for aspects of *commerce and economy*. Here, textbooks would need to portray characters in everyday shopping situations (*micro-level*), display the foreign country's commerce and industry (*macro-level*), as well as its role in international commerce and economy (*international/intercultural level*) (ibid.).

Table 5 illustrates that, when considering aspects pertaining to *education*, the investigated coursebooks show quite varied patterns in distributing cultural information across different levels of culture.

| Education | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Micro level | 100% | 42.5% | 39.3% | 60.6% |
| Macro level | 0.0% | 55.5% | 34.5% | 30.0% |
| International level | 0.0% | 2.0% | 26.2% | 9.4% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 139 | 247 | 206 | |

Table 5: Distribution of culture pertaining to *education* across levels of culture

In fact, *NH* tends to be most successful in portraying educational aspects on all cultural levels. *NH* manages to present learners with a well-balanced picture of education on the micro- (39.3%) and macro level (34.5%). Additionally, *NH*'s score (26.2%) for presenting education on the international level is the highest of all coursebooks. Although *MYW* shows a preference for giving information on education on the macro level (55.5%), it still seems to include cultural information on the micro level in great part (42.5%). However, educational aspects presented on the international level are scarce in *MYW*, with a score

of 2.0%. *L*, on the other hand, clearly fails to evenly distribute information pertaining to education across all levels. *L* solely focuses on the micro level, with a score amounting to no less than 100%.

Table 6 demonstrates that information regarding *commerce and economy* is predominantly presented on the micro level of culture, with scores of 43.2% for *MYW*, amounting to no less than 80.0% for *L* and 86.7% for *NH*. However, while the international/intercultural level is well-represented in *MYW* with a high score of 49.6% (because of a listening comprehension on "Shopping experiences in England and Austria MYW: 178), the other two coursebooks completely refrain from dealing with commercial and economical aspects on the international level (0.0%). Turning to the macro level now, the table further reveals that *MYW* seems to neglect the macro level in favour of the other two levels. Rather, the other two coursebooks appear to be better positioned in this respect, reaching proportions of 20% for *L* and 13.3% for *NH*.

| Commerce/economy | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Micro level | 80.0% | 43.2% | 86.7% | 70.0% |
| Macro level | 20.0% | 7.2% | 13.3% | 13.5% |
| International level | 0.0% | 49.6% | 0.0% | 16.5% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 30 | 139 | 15 | |

Table 6: Distribution of culture pertaining to *commerce/economy* across levels of culture

In brief, the analysis showed that all coursebooks seem to predominantly focus on the individual's everyday life dimension of culture than the factual and institutional one. Moreover, it holds true for all coursebooks that that the international/intercultural level and therefore the depiction of mutual relations is largely disregarded.

5.2.2.3 Distribution of culture across concentric circles of English

As argued in chapter 2.3, the rise of English as a global lingua franca has detached the language from its traditional geographic locations, i.e. the inner circle countries. It is thus no longer justified to solely focus on native speaking countries; instead coursebooks should present a diversified picture of countries where English is spoken as a first, second or foreign language. The following section aims at analysing how the investigated coursebooks compare with regard to their distribution of culture across the three concentric circles of English.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Inner circle | 80.4% | 72.6% | 68.0% | 73.7% |
| Outer circle | 0.2% | 13.1% | 1.0% | 4.8% |
| Expanding circle | 19.4% | 14.3% | 31.0% | 21.6% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 501 | 1973 | 1023 | |

Table 7: Distribution of culture across concentric circles of English

As shown in Table 7, all three coursebooks show a clear preference for addressing inner circle countries, with scores amounting to no less than 80.4% for *L*, 72.6% for *MYW* and 68% for *NH*. The expanding circle countries are second most commonly presented. In this respect *NH* gets the highest score of 31%. Looking at countries from the outer circle, it becomes obvious that although *MYW* does address outer circle countries quite often (13.1%), they seem to be mainly neglected by *L* and *NH*.

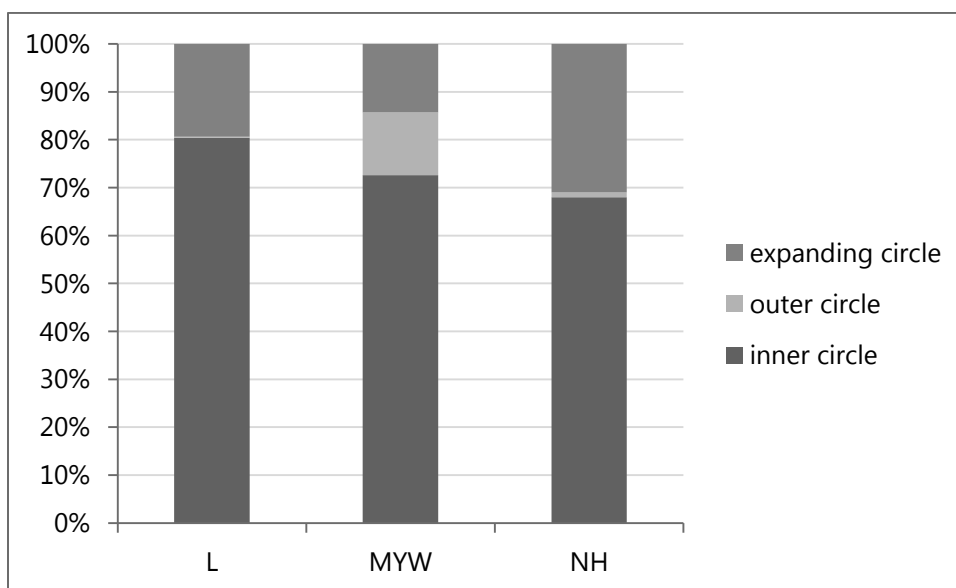


Figure 7: Distribution of culture across concentric circles of English

In brief, as illustrated in Figure 7, although all three coursebooks devote a substantial amount of ink to countries of the inner circle, *MYW* achieves the most equal distribution of culture across concentric circles of English. While *NH* is most successful in including a range of expanding circle countries, the proportion of outer circle countries remains quite low. On the contrary, *L* clearly fails to evenly distribute culture across all concentric circles by overlooking outer circle countries in favour of inner circle countries as well as expanding circle countries to some extent.

In a next step, it shall be examined what inner-, outer- and expanding circle countries the coursebooks address.

Inner circle countries

Table 8 illustrates that in all coursebooks, the by far largest part of information is devoted to the UK, with scores ranging between 72.4% for *NH* and 78.9% for *MYW*. The USA similarly gets special attention in the investigated coursebooks, with proportions amounting to 25.4% in *NH*, for example. However, the proportions devoted to other inner circle countries never exceed 1.6%, with Canada and Australia being marginally better represented than Ireland, which is only addressed in *MYW*.

| Inner circle | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| UK | 73.8% | 78.9% | 72.4% | 75.0% |
| USA | 24.6% | 17.8% | 25.4% | 22.6% |
| Canada | 1.1% | 0.6% | 1.6% | 1.1% |
| Australia | 0.5% | 1.2% | 0.6% | 0.8% |
| Ireland | 0.0% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.5% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 374 | 1458 | 696 | |

Table 8: Distribution of culture across inner circle countries

Outer circle countries

The analysis of the distribution of culture across outer circle countries reveals that the coursebooks differ markedly in this respect. Considering the total number of lines the coursebooks devote to countries of the outer circle (see Table 9), it becomes apparent that *MYW* appears to be the only coursebook to successfully address the outer circle of English. However, by devoting a substantial part to India (97.5%), *MYW* predominantly focuses on this very country and thereby neglects other outer circle countries.

Bangladesh is the only further outer circle country which gets at least passing mention in *MYW* (2.5%). The other two coursebooks appear to refrain from incorporating outer circle countries, with *NH* referring to South Africa and Malaysia once and *L* mentioning South Africa once (see total number of lines in Table 9).

| Outer circle | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| India | 0.0% | 97.5% | 0.0% | 32.5% |
| South Africa | 100% | 0.0% | 90.0% | 63.3% |
| Bangladesh | 0.0% | 2.5% | 0.0% | 0.8% |
| Malaysia | 0.0% | 0.0% | 10.0% | 3.3% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 1 | 283 | 10 | |

Table 9: Distribution of culture across outer circle countries

Expanding circle countries

Table 10 shows that, as mentioned before, *NH* is most successful in addressing a wide variety of expanding circle countries, followed by *MYW* and *L*.

| Expanding circle | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Austria | 0.0% | 41.4% | 13.9% | 18.4% |
| France | 16.3% | 6.7% | 27.4% | 16.8% |
| Greece | 32.7% | 0.0% | 3.5% | 12.1% |
| Italy | 8.2% | 12.5% | 6.0% | 8.9% |
| Germany/Switzerland | 10.2% | 8.8% | 4.4% | 7.8% |
| Turkey | 1.0% | 20.2% | 1.6% | 7.6% |
| African countries ¹² | 7.1% | 3.0% | 9.1% | 6.4% |
| Asian countries ¹³ | 0.0% | 5.1% | 10.7% | 5.3% |
| Eastern Europe ¹⁴ | 7.1% | 0.0% | 8.2% | 5.1% |
| Spain/Portugal | 8.2% | 0.3% | 6.6% | 5.0% |
| South-America ¹⁵ | 9.2% | 1.7% | 0.0% | 3.6% |
| Northern Europe ¹⁶ | 0.0% | 0.3% | 8.5% | 2.9% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 98 | 297 | 317 | |

Table 10: Distribution of culture across expanding circle countries

¹² African countries include Morocco and Egypt.

¹³ Asian countries include China, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

¹⁴ Eastern Europe includes Poland, Russia and Croatia.

¹⁵ South-America includes only Colombia.

¹⁶ Northern Europe includes Denmark, Norway, Sweden and The Netherlands.

In fact, sorted according to their mean value, the expanding circle countries which are most frequently addressed in the investigated coursebooks are Austria, France and Greece. It is interesting to see that *NH* shows a marked preference for addressing France (27.4%), *MYW* for Austria (41.4%) and *L* does so for Greece (32.7%). Table 10 further reveals that all coursebooks express a strong interest in displaying *European* expanding circle countries, with their proportions of culture devoted to European countries as a group amounting to no less than 90.1% for *MYW*, 83.7% for *L* and 80.1% for *NH*. *Non-European* countries like Asian or African countries being somewhat better positioned in *NH* (10.7% and 9.1%), receive scant attention in *MYW* (5.1% and 3.0%) and *L* (0.0% and 7.1%). Additionally, South American countries, or rather only Colombia, are frequently addressed in *L* (9.2%), but get little or no address in *MYW* (1.7%) and *NH* (0.0%).

The next question addressed is whether the source culture of Austrian students is incorporated in the investigated coursebooks. *MYW*, being the only coursebook solely produced for the Austrian market, often refers to Austria, holding a score of 41.4%. In fact, the coursebook often makes reference to Austria when drawing comparisons between England (not Britain) and Austria for instance, contrasting Austrian and English housing (*MYW*: 163) and Austrian and English shopping experiences (*MYW*: 178). Moreover, the students' source culture is frequently addressed in follow-up activities at the end of units. Here the students are invited to carry out internet projects on "Soap operas on Austrian TV" (*MYW*: 142) or their Austrian school and the Austrian education system (*MYW*: 36). *NH*, which has been slightly adapted for the Austrian market, seems to address Austria every now and then (13.9%). However, unlike *MYW*, when asking students to compare cultures, *NH* does not explicitly state to do so with the Austrian culture. In *L*, Austria finds no mention at all.

Another interesting feature is the fact that Turkey receives relatively high attention in *MYW* (20.2%). One hypothesis might be that because people from Turkish origin make up a considerable part of the immigrant population in Austria (Statistik Austria 2013¹⁷), the coursebook authors feel the need to incorporate this ethnic group.

To conclude, with respect to the inner circle countries, especially the UK and to some extent the USA, get great prominence in all coursebooks. Other inner circle countries

¹⁷ http://www.statistikaustria.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_migrationshintergrund/072107 (19.2.2014)

seem to be largely neglected. For the outer circle countries, only India receives sufficient attention in *MYW*. The other two coursebooks fail in addressing outer circle countries. With respect to expanding circle countries, *NH* seems to be most successful in presenting a wide variety of expanding circle countries. And finally, *MYW* most frequently takes the Austrian students' source culture into account.

5.2.2.4 Presentation of characters

The following section aims at getting an insight into the presentation of characters in the coursebooks. According to Sercu (1998: 272), "[c]haracters reveal a lot about textbook authors' opinion on and conceptions of the foreign culture." Therefore, it is important to have a closer look at the characters portrayed in the books. In this analysis, characters have been investigated in terms of their gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, and situation of interaction.

Gender of characters

With respect to gender groups, Table 11 and Table 12 show that even though females tend to be slightly less frequently represented than males in textual as well as in visual items, it is justified to state that all three coursebooks are successful in presenting a well-balanced picture of male and female characters.

| Textual items | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| male | 47.3% | 51.5% | 52.4% | 50.4% |
| female | 52.7% | 48.5% | 47.6% | 49.6% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 537 | 1869 | 975 | |

Table 11: Gender of characters in textual items

| Visual items | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| male | 50.8% | 48.5% | 55.5% | 51.6% |
| female | 49.2% | 51.5% | 44.5% | 48.4% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of cm ² | 15729 | 3240 | 15215 | |

Table 12: Gender of characters in visual items

Age of characters

Concerning age groups, the analysis indicates that not all age groups (child, teenager, adult, elderly adult) are sufficiently represented. As can be observed from Table 13 and Figure 8, *adult* is the most frequent presented age group in all coursebooks, with proportion varying between 50.4% for *L* and 70.6% for *NH*.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| child | 0.2% | 10.5% | 1.3% | 4.0% |
| teenager | 49.3% | 37.9% | 20.4% | 35.9% |
| adult | 50.4% | 51.6% | 70.6% | 57.5% |
| elderly adult | 0.0% | 0.9% | 7.7% | 2.6% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 573 | 1368 | 627 | |

Table 13: Age group of characters

The second most depicted age group is the one of *teenager*, where *L* shows an especially high score of 49.3%. The age groups of *child* and *elderly adult* seem to be relatively neglected by all coursebooks. However, *MYW* is most successful in presenting children (10.5%), and *NH* (7.7%) and *MYW* (0.9%) are the only coursebooks including elderly adults.

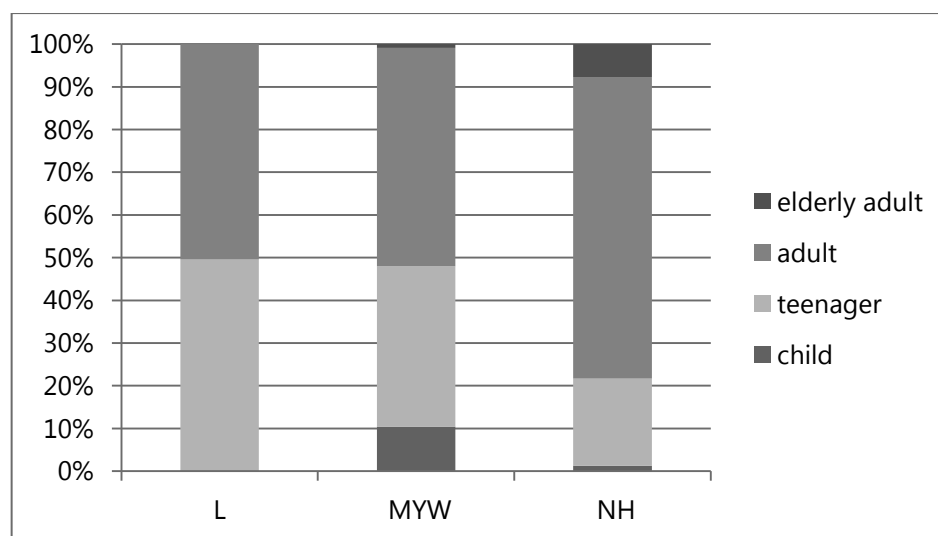


Figure 8: Age group of characters

Ethnicity of characters

Furthermore, for perceiving a coursebook's population as real, the ethnic diversity of population should be reflected. However, Volkmann argues that

[...] eine gezwungen wirkende Überbetonung der Existenz marginalisierter Gruppen die Gefahr in sich trägt, beim Lehrbuchadressaten als aufdringlicher Zeigefinger empfunden werden zu können und somit kontraproduktiv zu wirken. (Volkmann 1999: 133 qtd. in Weier 2002: 173)

In the analysis, the categories 'white' and 'non-white' were devised. Table 14 shows that all coursebooks do depict non-white characters, with *MYW* illustrating most non-white

characters (19%). Nevertheless, all three coursebooks mostly portray white characters with scores ranging between 69% for *MYW* up to 84.6% for *NH*.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| white | 75.7% | 69.0% | 84.6% | 76.4% |
| non-white | 12.5% | 19.0% | 11.9% | 14.5% |
| white & non-white | 11.8% | 12.0% | 3.5% | 9.1% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of cm ² | 2435 | 11409 | 13401 | |

Table 14: Ethnicity of characters

Occupation of characters

In a further step, we will look at the occupation of characters introduced in the investigated coursebooks. For the learner to perceive the coursebook's population as real, a wide variety of different occupations should be featured.

Table 15 shows the distribution of occupation groups in the three investigated coursebooks. The occupation groups are again sorted on their mean value. In the following section I will however refrain from commenting on every single occupation group, but rather focus on the most significant ones.

Although students/pupils and famous people are not occupation groups in the narrow sense, as can be derived from Table 15, especially *MYW* (34.9%) and *L* (26.6%) show a high proportion of students and pupils. Furthermore, famous people and celebrities are frequently depicted in all coursebooks, with scores ranging between 14% for *MYW* and 26.4% for *NH*. The analysis further reveals that *creative professionals* are the most commonly portrayed occupation group. Especially in *NH* and *L*, the characters pursue fancy and successful careers as snowboard or fashion designers, fashion buyers, gallery owners, writers, radio presenters and musicians. Furthermore, *health professionals* like doctors, psychologists, pharmacists and nurses and *service and sales workers* like waiters, hairdressers, shop assistants and chefs among others were quite often pictured in the coursebooks. *Managers* found their way into the coursebooks, with *NH* showing the highest percentage of 7.5%. Additionally, *NH* is also the only coursebook which more or less successfully portrays characters working as *craftsmen* like factory workers and plumbers (6.1%). *MYW* appears to mention the occupation group of craftsmen in passing (0.9%), and *L* does not include them at all (0.0%).

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| student / pupil | 26.6% | 34.9% | 9.1% | 23.5% |
| famous person | 22.4% | 14.0% | 26.4% | 20.9% |
| creative professionals | 14.5% | 3.9% | 12.3% | 10.2% |
| health professionals | 11.5% | 9.1% | 6.1% | 8.9% |
| service & sales workers | 8.2% | 3.6% | 9.8% | 7.2% |
| managers | 2.1% | 3.4% | 7.5% | 4.3% |
| teaching professionals | 0.3% | 6.9% | 3.8% | 3.7% |
| parent | 0.6% | 4.0% | 2.8% | 2.5% |
| craftsmen | 0.0% | 0.9% | 6.1% | 2.3% |
| science professionals | 0.0% | 3.9% | 2.2% | 2.0% |
| business professionals | 4.2% | 0.0% | 1.9% | 2.0% |
| clerks & civil servants | 6.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.0% |
| child worker | 0.0% | 5.9% | 0.0% | 2.0% |
| summer job | 0.0% | 4.1% | 0.0% | 1.4% |
| environmentalist | 0.0% | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.9% |
| politician | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.9% |
| homeless | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 0.9% |
| legal professionals | 0.9% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 0.7% |
| criminal | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.2% | 0.7% |
| widowed | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.0% | 0.7% |
| retired | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.8% | 0.6% |
| unemployed | 0.0% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.5% |
| divorced | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.5% | 0.5% |
| agricultural workers | 0.0% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 0.4% |
| housewife | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.2% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 331 | 1028 | 683 | |

Table 15: Occupation of characters¹⁸

¹⁸ The classification of occupation in the analysis is based on ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupation) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf (6.3.2014). The following occupation groups turned out to be particularly useful for my analysis (in alphabetical order): *agricultural workers, business professionals, clerks & civil servants, craftsmen, creative professionals, health professionals, legal professionals, managers, science professionals* and *service & sales workers*.

The 'non-ISCO' occupation categories in Table 15 such as *child worker, housewife*, and *criminal* among others were featured in the investigated coursebooks and arose therefore from the actual analysis. Categories of *homeless, widowed, retired, unemployed* or *divorced* were included here due to practical reasons.

In the course of the analysis, attention was also directed towards controversial occupation groups, like unemployed people or people earning extremely low salaries. The data shows that whereas *L* clearly refrains from covering controversial occupation groups, *MYW* and *NH* seem to be more successful in this respect. *MYW* for instance, overtly deals with the topic of child labour and portrays five boys and girls and their dreadful fate as *child workers* in India (MYW: 71-73). Additionally, *MYW* introduces one unemployed person in the course of the book (MYW: 77). *NH* also portrays one homeless man working as a news agent (NH: 94-95).

A cross tabulation of the characters' occupation and gender will give further insight into the coursebooks' degree of realism in presenting their characters. Whereas *craftsmen* in *MYW* are solely male, *NH* tries to provide learners with a more diversified picture of this occupation group by introducing women working as a plumber (NH: 67) or factory workers (NH: 15). Moreover, male *famous people* are represented far more often than females of equal status in all three investigated coursebook. The same is true for *scientific professionals*, who, quite strikingly, are only men in *MYW* and *NH*. Female *teaching professionals* as well as *health professionals* clearly outnumber men in the respective occupation group in all three coursebooks. The distribution of *creative professionals* across gender seems to be well-balanced in *MYW*. However, *NH* portrays predominantly female creative professionals (81.0%) and *L* mainly male ones (80.0%). The distribution of *managers* across gender reveals interesting findings as well. *MYW* represents far more male managers (91.4%) than female ones (8.6%). On the contrary, *NH* depicts more women (64.7%) than men (35.3%) in leading positions, and *L* completely neglects male managers since 100% of the introduced managers are female.

Situation of interaction of characters

Finally, the interactions between characters, i.e. any kind of communicative situation in both visual and textual items, were investigated in the course of the analysis. In this respect the coursebooks show quite similar patterns. As shown in Table 16, the characters are most of the time portrayed in 'situations of spare time' or 'situations at work or at school'. Solely *MYW* also illustrates 'situations at home' quite often (16.7%).

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| situation of spare time | 52.2% | 28.7% | 55.5% | 45.5% |
| situations at work/ school | 38.4% | 41.8% | 34.1% | 38.1% |
| situation at home | 4.9% | 16.7% | 9.1% | 10.2% |
| service situations | 4.5% | 12.8% | 1.3% | 6.2% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 573 | 1368 | 627 | |

Table 16: Situation of interaction of characters

Furthermore, smooth, neutral and friendly interactions clearly outnumber those where characters express anger, disappointment, hatred, fear or love. However, in this respect *L* and especially *MYW* compare favourably with *NH* which only reaches a score of 10.1% for interaction situations where feelings are shown (see Table 17).

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Smooth, neutral, friendly | 80.6% | 73.1% | 89.9% | 81.2% |
| Anger, disappointment, hatred, fear, love etc. | 19.4% | 26.9% | 10.1% | 18.8% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 540 | 1392 | 694 | |

Table 17: Subjectivity of characters

And finally, it was found that characters are predominantly presented in isolation, with scores ranging between 52.7% for *NH* and 71.9% for *L*. Additionally, characters are more often portrayed with friends than with family. Here *L* shows an especially low score of 6.0% for depicting characters within families (see Table 18).

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| isolated | 71.9% | 56.9% | 52.7% | 60.5% |
| with friends | 22.1% | 24.9% | 32.0% | 26.3% |
| with family | 6.0% | 18.2% | 15.3% | 13.2% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 548 | 1207 | 600 | |

Table 18: Situation of interaction of characters

It was equally found that different portrayals of family life are hard to find in the coursebooks. When introducing families, the coursebooks primarily limit themselves to the traditional nuclear family, consisting of a mother and a father with two children (L: 56; NH: 38-9; NH: 103). There are no single parents portrayed in any of the three coursebooks. Only one divorced wife - who is however already remarried - (NH: 103), and two widowed people (NH: 7; 89) found their way into *NH*. *L* and *MYW* on the other hand do not take any other types of family into account (please see Table 15 on page 57).

As already stated in chapter 3.3, Risager (1991: 184) found a "strong tendency towards individualisation" in her analysis. Considering the scores in Table, this tendency can be equally noticed in the three coursebooks investigated in this study. Let me briefly comment on three characters in *NH* which I would call characteristic of this tendency towards individualisation.

In *NH*, the learners are introduced to Chantal, a beautiful and successful French fashion buyer. She is not married and has no children. The learner further gets to know that Chantal loves to go to the gym or buy clothes in Milan in her free time and has a holiday home in Biarritz (NH: 16). Additionally, there is Claire, who is a gallery owner living in Manchester and New York. The coursebook tells us that she loves her "transatlantic lifestyle" but when being in Manchester, Claire misses "New York manicures". Once a month, she commutes between her "rooftop flat" in Brooklyn (where she lives with an artist) and her "city-centre loft" in Manchester (NH: 19). Furthermore, the learner gets introduced to Joss, who is a snowboard designer living in Cambridge and Nuremberg. Joss also works in Switzerland sometimes and flies "100 times [a] year" (he makes a point not to fly first class though). He rarely sees his girlfriend who also travels a lot for her job, but "sometimes [their] planes cross in the skies" (NH: 18).

Without doubt, the presentation of pluralistic ways of life (also of young, successful and independent people) can be assessed positively. Nonetheless, to my mind, the depiction has been a bit overdone in this respect. All of the three characters live a luxurious jet set life by owning several lofts or holiday homes, travelling from one city to another and pursuing fancy careers as fashion buyers, gallery owners or snowboard designers. Even though such lifestyles certainly exist, there remains the definite risk that learners might on the one hand, perceive them as unrealistic and on the other hand, get

the wrong impression regarding the likelihood of pursuing the like careers and lifestyles in their own future.

5.2.2.5 Perspectives on the foreign culture

As pointed out in chapter 4.1.1, the coursebooks' degree of realism also depends on the authors' point of view, i.e. whether they present different perspectives on issues along with positive and negative aspects. As Sercu points out:

Refraining from presenting multiple perspectives on cultural issues may leave learners under the impression that the image presented in the textbook is unquestionable and true, needs no further investigation or thought, and is unchallenging and uninteresting. (Sercu 2000: 286)

First, the degree to which coursebooks adopt monoperspectival or multiperspectival points of view will be investigated.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Monoperspectivity | 75.1% | 53.5% | 65.1% | 64.6% |
| Multiperspectivity | 24.9% | 46.5% | 34.9% | 35.4% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 1350 | 2514 | 1311 | |

Table 19: Distribution of culture across perspectives:
monoperspectivity vs. multiperspectivity

As can be seen in Table 19 and Figure 9, the investigated coursebooks tend to adopt a monoperspectival view more often than a multiperspectival point of view. Although the external evaluation of the table of contents (cf. chapter 5.1.2) found that *NH* wishes to present topics from different angles like immigration, men's and women's jobs and danger of tourism, the in-depth analysis shows that *NH* still clearly adopts a monoperspectival point of view throughout the book (65.1%). *L* tends to refrain from presenting multiperspectival point of views since it only achieves a score of 24.9%. On the contrary, *MYW* compares favourably with the other two coursebooks by more or less equally distributing culture across monoperspectivity and multiperspectivity.

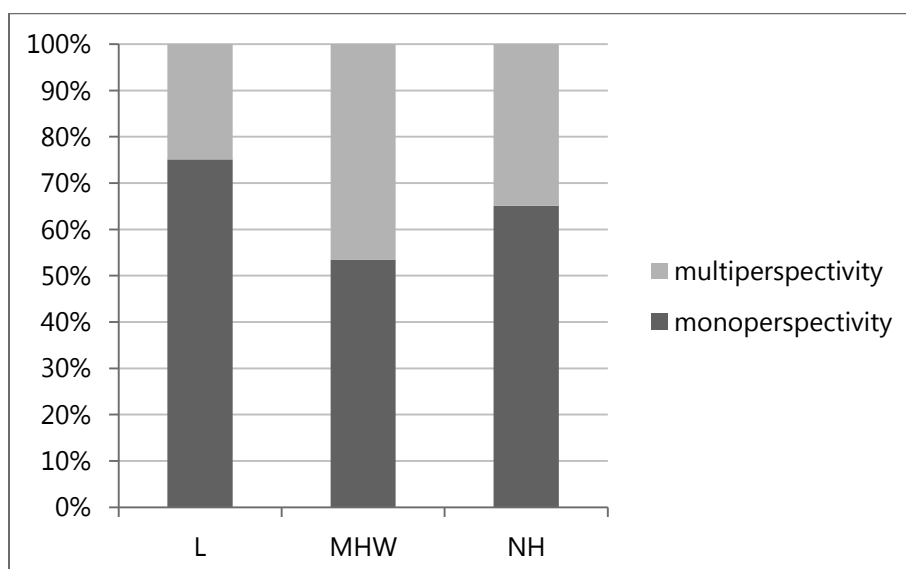


Figure 9: Distribution of culture across perspectives: monoperspectivity vs. multiperspectivity

In the following section, I want to point out some examples where the coursebooks explicitly contrast different points of view on the same topic.

For instance, in *MYW*, the learners are presented with diary entries of a mother and her daughter writing about the same events but from two different perspectives (*MYW*: 133). The coursebook further explicitly contrasts different opinions on school discipline (*MYW*: 32), on a self-appointed “psychic doctor” (*MYW*: 55) on package tours and means of transport (*MYW*: 104-5). The learner also gets introduced to two Indian children from opposite ends of the privilege spectrum. Additionally, *MYW* provides different insights into teenage life by letting three different generations talk about what life is/was like for them at the age of 15, namely an English teenage girl and her mother talking about teenage life nowadays and in the 1980s (*MYW*: 197) as well as an elderly woman who lived her teenage life in the 1950s (*MYW*: 202).

NH tries to present multiple points of view on the topic of education by displaying a South African teenage girl whose parents cannot afford her education. However, she holds high ambitions to study hard and to go to university. The South African girl’s life is starkly contrasted with the life of a rich Russian teenage boy who has unlimited educational opportunities but no idea of what he actually wants (*NH*: 88). Nevertheless, one might argue that the contrast here appears to too boldly perpetuate common stereotypes of the poor black South-African girl and the rich white Russian boy. Furthermore, *NH* portrays the contrasting lifestyles of two women: the life of a middle-

aged Quebecois who runs a small family hotel with her husband and who loves to go dog-sledding in her free time stands in clear contrast to the life of a young Chinese woman who works in a toy factory under terrible conditions and who studies in private lessons in her free time (NH: 14-15). The coursebook also presents the situation of a girl leaving home to live in London from her own perspective as well as her father's. It becomes apparent that the two sides have quite divergent views on the matter (NH: 65). The coursebook further displays two different kinds of communication situations in order to illustrate how to avoid a conversation break-down (NH: 21). Finally, the learners get introduced to people who are "travel addicts" and those you do not want to travel but rather stay home (NH: 74-76).

Generally speaking, *L* compares unfavourably with the other two coursebooks in terms of presenting multiple viewpoints of the same issue. For instance, *L* attempts to portray multiple viewpoints by introducing five teenagers from around the world talking about their English-learning experience. Still, the texts are not very successful in doing so since the issue of learning English in different contexts is only touched on at a surface level. Although a boy from Ghana talks about difficult classroom situations ("there are usually lots of kids in the class, so the teachers can't give you a lot of attention") and a boy from Spain admits that "[he] find[s] English a bit boring sometimes", the texts basically remain quite superficial and idealistic. In the end, all of the teenagers enjoy learning English (L: 8-9). In another activity in *L*, five people (a police officer, a prison guard, a judge and two victims) talk about different crimes (L: 29).

Negative vs. positive/neutral aspects on culture

In a further step I will examine whether the investigated coursebooks discuss positive as well as negative aspects of culture or of specific cultural topics. As pointed out by Sercu (2000: 287), only a well-balanced presentation of positive and negative aspects can support the learners in perceiving the world presented to them as real. It will be recalled from chapter 4.1.2 that cultural references were coded 'negative' and 'positive/neutral'.

The scores in Table 20 illustrate that as opposed to *L* being weak in exploring negative aspects (7.4%), *MYW* (23.3%) and *NH* (17.2%) attempt to show negative aspects of cultural topics alongside positive ones. Nevertheless, all coursebooks obviously present positive or neutral aspects of culture most of the time, with proportions varying from 76.7% for *MYW* up to 92.6% for *L*.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| negative | 7.4% | 23.3% | 17.2% | 16.0% |
| positive/neutral | 92.6% | 76.7% | 82.8% | 84.0% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 1360 | 2523 | 1324 | |

Table 20: Distribution of culture across perspectives:
negative vs. positive/neutral

Combining data for cultural topics and for negative vs. positive/neutral perspectives reveal that the majority of cultural topics are presented positively in *all* coursebooks.

The topic of *geography* is only dealt with in positive terms in all three coursebooks. When discussing *religion* (L), *mentality* (L), *foreign language* (NH) or *body culture/fashion* (MYW) the respective coursebooks only present positive or neutral aspects. It is also interesting to see that MYW and NH present the topic of *multiculturalism* solely positively or neutrally with scores of 100%, and refrain from including any negative aspects of this topic. L, on the other hand, does not cover *multiculturalism* at all.

Investigating the topic of *media and communication* along with positive and negative aspects reveals interesting findings. L regards aspects of *media and communication* only positively (100%), whereas NH presents only negative aspects of the very topic (100%). MYW on the contrary, incorporates positive/neutral as well as negative aspects of *media and communication*, but still predominantly focuses on positive/neutral aspects (80.3%).

Environment for instance, was found to be the only topic more or less evenly distributed over negative and positive/neutral perspectives. L reaches a score of 48.9% for negative aspects and 51.1% for positive/neutral aspects of environmental issues. MYW even more prefers to present negative aspects on environmental issues (68.6%). NH on the contrary does not cover the topic of *environment* at all.

It is further worth mentioning that whereas NH and L do not include the topic of *(im)migration* at all, MYW manages to evenly distribute negative (48.3%) and positive/neutral (51.7%) aspects over that topic.

Looking at stereotypes

In this line of argument, I will also briefly look at stereotypical presentations and formulations the students may encounter in the investigated coursebooks.

NH tries hard to challenge common gender stereotypes in terms of *occupation*. In the reading activity 'Jobs for the boys ... and girls' (NH: 66-67), the learners are faced with two characters who swapped traditional gender roles, namely a woman working as a plumber and a man working as a nanny. The activity seems to have a lot of potential to raise the learners' awareness of stereotypes. Additionally, the coursebook also presents negative viewpoints since the female plumber states that "she has to fight sexism and prejudice every day in her job" (NH: 67). Nonetheless, *NH* is not beyond formulating stereotypical statements itself. For instance, in a reading activity about the multicultural society of London, some sentences in the introduction read as follows: "All Londoners, old and new, have the same principles. They work hard, love their children, and move out of the city centre as soon as they can afford it." As well as: "Another surprising reason is the character of the London people. They are not as friendly as some other nationalities." (NH: 50). Furthermore, in the course of the book we get to know a French man talking about refusing to leave his country for holidays since he has everything (food, wine, climate) he needs "en France" (NH: 156). Here, the stereotypical image of the patriotic, 'savoir-vivre loving' French might be reinforced, supplemented by a photograph showing Jean-Claude with a bottle of wine (NH: 76).

Similarly, *L* does not refrain from incorporating stereotypical formulations into the texts. For example, in a reading activity, an Italian girl tells her English friend about the Greek people she met in her holidays: "The Greeks are very friendly and most of them speak English well. They do like it though if you try to speak a bit of Greek [...]". As well as: "You'll really impress the Greek boys if you speak to them in their own language!" (L: 113).

By contrast, in the reading comprehension 'Unscrambling the British Breakfast' (MYW: 185), *MYW* explicitly rejects the stereotype of the Full English Breakfast by stating that "only one person in ten has bacon and eggs for breakfast". Another successful way of challenging stereotypes is presented in *MYW*. Jokes about Austrians should raise the students' awareness of stereotypes other people may have about Austrians.

Sercu (1998: 270) also argues that “[o]nly humorous irony and pleasant exaggeration can tone down and moderate stereotypical issues”.

5.2.2.6 Presentation of intercultural contacts

One aspect which remains to be addressed is the presentation of intercultural contacts in the investigated coursebooks. Sercu’s argument for the importance of portraying intercultural contact situations reads as follows:

[W]hen learners are presented with situations in which people from various cultural backgrounds meet, - who have to apply intercultural skills in order to cope with misunderstandings arising from differences in cultural background [...], textbooks have a better chance of contributing to the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence than when they do not. (Sercu 2000: 291)

The analysis of the textbook data however reveals that the proportion of intercultural contact situations in the investigated textbooks is extremely low. In total numbers, *NH* models most intercultural contact situations, namely 34, *MYW* presents 20 situations and *L* only four.

Table 21 demonstrates how the coursebooks compare with regard to the variety in presenting intercultural contacts.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| pen pal contact | 95.8% | 8.3% | 2.9% | 35.7% |
| living in the country | 0.0% | 50.5% | 31.1% | 27.2% |
| tourist contact | 4.2% | 18.5% | 46.6% | 23.1% |
| study stay | 0.0% | 0.0% | 19.4% | 6.5% |
| contact through media | 0.0% | 17.9% | 0.0% | 6.0% |
| work contact | 0.0% | 2.9% | 0.0% | 1.0% |
| leisure | 0.0% | 1.6% | 0.0% | 0.5% |
| a visit to friends, relatives | 0.0% | 0.3% | 0.0% | 0.1% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 24 | 313 | 206 | |

Table 21: Type of intercultural contact

It becomes apparent that *L* tends to confine itself to the portrayal of pen pal contacts (95.8%) and tourist contacts (4.2%). *NH* mainly focuses on depicting tourist contacts (46.6%), living in the country (31.3%) and study stays (19.4%). On the contrary, *MYW* provides the learner with a wide variety of different intercultural contact situations. Although a large proportion of contacts models living in the country (50.5%), *MYW* also quite often portrays tourist contacts (18.5%) and contacts through media (17.9%). Given the fact that media occupies an important role in the students’ lives nowadays, it is

particularly surprising that the other two coursebooks completely omit intercultural media contacts. Other forms of contact which are further addressed in *MYW* are pen pal contacts (8.3%) and work contacts (2.9%).

In Sercu's citation above, it is stated that intercultural contact situations should preferably model characters applying intercultural skills. Therefore, the type of intercultural information in intercultural contact situations has been examined.

| | L | MYW | NH | Mean |
|-------------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| intercultural information being exchanged | 100% | 11.9% | 26.7% | 46.2% |
| cultural misunderstanding illustrated | 0.0% | 47.8% | 24.4% | 24.1% |
| cultures compared | 0.0% | 40.3% | 48.9% | 29.7% |
| Sum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| n = total number of lines | 9 | 201 | 45 | |

Table 22: Type of intercultural information

From the data in Table 22, it can be seen that *L* compares unfavourably with the other two coursebooks by solely illustrating the exchange of intercultural information (100%). In contrast, *NH* in particular, seems to be successful in portraying various types of intercultural information. Most of the time, cultures are compared (48.9%). However, also contacts illustrating cultural misunderstandings (24.4%) and the exchange of intercultural information (26.7%) gain considerable prominence in *NH*. Similarly, *MYW* takes contact situations into account in which cultural misunderstandings are illustrated (47.8%) as well as in which cultures are compared (40.3%) and to some extent, in which intercultural information is exchanged (11.9%).

With regard to the type of background for the intercultural contact, it becomes apparent that, if specified, the countries where the most intercultural contacts take place are the UK, Austria as well as the USA. Furthermore, all three coursebooks most frequently model situations in which a British person meets somebody from the expanding circle (Italy, France, Austria). For instance, *MYW* most often depicts British-Austrian contact situations and *NH* does so every now and then. However, there can also be intercultural contact situations between speakers from non-English countries found in *NH* (German-French; Austrian-Swiss). Interestingly, although *L* models the least intercultural contact situations, it is the only coursebook to incorporate an American person (meeting a Greek person).

6 General Discussion

As became obvious, the present study produced a vast amount of data which has been presented in detail in the previous chapter. In this section, the main findings will be summarised and discussed with reference to the research questions (cf. chapter 1). Furthermore, some implications for teaching, especially for adapting and modifying the cultural content in the coursebooks will be outlined.

6.1 Summary and discussion of results

The dual approach of external and internal evaluation revealed that the claims made by authors and publishers as well as the table of contents do not always seem to correlate with the actual content in the investigated coursebooks.

The results of the external evaluation of *L* have not been overly revealing. Neither the table of contents nor the introductory pages of the teacher's book contain any references to specific cultures. Furthermore, the external evaluation showed that 'big C culture' aspects seem to be largely disregarded. The in-depth analysis indicated that *L* very much focuses on the inner circle of English. Additionally, although strongly emphasising the micro level of culture, *L* displays culture on the macro level, too.

In *MYW* the results of the external and in the internal evaluation tend to correlate. After the external evaluation *MYW* had been expected to deal with the "Kulturen der englischsprachigen Welt" (*MYW* 5. Teacher's Handbook 2010: 3) by however strongly focusing on the inner circle and UK in particular. Furthermore, the examination of the table of contents indicated a certain relevance of the Austrian culture throughout the book. The in-depth analysis of the content showed that *MYW* provides indeed a principal focus on the UK and Austria. Still, by devoting a whole unit to India, *MYW* attempted to incorporate a representative of the outer circle of English as well. Furthermore, the examination of the table of contents in the external evaluation gave some indication of the incorporation of controversial topics as well as portraying culture both on the micro and macro level of culture. These assumptions were also confirmed by the internal evaluation.

With regard to *NH*, the external evaluation of the table of contents revealed that *NH* might present the learners with a strong focus on the micro level of culture and the portrayal of individual people's lifestyles. This assumption was underpinned in the in-

depth analysis. However, although there were no references to particular concentric circles of English found, the internal evaluation showed that *NH* focuses on the inner circle but at the same time, refers to a wide variety of expanding circle countries. The external evaluation also indicated the incorporation of controversial topics. Even though *NH* raises contentious issues, the predominant tone in the coursebook can still be perceived as positive and neutral.

6.1.1 Degree of realism in cultural content

The study attempted to investigate the potential the investigated coursebooks have for developing the students' intercultural communicative competence. It has been argued in chapter 4.1.1 that this can be done by examining whether the students can recognise the cultural content portrayed in the coursebooks to be *real* (Sercu 2000: 253). Therefore, the first research question set in the study asks: How do the investigated coursebooks present the cultural content with regard to their degree of realism? It will be recalled that the coursebooks' degree of realism was examined in terms of the coursebooks' cultural topics, the distribution of culture across levels of culture, the incorporation of concentric circles of English, the portrayal of characters, the perspectives the coursebooks take on the foreign culture as well as the depiction of intercultural contact situations.

Cultural topics and perspectives on culture

The analysis of the cultural topics covered in the coursebooks made apparent that the three investigated coursebooks are not entirely successful in incorporating Byram's (1993) 'minimum cultural content for coursebooks'. Most of the time, the coursebooks make do with a small amount of safe and bland cultural topics, disregarding controversial topics or so-called PARSNIP topics (cf. chapter 3.2.2). As pointed out in chapter 3.2.2, Tomlinson (2013) and Gray (2010) argue that locally produced teaching material can better take cultural taboos into account and can therefore take more risks in covering controversial topics. This argument tends to be somehow reflected in the present study. *MYW*, which counts as the only locally produced coursebook in the study, seems to be the only coursebook to successfully cover controversial topics and some of the PARSNIP topics of politics/war&peace, religion and (im)migration (cf. chapter 5.2.2.1). However, it still has to be stressed that some of these topics are often only mentioned in passing and could thus receive much more attention from the coursebook authors.

Furthermore, incorporating multiperspectival points of view has been established as one main criterion in assessing the coursebooks' degree of realism in presenting the cultural content. Dunnett, Dubin & Lezberg (1986: 153) for instance, distinguish between "one-dimensional" and "two-dimensional" teaching materials. The former is said to adopt solely monoperspectival views on particular issues, whereas the latter "treat culture-related themes from at least two contrasting perspectives" and can therefore foster an intercultural point of view. In the present analysis, it became apparent that the globally published coursebooks, namely *L* and *NH* very much adopt monoperspectival points of view. On the contrary, *MYW* appears to be "two-dimensional" since it more or less equally presents monoperspectival viewpoints as well as multiperspectival ones. Additionally, *MYW* was found to be most successful in looking at negative aspects on particular issues alongside positive and neutral ones (cf. chapter 5.2.2.5).

Moreover, the study aimed at examining the degree of subjectivity in interactions of the coursebook characters. Here too, the coursebook authors remain very objective and neutral. They hardly incorporate interaction situations in which characters express feelings like anger, disappointment, hatred, fear or love. However, it has to be stated that in this respect *MYW* compares favourably with the other two coursebooks (cf. chapter 5.2.2.4).

Risager (1991: 189) argues that the state of affairs of expressed neutrality has been underscored first, by an increasing pragmatic orientation of FLT and second, by the ideology of "cultural relativism", which has had a considerable impact on FLT since the 1960s. According to Risager, cultural relativism

[s]tresses that all national cultures and other cultural matters are of equal worth, and have equal rights to exist, but also that one should not interfere with them, evaluate or criticise them, or engage in political action in relation to them. (Risager 1991: 189)

Without doubt, the ideology of cultural relativism hinders pedagogical aims of engagement and discussion which are however essential in promoting intercultural communicative competence (ibid.).

To conclude, in terms of topic diversification and multiperspectivity, the investigated coursebooks have to be assessed with low marks in terms of realism, with *MYW* comparing favourably with the other two coursebooks and *NH* being better positioned than *L*.

Levels of culture

It has been further argued by Sercu (2000: 277-84) that cultural topics should be equally distributed across the micro-, macro- and international/intercultural level in order to be perceived as *real* by the students. The analysis revealed that all coursebooks mainly present culture on the micro level, followed by the macro level and the international level coming in last. It became also obvious that *MYW* and *NH* present the learner with a more equal distribution across levels of culture than *L* (cf. chapter 5.2.2.2).

As stated in chapter 2.1, former coursebooks were largely criticised for confining their presentation of cultural aspects to 'big C culture' (thus the macro level) only. But, because of the fact that the coursebooks in the study predominantly focus on the micro level of culture, the shift from 'big C culture' towards 'small c culture' can be clearly noticed. Still, coursebooks should attempt to equally incorporate the international/intercultural level of culture. It will be recalled from chapter 4.1.1 that on the international/intercultural level coursebooks should present comparisons between the foreign country and the students' own, mutual representations and relations. In terms of comparisons between the foreign country and the pupil's own as well as mutual representations, Risager (1991: 187) however states that, given all the different contexts coursebooks have to cater to, "it is in principle impossible to elaborate a sociocultural content that is based on a contrastive analysis of the two countries originally involved". Without doubt, *MYW* has an advantage over the other two coursebooks, since it was solely produced for the Austrian context. And indeed, *MYW* is the coursebook that most often refers to the source culture and invites the students to compare Austrian culture with the foreign one (which in the *MYW* context is most often English culture).

On the international/intercultural level, Risager's (1991) framework further investigates the stereotypes incorporated in the coursebooks. The coursebooks should refrain from including stereotypical images and formulations and should even go so far as provide activities to challenge stereotypes. The analysis revealed that in *MYW* and *NH*, the learners are engaged with some activities rejecting common national and gender stereotypes. Still, stereotypical formulations could be found in *NH* and *L*.

Presentation of characters

In terms of gender groups, all coursebooks show awareness of a well-balanced portrayal of males and females. Additionally, when combining gender and occupation data, it was found that the coursebooks make positive efforts to depict females in male-dominated jobs and vice versa. Here, the globally published coursebooks, *NH* in particular, appear to be most successful in doing so. However, a weak feature of coursebooks is the incorporation of only a limited range of occupations. By predominantly focusing on *professionals* (in this group *creative professionals* receive special prominence), other occupation groups like *craftsmen*, *agricultural workers* or *clerks and civil servants* tend to be neglected. Moreover, in order to present a diversified picture of the population's occupation situation, unemployed people, as well as people working below the income limit, should doubtlessly find their way into the coursebooks. This however seems to be mainly disregarded by the majority of coursebooks since only *MYW* mentions an unemployed person and discusses aspects of child labour in India.

In fact, the investigated books might want to paint a more diversified picture of the coursebook population. With regard to age groups for instance, it was found that *teenagers* and *adults* are most often portrayed. This of course might not surprise considering the (predominantly teenage and young adults) target groups at which coursebooks aim. Nonetheless, in order to paint a representative picture of the coursebook society, *children* and *elderly adults* should find their way into the coursebooks equally. As stated in chapter 5.2.2.4, *NH* and to some extent *MYW* are most successful in doing so.

Moreover, the analysis showed that pluralistic ways of life are poorly represented in the coursebooks. Most of the time, when portraying families, coursebooks limit themselves to the traditional nuclear family type and consequently disregard growing tendencies towards single-parent families, patchwork families and divorced or homosexual relationships. Volkmann similarly criticises the ideal world depicted in most of the coursebooks and calls for a more representative picture of ways of life:

Eine pluralistische Darstellung verschiedener Lebensformen könnte einem realistischen Gesellschaftsbild sicherlich besser Rechnung tragen als das von den Lehrbüchern realisierte einseitig harmonisierende Weltmodell. (Volkmann 1999: 131 qtd. in Weier 2002: 181)

Generally speaking, there is however a “strong tendency towards individualisation” (Risager 1991: 184) displayed in the investigated coursebooks. The characters are mainly portrayed in isolation or interacting in situations of spare time and consumption (cf. chapter 5.2.2.4). The consumer behaviour and luxurious lifestyle of some of the coursebook characters have already been partly discussed in chapter 5.2.2.4.

It is worth additional mention that only ‘attractive-looking people’ are portrayed in the visual items in the investigated coursebooks. Gray (2010: 126-27), who conducted interviews with ELT coursebook publishers, reports that the reason for doing so was twofold. First, it was argued by the publishers that the learners “‘tend to like attractive models’ they can ‘idolize’”. And second, the publishers referred to a “‘aspirational’ content” which “they [the learners] aspire to and which therefore interests them and motivates them” (Gray 2010: 126 [interview extract]). In my study, it was found that especially the globally published coursebooks *NH* and *L* seem to work with the “aspirational content” regarding the amount of visual items the coursebooks include (cf. chapter 5.2.1) as well as some of the individual people’s stories (cf. chapter 5.2.2.4).

The analysis also shows that there are no central characters in the coursebooks. Risager (1991: 184) talks about a “fragmentation of the social universe” in the coursebooks. Similarly in my analysis, the investigated coursebooks predominantly portray flat characters that do not turn up again in the course of the book and consequently do not develop. However, *NH* (89) and *L* (113) at least try to portray characters again in later activities. For instance, one attempt in *NH* to follow some characters’ lives can be assessed positively since in one activity the learners meet the characters introduced before one year later in order to see what has happened (NH: 89).

In brief, whereas the coursebooks manage to portray a well-balanced picture of the population in terms of gender groups, limitations are shown concerning age as well as occupation groups. Furthermore, the investigated coursebooks were found to have deficiencies in depicting pluralistic ways of life, which would be conducive to the coursebooks’ degree of realism in presenting the population. The coursebooks also show a strong tendency towards an individualised and consumer-oriented society. Finally, due to the fact that characters are mainly presented in a fragmented way, there might remain little opportunity for students to identify with the coursebook population.

Presentation of intercultural contacts

As became obvious in the analysis, the portrayal of intercultural contact situations is very rare in the investigated coursebooks. According to Sercu (1998: 272), depicting situations in which, for example, a person fluent in a foreign language is misunderstood because of the difference of culture-specific reference frames, would promote the students' intercultural communicative competence. Such or similar situations could, however, not be found in the investigated coursebooks. When portraying intercultural contact situations, the coursebooks are predominantly confined to pen pal or tourist contacts. However, it can be assessed positively that *MYW* and *NH* also depict intercultural contact situations in which one interlocutor is living in the foreign country. It turned out to be surprising that only *MYW* takes the chance of presenting intercultural contacts through media. In this respect in particular, some improvement would be favourable because given the prominent role media takes in the students' lives, the presentation of intercultural contact situations through media might appeal to most of the students and has therefore great potential to raise their interest.

6.1.2 The aspect of English as a lingua franca

The second research question that has been addressed in the present study asks whether the investigated coursebooks still largely focus on native-speaker target cultures (i.e. the inner circle) or whether they show awareness of the use of English as a lingua franca. In order to shed light on this research question, the distribution of culture across concentric circles of English has been examined in the analysis.

As argued in chapter 2.4, the international use of English as a lingua franca has led to the fact that many cultures now call the language their own and that consequently, English is no longer inextricably bound to the inner circle of English. It has been further emphasised that in order to do justice to the global use of English in ELT, the cultural content which in the past was very much related to the inner circle, particularly the UK and the US, has to be complemented by topics covering other parts of the world (Gnutzmann 1999; Doyé 1999).

The data analysis in the present study showed that in all three of the investigated coursebooks, the predominant focus still lies on the inner circle countries, the UK in particular. It further became apparent that the "global coursebooks" being "subtly deterritorialized" (cf. chapter 3.2.2), namely *L* and *NH*, tend to be indeed internationally

located since they seem to be most successful in addressing a wide variety of expanding circle countries. Still, they predominantly focus on *European* expanding countries leading to the fact that African, Asian or South-American countries are somewhat discounted. Furthermore, apart from *MYW*, the other two coursebooks seem to largely disregard the outer circle of English. Although *MYW* turns special attention to India, by devoting a whole unit to this very country, it can be argued that here, India is presented in isolation and appears thus to be a 'special case' of English. Without doubt, it is a first step towards making the aspect of ELF visible in ELT. However, coursebooks might better incorporate outer circle countries throughout the whole book and treat them as equal to the inner and expanding circle of English.

The discussion and summary of the main findings showed in which respects the investigated coursebooks are successful in presenting the cultural content as *real*. In sum, the investigated coursebooks in my study cannot be claimed to successfully depict a "realistic diversified, nuanced multiperspectival image of [...] culture" (Sercu 2000: 296). Turning to coursebook specifics, some appear to be more successful in presenting certain aspects of culture as real than others. It seems that the locally published coursebook *MYW* finds indeed more opportunities to incorporate contentious issues, multiperspectival viewpoints and mutual relations between the foreign culture and the students' own. The globally published coursebooks, especially *NH*, on the other hand, tend to be more successful not only in presenting a varied portrayal of the coursebooks' characters (particularly in terms of occupation) but also in addressing a wide range of expanding circle countries. Furthermore, it might be argued that the colourful appearance of *L* and *NH*, each containing lots of images, might be appealing to the students. Still, as argued before, the so-called 'aspirational content' has to be challenged, because it might leave the students with a distorted impression of future careers and lifestyles.

Although the coursebooks' efforts to present the cultural content as *real* are clearly evident, all of them show various limitations in some way or other. I will therefore refrain from reaching a conclusion about which coursebook is most suitable in promoting the students' intercultural competence by ranking them in a 'hit parade like way' from best to worst.

Risager (1991: 188) for instance, emphasises that “[...] an evaluation of textbooks is not directly an evaluation of the teaching and learning process that is associated with them”. The underlying implication is that the teacher has the responsibility of what to make of the existing material. Teachers will need to go beyond the teaching material in order to detect the coursebook’s strengths and weaknesses through critical evaluation. It will also very much depend on how they adapt or modify it. Since McGrath (2002: 64) claims: “[I]f we are not wholly satisfied with what the coursebook has to offer we have a responsibility to do something about it”.

The adaption and supplementing of teaching material is another important process in material evaluation. The following section discusses this aspect and explores how coursebook materials can be adapted and modified by teachers.

6.2 Implications for teaching: Adaptation and supplementation of coursebook material from an intercultural perspective

McGrath (2002: 64) basically sees two main reasons for material adaption, first when the material is not suitable for the current teaching circumstances, and second when the material is deficient in some way. In terms of cultural content, the literature suggests different options for coursebook material adaptation and modification (Gray 2000, McGrath 2002, Skopinskaja 2003):

- to reject and replace the material if the cultural content is inappropriate
- to adapt and modify the material to make it culturally more appropriate and to meet the teaching objective of a lesson
- to add and supplement material if there is inadequate or insufficient coverage of particular topics

Gray (2000), however, talking about coursebooks as “cultural artefacts”, clearly argues against “censorship” of cultural material by teachers since “it robs students of the ability to defend themselves against the ‘possibly harmful concepts and pressures’” (Hyde 1994: 302 qtd. in Gray 2000: 278). He calls for critical engagement with the coursebook and suggests using the coursebook as a useful instrument for provoking cultural debate (Gray 2000: 280-81). Therefore, instead of rejecting material, teachers are advised to adapt or supplement the existing coursebook material.

Concerning the coursebooks investigated in the present study, I would not claim their cultural content to be necessarily unsuitable. However, there could be certain limitations found concerning the diversification of topics, the perspectives taken on cultures as well as the representation of the coursebook population.

Byram, Gribkova & Starkey (2002: 21) for instance, make some suggestions for material adaptation in order to foster intercultural skills. In case the coursebook mainly adopts a monoperspectival point of view and presents itself as “authoritative and definitive”, the teacher has the possibility of adding a critical perspective by inviting learners to ask further questions and make comparisons. However, it should be noted that “[t]he key principle is to get learners to **compare** the theme in a familiar situation with examples from an unfamiliar context” (ibid. [original emphasis]). The authors propose considering

familiar topics from different angles by asking probably unfamiliar questions concerning gender, age, region, religion and racism.

L for instance, incorporates a whole unit on sports (L: 88-95), a topic which is quite likely to be familiar to most of the students. However, the texts and tasks remain very objective and do not include controversial issues or viewpoints. Therefore, in order to add a critical perspective, the teacher could ask the following questions:

- **Gender:** Are there sports, in the familiar context or in the unfamiliar context, predominantly played by men or by women? Are things changing?
- **Age:** Are there sports for younger people and older people?
- **Region:** Are there local sports? Do people, including the learners, identify with local teams? Do some teams have a particular cultural tradition?
- **Religion:** Are there religious objections to playing sport, or days when some people choose not to do sports because of religious observance?
- **Racism:** Is this found in spectator sports? Are the players of foreign teams, or foreign players in local teams always treated with respect? Are there incidents of racist chants or insults?

(taken from Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 21).

Other familiar topics like food, home, school, tourism or leisure could be dealt with in a similar way. Another way of adding a critical perspective to monoperspectival texts is to invite the learners to look for additional authentic materials which adopt a different point of view. The internet for example, is a rich source for finding newspapers of different political or cultural perspectives (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 23).

Teachers should also take up the opportunity to question and challenge existing prejudice and stereotypes in the coursebooks. Here, teachers might encourage students to comment on stereotypical depictions and formulations and challenge them (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 21). Regarding the stereotypical formulations found in *NH* and *L* (cf. chapter 5.2.2.5), teachers should direct the learners' attention to them and invite them to make suggestions of how these sentences can be formulated in a more appropriate way. I would argue that in case the coursebook is successful in challenging common national and gender stereotypes, the teacher should equally draw the students'

attention to it and encourage them to discuss how these stereotypes have been successfully rejected.

As has become obvious in the present study, sometimes the coursebooks are all too focused on particular cultures which might not be conducive to an intercultural perspective. Therefore, a broader view of culture could be incorporated by adapting names, countries and people, and not just confining oneself to Europe and North America (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 21).

And finally, the learners might take the place of the coursebook evaluator. The teacher could encourage the students to critically examine the coursebook's visual and/or textual items to find striking, inappropriate or interesting features. The students could also be invited to find similar texts or items from their familiar culture and compare and contrast them (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 24).

Of course, the above mentioned list of suggestions does not make any claims to completeness, but it aims at demonstrating some simple ways and ideas of how teachers can add a critical and intercultural perspective to the existing teaching material.

7 Conclusion

The present thesis has attempted to contribute to the research on intercultural communicative competence and the evaluation of the cultural content in coursebooks.

First, this paper has provided a theoretical overview of intercultural communicative competence in ELT. It has explored and discussed changing notions of culture and culture teaching. It has argued that nowadays culture can no longer be seen as a static concept which is coincidental with a particular country or region (which has mainly been the UK and the USA in the ELT context), but has to be understood as a dynamic model of construction of meaning. Similarly, the shift from a 'Landeskunde' approach towards intercultural learning has been discussed. In trying to reach a common definition of intercultural communicative competence, Byram's model of *five savoirs*, which entails the attitudes, knowledge, skills and values involved in intercultural competence, as well as Kramsch's concepts of "third place" and the "intercultural speaker", who is supposed to be an ethnographer and mediator between culturally different groups, have been particularly useful. However, since the term intercultural competence is still often perceived as a fuzzy concept, other critical voices on the concept had been considered. Last, the aspect of English as a lingua franca in culture teaching and its underlying implications for the cultural content in teaching materials have been touched upon. It has been argued that in order to do justice to the status of English as a global language, the cultural content which until recently has strongly focused on the inner circle of English has to be complemented with topics dealing with other parts of the world.

Chapter 3 dealt with the implementation of culture and intercultural competence in curricula and coursebooks. It was found that the CEFR strongly advocates an intercultural approach. It has however been argued that being a policy document, the CEFR adopts an intercultural approach not only for educational reasons but also for attaining political and economic goals. The examination of the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages equally showed that all three components of intercultural communicative competence, namely the affective, cognitive and skills domain are implemented in the curriculum while, however, emphasising the cognitive domain. Furthermore, aspects of culture in coursebooks and the 'global coursebook' have been discussed. The global coursebook has been chiefly criticised for incorporating only safe and bland topics in order to cater

for all the different contexts it is used in. Thus, it has been stated that it would be preferable to supplement the global coursebook with locally produced materials as those can take more risks in including provocative and controversial topics and aspects of culture.

The analysis of three commonly used ELT coursebooks in the Austrian context formed the second part of this thesis. By following Sercu's (2000) approach, the degree of *realism* in presenting the cultural content has been established as one main criterion to assess the coursebooks' potential to promote students' intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, it has been investigated whether the coursebooks are aware of the status of English as a lingua franca and whether they present culture by taking all three concentric circles of English (Kachru 1985) into account.

The analysis revealed that although trying to incorporate controversial issues and negative aspects of culture, the investigated coursebooks predominantly portray a limited range of cultural topics from a monoperspectival point of view. Furthermore, the coursebooks tend to present the learners with an image of culture focusing on the individual's everyday life dimension (micro level) than on broad social facts about geography, politics and history (macro level). International and intercultural issues like mutual representations and relations are mainly disregarded. Additionally, the portrayal of intercultural contact situations is very limited. However, it was also found that in comparison to the globally published coursebooks *L* and *NH*, the locally published coursebook *MYW* seems to find more opportunities to incorporate controversial issues, multiperspectival viewpoints and mutual relations between the foreign culture and the students' own.

With respect to the presentation of the coursebooks' population, the analysis showed that the investigated coursebooks are successful in displaying a well-balanced image of gender groups, but could make improvements in terms of age, ethnic as well as occupation groups. It was further found that characters are mainly portrayed in an isolated and fragmented manner, interacting in situations of spare time and consumption. Furthermore, the characters show hardly any feelings in interactions. Presentations of pluralistic ways of life and socio-political issues, like single-parent families and divorced or homosexual relationships as well as poverty or unemployment and racism are very scarce or non-existent.

Finally, the analysis indicated that all coursebooks still predominantly focus on the inner circle of English, especially UK. The globally published coursebooks seem to be more successful in referring to a wide variety of expanding circle countries, but clearly fail to incorporate the outer circle of English.

In fact, the coursebooks' efforts to present the learner with a realistic image of culture are evident. However, all of the coursebooks show limitations in some way or other. Therefore, the implications for teaching arising from the study results suggested adaptation and supplementation of the existing teaching material.

Although textbooks play a substantial role in the classroom and thus in the students' learning process, this thesis should of course not give the impression that learners can acquire intercultural communicative competence from textbooks only. For instance, *experiential learning*, "where learners can experience situations which make demands upon their emotions and feelings and then reflect upon that experience and its meaning for them" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 19), should constitute an important part in the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence.

The backwash effect of examinations will be crucial in the future direction of teaching for intercultural communicative competence. Although existing literature on the subject gives suggestions for the assessment of intercultural communicative competence (see Byram 1997, Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002), there are still no valid and sound evaluation methods implemented in the CEFR or the Austrian curriculum. The problem lies in the difficulty of assessing the learners' attitudes (*savoir-être*) and values (*savoir s'engager*) i.e. whether the learners have changed their attitudes and tolerance towards the different or unfamiliar (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002: 29). Hu warns that due to the ongoing debate of whether intercultural competences are scalable or assessable, and the concurrently increasing pressure for visible and measurable realisations of competences, "there remains the danger that precisely these educationally relevant aspects of language learning are underdeveloped in teaching" (Hu 2012: 72), (Hu & Byram 2009: XI).

These considerations along with necessary changes in methods, techniques and teacher's perceptions (Byram 1993: 201) will influence the future standing of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language teaching. The development of

intercultural communicative competence does not take care of itself. Instead, it has to be actively promoted by teachers, coursebook authors and curriculum designers. If those different stakeholders are willing to interact, intercultural communicative competence can truly become the guiding principle in foreign language teaching and learning.

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8.3 Online resources

BMUKK:

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http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/interkult_lernen.xml (18.3.2014).

Council of Europe - European Language Portfolio:

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/> (18.3.2014).

[http://elp.ecml.at/UsingtheELP/ Understandingtheportfolio/tabid/2745/language/en-GB/Default.aspx](http://elp.ecml.at/UsingtheELP/Understandingtheportfolio/tabid/2745/language/en-GB/Default.aspx) (18.3.2014).

ISCO – (International Standard Classification of Occupation)

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf (6.3.2014).

Statistik Austria:

[http://www.statistikaustria.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/ bevoelkerung_nach_migrationshintergrund/072107](http://www.statistikaustria.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_migrationshintergrund/072107) (19.2.2014)

Abstract: English

This thesis investigates whether and to what extent coursebooks portray their cultural content as *real* and can therefore promote the students' intercultural communicative competence. The theoretical section gives an overview of how first, notions of culture from a static towards a dynamic concept and second, culture teaching approaches from 'Landeskunde' towards intercultural learning have changed in the past few decades. On the basis of various studies, it has been argued that the cultural content in coursebooks, especially in the 'global coursebook', is mainly criticised for confining to the discussion of bland and safe topics and therefore offering no critical perspective. Furthermore, regarding the status of English as a lingua franca, the primary focus on the inner circle of English in coursebooks is no longer tenable. The empirical part in this thesis comprises an external and internal evaluation of the three EFL coursebooks *Laser B1*, *Make Your Way 5* and *New Headway 5* which are commonly used in Austria. The internal evaluation is based on Sercu's (2000) approach which investigates the cultural content's degree of *realism* in coursebooks. The dual approach of external and internal evaluation revealed that the claims made by authors do not necessarily correlate with the actual cultural content in the books. Results show that coursebooks predominantly portray a limited range of cultural topics from a monoperspectival point of view. They further portray more cultural aspects on the micro level than on the macro level, disregarding the international level of culture. Similarly, intercultural contact situations are scarcely displayed. In terms of the coursebooks' population, a strong tendency towards an individualised and consumer-oriented society could be found. Finally, the coursebooks still show a strong focus on the inner circle of English. Although the coursebooks' efforts to present a realistic cultural content are evident, certain limitations are revealed. Therefore, this thesis outlines some ideas on how to adapt and supplement existing teaching materials.

Abstract: German

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Frage, ob und inwiefern Lehrbücher für den Englisch-Fremdsprachenunterricht den kulturellen Inhalt realistisch darstellen und somit die Interkulturelle Kommunikative Kompetenz der Schülerinnen und Schüler fördern können.

Der theoretische Teil der Arbeit soll einen Überblick darüber geben, wie sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten zum einen die Auffassung von Kultur von einem statischen zu einem dynamischen Konzept entwickelt hat und zum anderen, wie sich Lehrmethoden von der traditionellen ‚Landeskunde‘ hin zum interkulturellen Lernen verändert haben. Anhand verschiedener Studien wird ferner erläutert, dass Lehrbücher – allen voran das ‚global coursebook‘ – vornehmlich dafür kritisiert werden, sich nur auf die Behandlung risikoarmer kultureller Themen zu beschränken und somit keine kritischen Sichtweisen für die Schülerinnen und Schüler zu bieten. Auch ist es angesichts der Verwendung des Englischen als Lingua Franca überholt, sich bei der Darstellung von Kultur allein auf die Länder des ‚inner circle‘ zu konzentrieren.

Der empirische Teil der Arbeit beruht auf der externen und internen Evaluation der drei in Österreich häufig verwendeten Lehrbücher *Laser B1*, *Make Your Way 5* und *New Headway 5*. Hierbei stützt sich die interne Evaluation auf die von Sercu (2000) entwickelte Methode, welche den Realitätsgrad des kulturellen Inhalts in Lehrbüchern zu untersuchen versucht. Der duale Forschungsansatz offenbart, dass die Behauptungen der Autoren nicht immer mit den tatsächlichen Inhalten im Buch übereinstimmen. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse zeigen, dass die Lehrbücher eine eher limitierte Auswahl an kulturellen Themen diskutieren und jene nur selten kritisch beleuchten. Des Weiteren werden kulturelle Aspekte vorrangig auf der Mikro-Ebene und in gewissem Maße auch auf der Makro-Ebene diskutiert, wobei sich jedoch die internationale Ebene vernachlässigt sieht. Ähnlich werden interkulturelle Kontaktsituationen nur äußerst selten dargestellt. Eine starke Tendenz zur Darstellung einer individualisierten und konsumorientierten Gesellschaft konnte in Bezug auf die Lehrbuchcharaktere beobachtet werden. Obwohl die Versuche der Lehrbuchautoren den kulturellen Inhalt realistisch darzustellen, deutlich zu erkennen sind, zeigt die Analyse verschiedene Limitierungen und Schwachpunkte der Lehrbücher auf. Infolgedessen werden einige Ideen zur Adaptierung und Erweiterung von Lehrmaterialien vorgestellt.

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