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## **Intercultural Competence in English Language Textbooks**

A qualitative study of the promotion of intercultural competence in two English language textbooks for upper primary level in Norway.

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## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis marks the end of my teacher's education at the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway. As I am writing these final words of my master's thesis, I am thinking about how fast these last years have gone by. I feel proud and happy to finally be able to start the next chapter in my life. I decided to study a topic which I believe is highly relevant for schools and teachers today – textbooks are widely used in the field and multiculturalism is commonplace. Therefore, being critical to what learners are exposed to is important. The process of writing my master's thesis has been challenging and frustrating, but also very interesting and educational.

I want to thank and express great appreciation to my supervisor, Janet Handley, for constructive feedback, great suggestions and motivational support throughout this process – I am so grateful. I also want to thank my family and friends for constant support and encouragement, and for bearing up with me during this period of ups and downs.

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## Abstract

This study investigates and compares how two English language textbooks for upper primary level in Norway (one old and one new) support intercultural competence. The old textbook is adapted for LK06 and the new textbook is adapted for LK20, and will be implemented this August. The research questions are as follows: *To what extent do texts and images in English upper primary level textbooks from LK06 and LK20 support the acquisition of intercultural competence in young English language learners?* and *To what extent does the emphasis on intercultural content differ in textbooks from LK06 to LK20?*

To address my research questions, I have used critical discourse analysis as a qualitative theoretical approach to analyze my findings. The findings are also sorted into categories developed by a combination of Byram's model for intercultural communicative competence (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018) and Barrett's (2018) definition of intercultural competence. The categories describe the sets of values, skills, attitudes and knowledge/understanding needed to acquire intercultural competence.

The results indicate that the old textbook promotes stereotypical and superficial presentations of cultures and thus, provides shallow cultural knowledge. As a result of curricula changes, the new textbook still promotes stereotypical presentations, but attempts to avoid superficial presentations by promoting deeper learning and thus, provides deeper cultural understanding.



## Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker og sammenligner hvordan to lærebøker i engelsk for mellomtrinnet i Norge (en gammel og en ny) støtter interkulturell kompetanse. Den gamle læreboken er for LK06 og den nye læreboken er for LK20, som vil bli iverksatt i august. Forskningsspørsmålene er som følger: *I hvilken grad støtter tekster og bilder i engelske lærebøker for mellomtrinnet tilpasset LK06 og LK20 tilegnelse av interkulturell kompetanse hos unge elever som lærer engelsk?* og *I hvilken grad varierer vektleggingen av kulturelt innhold i lærebøkene for LK06 og LK20?*

For å svare på forskningsspørsmålene har jeg anvendt kritisk diskursanalyse som en kvalitativ tilnærming til analysen av funnene. Funnene er også sortert i kategorier som er utviklet gjennom en kombinasjon av Byram sin modell for «intercultural communicative competence» (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018) og Barrett (2018) sin definisjon på interkulturell kompetanse. Kategoriene beskriver de samlingene av verdier, ferdigheter, holdninger og kunnskap/forståelse som trengs for tilegnelse av interkulturell kompetanse.

Resultatene indikerer at den gamle læreboken fremmer stereotyper og overfladiske presentasjoner av kulturer, som derfor sørger for overfladisk kulturell kunnskap. Som et resultat av læreplanendringer, fremmer den nye læreboken fortsatt stereotypiske presentasjoner, men den forsøker å unngå overfladiske presentasjoner gjennom dybdelæring. Den sørger derfor for en dypere kulturell forståelse.





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# 1 Introduction

The aim of the following study is to examine the promotion of intercultural competence in English textbooks used in schools at upper primary level. This is prompted by the renewal of the Norwegian National Curriculum, which will be implemented in the fall of 2020. This is the most significant curriculum change since the Knowledge Promotion Reform (henceforth LK06), which took effect in 2006. The new curriculum, Fagfornyelsen (henceforth LK20), literally means “the renewal of subjects”. Consequently, the biggest expected change will be the subjects’ content matter. The aims stated in the English subject curriculum for LK20 place more emphasis on the acquisition of a deeper intercultural understanding, than is apparent in the previous aims outlined in LK06. The general focus on cultural understanding and diversity has therefore gained a more important position than before and the relationship between language knowledge and cultural knowledge is more enhanced than ever (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; 2018; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013; 2020).

The subject of English is a great arena for learning about different cultures; the English language has become a lingua franca and is a main tool for communicating across different cultures and borders (Eriksen, 2018; Hoff, 2018; Munden, 2019). Furthermore, as a result of migration and globalization, Norway has become a multicultural society in line with the rest of the world. The influence of intercultural competence in language learning has thus taken on renewed status. A recent study by Waagene & Gjerustad conducted on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in 2015, found that the majority of teachers in social science, mathematics, natural science and English mainly use paper-based textbooks in their teaching, especially in primary and lower secondary education (Waagene & Gjerustad, 2015). As the textbook still preserves a central and influential position in education, I expect a noteworthy change in the cultural content of new textbooks produced for the English subject classroom as a result of LK20. It will be interesting and pertinent therefore to compare textbooks previously adapted for LK06, to the new ones adapted for LK20 from a cultural point of view.

## 1.1 Background and Motivation for the Study

I have several reasons for wanting to analyze textbooks. The first one comes from my years in primary education. Textbooks were our main source of information, regardless of the subject. Most of the tasks and activities we were set to do, either in class or as homework, came from either the textbook or the accompanying workbook. In addition, the tests set by teachers were always based upon the textbook's content. Thus, the textbook maintained an important and powerful influence at my school and in my primary education.

A more recent perspective on textbooks is inspired by my time as a trainee teacher. An important part of being a teacher is deciding what knowledge to convey to pupils and how to convey it. When doing so it is vital to analyze and be critical regarding teaching materials and their content (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018, p. 333). Dagrun Skjelbred is a Norwegian professor who has researched learning tools over the years. In her recent publication, *Skolens Tekster* (2019), her findings show that approximately 800 000 people read textbooks or other school-related texts daily. Additionally, Norwegian schools in primary and lower secondary education spend more than 700 million NOK on textbooks and other learning tools yearly (Skjelbred, 2019, p. 11). Despite these large numbers, Skjelbred underlines that learning tools have a limited focus in teacher's education, even if the framework for the teacher's education states that a student should be able to "evaluate and use relevant learning tools, digital tools and resources in the education, and give pupils training in digital skills" (Skjelbred, 2019, p.11, my translation). Accordingly, what pupils learn depends on teachers' competence regarding learning tools. Especially with regards to the implementation of LK20 and its changes from LK06, this competence is important (Skjelbred, 2019, p. 149). However, learning tools are thematized to a small extent in both pedagogical and didactical textbooks. In my teacher's education, for example, the syllabi lacked focus on learning tools. Additionally, the focus on learning tools was limited both in lectures and seminars as well. Hence, my experiences as a trainee teacher are not unique and moreover, a limited focus on learning tools in teacher's education is something which is common at a national level.

Whilst out on teaching practice, the dominance of textbooks in shaping learning was reinforced. In my own teaching, I used the textbook frequently, probably because that was the way it was done by other qualified teachers whom I worked with. Another reason perhaps is that textbooks

are the easiest learning tool available and the most familiar to both students and teachers. Additionally, other learning tools, especially digital tools linked to the textbook, result in insecurity because I am not used to it. Bakken (2018) describes teachers' reasons for mainly using textbooks in teaching. One of them is because textbooks have been a part of their own language learning education, thus it is familiar. Other reasons are lack of time and availability of other learning materials. Moreover, teachers also view the textbook as a legitimate and reliable source to use in teaching (p. 25).

The renewal of the Norwegian National Curriculum, as mentioned above, gives an analysis of textbooks an added immediacy. LK20 focuses on a new term called *deep learning*, within the core curriculum and the competence aims for the English subject (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; 2019; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The term will lead to a deeper understanding of new knowledge and being able to use what is learned in new situations (see section 3.5.2). In this case, the term will lead to a deeper intercultural competence. Therefore, I expect that the new textbooks created in response to LK20 will contain a cultural content that promotes a deeper intercultural competence than the ones from LK06. A more detailed description about the curricula appears in the theory chapter.

As a teacher, cultural diversity interests me. In Norway we live in a multicultural society, which means that we live in a society with two or more groups of people who see themselves, and acknowledged by others, as culturally different from each other (Eriksen, 2018). By January 1, 2016, 15,3% of the pupils in primary and lower secondary education had immigrant backgrounds (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 5). Moreover, on January 1, 2019, 17,7% of the population in Norway were either immigrants or Norwegian-born with immigrant parents (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, Statistics Norway, 2019). Additionally, in 2018 over 638 200 refugees applied for asylum in other countries which are a part of the European Union (Flyktningshjelpen, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019). These numbers show that both Norway and the world are greatly affected by world immigration and thus, multicultural societies are now commonplace.

However, my cultural interests arise not only from immigration, but also from globalization. The world is closely tied together through economic, cultural and political relations across borders due to a constant increase of travels and communication between people from all over the world (Globalization, n.d.). Immigration and globalization underline the importance of intercultural competence. This is a term that will be clarified further in the theory section, but in short it means to have respect, understanding and tolerance for each other and being able to communicate appropriately with each other (Barrett, 2018, p. 94). Education is supposed to provide pupils with skills and assets they need in order to be prepared for daily life and challenges they may face, alone or together, in the present and the future. Moreover, these skills and assets need to last a lifetime and build a foundation for acquiring new skills that are needed in this constantly changing society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015a; 2017). Hence, in a classroom context, learning about cultural diversity and gaining intercultural competence are important aspects, especially due to the number of pupils from immigrant backgrounds in schools, but also due to multiculturalism in Norway and the world.

### **1.1.1 Research Questions**

Textbooks still maintain an influential position in school. Cultural diversity and globalization are aspects of modern life and need to be accepted and valued. Hence, the need for intercultural competence is constantly increasing, which LK20 has initiated with an intention for a deeper cultural competence. Accordingly, my research questions are as follows:

Main research question:

To what extent do texts and images in English upper primary level textbooks from LK06 and LK20 support the acquisition of intercultural competence in young English language learners?

Subordinate research question:

To what extent does the emphasis on intercultural content differ in textbooks from LK06 to LK20?

This thesis is based on a qualitative discourse analysis. The textbooks will be analyzed in relation to their social context, which is the classroom. Chapter 2 will provide a detailed description of theoretical approach. I will answer my research questions by relating my findings from two specific English textbooks to theory on intercultural competence, along with the curricula LK06 and LK20, and other steering documents. Furthermore, there will be a comparison of the findings from the textbooks.

## **1.2 Choice of Textbooks**

Due to time limitations and the newness of the material studied, the first textbook available for LK20, is *Engelsk 5* (February 2020) from Cappelen Damm. Consequently, my focus will automatically center around 5<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks. As far back as 2013, Hagesæther (2013) from the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*, found the English textbooks series *Stairs* from Cappelen Damm to be the most dominant in upper primary education and stand for 80-90% of the market share. Therefore, the choice of textbook for LK06 resulted in *Stairs 5*, from Cappelen Damm as well. The textbooks are not only from the same publishing house, but they are written by the same authors. *Engelsk 5* is therefore a follow-up to *Stairs 5*. Hence, analyzing and comparing these textbooks will be interesting and *Stairs'* market domination anticipates the chances for *Engelsk 5* to be just as high.

## **1.3 The Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis consists of 6 chapters. Chapter 2 begins with a presentation of the theoretical approach and then analyzes the materials and method used in the study in order to answer my research questions. The study's challenges and limitations will also be explored, along with the study's validity and reliability. Lastly, chapter 2 provides contextual background of the study: the textbook's background and earlier research. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical underpinning of the thesis. It begins with a description of the terms culture and intercultural competence. Chapter 3 will also give a brief insight into the historical development of the English subject in Norway from a cultural point of view. Furthermore, a presentation of the cultural content in the Education Act, LK06, LK20 and the English subject curricula will be provided. Chapter 4 presents my findings related to contextual and theoretical backgrounds. The findings will be discussed further in chapter 5 and provide a conclusion. Finally, an overview of the references used in this thesis is presented.



## **2 Theoretical Approach**

This chapter presents the theoretical approach of the thesis. It begins a justification of the research questions. Then a clarification of the chosen analytical approach adopted in order to analyze the textbooks is provided. Thereafter, the material and analysis process are detailed, followed by an evaluation of the study. Lastly, a history of the textbook and its position within existing scholarship will be presented.

### **2.1 Methodology**

In any research, one of the challenges is in determining the approaches which are most appropriate in order to answer the research question (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 57). According to Creswell (2014) research approaches are “plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.” (p. 3). Such a plan involves many decisions and setting out clear research questions determines the direction the research will take. As outlined in section 1.1.1, the research questions for this thesis are as follows:

Main research question:

To what extent do texts and pictures in English upper primary level textbooks from LK06 and LK20 support the acquisition of intercultural competence in young English language learners?

Subordinate research question:

To what extent does the emphasis on intercultural content differ in textbooks from LK06 to LK20?

These questions are open-ended, which means that the results are not predetermined. Such questions aim to explore and understand a phenomenon within a social context, which are the intentions of a qualitative researcher (Creswell, 2014, pp. 18-20). This research is qualitative in that it looks at a new textbook developed to respond to the demands of the new English subject curriculum in LK20 compared to a previous textbook in the same series developed for the current English subject curriculum in LK06. In addition, this study is placed within the current context of debate surrounding how textbooks promote cultural understanding.

## **2.2 Discourse Analysis as a Theoretical Approach**

As stated in the introduction the approach taken to analyze textbooks in this particular study is discourse analysis. In general, discourse analysis is the study of language in use, both oral and written forms. It is a study of language's meanings used in specific contexts. Gee & Handford (2012) define discourse analysis as "the study of language above the level of a sentence, of the ways sentences combine to create meaning, coherence, and accomplish purposes" (p. 1). There exist several different approaches to discourse analysis. Some are closely linked to linguistics which focus on the functions of language, for example grammar or grammatical structures. Other approaches focus more on tying language to politically, socially or culturally debatable issues and thereafter researchers usually state their own opinions about these issues. Tying language to such issues is referred to as 'critical discourse analysis' (henceforth CDA) (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 5).

According to Fairclough (2012), CDA can be viewed as a normative and explanatory critique. Normative critique means that instead of just describing existing realities, it seeks evaluation and assessment of these realities in order to determine the extent they match up to different values which are fundamental in societies. Explanatory critique means that these realities are explained in addition to being evaluated and assessed (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). As my research questions aim to evaluate and assess texts and images which are present in textbooks in relation to intercultural competence as outlined in official educational documents in a classroom context, CDA is thus a natural place from which to gain a theoretical perspective. In relation to context, Gee (2014) describes context as a crucial part of any discourse analysis and presents the following definition:

Context includes the physical setting in which the communication takes place and everything in it; the bodies, eye gaze, gestures, and movements of those present; what has previously been said and done by those involved in the communication; and any shared knowledge those involved have, including shared cultural knowledge (p. 12).

In this study, the focus is upon the discourse used in textbooks designed for educational use inside the English-language classroom. Whilst teachers and pupils are not involved in this study, we must consider the wider contextual factors that influence the writing of these textbooks. Assumptions of standard class sizes and standard length of teaching sessions for pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> grade are made. Additionally, the textbooks and their accompanying workbooks

are written and adapted accordingly, to incorporate individual, pair and group activities. The teacher's books also need to be taken into consideration, as they contain suggestions for how the textbooks can be used in classrooms. Other considerations are that learners have shared cultural knowledge in a classroom context, for example shared rules and behavior etc., including shared knowledge from the previous level 4 textbook: we can assume that textbooks for level 5 are intended to build upon materials and skills from the previous level textbook.

### **2.3 Application of Method**

Two English language textbooks from the same publishing house are compared: the first produced in accordance with LK06 (2013); the second in accordance with LK20 (2020). The analysis begins by looking at how each textbook promotes intercultural competence in relation to the competence aims of the curriculum for which it is written, and thus addresses my first research question above. The first textbook then functions as a basis in which to detect and measure any changes concerning the promotion of intercultural competence in the second textbook which is recently published for the new curriculum, and thus addresses research question 2 presented above. *Stairs 5* for LK06 will be analyzed first, followed by *Engelsk 5* for LK20. In addition, a comparison between the textbooks is conducted. This will be reflected on further in chapter 4 and 5. Furthermore, the teacher's books for both *Stairs 5* and *Engelsk 5* will be used in the analyzation process to acquire further insight into how the textbooks are intended to be used and implemented in teaching.

Using critical discourse analysis (see section 2.2), a close reading of the two textbooks will take place. This will examine materials, both visual and written, that are explicitly identified as having specific cultural content, which is specified by the competence aims for each chapter in the teacher's books. In addition, materials that have an implicit relation to representing and encouraging understanding of intercultural competence will be explored. The teacher's books are included in the analysis for the overview they provide regarding the relationship of content to the competence aims.

## 2.4 Material

The reasons for my choice of textbooks are stated in section 1.2. Firstly, there is *Stairs 5* by Solberg & Unnerud (2014a) (hereby referred to as *Stairs*) which is written for the revised version of LK06 that took effect in 2013. Secondly, there is *Engelsk 5* by Solberg & Unnerud (2020a) (hereby referred to as *Engelsk*) which is written for the new National Curriculum LK20 and takes effect this fall. Both textbooks are published by the same publishing house; Cappelen Damm, and are adapted to pupils in level 5, aged 10-11 years.

Each textbook has an adjoining teacher's book: *Stairs 5 Teacher's Book* by Solberg & Unnerud (2014b) (hereby referred to as *Stairs TB*) and *Engelsk 5 Lærerveiledning* by Solberg & Unnerud (2020b) (hereby referred to as *Engelsk TB*), both from Cappelen Damm as well. They function as an optional support for teachers with suggestions on how to use the textbooks in the classroom, including an overview of which competence aims each chapter addresses. Cappelen Damm justifies this in the following: "The teacher's book has an organized structure, it contains facsimiles from the textbooks and has a rich amount of suggestions on how to work with the texts, topics and tasks" (Cappelen Damm, 2020b, my translation).

## 2.5 The Process of the Analysis

The intention of qualitative analyzation methods is to sort the collected data in order to make the data understandable. In other words, the collected data, which in this case are two textbooks, is often sorted into categories to make the findings clearer (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 139). Therefore, to carry out the analysis, I devised a set of analyzation categories which combine Byram's model for ICC (see section 3.2.1) (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018) and Barrett's (2018) definition of intercultural competence (see section 3.2). Whilst the model and definition are not specifically developed for analyzing textbooks, they have proved to be useful tools. The four categories for analyzing how textbooks support the acquisition of intercultural competence are listed as follows:

*Values* – Do the textbooks promote cultural diversity and equal human rights and encourage learners to reflect upon cultural diversity or their own and others' values and norms?

*Intercultural attitudes* – Do the textbooks promote openness, respect and tolerance towards others and their beliefs and practices? And do the textbooks encourage learners to view the world from another point of view than their own?

*Intercultural skills* – Do the textbooks provide pupils with the abilities of interpreting and relating to other cultures’ practices when interacting with others? Being able to listen, observe, adapt and show empathy are important factors for proper communication.

*Knowledge and critical understanding* – Do the textbooks provide learners with knowledge and critical understanding of their own and other cultures’ worldviews, practices and products, including language and communication?

Whilst the categories above are listed separately, there is considerable overlap when it comes to findings. Thereafter, the findings were analyzed with regards to their respective competence aims. In addition, throughout the findings I have included my own suggestions for ways to work with the texts and images in order to enhance the acquisition of intercultural competence.

## **2.6 Reliability, Validity and Transferability**

When conducting research, it is important to evaluate the quality of a study. Determining the quality occurs through an evaluation of benefits and limitations of how knowledge is discovered (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 219). Reliability, validity and transferability are terms which help determine the quality. Reliability means that a researcher must reflect upon “how he or she, through the way the study was conducted, may have influenced the final results” (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 222, my translation). Validity is an evaluation of whether the study answers the research questions through discussing limitations and benefits and transferability considers if the study can be used to determine the support of intercultural competence in other textbooks as well (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 222: 238).

An evaluation of this study shows several benefits. LK20 will be implemented in the new school term which begins in August 2020. In addition, the English textbook adapted for LK20 which is a focus of this study was only recently released on February 2, 2020. Therefore, the textbook is literally “hot off the press”. Moreover, Cappelen Damm is the first publishing house to release the new English textbook and teacher’s book, which is suggestive of their leadership in the market of English textbooks (see section 1.2). Aschehoug was the second publishing house to

release their English textbook this April, however the teacher's book is not ready until June 1, which is too late to implement in this present study. Furthermore, existing scholarship on textbooks (see section 2.7.1) outlines a demand for further research into school textbooks and their presentation of cultural understanding. This underlines the relevance of this research to the field and how timely the research is, especially considering the emphasis on cultural understanding in LK20. Additionally, for obvious reasons the textbook for LK20 has not been studied and thus, this study can be considered as breaking new ground.

Nevertheless, this study has some limitations as well. Firstly, there are time limitations. If this study encompassed a larger time frame, the English textbook from Aschehoug could have been included, in addition to including another textbook for LK06 in order to get a further overview into the changes between the old and new textbooks. I was scheduled to attend a course from Aschehoug, which intended to provide information about their new English textbook and suggestions on how to work with them. This would have provided some contextual overview. Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to Corona-virus restrictions. Secondly, this study just focuses on two English language textbooks, and moreover, it does not take the textbooks' digital tools into consideration. Therefore, the study is not representative. Another limitation is that this study does not involve pupils and teachers within a classroom, who are the intended audience and arena for the textbooks.

## **2.7 The Textbook**

Since textbooks are the data for my research, it is worthwhile introducing the textbook's history and importance in Norwegian schools. The textbook has always been a central learning tool in schools. It has survived even if pedagogical research or technological developments have anticipated otherwise (Skrunes, 2010, p. 15). The Regulations for the Education Act defines learning tools as follows: "All printed, non-printed and digital elements which are developed for educational use. They can be individual or combined, and exclusively or jointly cover the competence aims in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion" (Regulations for the Education Act, 2010, § 17-1, my translation). Therefore, textbooks are to be developed for educational use and cover the competence aims in the curricula (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016, p. 75). Thus, the textbook is defined as a pedagogical text that is used in learning processes and is adapted for learning. Accordingly, a textbook contains a selection of

knowledge and insights, a pedagogically reasoned structure and an explaining mean, for example glossary, explanations, images and tips. Moreover, the text's content is constructed in such a manner that it is easy for a teacher to verify it and lastly, it is produced and structured for application in a pedagogical-institutional context (Skjelbred, 2019, p. 17; Skrunes, 2010, p. 30).

Originally, the Norwegian system of textbook approval decided which textbooks schools could use in teaching in order to assure their quality. The approval system took effect in 1860 but was abolished in 2000. However, this did not mean that the government renounced their control of education. Laws, regulations and curricula were still important steering documents and textbooks were not disengaged from these determinations. However, as a result of the abolishment of the approval system, schools and teachers are now free to choose which textbooks they want to use when teaching. Moreover, publishing houses have a greater responsibility in ensuring that their textbooks are in line with the steering documents. Furthermore, the aim of the abolishment of the approval system was to enable teachers to focus more upon the curricula's content instead of the textbooks' content, especially as teaching materials became available from several different sources. For example: videos, images, newspapers, movies, novels, books, music etc. (Skrunes, 2010, pp. 51-53).

However, how free are schools and teachers when choosing textbooks? Schools are bound by budgets from the local authorities and thereafter it is the governing board which decides where and how the money shall be spent. So, financial factors have a considerable influence. Furthermore, the publishing houses, Cappelen Damm, Gyldendal and Aschehoug, are in competition with each. Therefore, choice of textbooks depends on offers from the different publishing houses and as we only have three publishing houses, there is a limited selection of textbooks. Moreover, as these publishing houses are the only ones to produce textbooks for educational use, they have a powerful position in education. As an example, Cappelen Damm leads the market when it comes to English textbooks (see section 1.2), and thus is the leading publishing house regarding the English subject in Norway. With that, even if schools and teachers are free from the government to choose textbooks, they still have several limitations and conditions which affect their textbook choices.

### 2.7.1 Existing Scholarship on Textbooks

A brief overview of existing scholarship on English textbooks in relation to culture will help place my study in context. Paul Thomas, in his recent article *The portrayal of non-westerners in EFL textbooks in Norway* (2017) researched how non-westerners are portrayed in eight short stories in four textbooks used in upper secondary schools in Norway, with a specific focus on the main characters. According to the author, textbooks play a central role in education as the primary source of information for learners. Learners of English lack contact with non-westerners and consequently, the textbook has the central role of providing cultural knowledge to the majority of ethnic/white Norwegian learners (p. 2). The chosen short stories are authentic texts written by other authors than the textbook writers. His findings show many negative and stereotypical representations of the characters, with descriptions like “superstitious Chinese man; criminal black man; illegal Hispanic immigrant; greedy Sri Lankan woman; subdued Indian teacher and hysterical Hispanic woman” (Thomas, 2017, p. 11). Such descriptions lead to misrepresentations of non-westerners. He concludes that writers of textbooks draw information from cultural experiences they intimately know, which are intended for a western audience that “appears primed to cherry pick information” (p. 11). Therefore, these writers have an ethical responsibility to consider the unintended consequences of their work. Furthermore, he expresses that teacher’s education needs to increase its focus on multiculturalism to become more critical to what is inserted in the curriculum, due to the increase of pupils from immigrant backgrounds (Thomas, 2017).

Ragnhild Lund, a Norwegian professor in English didactics, wrote a doctoral thesis that studied culture and context in English language textbooks in lower secondary schools in Norway, published 1997-1999, accordingly with a focus on L97 (see section 2.6). It was originally published in 2007, but it has been revisited in an article in 2019, where recent developments on textbooks, culture and curriculum are included. The results from 2007 showed that culture-specific references were hard to detect because most of the topics reflected Norwegian learners’ own cultural background, for example: pets, friendship, music, movies and embarrassing parents. Moreover, the majority of texts dealt with cultural issues concerning the United Kingdom and USA and “big C culture” (see section 3.1) topics. Lund (2007) emphasizes that learners are regarded as tourists in relation to the target countries, resulting in superficial facts that do not explore in depth, resulting in stereotypical presentations of the target countries. Later findings by Lund (2019), show that cultural content in textbooks remains superficial and



textbooks written in accordance with LK06 (see section 3.5.1) still have a limited relationship between language and culture (Lund, 2019). Lund (2019) proposes suggestions for future research concerning textbooks which are relevant to my study, and these are as follows: “What kind of cultural material do they contain? Which understanding of “culture” do the materials convey?” (p. 270). My thesis can thus be located within Lund’s previous research and is particularly pertinent with the introduction of LK20 in the autumn of this year.

The results of international studies on cultural perspectives in English-language teaching textbooks correspond with Norwegian findings. International textbooks show a domination of the inner circle countries’ (see section 2.7.1) culture, especially from the United Kingdom and USA, even though many other countries use English as well. Thus, English textbooks are criticized for making some nationalities superior to others. Additionally, the textbooks’ content matter focuses more on knowledge about cultures, instead of an understanding of them, although language professionals have increased their emphasis on cultural acquisition of English-speaking societies in addition to language acquisition. Moreover, most texts convey cultural information related to tourism, “big C culture” (see section 3.1), stereotypical pictures and Western cultures. A lack of multicultural representations is also apparent in some textbooks, thus cultural information is often incomplete. As a result, acquisition of intercultural competence is almost impossible through the majority of English textbooks due to the limited cultural content matter (Nuñez-Pardo, 2018; Shin, Eslami & Chen, 2011). Shin et al. (2011) present recommendations for what future textbooks’ content matter should implement, stating the following: “focus not only on cultural facts but also on deeper beliefs and values...promote both native and target cultures’ specific norms” (p. 265). Even if this is an international study, its issues are relevant in Norway as well, as Lund (2007; 2019) discovered. Therefore, this thesis will consider whether future textbooks implement the recommendations from Shin et al. (2011).

Another international study, by Forman (2014), focused on how local teachers respond to the cultural content in an English textbook used in South East Asia. Whilst this is not a Norwegian context, the comments regarding the role of the textbook are relevant. The first sentence opens as follows: “For majority-world foreign-language teachers and students across the globe, the textbook *is* the curriculum” (Forman, 2014, p. 72). The teachers’ statements show that they are

aware that the cultural content is limited to Western countries' cultures and is superficial as well, but they cannot find the time to use other learning tools. Furthermore, in this instance, textbooks are seen as trustworthy since they are written by native speakers and therefore, teachers just follow what the texts express. As mentioned in the introduction, Bakken's (2018) study (see section 1.1) described similar results: lack of time, that teachers view the textbook as a reliable source and that the textbook is familiar.

The reason stated above that native-speaking authors of textbooks are considered trustworthy is not relevant to this study, as the authors of the textbooks are Norwegian. So why are they seen as trustworthy even though they are not native speakers? Cecilie Solberg and Hege Dahl Unnerud are the authors of the chosen textbooks in this study. Solberg is currently a teacher with a broad experience in adapted education and has a passion for the English language, especially English grammar and English children's literature. Unnerud is currently a teacher as well, with over 20 years' experience in the field. She has a master's degree in reading and writing with special interests in English literature and movies. Their considerable experience speaks for itself, and their knowledge of the Norwegian classroom and Second Language learning provides the basis for their expertise. Solberg and Unnerud started their authorship by developing teaching materials for LK06 in 2006, which they have extended into LK20 (Solberg, n.d.; Unnerud, n.d.).

As this study will explore images as well as texts within two English language textbooks, I found a recent study about visual stereotypes by Cecilie Waallann Brown interesting. Brown is a research fellow at the University of Stavanger in Norway and has written an article which uses critical visual literacy in order to study the link between visual stereotypes and cultural references within three English language classrooms of Norwegian upper secondary pupils (Brown, 2019). The study aims to explore "the pupils' visual stereotypes, as well as their awareness of and willingness to challenge these stereotypes before and after participating in an educational intervention" (Brown, 2019, p. 120). The author expresses that today most people in the Western world are presented with information in visual form through several sources due to technology. Regarding the English language classrooms, pupils are presented with information about other cultures through several visual sources, including textbooks. As a result, textbooks are considered as important and influential sources of information as they

contain several images which accompany the texts. Whilst the research I found focuses on textbooks within secondary level education, it provides a good basis upon which to situate my study of textbooks within the primary classroom.

### **3 Theoretical Background**

This chapter presents the theoretical background of the thesis. Firstly, explanations of relevant terms which form the basis for discussing the study's findings and answering the research questions are detailed. Then, the chapter then focuses upon English as a lingua franca and the English subject's history in Norway from a cultural aspect. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a close look into official educational documents relating to the English subject curricula: LK06 and LK20.

#### **3.1 Culture**

The Cambridge Dictionary defines culture as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (Culture, n.d.). A Norwegian definition of the word culture is “attitudes, values and norms prevailing in a certain group of people” (Kultur, n.d., my translation). These definitions, as Munden (2019) has pointed out are problematic: the term culture has many different and even contradictory meanings. There simply does not exist a definition that will cover all the aspects of the term. Therefore, the term culture needs to be defined for the particular purpose of this study. Munden (2019) presents two possibilities for how the term may be interpreted. The first one is talking of ‘culture with a big C’, which contains aspects such as Edvard Munch’s paintings, the novels of Jane Austen or Broadway musicals. The second interpretation is talking of ‘culture with a little c’, which deals with collective behavior and shared ways of understanding the world. Accordingly, most things can be seen from a cultural perspective, including everything from the way celebration of weddings or birthdays happens to the way people behave in queues (Munden, 2019, pp. 306-307).

Furthermore, Munden (2019) highlights the work of Clifford Geertz’, an anthropologist who has contributed to how we understand culture. He defines culture as: “a historically transmitted pattern of meaning that enables a group of people to communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” (Munden, 2019, p. 307). This definition has been very influential, but also criticized for describing cultures as being more static than they are and for claiming that people are part of a specific culture their entire life. Today, the understanding of culture is more ambiguous. It is accepted more readily that cultures change all the time, that

“different” cultures are not always clearly distinct from one another and that people have the opportunity to choose, to a various extent, which cultures or cultural values they accept.

### **3.2 Intercultural Competence**

As mentioned in the introduction, multicultural societies are now commonplace. Hence, acquisition of intercultural competence is important. Barrett (2018) defines intercultural competence as:

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

Moreover, Barrett (2018) presents 14 different components which explain his definition in more detail and are considered as important in acquiring intercultural competence. The components are as follows:

#### *Values*

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

#### *Attitudes*

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

#### *Skills*

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

### *Knowledge and critical understanding*

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of culture, cultures, and religions (p. 95).

The definition is tied to an understanding of culture which “interprets cultural groups as being internally heterogeneous” (p. 94). It means that various beliefs and practices acquired by cultural groups, that often are associated with certain groups, constantly develop and change. This understanding is compatible to how Munden (2019) described the term culture in the previous section.

The promotion of intercultural competence is extremely important for dealing with challenges such as discrimination, intolerance, prejudice, hate crimes and violence that occurs across cultures today, especially against minority ethnic and religious groups. It turns out that these challenges are higher in Europe now than at any time during the past 50 years. In fact, far-right political parties in Europe, which openly support various racist rhetoric and policies, have actually scored higher in recent national elections, including elections for the European Parliament (Barrett, 2018, p. 93). On the other hand, as Hoff (2018) pointed out, there has been an increased focus in both politics and the media during the last two decades regarding the need for intercultural understanding and communication amongst people from different countries, cultures and societies as a result of globalization, migration and technology. Intercultural encounters occur frequently today, as it is both possible and necessary to communicate and interact with individuals from several different religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, policy makers and scholars in the field of educational research have emphasized how important teachers and education are regarding the promotion of intercultural competence to young learners. This is especially true in the English classroom, since the process of learning a foreign language (FL) is followed by being exposed to foreign cultures (Hoff, 2018, p. 67).

As stated earlier, Barrett’s (2018) definition of intercultural competence focuses upon the ability to “interact and communicate appropriately” with people from different backgrounds. As a result, Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) express that intercultural competence is strongly associated with communication and describes the ability to communicate properly as “the

ability both to understand what other people are trying to say, and to make ourselves understood, at the same time as being able to maintain a good relationship with the people we are communicating with” (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018, p. 158). Nevertheless, proper communication and language acquisition are not adequate on their own to provide intercultural competence. Intercultural competence calls for the ability to think interculturally as well. To explain; we need to have an open attitude, treat people with respect and understand that individuals come from different backgrounds. Moreover, our mindsets are strongly affected by socialization processes in our environment and it is through these socialization processes that we acquire values, norms, attitudes and beliefs. Hence, school is an important arena for providing intercultural competence (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018, p. 159; Barrett, 2018, p. 94).

### **3.2.1 Model for Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) state that examining Michael Byram’s model for intercultural communicative competence (ICC) may be beneficial for teachers when trying to get a deeper understanding of the concept intercultural competence. There have been many different models developed, but Byram’s is the most common one. The core of his model contains various types of *knowledge*, *skills* and *attitudes* that are necessary for gaining intercultural competence and they are as follows:

- *Knowledge* – for example, knowledge in such fields as socialization processes, cultural products (such as texts) and practices (such as religious ceremonies) in other societies.
- *Skills of interpreting and relating* – the ability to analyze and interpret cultural products and practices in other cultures.
- *Intercultural attitudes* – such as tolerance, openness and the ability to change perspectives. Changing perspectives mean the ability to “decenter” or to be able to see the world and oneself from another point of view.
- *Skills of discovery and interaction* – the ability to acquire new knowledge about different cultural practices and being able to relate to such practices when communicating with others.
- *Critical cultural awareness* – the ability to evaluate, in a critical way, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own culture and in other cultures. (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018, p. 162)

Byram's view on requiring intercultural competence has had great impact on curriculum development in many countries, including Norway. Accordingly, these concepts above can help teachers to develop classroom activities which emphasize intercultural competence (Hoff, 2018, p. 72; Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018, p. 161).

### 3.3 English in Norway and the World

Hoff (2018) was talking about English as learning a FL, but English is not a FL in Norway anymore according to Munden (2019). English is spoken in many different varieties around the world and in many countries, thus Munden (2019) presents this picture to illustrate the spread of the English language:



Figure 1 English in the world. (Munden, 2019, p. 56).

The inner circle illustrates countries where English has been the first language for a long time. The outer circle illustrates countries where English is a second language, and in some of them even an official language. The expanding circle, which has become the biggest group, illustrates countries which use English to communicate across nations. Norway is placed in this circle, but some researchers believe that Norway does not belong here anymore. Instead it should be placed in the outer circle, because English is so widespread across the country and thus, no longer a FL. The English language is a *lingua franca*, which means that individuals with different languages can communicate using English. Actually, an individual is most likely to speak English with a person from the outer or expanding circle than a person from the inner circle due to the high number of English speakers living in the outer and expanding circles. This widespread use of the English language has made it possible for people to learn about the



diversity and values of other cultures (Munden, 2019, pp. 57-59). Considering the number of people speaking English and the need to communicate in English due to world immigration, I believe it is crucial that young learners of English acquire intercultural competence in order to treat and understand other individuals in a reasonable way.

### **3.4 The English Subject in Norway**

*Bildung* aims are central in all Norwegian education and the English subject is defined as a *Bildung* subject. This is a definition of the concept related to education in English that occurs today:

“a socialization process which leads to an understanding and a mastery of the common, valued cultural forms, as well as the ability to participate in these. This includes way of thinking, the potential to act, and knowledge within a varied field” (Fenner, 2018, p. 18).

The concept is dynamic, and the understanding of the term has changed through educational history. *Bildung* is a process which is a matter of self-development, even though one lives in a modern or a post-modern world. Additionally, the concept has changed from being a matter of individual development to becoming a matter of individual development in interaction with the rest of the world (Fenner, 2018, p. 18). Furthermore, Fenner (2018) explains three categories of *Bildung* traditions: *material*, *formal* and *categorial Bildung*. Material traditions are related to the content of learning materials. Gaining knowledge about canonical literary texts, such as literature tied to ‘culture with a big C’, classifies a person of *Bildung*. Formal traditions, on the other hand, do not focus on content. These traditions are primarily subjective and focus on learning processes and the learner’s learning abilities. The categorial traditions, which are the interesting part in relation to my thesis, is the part where the two other categories exist in a dialectic relationship. Gaining knowledge of a topic is not enough. Categorial *Bildung* requires that what is learned influences thoughts and actions of the learner, including critical thinking and reflection (Fenner, 2018, pp. 18-19). Thus, regarding the definition and the process, categorial *Bildung* is related to intercultural competence and Byram’s model of intercultural communicative competence.

### **3.4.1 The Historical Development of the English Subject: A Cultural Aspect**

English was first taught at primary level in Norway around the 1870s. Then the subject was optional, and it was only the south coast of Norway that had English teaching. The English language was seen as useful for young people who were entering into shipping and trading. However, this was perceived as a mistaken focus by authorities, because other subjects, such as natural science, were more important. In 1936, English was again introduced, but this time across the entire country. Nonetheless, local authorities could decide whether the subject was mandatory or not. The reasons for re-inserting English as a subject again were due to advantages in society, for instance entrance to higher levels of education. Even though English was offered in schools from 1936, it was still limited to town schools. It was not until 1969 that English became a school subject for all pupils in Norway (Fenner, 2018, pp. 23-24). From this point up until the curriculum of 1997, the English subject has gone through many changes, each with a different focus on how the language should be taught and what is important in FL acquisition.

In the beginning, according to Fenner (2018), there was no focus on acquiring cultural competence other than learning the culture of the so-called elite, the highly educated members of the society. Additionally, the content of the texts used in schools was not important, in contrast to the language use. For instance, pupils could read a text about cultures in other parts of the world, but the content was not emphasized at all (p. 25). Moreover, knowledge of culture was not present at all in the curriculum of 1939 (N39) (Normalplan for byfolkeskolen, 1957, p. 227). When the curriculum of 1974 (M74) was introduced, there were still no aims with focus upon cultural knowledge, except that learning English should be linked to everyday situations in the target culture (Mønsterplan for grunnskolen, 1974, p. 147). Accordingly, textbooks reflected the daily lives of the average English family of four, which led to cultural stereotypes that did not reflect the multicultural British society at all. It was not until the curriculum of 1987 (M87) was implemented that cultural aspects gained more focus, but it was still limited. M87 expressed that knowledge of English-speaking countries should be introduced when it is necessary, for instance if the class has English-speaking pupils or if pupils have special interests in these countries (Rettleiande årsplanar: Engelsk, 1987, p. 14). When the curriculum of 1997 (L97) took effect, it was clear that cultural competence gained a bigger focus than ever before due to globalization, where collaboration across borders and cultural borders increase constantly. One of the main aims of L97 was knowledge about the English language and its cultural contexts, which defined language as an expression of culture, among other things. The

aim was no longer solely to learn about English cultures, but through cultural expressions as well (Læreplanverket for den tiårige grunnskolen, 1996, p. 223). In the early years, aims of culture and *Bildung* have been difficult to trace in the English subject curricula, although *Bildung* aims are clearly present in the general curricula. The insertion of L97, made culture and *Bildung* more emphasized in the English subject curriculum as well (Fenner, 2018, pp. 24-34).

### **3.5 Official Educational Documents**

According to Speitz (2018) a subject curriculum is an important document that teachers need in order to plan, implement and evaluate their teaching. In fact, the curriculum is a regulation with legal status in education, which means that schools and teachers are required to plan and execute teaching based on the curriculum. Additionally, teachers need to know and understand how subject curricula have come about and the underlying ideas and practices behind them. In other words, teachers need to know other educational steering documents as well (Speitz, 2018, pp. 38-39). However, it is important to remember that the Norwegian school is a democratic project at different levels. It means that laws, rules and curricula which are designed at a national level, are a result of democratic processes. Of course, these laws, rules and curricula must be followed, but they also need to be evaluated and criticized for the democracy to function. Thus, it raises questions whether minority cultures are involved in these processes, or if there is a relatively limited part of the population who expresses themselves on behalf of the minorities, without enough experience, but with good intentions (Tolo, 2014, p. 102).

Firstly, there is the Education Act, which provides a general framework for education in Norway. Regarding culture, the Education Act says that “Education and training in schools and training establishments must ..., open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices insight into and a firm foundation in history and culture” (The Education Act, 1998, §1-1). Additionally, the Education Act expresses that “Education and training must help increase the knowledge and understanding of ..., our common international cultural traditions” (1998, §1-1). Furthermore, “Education and training must provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individuals’ conviction” (1998, §1-1). If we look at the framework provided by the Education Act regarding intercultural competence, it seems quite vague. Bearing the definitions of intercultural competence and culture, including the *Bildung* aims, in mind, the

Education Act repeatedly expresses that education must provide *insight* into cultures and cultural diversity. This makes me wonder if insight is enough for acquiring the set of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding that are needed for being able to interact and communicate appropriately across different cultures. In addition, how can teachers measure if pupils have gained insight into cultures and cultural diversity? Insight is a vague word that is hard to evaluate and assess. Secondly, together with the Education Act, general education is guided by the *National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion*, hereby referred to as LK06. This is detailed in the section below.

### **3.5.1 Intercultural Competence in LK06**

LK06 consists of a core curriculum, curricula for the various subjects, quality framework and an overview of the number of teaching hours each subject distribute (Ministry of Education and Research, n.d.). The core curriculum describes values and principles which set the foundation for education. It is passed on from L97, but the curricula for the various subjects are very different. Moreover, the core curriculum is a deeper understanding of the Education Act and presents general educational aims, which contain the cultural foundation of education, among other things. The core curriculum states that “Education must convey knowledge about other cultures and take advantage of the potential for enrichment that minority groups and Norwegians with another cultural heritage represents” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015a, p. 9). Furthermore “Education should counteract prejudice and discrimination and foster mutual respect and tolerance between groups with differing modes of life” (2015a, p. 10). Additionally, education also needs to expose conflicts that may occur across different cultures. In other words, intercultural competence is integrated in LK06. Moreover, the aims in the core curriculum are more specific than in the Education Act, however, they are still general.

The Quality Framework, which is a part of LK06, contains elements that promote intercultural competence as well. Its purpose is to summarize and elaborate upon the provisions from the Education Act together with LK06. It helps to clarify schools’ responsibilities regarding the regulations from the Education Act and LK06. The Quality Framework states that schools must stimulate learners’ development of social and cultural competence. In addition, it states the following: “Clear value base and a broad cultural understanding are fundamental elements of an inclusive social community and of a learning community where diversity is acknowledged

and respected” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015b, p. 3). For schools to develop learners’ intercultural competence regarding participation in multicultural societies, education must provide possibilities to acquire knowledge about various cultures. Moreover, “The education shall promote cultural understanding and develop self-insight and identity, respect and tolerance” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015b, p. 3).

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2013) starts by introducing the intention of the English subject curriculum, which has the title *Purpose*. It opens with the statement “English is a universal language” (p. 2) and justifies the statement with listing the language’s areas of utilization in for example movies, literature, music, business, trading etc., including when meeting people from different countries. As a result, English language acquisition is important to manage oneself in a world where the English language is a *lingua franca*. Furthermore, in addition to language learning

“the subject of English shall contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language. The subject of English shall provide insight into how English is used as an international means of communication. Learning about the English-speaking world and the increasing use of English in different international contexts will provide a good basis for understanding the world around us and how English developed into a world language.” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, p. 2)

The English subject curriculum clearly enhances language learning as a main aim. The reasons for learning English are tied to the language’s utilization worldwide, as a means for international communication. In the above quotation, aspects of acquiring cultural knowledge are present. However, the acquisition of cultural knowledge is presented as a basis for gaining knowledge of how English became a world language. Cultural knowledge is not presented as an intention on its own. Additionally, *insight* into ways of life of people from different cultures, as stated in the quotation, is vague, as mentioned in section 3.5. What does insight really mean, is it knowledge or understanding? How can insight be measured? Furthermore, knowledge of culture is limited to countries where English the primary or official language. For instance, as stated in above quotation: “learning about the English-speaking world...is a good basis for understanding the world around us.” (ibid.). As a result, these countries are represented as being more important and valued than other countries. Why is the English-speaking world

representative to the rest of the world? As Munden (2020) pointed out, there are more people using English as their second language, than there are people using English as their first or official language (see section 3.3). Moreover, the English subject is a subject for personal development. Therefore, it aims for promotion of mutual understanding and respect between people from various cultural backgrounds.

The English subject curriculum is divided into four main subject areas: *Language learning*, *Oral communication*, *Written communication* and *Culture, society and literature*. Each subject area has its own adjoining competence aims (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, pp. 2-4). As a result, the subject areas and their adjoining competence aims are presented as separate parts when learning English, rather than being interdependent upon each other. The subject area *Culture, society and literature* is the focus area in this thesis. It contains six competence aims, however just two of them will be focused upon in this thesis. Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2013) states that after year 7<sup>1</sup>, learners shall be able to: “narrate about people, places and events in English-speaking countries” (p. 8) and “converse about the way people live and socialize in different cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway, including the Sami culture” (p. 8). Even if *Culture, society and literature* is the focus, there are also two other competence aims which are presented in *Language Learning* and *Oral Communication* that are relevant to this thesis: “identify some linguistic similarities and differences between English and one’s native language” (p. 7) and “use expressions of politeness and appropriate expressions for the situation” (p. 7).

The core curriculum, the Quality Framework and English subject’s intentions enhance understanding and respect between people from various cultural backgrounds as a significant educational aim. In addition, understanding and respect are of great importance in order to acquire intercultural competence (see section 3.2). However, a comparison between the competence aims covered by the subject area *Culture, society and literature* to the intentions of the English subject, the Quality Framework or the term intercultural competence, shows that there are deviations. The competence aims exclusively express *narrating* and *conversing* about

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<sup>1</sup> Even if the study focuses on level 5, the curriculum divides the competence aims into level groups, such as “after year 4” and “after year 7”. In other words, “after year 7” includes level 5, 6 and 7, therefore the competence aims for year 5 are integrated into the competence aims “after year 7”.

ways of life in various cultures as the educational aims. Teachers assess pupils with the competence aims as a basis, not the rest of LK06. Therefore, knowledge, understanding and respect of other cultures should be stated in the competence aims as well, not just in the Quality Framework.

### **3.5.2 Intercultural Competence in LK20**

The renewal of the National Curriculum in Norway is a result of both national and global community changes. When the world is changing, schools need to change accordingly in order to make the education adapted to the present and the future (Fullan, Quinn & McEachen, 2018, p. 7). As mentioned in the introduction, the biggest change in LK20 will be the content matter of the subjects (Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). However, the core curriculum will also be renewed, but its purpose will still be the same; it will still express the set of values and principles which make the foundation for education, with guidance from the Education Act. What is new, is that the core curriculum contains three interdisciplinary areas which education will be based on. These are *Public health and mastering life*, *Democracy and citizenship* and *Sustainable development* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, Ch. 2.5, my translation). These areas are part of all the subjects, however the focus in each are differs depending on the subjects. The focus areas in this thesis are *Public health and mastering life* and *Democracy and citizenship*. Intercultural competence in the new core curriculum is based on the same paragraphs in the Education Act (see section 3.5), as in LK06. The new core curriculum states that “in a time where the population is more diverse than ever, and where the world is tied closer together, the importance of language knowledge and cultural understanding increase constantly” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, Ch. 1.2, my translation). Language and culture are strongly associated, as Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) stated. The new core curriculum enhances knowledge of language as an important part of affiliation and cultural awareness and expresses that language develops the possibility for communication and relationships with people with different backgrounds, which leads to intercultural competence.

Another big change between the curricula is the term *deep learning*, which is implemented in LK20. In the white paper, Meld. St. 28 (2015-2016), *deep learning* means the gradual development of an overall understanding of concepts and consistencies within subjects and being able to identify the connections between them, and, simultaneously, use this acquired

knowledge in order to solve problems in new situations (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016, p. 14). This is why LK20 contains the interdisciplinary areas, in order to identify connections between the different subjects. Fullan, Quinn & McEachen (2018) present six global competences, which are the intentions of deep learning. These are creativity, communication, critical thinking, citizenship, collaboration and character. Several of these competences are already present in educational documents and have been for several years. However, according to Fullan et al. (2018), there has been a lack of strong implementation of them and a limited focus on how to evaluate them. Therefore, the intentions of deep learning are to emphasize these factors (Fullan et al., 2018, pp. 42-43). For instance, LK06 focuses more on just providing insight into different cultures in the English-speaking world and our society, on a surface level. LK20 focuses more on how intercultural competence leads to people from various cultural backgrounds being able to live together. There is a bigger focus on ways to make a united and equal society, than just knowledge about and insight into different cultures (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015a; 2017). LK20 aims for a deeper understanding and knowledge of cultures, than LK06 does.

The English subject curriculum has gone through significant changes as well. LK20's intentions for the English subject begins with the title *The subject's relevance and central values* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2, my translation). The words *relevance* and *central values* express a deeper importance in relation to the world, than the title *Purpose* from LK06. The word *purpose* merely depicts the intention or final aim to be achieved, whereas LK20's title places the subject of English in a wider context. The first sentence in the English subject curriculum for LK20 states: "English is a central subject for cultural understanding, communication, self-development and identity development...English shall contribute to learner's development of intercultural understanding of different ways of life, mindsets and communication patterns." (ibid., p. 2, my translation). In contrast to LK06, which had its focus on language acquisition, LK20 immediately enhances cultural understanding as an educational aim. Moreover, LK20 expresses that English language acquisition is needed in order to learn, communicate and bond with others. In other words, language acquisition is acknowledged by LK20 as being associated with acquiring intercultural understanding, as stated by Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) (see section 3.2). Accordingly, language acquisition and intercultural understanding are presented as interdependent parts in LK20, while LK06 presented them as independent of each other. Additionally, "Knowledge of and an exploratory



approach to language, communication patterns, ways of life, mindsets, and social conditions provides new perspectives on the world and ourselves. The subject shall contribute to develop learners' understanding that their perception of the world is culturally dependent.” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 2, my translation). LK20 has changed the perspective on language and culture. Additionally, in LK20, *insight* into different cultures is replaced with *knowledge of and exploratory approach* to different cultures.

The English subject for LK20 is divided into *Core elements*, instead of *Main subject areas* in LK06. *Core elements* express more importance, that they are the center of the subject. The core elements are *Communication*, *Language Learning* and *Meeting with English-language texts*, where the content of the latter is relevant to this thesis. “By reflecting upon, interpreting and critically assessing various types of English-language texts learners shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. As a result, learners' intercultural competence is developed...” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3, my translation). The appearance of the term intercultural competence, underlines its influence upon curriculum development, as Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018) stated (see section 3.2.1). As previously mentioned, the interdisciplinary areas *People health and mastering life* and *Democracy and citizenship* are this thesis' focus. In the English subject curriculum, *People health and mastering life* places an emphasis on providing learners with new perspectives upon own and others' mindsets and ways of life. Knowledge of language and culture are tools for learners to manage in new situations and contribute to a positive self-image and a confident identity. *Democracy and citizenship* enhances learners' opportunity to communicate with people from all over the world, despite cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, it contributes to different ways of interpreting the world and to learners' understanding that people's conception of the world is entirely culturally dependent (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 3).

A further significant change is to be found in the competence aims in the new English subject curriculum. Whereas LK06 divided competence aims in relation to the main subject areas of *language learning*, *oral communication*, *written communication* and *culture, society and literature*, LK20 has a section detailing basic skills: *oral skills*, *to be able to write*, *to be able to read* and *digital skills*. These sections describe what it means to be able to read, write and speak in English, whereas LK06 presents the competence aims within each main area. Thereafter,

LK20 presents all the competence aims together in a separate section, which place the competence aims in connection with each other, instead of having competence aims related to separate topics as in LK06. Moreover, LK20 also contains an added section about formative assessment, which enhances the importance of formative assessment in order to monitor the knowledge learners have acquired or not and adapt the teaching accordingly (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Formative assessment provides a greater insurance regarding learners' fulfillment of the given competence aims. The new English subject curriculum has four competence aims which are related to promotion of intercultural competence. After year 7<sup>2</sup> the learner should be able to

- “explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation”
- “make oneself understood using a varied vocabulary and expressions of politeness adapted to recipient and situation”
- “explore and converse about linguistic similarities between English and other languages the learner knows, and transfer it into own language acquisition”
- “reflect upon and converse about the role of English in your own life” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 7, my translation).

Looking back on the aims for LK06, one can see great differences. Verbs like *narrate*, *identify* and *converse* are replaced with *explore* and *reflect*. To *explore* and *reflect* are methods with a greater chance of resulting in intercultural competence and *deep learning*. Another difference in terms is that LK06 aims for cultural knowledge about English-speaking *countries*, whereas LK20 aims for cultural knowledge about the English-speaking *world*.

To sum up the differences between the English subject curricula in LK06 and LK20 in short: The main focus in LK06 is language learning where cultural understanding is presented as an additional component, which presents language and culture as two separate parts of the English subject. LK20 presents cultural understanding and language learning as interdependent upon each other. Additionally, LK06 limits the focus to countries where English is the primary or official language. LK20, on the other hand, expands the focus to the English-speaking world, which is any given country which uses the English language. Thus, LK20 is more adapted to

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<sup>2</sup> The competence aims are divided in the same way as LK06, see section 3.5.1.

acquiring a deeper intercultural competence, than LK06. It will be interesting to see the extent to which *Engelsk 5* reflects these changes.

## 4 Findings

In this chapter a discourse analysis of the textbooks will be presented. In order to carry out an effective analysis, I have chosen to focus upon certain sections within the textbooks that provide a good basis for comparison.

### 4.1 Front Covers

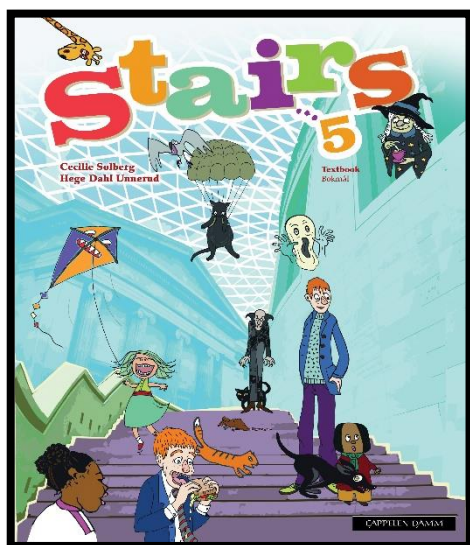


Figure 3 *Stairs 5* Front Cover (Cappelen Damm, 2014).



Figure 2 *Engelsk 5* Front Cover (Cappelen Damm, 2020a).

To begin my analysis, a comparison of the front covers for *Stairs 5* and *Engelsk 5* is a good place to start. The front covers are the first thing learners see and can therefore set the tone. Firstly, the titles of the textbooks need to be considered. The title *Stairs* is English, which immediately expresses the use of the English language in the textbook and thus, promotes knowledge of language in the category *knowledge and critical understanding*. The meaning of the word *Stairs* in this context suggests progression, and coupled with the number 5 underlines the educational level that the textbook relates to. It is clearly intended for educational use, which is part of a textbook's requirements (see section 2.7). In the latest version designed for LK20, the title is *Engelsk*, which is the Norwegian word for English. This is an interesting change. The number still denotes the educational level it is designed for, but the use of Norwegian and the direct reference to the subject to be studied, sets a more serious and educational tone. It also has a more formal connection to the official documents issued from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2020) which is titled: *Læreplan i engelsk*. This is also repeated in the titles of the teacher's books: *Stairs 5 Teacher's Book*; *Engelsk 5 Lærerveiledning*.

The images on the front covers have also changed dramatically. The images on the cover of *Stairs 5* are very cartoony and childish. The illustrations in the image also seem random, for example: what do a witch, a kite, a bat or a parachuting cat have to do with learning English? However, they do suggest a fictional world and appear to be fun and interesting. They are colorful and appealing to the imagination. The images can be seen to promote cultural diversity, which is placed in the category *Values*, through the presentation of characters of different ethnic backgrounds. The images on the cover of *Engelsk 5* are very different. Regarding the illustrations in *Engelsk 5*, Cappelen Damm states: “All chapters and texts are richly illustrated by the Irish illustrator, Peter Donnelly...His humorous and detailed illustrations provide beneficial reading support to all pupils, which simultaneously work as basis for conversations and tasks.” (Cappelen Damm, 2020a, my translation). Whilst still an illustration, the images are more representative of reality, firstly due to the setting being on a plane and that the individuals are represented as real people: passengers on the plane and an air steward. Secondly, the textbook provides an international feel through travelling. On one boy’s sweater it says *Viking FK*, which is a Norwegian football team. Thus, the assumption is that the boy is Norwegian. As a result, the image provides motivation for learning English; travelling is a situation that many learners can immediately relate to. The food served also has an international dimension: pasta. Consequently, this image promotes intercultural competence within several categories: *Values* through promotion of cultural diversity and *intercultural attitudes and skills* through the need for openness, respect etc. and proper communication when meeting new people. It suggests that being “intercultural” is already a regular aspect of our lives. The colors are also more muted, reinforcing a serious tone. On a further note of difference, the images on *Engelsk 5* are all male. This is something that also occurs in the image that relates to the plane dialogue below (see section 4.3.1). Whilst this maintains consistency for the new textbook regarding this scene, it may be something to reflect upon in the conclusion. As for the images on the covers of the teacher’s books: they are identical to their respective textbooks.

## **4.2 Chapter Headings and Competence Aims**

In order to make the comparison of the textbooks clearer, a presentation of the textbooks’ chapters and their focus on cultural understanding and the chapters’ respective competence aims are presented in a table as follows:

Table 1: Chapter headings and competence aims.

<b>Chapters in <i>Stairs 5</i></b>	<b>Cultural aspects in <i>Stairs 5</i></b>	<b>Cultural competence aims for LK06</b>	<b>Chapters in <i>Engelsk 5</i></b>	<b>Cultural aspects in <i>Engelsk 5</i></b>	<b>Cultural competence aims for LK20</b>
<b>1: Meeting People</b>	Explicit aspects	“converse about the way people live and socialize in different cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway, including the Sami culture” “use expressions of politeness and appropriate expressions for the situation”	<b>1: Good talking to you</b>	Explicit aspects	“make oneself understood using a varied vocabulary and expressions of politeness adapted to recipient and situation” “explore and converse about linguistic similarities between English and other languages the learner knows, and transfer it into own language acquisition” “reflect upon and converse about the role of English in your own life”
<b>2: Hobbies and Interests</b>	Implicit aspects	None	<b>2: Take an interest</b>	Implicit aspects	“make oneself understood using a varied vocabulary and expressions of politeness adapted to recipient and situation”
<b>3: Poems</b>	Implicit aspects	None	<b>3: Travel through old and new</b>	Explicit aspects	“explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation”

**4: Travelling in the British Isles**      Explicit aspects      “converse about the way people live and socialize in different cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway, including the Sami culture”  
 “narrate about people, places and events in English-speaking countries”

**4: Respect our Earth**      No aspects      None

**5: The Science of Nature**      No aspects      “narrate about people, places and events in English-speaking countries”

**6: The Brimming Bookshelf**      No aspects      None

### 4.2.1 Chapters with Explicit Cultural Aspects

It is not only the number of chapters that differ between the textbooks, the titles are different as well. With regards to *Engelsk 5* containing fewer chapters, Cappelen Damm justifies this by stating: “Fewer topics with various subtopics provide pupils with plenty of opportunities for deep learning” (Cappelen Damm, 2020a, my translation). Deep learning is a new term within LK20, which aims for a deeper understanding of subjects’ content in order to identify the connections between the different subjects, and, simultaneously, use this acquired knowledge in order to solve problems in new situations (see section 3.5.2). As a result, *Engelsk 5* appears to focus upon learning fewer topics, but in greater depth.

The first chapters of both textbooks have a similar focus, which is mainly acquisition of language adapted to the situation. *Stairs 5*’s title *Meeting People* merely expresses that the focus is on meeting people and getting by in practical situations. *Engelsk 5*’s title *Good talking to you*, on the other hand, influences learners in a more positive matter. It expresses appreciation of talking to people and there is value to be gained from this, and a level of intimacy achieved through establishing relationships. Thus, it adds extra motivation to language learning and the meeting of other people. We can therefore see that the chapter title for *Engelsk 5* is more related to the concept of intercultural competence than the chapter title for *Stairs 5*.

*Stairs 5* begins the chapter *Meeting People* with an image of faces of people with different ethnic background which promotes cultural diversity. It has an accompanying text saying: “All over the world, children like you learn to speak English...can understand each other even if they are from different countries” (Stairs, p. 6). The textbook enhances the importance of learning English in order to be able to communicate with people from other countries. The words “children like you” promote a sense of unity and equality with shared aims through the learning of the English and thus, is a motivation for learners to acquire English. Additionally, the words “from different countries” express that diverse nationalities are not a barrier. The teacher’s book for *Stairs 5* gives tips to the teacher on how to work with the image. It suggests talking to learners about where the children come from, which language they use and which language they are learning. The teacher’s book also asks which countries in the world has English as their first language (Stairs TB, p. 35). As a result, these questions encourage learners to reflect upon cultural diversity in the category *Values*, in addition to knowledge of language



in the category *Knowledge and critical understanding*. The image and tasks are covering the competence aim “converse about the way people live and socialize in different cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway, including the Sami culture.”

The textbook *Engelsk 5* starts its first chapter, *Good talking to you*, with an image promoting cultural diversity as well. The image is representing the Norway Cup and shows children with different ethnic backgrounds having a good time playing football together. (Engelsk TB, p. 7). Next to the football field one can see four different national flags representing Norway, Ireland, South Africa and Great Britain (Engelsk, p. 6). The textbook does not convey which countries the flags are representing. Thus, the teacher’s book suggests talking about what is present in the image (Engelsk TB, p. 7). Moreover, the teacher’s book says: “We have used Norway Cup as an example of an arena where children and youth meet across languages and cultures... It can also be relevant to reflect upon English as a world language” (Engelsk TB, p. 7, my translation). Thus, another task can be asking the learners in which other arenas they have to use English to communicate, for example in video games, at home or when travelling. As will be mentioned later in section 4.3.3, the Norway Cup is the biggest football tournament for children in the world and is thus a perfect example for discussing the importance of English and how it functions as a world language. Moreover, the use of the Norway Cup locates interculturality within Norway: it is a motivation for children to learn English without leaving the country. As a result, the category *knowledge and critical understanding* of language and communication is promoted. Furthermore, the competence aim “reflect upon and converse about the role of English in your own life” is covered. Therefore, *Engelsk 5* is enhancing the importance of English as a world language more than *Stairs 5* does.

Other chapters with an explicit cultural focus are *Travelling in the British Isles* in *Stairs 5* and *Travel through old and new* in *Engelsk 5*. The first title promotes travelling through the UK to visit different places to learn about them, giving a clear geographical location. The title in *Engelsk 5* is more suggestive of travelling in time and throughout history without a specific reference to location. This may be due to the word *engelsk* being in the title, implicitly locating this chapter within the English world. However, it will be interesting to assess any changes in the content of these two chapters when they are explored in further detail below. These chapters are further explored in sections 4.3.5 to 4.3.8.

## 4.3 Content of the Textbooks

### 4.3.1 Plane Dialogue

Two texts which are similar to each other are plane dialogues found in both textbooks. The texts are also in the first chapters of the textbooks, *Meeting People* and *Good talking to you*, which focus on how to speak when meeting new individuals. Both texts are a dialogue between two boys who are travelling to London and the flight attendant. Thomas is Norwegian and William is English. The texts show learners how to speak to the flight attendant in a proper and polite way. Extracts of the dialogues are presented as follows:

*Stairs 5:*

**Flight attendant:** How are you, boys?

**William:** I am fine, thank you.

**Thomas:** I am fine, too.

**Flight attendant:** What would you like to eat and drink?

**William:** I would like some apple juice and crisps, please.

**Thomas:** Can I have some orange juice, please? And some peanuts (Stairs, p. 8).

*Engelsk 5:*

**Flight Attendant:** Hello! How are you?

**William:** Fine, thank you.

**Flight Attendant:** ... And next to you is Thomas?

**Thomas:** Yes, that's me.

**Flight Attendant:** ... Now, who is hungry? I have some lunch for you.

...

**Thomas:** Can I have some orange juice, please?

**Flight Attendant:** Of course. Here you are.

**William:** Thank you very much.

**Thomas:** Thank you. (Engelsk, p. 11).

Both texts enhance the importance of polite expressions, such as “How are you?”, “please” and “thank you” when meeting and talking to new people. Moreover, the children are adapting to

the new situation on a plane and thus, *intercultural skills* for proper communication are provided. Even if both texts are enhancing polite expressions, they are still different. The text in *Stairs 5* seems staged and more formal compared to the text in *Engelsk 5*. The dialogue in *Engelsk 5* is thus more chatty, informal and authentic. The images are presented as follows:



Figure 5 Plane Dialogue (*Stairs*, p. 8).



Figure 4 Plane Dialogue (*Engelsk 5*, p. 10).

When presenting the images side by side they clearly reveal that the image in *Stairs 5* is cartoony, while the image in *Engelsk 5* is much more authentic and realistic. However, the female in the image in *Stairs 5* has been replaced with a male in *Engelsk 5* which can be a subject for discussion in the conclusion with regards to visual stereotypes (Brown, 2019).

Even if the texts are very similar, there are differences in competence aims and how the textbooks suggest working with them. *Stairs 5* presents this competence aim stated in the beginning of the chapter: “Use English expressions of politeness” (*Stairs*, p. 7, my translation). In addition, the teacher’s book states that “when travelling to the British Isles, it is important to understand the codes of British politeness” (*Stairs TB*, p. 37, my translation). Whereas, *Engelsk 5* presents this competence aim in the beginning of the chapter: “Learn when to use polite expressions” (*Engelsk*, p. 9). In addition, the teacher’s book enhances focus on learning polite expressions and suggests practicing polite expressions used in the dialogue (*Engelsk TB*, p. 11). Through the chapters’ competence aims one can see that *Stairs 5* focuses on learning English expressions of politeness with regards to situations, which is expressed in LK06’ competence aim “use expressions of politeness and appropriate expressions for the situation.” *Engelsk 5*, on the other hand, focuses more on learning expressions of politeness with regards to situations in

general. This is part of LK20's competence aim "make oneself understood using a varied vocabulary and expressions of politeness adapted to recipient and situation." Whilst both books recognize politeness as a distinctive feature of British culture, *Engelsk 5* provides a focus upon the recipient as well as the situation, which has a more interpersonal feel than *Stairs 5* does.

A suggestion for a classroom task which promotes not just the category of *intercultural skills*, but also *knowledge and critical understanding* of language and communication, can be to make learners reflect and discuss any differences or similarities in polite expressions between English and their own language: for example, British people are very polite, while Norwegians are typically straightforward/direct when speaking. This is not an aim in LK06; however, it is present in LK20 through the competence aim "explore and converse about linguistic similarities between English and other languages the learner knows and transfer it into own language acquisition." This promotes a deeper sense of learning than merely learning polite phrases.

#### **4.3.2 Pals United**

Another similarity to be found within the textbooks are the texts and images about the topic "Pals United", which are also in the textbooks' first chapters. The texts are identical and start off the same way: "This is Pals United Football team. They are all good pals, and they play just for fun" (Stairs, p. 12: Engelsk, p. 23). Instantly, the name of the team stands out because pals is a synonym for friends and thus expresses friendship. Accompanying the texts there are team portraits (Stairs, p 12: Engelsk p. 25), which show players of different ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the team name together with the image promotes an idea of unity and shows learners that even if they look different, they are still the same, a team of good friends with respect for each other. Thus, the texts and images together promote cultural diversity and respect, openness and tolerance in the categories *Values* and *Intercultural attitudes*.

The first clear differences between the textbooks are the images. They provide many of the same aspects as the front covers do (see section 4.1). The image in *Stairs 5* is very childish and presents the players as cartoon figures. In *Engelsk 5*, the image is once more closer to reality through the players being presented as real people. Therefore, *Engelsk 5* is more representative

of the real world, than *Stairs 5*. A reason for this change in images may be to associate them more with real life situations. The images are presented as follows:



Figure 6 Pals United (*Stairs 5*, p. 12).

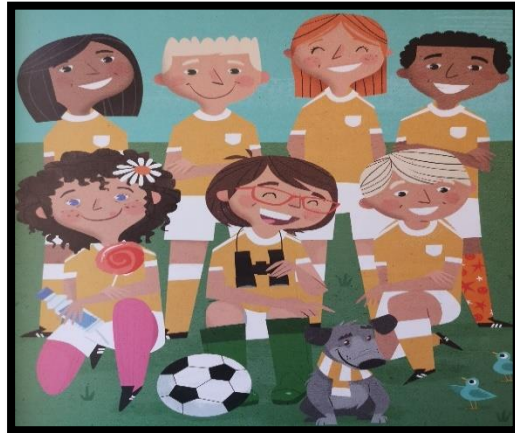


Figure 7 Pals United (*Engelsk 5*, p. 25).

Learners can perhaps identify more with the images in *Engelsk 5* than the caricatures in *Stairs 5*. Reflecting upon identity is not an explicit focus in the competence aims for the first chapter in *Engelsk 5*. Nevertheless, this is still a great opportunity to cover the competence aim.

Other differences are the presentations of the text related tasks. In *Stairs 5*, the task is provided by the teacher's book and suggests that learners should describe their own football team (if they have one) (*Stairs TB*, p. 44). In *Engelsk 5* the task is present in the textbook. It asks learners "Do you play a sport? Describe your team." (*Engelsk*, p. 24). There will most likely exist cultural diversity in most teams, considering the numbers from Statistics Norway (2019) (see section 1.1). Hence, both tasks are beneficial to make learners reflect upon cultural diversity in their own team. However, the fact that *Stairs 5* has the task in the teacher's book suggests the task is optional and may result in learners not being exposed to it. Consequently, it depends on the teacher to provide learners with the task or not. This is not the case in *Engelsk 5*, where the task is present in the textbook and available for learners, which is a more obvious promotion of cultural diversity. Another task which can be implemented in the classroom regarding both textbooks, is to discuss important parts of friendship and ask learners how one should treat friends or people in general. These texts are examples of implicit aspects, even though the chapters focus on explicit aspects: the competence aims which focus on expressions appropriate and adapted to the situation both regarding LK06 and LK20 (see section 4.2). Language expressions adapted to the situation in this case focus upon adjectives, which are implemented through descriptions of the teams.

### 4.3.3 Junior Journalists

A third set of texts and images in the textbooks which are similar are about “Junior journalists.” They are about two Norwegian junior journalists interviewing a player from South-Africa during the tournament Norway Cup, which is the biggest football tournament for children in the world (Stairs, pp. 10-11; Engelsk, pp. 21-22). The texts are found in the chapters *Meeting People* and *Good talking to you*. Extracts of the interviews are presented as follows:

*Stairs 5:*

**Milla:** Hello! My name is Milla. This is my friend Chris. How are you?

**Sarah:** I am fine, thank you.

**Milla:** Where are you from?

**Sarah:** I am from South Africa.

**Chris:** You are far away from home. How do you like Norway, Sarah?

**Sarah:** It is nice, but it is very different from home. The food is different, and so are the people. Norwegians are very nice, and they all speak English. In my country, we speak English at school. I am glad you speak English, too, because I don't understand any Norwegian at all. At first I thought Norwegians were very quiet and shy, but they are friendly once you get to know them. (Stairs, pp. 10-11).

*Engelsk 5:*

**Milla:** Hello! My name is Milla and this is my friend Chris. How are you, Sarah?

**Sarah:** I am fine, thank you.

**Milla:** Where are you from?

**Sarah:** I am from South Africa.

**Chris:** You are far away from home. How do you like Norway, Sarah?

**Sarah:** It is nice, but it is very different from home. You guys know how to do cold weather here – even in the summer! I guess I'm used to warmer temperatures. (Engelsk, p. 21).

At first sight, the texts seem identical to one another, but in *Engelsk 5* the textbooks' authors have chosen to change Sarah's last answer, making it very different from *Stairs 5*. The differences in these interviews are similar to the differences in the plane dialogues. In *Stairs 5* the answer sounds more like a staged educational speak, whereas in *Engelsk 5* Sarah's response is more authentic, chatty and informal. Sarah's last answer in the first extract presents many possibilities for classroom tasks. One is for learners to explore what it is like in South Africa compared to Norway. Another one is discussing the perceptions Sarah had of Norwegians and

how perceptions can affect the way people perceive and treat each other, both from positive and negative perspectives. It reverses the gaze and makes learners aware that there is more to people than meets the eye. This challenges how narrow perceptions and first impressions may lead to prejudice, discrimination, intolerance etc. and is beneficial for acquiring intercultural competence, as stated by Barrett (2018) in section 3.2. However, even if the last answer in *Engelsk 5* is changed, it can still be used as a starting point for the same tasks and discussions. Encouraging different perspectives and perceptions of the world and people promotes the category *Knowledge and critical understanding* as well as *Intercultural attitudes*. The images adjoining the texts are also different (see below). They share the same aspects as mentioned in in section 4.3.2, making the image in *Engelsk 5* more in line with the reality. They are clearly on a football pitch whereas *Stairs 5* is just a white background. However, the texts and images together in both textbooks promote *Intercultural attitudes* through openness, respect and tolerance towards each other.

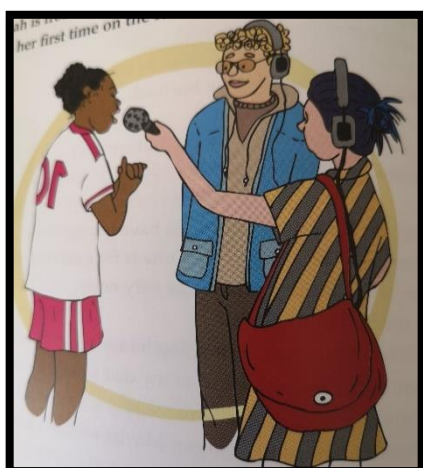


Figure 8 Junior Journalists (*Stairs 5*, p. 10).



Figure 9 Junior Journalists (*Engelsk 5*, p. 20).

Furthermore, the teacher's book for *Stairs 5* suggests activities related to polite expressions and enhances English interrogatives, which is part of the competence aim that focuses on "appropriate expressions for situations" in LK06. The teacher's book for *Engelsk 5* suggests: "by working with this text it can be interesting to repeat proper nouns, and similarities and differences between Norwegian, other native languages or other languages learners know, and English." (*Engelsk TB*, p. 25, my translation). This can be linked to LK20 and deep learning, where the intention is for learners acquire knowledge of connections between topics (see section 3.5.2).

The names of the characters in the texts can be interesting to look at, especially as the teacher's book draws attention to proper nouns: for example, the name Sarah is very international and not a typical South-African name and the names Milla and Chris are not typical Norwegian names either. In Norwegian Chris would be spelt with a K. Other examples of names are Thomas and William in the plane dialogues. Hence, it seems that westernized names are symbolic of the textbooks as a whole: maybe because it can be easier for learners to relate to familiar names. As the name Sarah can be associated with many countries or cultures, when representing a person from South-Africa and its culture, it could be more interesting to use a name which is more typical of that country and its culture. This is a pattern which runs through both textbooks. Additionally, names express a lot about a person's identity and reflecting upon the use of names is therefore a great opportunity to promote the competence aim "reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation" within LK20, even if the current chapter focuses on other competence aims.

The teacher's book for *Engelsk 5* suggests that learners should notice English phrases of politeness such as *thank you* and *how are you* (Engelsk TB, p. 24). These tasks promote the competence aims in LK20 which focus on "expressions adapted to recipient and situation" and "explore linguistic similarities." Sports interviews are popular in the media and are often conducted in English in an international context. Therefore, the textbooks' use of such interviews provides authentic situations which are motivational sources of relevance to learners acquiring the English language. Here, *Stairs 5* promotes knowledge of language, while *Engelsk 5* promotes knowledge and critical understanding of language and thus, aims for a deeper learning than *Stairs 5*.

#### **4.3.4 Pet Shop**

Images of a culturally diverse family visiting a pet shop is also something that is present in both textbooks (Stairs, p. 39; Engelsk, p. 58). The images are examples of implicit aspects regarding culture, because intercultural competence is not a stated objective within the textbooks/teacher's books here. The topic of the Pet Shop is found in the chapters *Hobbies and Interests* (Stairs 5) and *Take an interest* (Engelsk 5). The images are presented as follows:



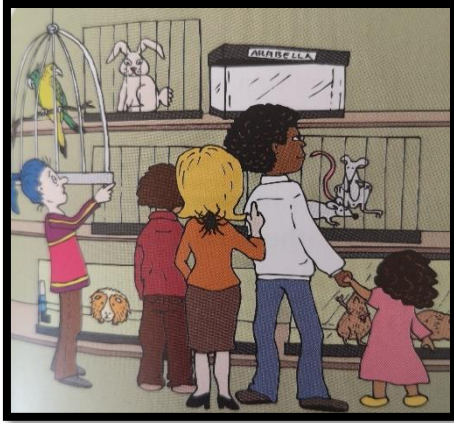


Figure 11 Pet Shop (*Stairs 5*, p. 39).



Figure 10 Pet Shop (*Engelsk 5*, p. 58).

The images show a multicultural family with parents from different ethnic backgrounds and consequently, children with mixed cultural heritages. Even though the chapters do not focus explicitly on acquiring intercultural competence, the images are possibilities to discuss various perceptions people around the world may have about the make-up of families and make learners reflect on the complexity of cultural diversity within the category *Values*. Additionally, by doing so, LK20's competence aim "reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation" is implemented, which is not part of LK06 competence aims. However, whilst both textbooks and teacher's books may seem to miss this opportunity and do not suggest any questions or activities relating to cultural diversity in relation to the images by instead focusing upon choice of pets and language acquisition, the images can be seen to normalize a way of seeing: culturally-mixed families are a natural aspect of today's society.

#### 4.3.5 Sights in London

Both textbooks contain chapters which focus explicitly on the UK, with an emphasis on popular sights and tourist attractions in London. These are placed in *Stairs 5*'s chapter *Travelling the British Isles* and *Engelsk 5*'s chapter *Travel through old and new*. Both chapters promote knowledge of cultural products in the category *Knowledge and critical understanding*. *Stairs 5* contains images of Big Ben, King's Cross, Platform 9 ¾, London Eye, Madame Tussauds, the Tower of London, the British Museum and London Zoo, including different facts about these places (Stairs, pp. 96-111). *Engelsk 5*'s focus on the British Museum, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, Oxford Street, London Aquarium and London Zoo, also with images and texts about these places (Engelsk, pp. 92-105). What is common in both textbooks is that the sights are presented from a tourist's point of view. For example, this is what you can do when

visiting London. However, this does not come as a surprise. In Norway there are several cities which offer direct flights to London and thus, London is an easily accessible travel destination for Norwegians. In the textbooks, most of the factual texts about the sights are short and superficial. That means that the texts describe the sights on a surface level, including what you can see there and their location, without information about their history or meaning. This may perhaps be because the texts function as starting points for learners to explore the sights in more detail, which several of the tasks related to the topic promote below.

However, even if the texts are similar, the images of the sights differ. *Stairs 5* presents photographs of the sights, while *Engelsk 5* represents the sights with illustrations, which make the sights less representative to the reality. Examples of images are presented as follows:

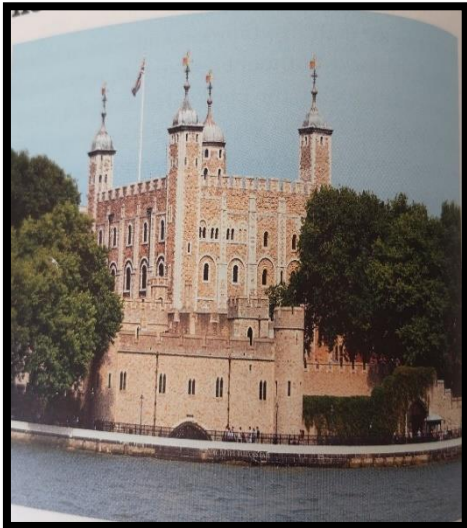


Figure 13 Tower of London (*Stairs 5*, p. 110).



Figure 12 Tower of London (*Engelsk 5*, p. 98).

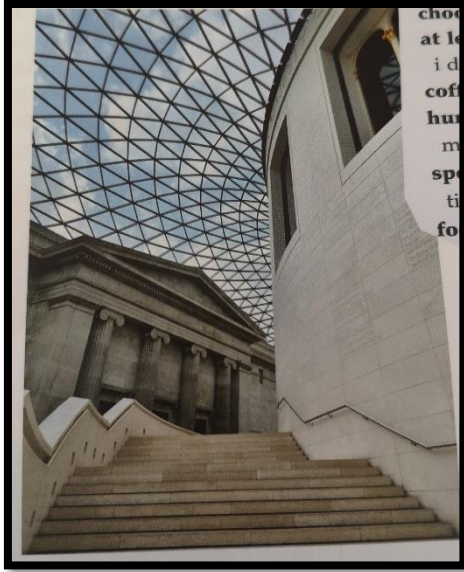


Figure 15 Inside the British Museum (Stairs 5, p. 107).

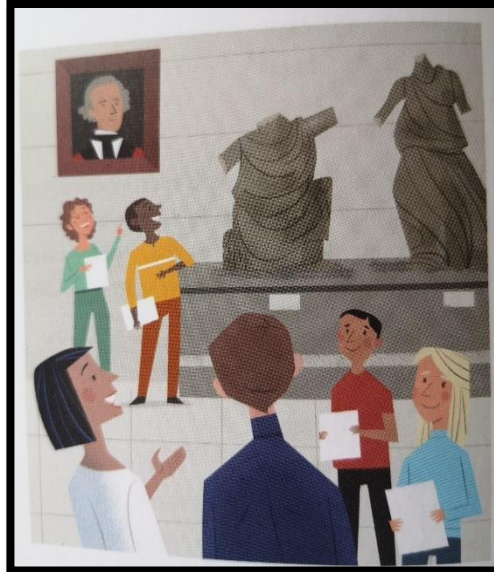


Figure 14 Inside the British Museum (Engelsk 5, p. 92).

This is a reversal, in some ways of the arguments already made. The use of illustrations in *Engelsk 5* is maybe a way to provide the texts with colors and make them more fun to read. It can also be argued that the illustrations can be a motivation for learners to explore how the sights look like in reality. Moreover, as stated in section 4.1, the illustrations are meant to be fun and work as starting point for discussions. Other differences are in the ways the textbooks choose to work with the texts. *Stairs 5* has tasks related to the texts, such as “What do you know about London Eye?” (p. 106), “Find out what you can see at the British Museum” (p. 107) and “Do you know any other famous people at Madame Tussauds?” (p. 108). In addition, the teacher’s book suggests these tasks: “What do you find typical for London? (cabs, double-decker buses, the old telephone booths)” (Stairs TB, p. 123) and “What have you learnt about London Eye?” (Stairs TB, p. 129). The tasks cover the competence aim “narrate about people, places and events in English-speaking countries.” Moreover, these are tasks that promote knowledge of cultural products, not critical understanding, in the category *Knowledge and critical understanding*. Hence, classroom activities can be to explore these places in more detail in order to acquire more cultural knowledge about them and their significance for the citizens. In addition, learners can compare these attractions to ones in their own country to gain critical understanding of own and others’ cultural products.

*Engelsk 5* presents more explorative tasks, such as “Why do you think there are so many things from around the world in the British Museum?” (p. 97), “What countries do you want to visit?”

Find the English names on a map. What do you want to explore there?” (p. 101) and “Where do the animals in London Zoo come from?” (p. 105). These questions promote a more worldly view of London and that many of its cultural icons are indebted to intercultural relations. Moreover, the teacher’s book suggests digital activities and websites where learners can gather more information about Buckingham Palace, The Tower of London and Oxford Street (Engelsk TB, pp. 112-115). In addition, it suggests that learners can compare these sights with sights in their own or other countries (Engelsk TB, p. 104). Such tasks promote the category *Knowledge and critical understanding* of learners own and others’ cultural products, which is part of the competence aim “explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway.” Considering the textbooks’ methods for working with the texts, *Engelsk 5* provides tasks that aim for knowledge and critical understanding, in contrast to *Stairs 5*, which aims for just knowledge.

#### 4.3.6 Multicultural London

The findings in this section are also in the same chapters. What both textbooks have in common in this part are references to London as a multicultural city, which promotes cultural diversity and equality in the category *Values*. London is a capital city so can be expected to have a more international feel. In *Stairs 5* there is a photograph of a crowd in London, where we can see people with from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Stairs, p. 98). The image is presented as follows:



Figure 16 Multicultural London (Stairs 5, p. 98).

Next to the image are these facts about London: “London is a multicultural city. Many of the citizens have their roots in Asia or Africa” (Stairs, p. 98). In addition to this task “Why do you think there are people from all over the world in London?” (Stairs, p. 99). Considering the definition by Eriksen (2018) of the term multicultural (see section 1.1), London is a good example of a multicultural city. Asia and Africa are big continents consisting of many countries with people from various ethnical and cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, the word “roots” can make a good class



discussion about perceptions of multiculturalism and the complexity surrounding cultural diversity. For example, many people in London have their roots from Asia and Africa. However, they are born in England, which makes them English citizens. As Munden (2019) pointed out; the understanding of culture is ambiguous, and people can choose which cultures or cultural values they accept. Therefore, people do not necessarily “belong” to the same culture all their life (see section 3.1). Furthermore, *Stairs 5* teacher’s book suggests naming other multicultural cities (Stairs TB, p. 123), which promotes reflection upon cultural diversity in other places as well. This is part of the competence aim “converse about the way people live and socialize in different cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway.” To supplement this task, learners can compare other multicultural cities to cities in their own country and perhaps consider their own country to be multicultural. As a result, knowledge and critical understanding of varied worldviews in the category *Knowledge and critical understanding*.

Furthermore, as Barrett (2018) pointed out (see section 3.2), people need to acquire intercultural attitudes in order to be able to live together as equals in a society: for example in school, at work, in restaurants etc., in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, violence etc., that occur in the world today. Therefore, questions which can be reflected upon in class are for example: What is your society like when it comes to multiculturalism? What is important when communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds, and why? What could be the effects of not showing openness, respect and tolerance to each other, and why? Why is it important to view the world from a different point of view than our own? In that way, the category *Intercultural attitudes* is implemented as well.

In *Engelsk 5* the reference to promotion of cultural diversity in London states: “In London everyone is different, and that means anyone can fit in.” (Engelsk, p. 90). My interpretation of the sentence is that because there are many people with different cultural backgrounds, no one is going to stand out. Thus, London has an open society where everyone is valued and feel comfortable: everyone is different thus, anyone can fit in. The teacher’s book explains the quotation like this: “London is a city where it takes a lot to stand out. Due to people with different cultural heritages, it is easy to blend in with the crowd.” (Engelsk TB, p. 104, my translation). The quotation promotes possibilities for good classroom discussions. A teacher

can encourage learners to discuss and reflect upon what they think the sentence means, especially the part “everyone is different.” The word “different” may promote an “us and them” perception, however in the quotation here it expresses a sense of unity and equality. Questions a teacher can ask are: What does it mean that people are different? Do they look different, behave differently, talk differently, act differently? Are people actually different? How does your society compare to London’s? Such questions promote reflection upon cultural diversity and equality within the category *Values*. *Engelsk 5* and its teacher’s book highlight London as being a multicultural city and provide a deeper understanding of what multiculturalism means through the quote and the explanation of it by the teacher’s book. It promotes learners to think about the concept “multicultural” in a more dynamic way. Multiculturalism is a complex term: many people have various cultural heritages due to roots elsewhere, even if they are English. Heritages are cultural practices and products which belong to specific cultures, which is another term learners can reflect upon. Consequently, people can belong to several cultures as stated by Munden (2019). As a result, the competence aims for LK20: “explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation” are covered. However, unlike *Stairs 5*, the teacher’s book for *Engelsk 5* does not suggest any activities with regards to multiculturalism in other cities. Additionally, *Engelsk 5* merely presents the multicultural quote, without an accompanying image, but with regards to the multicultural references in both textbooks, we can see that *Engelsk 5* promotes a deeper understanding of multiculturalism than *Stairs 5*, which corresponds to “deep learning” in LK20.

#### **4.3.7 References to Culture Outside of London**

Regarding references to other places in the UK than London (see section 4.3.5), there are remarkable differences between the textbooks. *Stairs 5* chapter has a broader focus and includes short references to Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well, thus reflecting the chapter’s title *Travelling in the British Isles*. *Engelsk 5* concentrates on England, but in more depth, with references to historical events in both past and present time, thus it has the chapter title *Travel through old and new*.

Firstly, *Stairs 5* presents texts and images about Ireland and its national day traditions, which are part of the competence aim “converse about the way people live and socialize in different

cultures in English-speaking countries and in Norway, including the Sami culture.” The text covers the celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. It begins with this: “All countries celebrate their national day. On 17<sup>th</sup> March the people of Ireland celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. People march and play live music in the streets, and eat good food in the pubs or at home.” (Stairs, p. 128). Additionally, the textbook provides a short text about ‘The Shamrock’ and ‘The Harp’, which are Irish national symbols (Stairs, p. 129). The teacher’s book suggests two activities related to these texts: “Do you know the name of any Norwegian patron saints?” (Stairs TB, p. 146) and “Do you know the name of any other saints or holy persons (prophets)?” (Stairs TB, p. 146). Saints and holy persons are closely related to religions. Thus, these tasks are beneficial methods for learners to acquire knowledge and critical understanding of own and other’s beliefs and worldviews. In addition to the tasks from the teacher’s book, learners can do a comparison with their own or others’ national day traditions and national symbols. For example, some countries do not celebrate their national day. In addition, people celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in several countries worldwide, even in Norway. As a result, the promotion of the categories *Intercultural skills* of relating to others’ cultural practices and *knowledge* and *critical understanding* of others’ cultural practices and worldviews are covered. The next three sections are also covering the same competence aim and categories as this one.

Secondly, *Stairs 5* provides facts about the celebration of Halloween, which started in Ireland: “The celebration of Halloween started in Ireland 2500 years ago. It was thought that the people who had died during the year would come back to scare the living.” (Stairs, p. 62). The textbook presents the celebration of Halloween from an Irish point of view with an adjoining question “How do you celebrate Halloween?” (Stairs, p. 62). The question encourages learners to gain knowledge of different Halloween traditions. In addition, the teacher’s book contains information about spreading of Halloween due to the Irish immigration to the USA (Stairs TB, p. 89). Therefore, learners can be encouraged to investigate the celebration of Halloween in other places as well. For example in the USA, because of the tradition’s popularity there. Consequently, learners acquire the category *knowledge and critical understanding* of own and others’ cultural practices, and the fact that some traditions are not merely own or others’ traditions anymore.

Thirdly, *Stairs 5* refers to cultural practices in Scotland as well. The textbook presents a text and image about the Scottish kilt and bagpipe in Edinburgh. Additionally, the text explains that kilts are only used on special occasions and “All kilts are different. Each clan or family has its own tartan.” (Stairs, p. 118). In this case, the teacher’s book encourages learners to reflect on other national garments, such as the Norwegian “bunad” and its geographical affiliation through differences in colors and embroidering (Stairs TB, p. 140). Additionally, learners can explore national garments in other countries in order to gain knowledge of other cultures as well. For example, the Sami’s national garment or national garments from other countries represented in learners’ own class.

Lastly, the textbook provides a short factual text about Wales, explaining where it is located, its capital Cardiff and spoken languages in the country: “The Welsh people speak English, but many people also speak Welsh, a Celtic language. It is very different from English. Welsh people have fought for their language, which was in danger of dying out.” (Stairs, p. 115). Along with the text there is a question that asks, “What more do you know about Wales?” (Stairs, p. 115), which encourages learners to explore Wales in more detail. Classroom tasks suggested by the teacher’s book are to investigate more about the Welsh language, as to why it was in danger of dying out and explore other countries with a minority language: as the Sami language in Norway (Stairs TB, p. 138). The teacher’s book also asks if there are any other languages in the current class and if any of the represented language have similarities to English (Stairs TB, p. 138). These are beneficial methods for gaining knowledge and critical understanding of own and others’ cultures and languages.

It seems that *Stairs 5* has chosen several different cultural aspects from different countries within the UK, which contradicts the findings from Lund (2007) which stated that cultural aspects were hard to detect (section 2.7.1). However, *Stairs 5* still limits the focus to UK or Western cultures, which corresponds to the findings from Forman (2014); Nuñez-Pardo (2018); Shin et al. (2011) (see section 2.7.1), which expressed these cultures as superior to others. Additionally, the cultural aspects are still presented from a tourist’s point of view as Lund (2019) discovered, resulting in superficial facts and stereotypical presentations due to the lack of exploring in depth and facts presented as “we think they are.”



In *Engelsk 5* the authors have chosen to focus on past and present history in England, instead of including texts and images about other countries in the UK. The textbook contains texts and images about ancient history in England and London: for example the Roman Empire, the old Londinium and Hadrian's Wall, as well as more recent English history, such as the Industrial Revolution, the Great Fire of London and the Great Plague (Engelsk, pp. 106-109: 114-119). It seems as though the authors have interpreted the term "deep learning" (see section 3.5.2) to explore England's and London's history in order to acquire knowledge of how England and London have become what they are today. This focus has resulted in the removal of other cultures' practices, such as the traditions and symbols presented *Stairs 5*. Moreover, instead of using photographs where it is possible, for example to illustrate Hadrian's Wall, again the textbook contains drawn images, as is common throughout the textbook (see section 4.3.5). Which again, perhaps is due to the humorous and supportive means of the illustrations in order to make the texts more fun and interesting to read (see section 4.1). The chapter's competence aim is "explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation." Thus, exploring ancient history and gaining knowledge about how London originated, who built Hadrian's Wall, the Roman invasion and their Latin language (Engelsk, pp. 108-109: 117) promote the fact that Britain has a long history of multiculturalism. The Romans and their empire consisted of people from several countries in Europe, including some countries in the Middle East and Africa. In addition, they influenced the British language through Latin. As a result, the category *Knowledge and critical understanding* is promoted through knowledge about the Roman invasion and the Latin language they left behind. The textbook provides these adjoining questions "The English words school, village and quiet come from Latin. What are they in Norwegian?" (Engelsk, p. 109). In addition, the teacher's book suggests that learners should explore Norwegian words or words from other languages which have their origins in Latin (Engelsk, TB, p. 125). As a result, learners are encouraged to gain knowledge and critical understanding of language and why some languages have similar words.

#### **4.3.8 References to Food Practices in the UK**

Concerning references to cultural practices in UK, such as food references, there are clear differences between the textbooks. *Stairs 5* contains several different references to cultural practices in the British Isles: "...we ate typical British food for lunch: mashed potatoes with sausage and gravy" (Stairs, p. 56), "We ate some fish and chips before..." (Stairs, p. 57), "My

father loves to sit down for...a cup of tea” (Stairs, p. 122) and “Do you think I can have tea with you?” (Stairs, p. 175). The two first references are implicit cultural aspects, as they are found in the chapter *Hobbies and Interests*, while the other two are explicit aspects found in the chapter covering the British Isles. However, the textbook does not provide any more information about these references other than what is said in the quotes: it does not convey that “tea” is a typical British reference for a ritual known as “afternoon tea” where the drink is accompanied by sandwiches and cakes which then became an informal reference to dinner. Nevertheless, they can still be subjects for questioning in a classroom context in order to cover the competence aim about “talk about the way people live in different cultures.” Thus, a task for learners can be to explore British food traditions and compare to their own. As a result, critical understanding of own and others’ cultural practices are promoted.

*Engelsk 5* chose to limit references to cultural practices to England (in section 4.3.7), however this is not the case with regards to food references. Food references are found in several places in the chapter *Travel through old and new*, with an emphasis upon the tea tradition. The first reference is “At my school back home in Norway, we tried to have tea as the English do. I liked the sweet biscuits and the scones – yum! The tea tasted good, too.” (Engelsk, p. 99). The reference is from a Norwegian perspective, which is a representation of how cultures influence each other. The next tea references are texts about the history of tea covering four pages, which is a considerable amount of space. The texts describe the discovery of tea in China and how trade routes enabled the transportation of tea to Europe. Because of the slow transport, tea was expensive and became a drink for the rich. However, today, tea is available for everyone (Engelsk, pp. 134-137). Consequently, the textbook is highlighting that whilst tea is regarded as something quintessentially British, it has roots in China. This results in promotion of the category *Knowledge and critical understanding*: that cultural products and practices constantly change. Additionally, the texts promote LK20’s focus on deep learning due to a lot of historical background of the tea tradition. Furthermore, in addition to the texts, the textbook asks learners “Tea is both a typical British drink and a meal. What meals are typical in your culture?” (Engelsk, p. 137). The teacher’s book suggests that learners can explore the tea they have at home to discover where it is produced and distributed (Engelsk TB, p. 152). Through these factual texts, learners are provided with a lot of knowledge about how tea became such an important part of the English culture. With regards to the tasks, learners are encouraged to gain knowledge and critical understanding of and relate to others’ and own cultural practices within

the *Knowledge and critical understanding* and *Intercultural skills* categories. The tasks and texts also cover the competence aim “explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway.”

Another reference to English food traditions is a text about the English breakfast. A family from Ireland is having a holiday in England and the text begins as follows: “They really like the full English breakfast they get every morning. Dad especially. He loves to have it all: eggs and bacon, sausages, baked beans, fried tomatoes, mushrooms, potatoes and toast.” (Engelsk, p. 122). Attached to the text there is this question: “What is your national dish and what is it made of?” (Engelsk, p. 125). A task suggested by the teacher’s book is for teachers to ask learners about their own food traditions at home (Engelsk TB, p. 138). The tasks give learners the opportunity to reflect upon their own food traditions with regards to English food traditions. Another task for learners can be to compare dishes from other parts of the world, as well. A task related to the matter is “Why do you think people eat different dishes in different countries?” (Engelsk, p. 121). In that way, learners are encouraged to acquire knowledge and critical understanding of other cultures’ practices as well, instead of just English.

Moreover, *Engelsk 5* provides knowledge about other typical English dishes as well: “*Fish and Chips* is a traditional English dish. They used to serve it wrapped in old newspaper. *Chicken Tikka Masala* was the favourite dish for a while, but in 2012 *Chinese Stir-Fry* became the new British favourite.” (Engelsk, p. 131). These facts are a possibility to work with in class in order for learners to discover how complex cultures can be. *Fish and chips* is British, however *tikka masala* is Indian and *stir-fry* is Chinese. Therefore, a classroom task can be to discuss and reflect upon how food from other parts of the world have ended up being so popular in Britain. For example, the UK has a huge Indian and Pakistani population due to these countries being part of the British Empire. Additionally, there is a food poem that mentions several other well-known food and drinks, for example burgers, pizzas, tacos, soda, shakes, donuts, French fries etc. in (Engelsk, p. 126), which are popular all over the world. In Norway, for example, Friday night is often advertised as “Taco Friday” and many consider pizza (the American version) to be the national dish of Norway. Hence, another task can be to explore where these food and drinks originate from: for example, French fries are not actually from France. Cultures change constantly, as Munden (2019) stated in section 3.1, and these food references are a great

possibility for learners to acquire critical understanding of the constant cultural changes that occur, which also fulfills the competence aim “explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation” (Engelsk TB, p. 102). International cuisine has become a feature in many societies around the world.

#### **4.3.9 Other Cultural References**

*Stairs 5* presents a cultural reference which I found relevant. It is a poem about a multicultural classroom, which is found in the chapter *Poems*, and thus is an implicit aspect which promotes cultural diversity. The poem contains several positive descriptions of the class, such as nice, fun, kind, colorful, best. It ends like this: “My class is different in a good way. My classroom is a great place to stay” (Stairs, p. 72), which expresses appreciation of cultural diversity. Adjoining the poem is an image of a multicultural classroom with pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including the question: “What is your class like?” (Stairs, p. 73). In addition, the teacher’s book suggests that learners should compare the multicultural class with their own class and talk about how they feel about their class (Stairs TB, p. 99). Another classroom activity can be to discuss perceptions of cultural diversity: for example, Norwegian-born, but parents from another country and culture, and the rich diversity that adds to society. The text, image and tasks together are a motivational source for learners to reflect upon cultural diversity and equality within the category *Values*.

*Engelsk 5* does not include a reference to a multicultural classroom. However, it promotes football as a reference to cultural practice. This reference is merely a text which presents a dad and son planning to watch a game of football: “My dad and I are keen Arsenal fans. We plan to see their stadium, the Emirates Stadium” (Engelsk, p. 100). Again, the textbook presents male individuals, which perhaps is because football is considered to be “a male interest”, which is a stereotypical interpretation of football. Accordingly, football is presented as a tourist attraction, which it is. Due to the Premier League, which is the top football league in England, most people know that football is a big part of England and its culture. There are people and fans from all over the world who are watching and following the Premier League, especially in Norway, and most of them have their favorite team. The top teams such as Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal have almost 235 million followers combined on Facebook

and they are constantly increasing (FootballPredictions.NET, n.d.). Consequently, many people travel to England just to watch football. The teacher's book suggests conversing about which football teams the learners support and their respective countries (Engelsk TB, p. 114). Considering the popularity of football not just in England, but in the rest of the world as well, exploring and discussing the matter in more detail can be beneficial to acquire knowledge of the cultural aspects of football and why the game has become so popular. As a result, learners acquire knowledge and critical understanding of others' cultures and worldviews, which will cover the competence aim "explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation."

In the next chapter the findings will be discussed further in relation to theory and curricula in order to address the research questions.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

With regards to the English subject's history in Norway explored in section 3.4.1 by Fenner (2018), this study shows that the English subject still undergoes significant curriculum changes. From an explicit focus on language learning in the beginning, the subject gradually expanded the focus to include cultural knowledge, which also corresponds to categorial *Bildung* (see section 3.4) LK06 focused upon language learning and cultural knowledge as separate parts in the subject. It is not until now, in LK20, this perspective is changed: language learning and cultural understanding are now emphasized as interdependent and will be promoted through deep learning. Multicultural societies are commonplace all over the world, and thus, intercultural competence is important (Barrett, 2018). Due to English being a lingua franca and intercultural competence being strongly associated with language learning, the English language classroom has become a significant arena for acquiring intercultural competence (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2018; Hoff, 2018). In addition, the textbook is a central and influential source of information as demonstrated by several researchers (Brown, 2019; Forman, 2014; Skjelbred, 2019; Skrunes, 2010; Thomas, 2017). In light of the above statements, it is no surprise that the acquisition of intercultural competence has more emphasis in the English subject curriculum for LK20 compared to LK06 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013; 2020). Accordingly, exploring how English language textbooks promote intercultural competence to learners, including how it differs between textbooks adapted for LK06 and LK20 are thus current and relevant topics.

Through analyzing and comparing the findings in the textbooks in relation to the categories of intercultural competence, the study found that *Stairs 5* promotes intercultural competence through knowledge on a surface level. The texts provide brief information about several topics in the UK and the tasks are very close-ended, without apparent room for reflection and discussions. This results in superficial representations, which lack in-depth exploration and results in a stereotype, which corresponds to the findings from Lund (2007). *Engelsk 5*, on the other hand, promotes intercultural competence through knowledge on a deeper level in accordance with deep learning. Many texts in *Engelsk 5* provide more in-depth information about fewer topics. The accompanying tasks are open-ended and emphasize exploring and reflecting upon the topics in depth. Therefore, with regards to suggestions on further research by Lund (2019), the cultural understanding is deeper in the new textbook – *Engelsk 5* promotes cultural understanding, while *Stairs 5* promotes cultural knowledge. Nuñez-Pardo (2018) and

Shin et al. (2011) found that textbooks focus on cultural knowledge and lack emphasis on cultural understanding. Therefore, the authors of the current textbooks, Solberg & Unnerud (2020a; 2020b), have implemented positive changes into *Engelsk 5*.

However, even if *Engelsk 5* places emphasis on cultural understanding through deep learning, it has firstly; resulted in the removal of references to other countries than England and secondly; resulted in the removal of other cultural practices than food. This change unfortunately promotes a further stereotype – that England is more important than other countries and cultures in the UK. Stereotypes exist within all cultures; everyone has them. They are not always negative. However, within the context of a textbook, which Thomas (2017) argues are “cultural intermediaries”, they take “a central role as learners’ primary source of information with regards to target language speakers (for example Norwegian speakers learning English in this case) and their cultures” (p. 2). The dangers of stereotypes are they can limit knowledge and insight into other cultures.

Moreover, Nuñez-Pardo (2018) and Shin et al. (2011) expressed a recommendation that future textbooks should focus on deeper norms, values and beliefs in other cultures instead of just cultural facts. These factors are also essential parts of acquiring intercultural competence, according to Barrett (2018) and Dypedahl & Bøhn (2018). However, the focus on cultural facts are still emphasized in the textbooks in this study. They place emphasis on “big C” cultures, such as the sights in London and England, which continue to be presented from a tourist’s point of view, resulting in incomplete and superficial presentations of the target cultures, as Lund (2007; 2019) pointed out. Therefore, as Thomas (2017) discovered: it still seems as authors of textbooks draw information from cultural experiences they intimately know, which are intended for a western audience. However, *Engelsk 5* also focuses upon Hadrian’s Wall. Whilst still a tourist attraction, the textbook provides history about it with link to the Roman period. *Engelsk 5* addresses this topic by emphasizing the intercultural roots of this iconic English attraction. In addition, the textbook provides knowledge of how the Latin language which was used by the Romans has affected the English language. This is to make learners understand that languages move when people move.

Regarding “little c” references, *Stairs 5* contains more references of national traditions and symbols, while *Engelsk 5* contains more and deeper references to food traditions. This in-depth exploration of food traditions (such as the history of tea) promotes understanding of how cultures affect each other and thus change. This corresponds to Munden’s (2019) understanding of cultures being ambiguous – leading to “different” cultures not being that different anymore. This again, can be linked to “deep learning.” So, in relation to my main research question, we can see that *Engelsk 5* makes increased/successful efforts to promote intercultural learning on a deeper level of understanding, but at the price of a narrower vision.

As we saw in chapter 4, great changes have been made regarding the images in the textbooks. As Brown (2019) pointed out – visual media in textbooks is influential in providing cultural information to learners, and Cappelen Damm both name the illustrator and provide a link to his webpages as a selling point. The images are credited with engaging pupils as a starting point into each chapter and useful as a support when reading (Cappelen Damm, 2020a). Images are thus important sources of information. *Stairs 5* mostly presents very cartoony and childish images, while *Engelsk 5* contains more authentic and realistic images which thus, lead to a more realistic and presentation of the given situations. Whilst still illustrations, they are more “grown-up” and reinforce the notion of deeper understanding. The only exception are the images of the sights in London, where *Stairs 5* provides photographs and *Engelsk 5* presents illustrations, maybe in order to use them as starting points for exploring them in more detail.

The images in both textbooks do present cultural diversity through people of different ethnic backgrounds and they include both male and female individuals, although the front cover and the plane dialogue images of *Engelsk 5* are solely male in contrast to *Stairs 5*. Some images can be used on their own to provide cultural understanding through discussion. For example, the images of the multicultural family at the Pet Shop in both textbooks challenge stereotypes, which according to Brown (2019) is important when learning about own and others’ cultures. In general, the images are presented as a beneficial support for learners when reading the accompanying texts. *Engelsk 5* clearly marks an “upgrade” of the images in a revision of the previous textbook. On a more cynical note, as many topics are the same, this is an easy and immediately visible way to promote the “newness” of the textbook. Schools will pay a lot for



new textbooks, as shown in the numbers presented by Skjelbred (2019), and need to see value for money.

Another noticeable difference between *Stairs 5* and LK06 is regarding the competence aim which includes the Sami culture. The textbook itself does not contain anything covering the Sami culture, but the teacher's book mentions the Sami language in relation to the Welsh language, as both of them are minority languages (see section 4.3.7). Considering that the Sami culture is referred to in the competence aim in LK06, it should have gained more coverage. In the competence aims in LK20 the reference to the Sami culture is removed, and thus, neither *Engelsk 5* nor its teacher's book mention it. Considering that the Sami culture is a Norwegian minority culture, the removal could be interpreted as the Sami culture being less important or invisible. However, my interpretation is that the Sami culture is embedded within the competence aim "explore the way of life and traditions in various societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect upon identity and cultural affiliation." Sami culture most certainly has identity and cultural affiliation in Norway. However, as *Engelsk 5* does not explicitly refer to Sami culture, it depends on teachers to include it.

Lastly, the English language textbook is supposed to cover all the competence aims within the English subject curricula and thus, it is challenging to fulfill all the competence aims completely – the textbook cannot contain too much information either. Considering the number of teaching hours the English subject distributes in school, the authors have to decide what the textbook should focus on. With regards to LK20 and "deep learning", the authors have chosen a deeper focus upon England, which ultimately leads to a deeper acquisition of intercultural competence. Obviously, teachers can work outside of the textbook. The textbook and teacher's book are suggestions of how to work with the competence aims. Yet, Skjelbred (2019) points out, the choice of textbook is important: «texts in school can provide common content matter and common frameworks as they reach all children» (p. 149, my translation). However, the textbook does not work alone. The knowledge learners acquire depends on teachers' competence regarding learning materials (Skjelbred, 2019).

This study has provided me with a lot of knowledge and understanding regarding intercultural competence, in addition to the importance of being critical to textbooks' content, especially with regards to the lack of focus on learning materials in teacher's education (Skjelbred, 2019) and the importance of criticizing them (Brown, 2019). In the context of Lund's (2019) research, we see that the new textbook still promotes stereotypical presentations, but attempts to avoid superficial presentations by promoting deeper learning. Whilst this study is restricted to just two textbooks from the same authors and publishing house, it cannot be considered as truly representative. However, my work with this thesis opens up a range of potential research directions. *Engelsk 5* is a completely new textbook and has not been used in the field yet. Thus, a suggestion for further research is to study the textbook *Engelsk 5* in its "natural habitat" in the classroom, in order to assess further how the textbook supports the acquisition of intercultural competence to young English learners from both the pupils' and the teachers' point of view.

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