

**PRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN CULTURE IN EFL TEXTBOOKS:
An analysis of the cultural content of Finnish EFL textbooks for secondary and upper
secondary education**

Master's Thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract Yksi kielen opetuksen päämääristä on kulttuurien välisen ymmärryksen ja suvaitsevaisuuden lisääminen. Tämän Pro gradu -tutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää, kuinka suomalaiset yläkoulun ja lukion englannin oppikirjat tukevat kulttuurin oppimisen ja opettamisen periaatteita. Tavoitteena on myös selvittää, onko oppikirjoissa tapahtunut kehitystä viime vuosina sekä onko yläkoulun ja lukion oppikirjojen kulttuurisisällöissä eroavaisuuksia. Tämä tutkielma keskittyy amerikkalaisen kulttuuriin esittämiseen, sillä on osoitettu, että monilla suomalaisilla nuorilla on negatiivisia asenteita amerikkalaisia kohtaan. Analyysini on luonteeltaan laadullinen ja käytetty metodi on nimeltään teorialähtöinen sisällönanalyysi. Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että oppikirjat eivät täysin tue kulttuurien välisen oppimisen ja opettamisen periaatteita. Oppikirjat sisältävät edelleen paljon stereotypioita ja monet asiat on kirjoissa vain todettu sen sijaan, että niitä olisi analysoitu pidemmälle. Yhdysvalloista kerrotaan myös paljon faktatietoa, joka on tärkeää lähinnä matkailijoille. Lisäksi amerikkalaista kulttuuria verrataan hyvin vähän muihin kulttuureihin. Näistä seikoista huolimatta voidaan tutkimustulosten perusteella todeta, että oppikirjat ovat kehittyneet parempaan suuntaan. Kirjat ovat monipuolisia ja moniin tärkeisiin osa-alueisiin, kuten etnisiin vähemmistöihin ja koulutukseen, on keskitytty hyvin. Tulokset osoittavat myös, että vanhemmissa oppikirjoissa on määrällisesti enemmän kulttuurisisältöjä kuin uudemmissa oppikirjoissa. Niissä on kuitenkin myös enemmän stereotypioita kuin uudemmissa kirjoissa. Lisäksi, yläkoulun englannin oppikirjat noudattavat kulttuurienvälisen oppimisen periaatteita paremmin kuin lukion oppikirjat, mikä on ristiriitaista opetussuunnitelman kanssa. Lukion oppikirjoille on kuitenkin tyypillistä autenttisen materiaalin käyttö.	
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 EFL TEXTBOOKS	7
2.1 Definition	7
2.2 The role of a textbook in teaching: criticism.....	8
2.3 The influence of textbooks.....	9
2.4 Previous research on textbooks.....	11
3 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN EFL LEARNING AND TEACHING.....	14
3.1 The definition of culture.....	14
3.2 Language and culture	17
3.3 Culture and EFL teaching — Intercultural teaching and textbooks.....	18
3.4 Criteria for evaluating cultural content in EFL textbooks	22
3.5 Previous studies.....	25
4 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN CEFR AND IN THE FINNISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM	29
4.1 CEFR.....	29
4.2 The Finnish National Curriculum	30
5 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	33
5.1 Research questions	33
5.2 Methods of analysis.....	35
5.3 Data	37
6 FINDINGS	39
6.1 Social identity and social groups.....	39
6.2 Social interaction.....	43
6.3. Belief and behavior	45
6.4 Socio-political institutions	48
6.5 Socialization and the life-cycle	48
6.6 National history	51
6.7 National geography	53
6.8 National cultural heritage	54
6.9 Stereotypes and national identity	56
6.10 International and intercultural issues	58

6.11 Point of view and style of the textbook author(s)	59
7 COMPARISON OF THE TEXTBOOKS	61
7.1 The content of the textbooks	61
7.2 The specific topics.....	63
8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The cultural content of the textbooks.....	61
Table 2. Social identity, social groups and social interaction.....	63
Table 3. Belief and behavior.....	65
Table 4. Socio-political institutions, socialization, the life-cycle and national history.....	67
Table 4. National geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and national identity.....	68
Table 5. International and intercultural issues, point of view and the style of the author(s).....	71

1 INTRODUCTION

There is nonetheless a fundamental values position which all language teaching should promote: a position which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction. (Byram 2001: 7).

The teaching of culture is considered to be an important part of modern foreign language learning and teaching since one major aim of language teaching is to increase the understanding and tolerance between cultures (Corbett 2003: 3). Furthermore, the cultural knowledge is needed for international communication and contacts (Buttjes 1991: 8). This aim of language learning and teaching will become even more important in the future since the world is constantly becoming more globalized. Therefore it is also relevant to study the practices of teaching culture. The importance of the teaching of culture is also stated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and in the Finnish national curriculum, which both regulate the language learning and teaching in Finland.

Textbooks play an important role in today's school world since most of the teachers in Finland use them as the most important tool in teaching (Luukka et al. 2008: 94). According to Karvonen (1995: 12, 24), textbooks are sometimes even the targets of action instead of being just tools. Even though the authors of the textbooks follow the Finnish National Curriculum, the content is still only their perception of the issue and they may also use the textbooks for reaching their own agendas (Karvonen 1995: 19-22). Therefore it is important to critically study what kind of image the EFL textbooks give of the target cultures.

The present thesis aims at finding out how the cultural themes in the Finnish EFL textbooks for secondary and upper secondary education support the principles of intercultural learning and teaching. The aim is also to compare the newer and older textbooks with each other and also to find out whether there are any differences in the cultural content in the textbooks for the secondary and upper secondary education. The study concentrates on the presentation of the American culture since according to my personal experiences, America raises strong feelings in people and its culture is often criticized. Also according to the study by

Storhammer and Ailinpieti (1995: 31), many Finnish learners have rather negative attitudes towards Americans. Furthermore, such a specific analysis solely on the presentation of the American culture in Finnish EFL textbooks for both secondary and upper secondary education has not been done before.

The present study leans on the criteria for evaluating cultural content in EFL textbooks by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and by Risager (1991:182-183, 188) and the method of analysis is a qualitative method called theory-based content analysis. The paper consists of eight chapters. After the introduction, chapter 2 presents the EFL textbooks and their role in language learning and teaching as well as their influence on teaching. Chapter 3 concentrates on defining the concept of culture and the relationship between language and culture. Furthermore, the intercultural approach to language learning and teaching and the criteria for evaluating cultural content in textbooks are presented. Chapter 4 discusses what the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and the Finnish National Curriculum for secondary and upper secondary education state about the teaching of culture. In chapter 5 the research design of the present paper is introduced. The research design consists of the research questions, methods and data. Chapter 6 presents the main findings of the study and in the chapter 7 the differences between the textbooks are discussed. Finally, in chapter 8, the results of the study are discussed and evaluated and some suggestions for further studies are made.

2 EFL TEXTBOOKS

In this chapter, the basic characteristics of a school textbook will be introduced. The central role of the textbook in teaching, its influence on pupils and teachers and previous research on textbooks will also be discussed.

2.1 Definition

The definition of a *textbook* includes books made and published for educational purpose or even any book used as a help tool in the classroom (e.g. a novel). The term textbook may also be linked to an even broader and more commonly-used term *teaching media*, which includes other teaching material as well (e.g. CDs, internet and videos) (Johnsen 2001: 50, also Elomaa 2009: 18). Textbooks are intended to serve several groups of users, which include teachers, pupils and parents. According to Karvonen (1995: 12), the most important basic function of a school textbook is to transmit information. Furthermore, both Kalmus (2004: 1) and Lähdesmäki (2004: 271) point out that school textbooks are also considered important instruments for transmitting values, skills and even attitudes to the younger generation. According to Karvonen (1995: 12), there are several types of textbooks such as course books, theme books or even handbooks. A single textbook is often a part of a larger series of books, which might include, in addition to textbooks, work books with exercises, extra readings, teacher's material and a guide. Some of the newest materials even include ready-made exams for the teacher to use.

Lähdesmäki (2004: 273, 275) states that an EFL textbook is also a *merchandise*, which forms the image of the English language and culture and the practice to study English. A textbook has a strong position in the Finnish school culture and therefore it has the power to determine what the English language and studying of English are. A textbook categorizes and names language learning into certain components and organizes it. This *authority of a textbook* is strongly criticized among researchers and it will be discussed further in the next section.

2.2 The role of a textbook in teaching: criticism

A textbook has traditionally been a self-evident part of teaching and therefore schools, which do not use textbooks, are often presented as exceptional (Karvonen 1995: 11). However, Lähdesmäki (2004: 271) states that even though many teachers may feel that they could not survive without a textbook, some also feel that textbooks can be frustrating, irritating and even limiting since they have so great an effect on teaching. After Karvonen (1995: 12, 24), textbooks and other teaching materials have become such central items in teaching that they have even started to take control of lessons, homework and the time pupils spend for their studies. The textbook, its texts and contents have become the targets of action instead of being just tools for the teacher: this can be seen for example during a lesson when the teacher explains and comments the textbook.

A wide and quite recent survey (Luukka et al. 2008, 94), in which 740 mother tongue teachers and 324 foreign language teachers took part, reveals that language teachers in Finland still heavily rely on textbooks in their teaching despite the development of other teaching material (for example the internet). A clear majority (95 %) of the foreign language teachers use textbooks often and 98 % of them included textbooks in their top five materials list. One reason for the popularity of the textbook could be that teachers do not have enough time for preparing their own material and using a textbook instead lightens up their work. It is also possible that they have not had enough training in the use of other teaching media or the use of the new technology is not possible in every school because there might not be computers in every classroom and moving from one class to another would take too much time. Also pupils themselves appreciate the use of a textbook: it is often thought to be something permanent which they can rely on.

According to Karvonen (1995: 12, 24), since the textbook has such a major role in teaching, it is followed almost like the national curriculum. This fact is also heavily criticized because the teacher, instead of a textbook, should be the one responsible of directing the learning process and the textbook should only be used as a help tool. Furthermore, teachers should familiarize themselves with the national curriculum and decide on how they want to carry it out because it is possible that they understand the national curriculum differently

from the textbook authors, and want to emphasize different aspects than the textbook.

According to Lähdesmäki (2004: 273), teaching the English language and publishing EFL textbooks are a big business and a great deal of time and money is spent on planning and marketing textbooks. As Rösler (1994: 75) points out, publishers seek for financial benefits and therefore it is important that the textbooks also make profit. For this reason they are made to serve the needs of as many learner groups as possible. According to Elomaa (2009: 48), textbooks are also supposed to fulfill many other expectations. They should follow the national curriculum, consider the expectations, needs and hopes of the teachers and the pupils and enable language learning. Moreover, as Lähdesmäki (2004: 271, 273) continues, *language learning and teaching* is a very complex concept, which includes many facts and skills to be learned. The teaching of languages concentrates at the same time on vocabulary, structures, grammar and communication as well as on thematic contents (e.g. textbook chapters) and learning strategies. Due to this, textbooks have to be very versatile. Because of these facts, it is possible that all the important aspects of language learning and teaching may not get equal attention and the textbooks may meet the needs of a certain learner group only partially. Teachers should be aware of this when choosing their teaching material.

2.3 The influence of textbooks

According to Karvonen (1995: 19-22), what the pupils learn through textbooks is not the actual reality but the reality that the text creates. The textbook authors use the language for reaching their own goals. An individual adapts the image and perspective which the text and the language create about the reality. This fact makes the text and its content seem obvious and reasonable for the reader. As de Castell and Luke (1989: 246) point out, textbooks have the ability to make meanings more explicit in a way that places them above any criticism. Furthermore, as Karvonen (1995: 23, 25, 28) continues, the language starts to direct our perception and it starts to look like the language would represent the actual physical world. Despite this fact, texts are above all written products, not images of reality. Because of the atmosphere that the learning situation creates, there is a power relationship between the textbook and the student. This relationship therefore determines the role of the

reader as well as the meaning and the function of the text.

In addition, Lähdesmäki (2004: 272, 273) argues that it is obvious that whether we want to teach attitudes or not, they are always part of the learning and teaching process. For example, the texts that have been chosen into a textbook reflect the attitudes and values of the dominant culture. de Castell and Luke (1989: 246) point out that pupils also learn what skills and facts they are supposed to learn, what the English language is like and for what purpose one can use it. Karvonen (1995: 19, 20) continues that text creates content that needs to be learned and without the text this content would not exist: if the text's form should be different, its content would also be different. This is because form and content are tightly bound together.

As Kalmus (2004: 4, 5) states, in some cases textbooks constitute the sole and trustworthy source of information, in which case they are most likely to affect pupils. Educational texts clearly provide frameworks for everyday understanding. However, a considerable part of texts in textbooks include *the hidden, or unplanned, curriculum*, which the pupils' may not notice or which they automatically take for granted. According to Apple (1979: 14, 84), the hidden curriculum means certain attitudes, norms, values and dispositions that are implicitly but effectively taught in schools but usually not talked about. A teacher should be aware of these facts and consider whether there is something more to teach than what is in the textbook.

As Karvonen (1995: 12, 18) points out, most textbooks are made by groups of authors, which means that they are the result of collective thinking and have therefore gone through many compromises during their design process. However, the *voice* one can hear in a text does not belong to the author(s) alone but also to other instances: The text may for example be a response, reaction or follow-up for some other texts. Risager (1991: 192) also criticizes the common anonymity of authors. Even though their names are known, their role is more like a mediator and therefore their point of view of things is not open to discussion. Furthermore, every text is linked to other texts since texts cannot be created in a vacuum without considering why and for what purpose they are made. This is called *intertextuality*.

According to Wallace (2003: 24), the term *intertextuality* is used to describe how the texts make references to other texts and how the texts should be read against other texts within or across different text genres.

This whole net around a text is called the *context* of a text (Karvonen 1995: 30). According to Wallace (2003: 11, 136), context must be understood as something more than the visible circumstances around the text: it includes e.g. the conditions in which the text is produced and consumed. Furthermore, these conditions are linked to even broader social and political landscapes from which the texts receive an ideological impact. According to Apple (1979: 20, 21), *ideology* refers to a system of ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitment or values about society. The concept of ideology is usually also linked to conflicts between people seeking or holding power. Ideologies are primarily embedded in the implicit propositions of the text (Fairclough 1995: 1).

According to Karvonen (1995: 19-20, 30), the main idea behind *critical text analysis* is that a text is always a product of many choices and categorizations, which are controlled by the values, attitudes and ideologies of a community. The context limits the target audience of the text to a certain group and directs the readers gently to certain conclusions. The aim of critical text analysis is to discover the hidden meanings in the text. As Wallace (2003: 43) states, the purpose of the process can be seen as linguistic, critical and cultural. Firstly, the linguistic aim helps the reader to understand the nature of the ideological meanings embedded in texts. Secondly, a critical approach helps the reader to move beyond the text and finally, the cultural aim provides insights into cultural assumptions (e.g. similarities and differences between nations).

2.4 Previous research on textbooks

According to Elomaa (2009:30), textbooks have been systematically studied only during the past few decades. It was not until the 1990s when researchers started to pay more detailed attention on the teaching materials. Lähdesmäki (2004: 273) continues that nowadays the importance of the teaching materials has been acknowledged and because

English is an international and global language, the critical study of EFL –textbooks is considered very important. Kalmus (2004: 1) states that much of the previous research interest in school textbooks has based on the more or less implicit assumption that they influence or even persuade readers. This assumption is based on the fact that textbooks are designed to teach pupils what educators believe to exist.

For example Laakkonen (2007) and Keisala (2010) studied textbooks in their Master's Theses. The topic of Laakkonen (2007) was the representations of gender in Finnish EFL textbooks. The aim was to discover whether the textbooks follow the principle of gender equality, which is stated in the Finnish national curriculum, or whether they support the traditional stereotypes. The method Laakkonen used was critical discourse analysis.

In critical discourse analysis language is seen as a medium which constructs and depicts the reality. The analysis of the texts and images was both qualitative and quantitative in nature and she also used content analysis as a help tool. The results of the study showed that textbooks carry a hidden curriculum, even though some improvements can also be found. There were more male persons presented in the books and the genders had specific roles in the textbooks: boys were active and sporty and girls were spending time with clothes and cosmetics.

Keisala (2010) concentrated on relationship values and attitudes in an EFL textbook series for upper secondary education. The method used was also critical discourse analysis. The aim of the study was to point out ideological implications, values and attitudes behind the chosen texts. The study revealed that the texts presented marriage as one form of relationship (both love marriage and arranged marriage were mentioned). The most important value, which came up in the study, was the freedom of choice which considered both getting married and getting divorced. Other values were stability, commitment and practicality.

The attitude towards love marriage was mainly negative. Marriage was presented as an old-fashioned and idealistic institution because it is only seldom based on true commitment. In contrast, the attitude towards the arranged marriage was positive. It was presented as a practical and successful form of relationship. The attitude towards domestic partnership was also positive and it was presented as a modern choice. Also divorce was seen as a positive thing because it can be seen as part of the choice of freedom.

In this chapter, some general characteristics of a school textbook and its central role in teaching were discussed. Furthermore, it was considered how textbooks may influence pupils and teachers and some previous research on textbooks was introduced. In the next chapter the focus will be on the learning and teaching of culture.

3 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN EFL LEARNING AND TEACHING

This chapter discusses the teaching of culture as a part of EFL learning and teaching. Firstly, the concept of a culture is defined and the relationship of language and culture will be discussed. Secondly, intercultural teaching and the role of the EFL textbook in culture teaching are introduced and criteria for assessing cultural content in textbooks will be presented. Finally, some previous studies related to culture education will be introduced.

3.1 The definition of culture

Elomaa (2009: 109) points out that there are as many definitions for culture as there are researchers studying culture. According to Nieto (2010: 135), *culture* is a slightly problematic and complex concept since it can mean very different things for different people in different contexts. Kaikkonen (1994: 69, 63) defines culture as “a mutual agreement between the members of certain society about the *values, rules, role expectations* and *meanings*, which direct the behavior of the members”. Nieto (2010: 136) adds that culture also includes “a shared world-view, common history, geographic location, language, social class and religion.” Based on these definitions of culture, it can be concluded that everyone has a culture since everyone has to be a part of it through social and political relationships. Salo-Lee (1995: 5), as well as Borrelli (1991: 284), highlights the fact that culture is always *dynamic* and *continuous* in nature, i.e. culture changes over time. Corbett (2003: 20) continues by stating that the concept of culture involves “the implicit norms and conventions of a society and historically transmitted, but also adaptive ethos”. Society constructs a set of beliefs and presuppositions that will become common sense knowledge for the members of a particular society. The culture of a group can therefore also be defined as the relationship between its beliefs, values, behavior and communication.

Borrelli (1991: 283-284), on the other hand, has defined culture as an *educational concept*. This means the attempt to define culture from a pedagogical point of view. She states that there are three different educational criteria for defining culture. Firstly, culture cannot be defined according to national boundaries because of its universal nature. Secondly, culture

is shaped by the history of society (for example societal changes). Thirdly, Borrelli (1991: 283-284) points out that culture is a thinking experience since *thinking* is a vital part of human beings and culture can only exist in connection with human experience. From a pedagogical point of view, intercultural education can therefore be defined as a synonym for the plurality of thinking experiences that need to be part of educating processes, the complexity of societal experiences that need to be reflected or as the plurality of cultural formations.

Kaikkonen (1994: 64) points out that the concept of culture has been associated with *nation* and *society* already during the 1700-1800th century. The aim to create a unified national culture was bound to the birth of national states. The culture back then was seen as a global and national phenomenon and therefore the national cultures were pitted against each other. It was not possible that only one general cultural theory would have been born. Because of the raise of concepts such as *Nationalism* and *national identity*, it could have even been dangerous at the time. People were afraid that a radical and general new culture theory would change the nature of nations and therefore the nations' own culture was appreciated, protected and valued above all. Nieto (2010: 136) agrees with Kaikkonen and states that cultures do not exist in a vacuum but they are always influenced by historical, political and economic conditions. Therefore the leading groups in society are often in the position to decide what is defined as culture.

According to Kaikkonen (1994: 64), after the Second World War the view of culture changed. The common opinion was that the national features were mainly stereotypical over-generalizations and clichés. Later on, joint markets, tourism, migration and global communication have increased the need to mediate between languages and cultures (Buttjes and Byram 1991: 6). Despite the fact that the idea of Nationalism was put aside, culture had already become one of the basic concepts for determining society. However, both Kaikkonen (1994: 64) and Corbett (2003: 19) state that it is important to remember that society consists of many different cultures, e.g. different age groups may have very different cultures within the same society. Therefore the concept of culture is not necessarily related to nationalities but cultures within the nation. However, as Kaikkonen

(1994: 65) continues, it would be impossible to categorize cultures without making any generalizations and from the perspective of foreign language learning and teaching, it is even useful to look for some generalizations about nations and their cultures. It is important for the teacher to make sure that the pupils get enough chances to observe foreign cultures and are able to carefully consider and evaluate their phenomena. Otherwise, the students will not process the foreign phenomena thoroughly enough in order to be able to understand them, or they may even end up drawing wrong conclusions about the target cultures.

According to Corbett (2003: 5), there are several different research disciplines interested in the concept of culture. *Anthropology* investigates in general how members of a particular social group are related to particular sets of behavior. Furthermore, *ethnography* concentrates on how the speech systems and behavior of groups are related to their social structures and beliefs. Finally, *cultural studies* aim to understand the way that members of a group represent themselves through their cultural products. These products can be almost anything, e.g. songs or sports events. Corbett (2003: 5) points out that each of these disciplines have their own intellectual history and methodology.

Corbett (2003: 30) continues that a modern intercultural approach combines some aspects of the earlier approaches to culture, e.g. cultural topics and acculturation (the ability to function in another culture while maintaining one's own identity). The main difference compared to the previous approaches is that it highlights the role of intercultural knowledge. This means adopting strategies from ethnography and linguistics and defining, teaching and testing intercultural knowledge and skills together with language skills.

In conclusion, culture has a long history and its meaning for people and society has varied throughout the history. It is clear that there are several ways to define and approach the concept of culture. Furthermore, several different research disciplines are interested in studying culture. The present paper approaches the concept of culture from an intercultural point of view.

3.2 Language and culture

According to Karvonen (1995: 40), language shapes the community's view of the world through texts, which in turn shape language systems. Therefore language has a central role as a maintainer and reformer of a culture. According to Kaikkonen (1994: 66-67, 69), the relationship between a language and culture is a diverse and complex one. Some researchers believe that culture is an embodiment of the language and that without languages cultures would not exist. In contrast, the development of languages to their present form has been possible only in close contact with the development of cultures. Kaikkonen (1994: 70) also points out that language and culture can barely be separated from each other since they are in mutual interaction with each other: language affects culture and culture affects language. Also Nieto (2010: 146) states that language is deeply implicated with culture and a very important part of it. According to Kaikkonen (1994: 70), the attitude towards language and culture has, however, slightly changed throughout the history. In the past one of the main tasks of a language was to protect one's own culture from strangers and dangers. Nowadays the role of language and culture is reversed as the aim is to bring cultures together and to try to understand and tolerate each other.

According to Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 5), language is the main medium for expressing other phenomena, including culture. It expresses the values, beliefs and meanings and it also refers to the objects of a given culture. Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 13) continue that language has for example a way of defining certain culture-specific features of a given word or expression. Kaikkonen (1994: 71) points out that the relationship between language and culture is at the same time psychological, sociological and political and language offers people a way to express their cultural backgrounds to other people.

Despite these facts, language and culture are often taught separately even though Kramsch (1993: 1, 8) states that culture should not be considered a separate skill like speaking, listening, writing and reading, since it is always present at the background, in the context. However, culture is often not seen as a feature of language but as information caused by the language. If language would be seen as a social practice, culture would become the center

of language teaching and an essential part of language proficiency. Also Byram (1991: 18) points out that if language and culture are not taught together, pupils may assume that the foreign language is similar to their own language and it can be used the same way in the same situations as their first language, which of course is not always the case. In contrast, Lähdesmäki (2004: 274) claims that language teachers are usually aware of the connection between language and culture but what this actually means for EFL teaching and learning and especially for EFL textbooks is a more complicated question, which will be discussed further in the next section.

3.3 Culture and EFL teaching — Intercultural teaching and textbooks

According to Buttjes (1991: 8), several research disciplines have acknowledged the need to teach culture as a part of language learning and teaching. The psychological concern of language learners' cultural identities is a rather new argument for the teaching of culture. More pragmatic reasons, such as travelling and commerce, are perhaps more traditional and well known reasons for teaching culture since cultural knowledge is obviously needed for international contacts and communication. Buttjes (1991:8) continues that the educational motive for teaching culture was only discovered later. Nowadays, it is thought that the knowledge of one's own and foreign cultures widens one's worldview and in general enriches one's life by providing access to new cultures.

According to Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 5), language teaching always means the teaching of both, language and culture. Elomaa (2009:108) states that intercultural interaction makes language learning meaningful and vital. However, because other goals of EFL –teaching (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) demand so much time, it is possible that there is not enough time for intercultural teaching. Byram et al. (1994: 3) state that the full potential of language and culture is not usually being fulfilled even though Kaikkonen (1994: 114) indicates that the aim of the teaching of foreign languages seems to be internationality and a better understanding of the target cultures. Kaikkonen (1994: 114) continues that people might be suspicious and afraid of foreign cultures. One aim of intercultural teaching is therefore to practice the understanding of diversity: while learning foreign languages, one

also has to change one's views of the world and develop new levels of consciousness. This new way of thinking enables pupils to understand other cultures better and develop their sense of justice further (Elomaa 2009: 109). According to Kramsch (1993: 24), the problem in the previous approaches on culture has been the promotion of facts over meanings instead of enabling the learners to understand foreign attitudes and values.

According to Corbett (2003: 3), the aim of the intercultural approach is to gain an *intercultural communicative competence*. Intercultural communicative competence means the ability to understand the language and behavior of the target culture and the ability to act like a diplomat between one's own culture and the target culture. In an intercultural approach, achieving the intercultural communicative competence is considered to be a more important aim than achieving native-like speaker proficiency. Corbett (2003: 3) continues that the purpose is not in any way to overestimate the importance of the language development and linguistic studies, but to point out that intercultural understanding should be considered an equally important aspect of language learning. Furthermore, Meyer (1991: 137) defines intercultural competence as a "part of broader foreign speaker competence". She highlights the learners' ability to behave appropriately when they meet foreign actions, attitudes and expectations. Pupils should also be able to behave in a flexible manner when they encounter foreign cultures.

According to Byram (2001: 5-6), the three components of intercultural competence are *knowledge, skills and attitudes*. Having an *intercultural attitude* means being curious and open towards foreign cultures and being able to understand that one's own attitudes are not the only possible way to perceive the world. Secondly, having *intercultural knowledge* includes knowing about how social groups and identities of the foreign culture (and one's own culture) function. Thirdly, there are *intercultural skills* that should be taught to learners. These skills are e.g. comparing, interpreting and relating one's own culture as well as the foreign cultures. It is also highly important to teach pupils to search for information on their own since teachers cannot anticipate all the knowledge that the pupils might need in the future and therefore pupils must be able to find the information by themselves. Finally, Byram (2001: 7) also mentions the concept of *critical cultural awareness*, which

the pupils should acquire. Critical cultural awareness means, according to Byram (2001:7), “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries.”

As Bredella (2003:226) points out, being intercultural means basically in its simplest form the learners’ ability to encounter something new and exciting. People grow up in one culture, often in a belief that our own cultural system is natural and normal and perhaps even superior to others. An intercultural approach makes us realize that aspects that seem irrational for us are actually rational from other people’s perspective and vice versa. Furthermore, being intercultural also includes acknowledging that we belong to a certain culture and that we should learn to explore how we are shaped by our culture, just as other people are shaped by their culture. This notion is essential to adapt in order to be able to increase the tolerance between different cultures.

As Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 10, 11) say, in the intercultural perspective it is important to encourage pupils to think of themselves as *ethnographers*, i.e. someone who learns language and culture as a whole and is interested in how a community behaves. According to Corbett (2003: 9, 34-35), ethnography refers to an anthropologist’s description of a community. Pupils are encouraged to learn a language for cultural understanding and the aim is to be able to cognitively analyze foreign cultures, people and the cultural artefacts. Also teachers and textbook authors should develop ethnographic skills in order to promote the intercultural approach to language learning. Integrating linguistic and cultural learning enables the critical assessment of the mainstream culture into which the pupils are socialized.

According to Elomaa (2009: 109-110), textbooks have a critical role in promoting the principles of intercultural learning and teaching because they have the power to affect pupils’ attitudes towards foreign cultures. The ideal aim would be that the textbook would get pupils interested in the target culture by presenting the culture, language and mentality of the target countries in an interesting and motivating way. However, as Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 180) point out, a textbook should also do more than encourage

positive attitudes and images. It is highly important that the textbooks are realistic and that they depict a culture which is lived and talked about by real people.

Elomaa (2009: 113, 122) states that if the textbook texts combined both formal language teaching and the teaching of culture, it would be possible to create a connection between language learning and intercultural learning. The textbook's contents should also be meaningful in order to support the intercultural approach, i.e. pupils should be able to use the learned information in real life. Both Kaikkonen (1994: 115) and Byram et al. (1994: 44) point out that a strong sense of one's own culture makes the understanding of a foreign culture easier. The aim of this approach is that pupils would realize that there are no better or worse cultures but just culture-specific features, which direct the use of language and behavior. Therefore, the teaching of one's own culture and comparing it with the foreign cultures is also a very important aspect in intercultural learning.

However, Elomaa (2009:122) criticizes that the cultural information in language textbooks is often scattered and over-generalized and it concentrates only on the surface since the values and personal feelings are often left out. Risager 's (1991: 191, 213) view is similar to Elomaa's, as he states that textbooks are indeed often very superficial and values, personal feelings and historical perspectives are given only little attention. For example many textbooks present mainly imaginary and stereotypical middle-class families, who have no major problems in their life. Elomaa (2009: 122) also suggests that textbooks should have a systematic way to approach a foreign culture and society. One suggestion would be to let professional writers to produce fictitious and interesting texts that would at the same time reflect realistic everyday life.

Furthermore, in some textbooks the cultural information is separated from the actual text into its own section. This is seen as a negative feature since teachers may end up ignoring these sections or giving them only little attention. Furthermore, as Lähdesmäki (2004: 274, 275) points out, the target culture in EFL textbooks is mostly only British or American culture and other English speaking areas such as Australia and New Zealand are ignored or discussed only shortly. In addition, Lähdesmäki (2004: 274, 275) and Kaikkonen (1994:

119) both point out that the target culture is often presented very stereotypically. Stereotypes do not present the culture's real diversity and they support stereotypical and unequal ways of thinking instead of mutual tolerance.

Elomaa (2009: 122-123) concludes that textbooks should equally include linguistic and cultural contents. Some pupils may never get real life contacts to target cultures and therefore it is the teacher's and the textbook's task to replace the real life contacts as well as possible. However, the problem is that there is not much theoretical information about what a good textbook should be like and therefore the material is not renewed. Publishers are also careful with innovative textbooks because it is possible that teachers may avoid choosing new types of textbooks. In the next section, two possible sets of criteria for evaluating the cultural content in textbooks will be presented.

3.4 Criteria for evaluating cultural content in EFL textbooks

According to Corbett (2003: 19), EFL -textbooks have often given an uncritical image of the target cultures but the current intercultural approach suggests a more cautious description and critical evaluation. According to Byram et al (1994: 50), people who have grown up in a particular culture have a great amount of information about their culture. They are socialized into certain values and meanings and they know naturally how to interact in certain situations, e.g. while using public services. Furthermore, they also know e.g. how to interpret literature. Such knowledge has historical, geographical and sociological dimensions: it is called *the shared understanding*. People who have grown up in a certain culture get this information not only through formal education but through media and social interaction within their society. The question is what aspects of this cultural knowledge should then be taught to foreign learners?

Byram et al. (1994:50) state that learners should be taught both taken-for-granted routine knowledge and conscious knowledge of the target culture. The aim of intercultural learning is that pupils would get alternative interpretations of the world and that they could compare their own culture with the foreign cultures. Also Kaikkonen (1994: 115) agrees with this.

Pupils should get enough opportunities to analyze the complex values and meanings of the different cultures and be able to get to know e.g. literature, film, history and political parties of the target cultures (Byram et al. 1994: 50). According to Corbett (2003: 19, 20) learners may not want to adopt the practices or beliefs of the target culture, but they should be able to understand them if they want to achieve a high proficiency in the target language. In order to understand how a community uses language it is necessary to also understand the community.

Byram et al. (1994:51-52) suggest the following nine criteria for analyzing and evaluating the content of cultural learning. These criteria are thought to be a minimum content of cultural knowledge, which textbooks should also include.

1. *Social identity and social groups*: groups within the nation-state, including social class, regional identity, ethnic minority and professional identity. These criteria are the basis for other than national identity and they illustrate the complexity of individual's social identities.
2. *Social interaction*: conventions of verbal and non-verbal behavior in social interaction.
3. *Belief and behavior*: routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group (either national or sub-national). The moral and religious beliefs as well as the routines from daily life belong to this section.
4. *Socio-political institutions*: institutions of the state (e.g. health-care) and their meanings and values. How do they characterize the state and its citizens?
5. *Socialization and the life-cycle*: Institutions of socialization, e.g. families, schools, employment offices, religion and military service. What are the expectations and shared interpretations in these cases?

6. *National history*: periods and events, both historical and contemporary. What is their significance in the material and for the learning process?
7. *National geography*: geographic factors. Which of them are significant for the members of the culture and which are important for outsiders in intercultural communication?
8. *National cultural heritage*: the cultural artefacts, which are known to the members of the nation, such as Shakespeare in Britain.
9. *Stereotypes and national identity*: what is typical for the target culture (both historical and contemporary)? Symbols of national identities, e.g. famous monuments and people.

Byram et al. (1994: 52-53) do not, however, suggest that culture courses should be history, sociology or geography courses. What they want to achieve with their proposal is to increase understanding of the importance of these factors when learning about a new culture. According to Byram et al. (1994: 55), the image of a particular culture has to be founded in the reality of contemporary life. These issues, however, can be presented in many different ways. The stories and images may be either fantastic or realistic when they just refer to reality. It is important that enough representations of a certain topic are given. Furthermore, Byram et al. are interested in whether the content provides the opportunity to promote intercultural learning.

Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) has also created criteria, or categories, for evaluating cultural content in textbooks. Her four criteria are as follows:

1. *The micro level – phenomena of social and cultural anthropology*: the social and geographical characters, situations of interaction, interaction and the subjectivity of characters: feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems.

2. *The macro level – social, political and historical matters*: broad social facts about contemporary society, sociopolitical problems, e.g. unemployment and pollution.
3. *International and intercultural issues*: comparisons between the target culture and the pupil's own country, mutual representations, images, stereotypes, relations, cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict.
4. *Point of view and style of the textbook author(s)*: expressions of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) towards the country and the people.

Risager (1991: 183) bases her categories on her previous experience with textbooks used mainly in Scandinavia. Her criteria are rather similar to the criteria by Byram et al. but the category *point of view and style of the textbook author(s)* is an interesting addition, which Byram et al. do not mention at all in their proposal. She also divides the categories into micro and macro levels, which Byram et al. do not do. As Risager (1991: 218) states, appropriate material would be an essential key for successful language learning and it would also increase the motivation of the learners.

3.5 Previous studies

Pohjanen studied in her Master's Thesis (2007) the presentation of the target cultures (for example America, Australia and Great Britain) in Finnish EFL –textbooks. Her study concentrated on analyzing two EFL –textbook series that are used in secondary education. She studied the presentation of the culture of all the English-speaking countries mentioned in the textbooks, including America. The methods used were both data- and theory-based content analysis. The theory-based analysis was based on the nine criteria by Byram et al. for analyzing and evaluating the content of cultural learning (see chapter 3.4).

Her study revealed that the aim of the Finnish EFL –textbooks was to teach language mainly for travelling and tourism and the cultural content in the textbooks resembled travel brochures. The theory-based content analysis showed that the presentation of the target

cultures was insufficient according to the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and the British and American cultures got the most attention. The cultural content in the textbooks consisted mainly of certain facts and it did not discuss the everyday life, beliefs and values of the people and therefore it did not increase or support intercultural learning, which, however, should be one of the main aims of the language education.

As already mentioned above, Pohjanen (2007) concentrated in her study in all the English-speaking cultures presented in the target textbooks. Because of this rather wide scale of her study, I felt that the presentation of the American culture did not get enough attention. Furthermore, Pohjanen did not analyze any textbooks for upper secondary education, even though culture has a significant part in the Finnish national curriculum for upper secondary education. Therefore it is interesting to include textbooks for upper secondary education into the analysis. The results that Pohjanen got clearly pointed out that the presentation of the target cultures in textbooks does not fulfill the expectations of intercultural education. It is interesting to see whether any development has happened in the newer textbooks.

Yim studied in her dissertation (2003) globalization and national identity in the English language textbooks of Korea. Her aim was to discover in what ways the government-approved English language textbooks adopted after the educational reforms made in Korea in 1995. These reforms highlighted mainly the Korean's global participation and the improvement of Korean national identity. The second aim of Yim was to discover the pattern of the cultural elements in the textbooks.

Similarly to Pohjanen, Yim also used the nine criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) for analyzing and evaluating the content of cultural learning but she also used the rather similar criteria by Risager (1991, see chapter 3.4). She combined these two criteria in order to get a purposeful and as comprehensive framework as possible for the analysis of the Korean English textbooks. The method used in the study was content analysis at both micro and macro levels. The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. In this way, it was possible to find out what the typical images of foreign countries were in the textbooks and how they conflicted with the Korean national cultures presented in the texts.

The findings showed that English textbooks of Korea clearly support the government's globalization reforms. The texts e.g. promote Americanization, homogenization and nationalism. However, globalization presented in this way may mislead the pupils to understand that isolated and single aspects of a culture represent the entire culture. According to Yim (2003: 185, 190), the textbooks that she analyzed have completely failed to promote the sense of multicultural education and the celebration of diversity. The cultural content of the target cultures was rather superficial and it was presented in isolated pieces of information. Furthermore, of all the English-speaking cultures mainly America was presented and occasionally also Britain.

Both Pohjanen (2007) and Yim (2003) got thorough results with the help of the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52). Yim had also included the criteria by Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) into her analysis. In order to get as comprehensive a picture of the American culture in the Finnish textbooks as possible, the present study also uses both criteria for the analysis and evaluation of the cultural content in textbooks. Furthermore, content analysis seemed to be an appropriate and well-working method for both Pohjanen and Yim and therefore content analysis will be the method used in the present study as well.

Storhammer and Ailiniemi (1995:31-32) investigated as a part of their English speaking cultures and images related study the features that Finnish pupils usually combine with American people. Altogether 147 pupils from different areas of Finland took part in the study. The pupils responding to the questionnaire were currently at the second grade in the upper secondary school.

The results pointed out that the most common feature combined with the Americans was *superficial*. 56 % of the pupils who had not visited any English-speaking country found Americans superficial. They have likely gotten this impression through entertainment media such as films and TV shows. However, also 43% of the pupils who had been in the USA thought that American people are superficial. According to Storhammer and Ailiniemi (1995: 31), this might be due to the fact that the communication culture of the Americans is somewhat different from the Finnish communication culture. Of the pupils, who have been

in some other English-speaking country than America, 67 % described Americans as superficial.

Other features that were commonly related to the American people were *self-confident* (34 %), *extrovert* (29 %) and *talkative* (24 %). The pupils, who had visited the USA, described Americans more often as *friendly*, *open* and *insecure* than the pupils who had never visited the USA. As already mentioned above, the students who had been in the USA also did not find the Americans as superficial and open-minded as the pupils who had not visited the States. In conclusion, the image that the Finnish students had about American people was slightly negative.

It is rather interesting that Finnish learners, especially those who have never been to America, have such a negative attitudes towards American people. It is possible that these attitudes partially rise from the textbooks which, according to the studies by Pohjanen (2007) and Yim (2003), give a stereotypical and superficial presentation of the target cultures. The real values, beliefs and values of the target cultures are not given enough attention. In order to be able to improve the presentation of the target cultures in textbooks and to increase the tolerance between cultures, it is important to keep studying textbooks further.

In this chapter the learning and teaching of culture was discussed. The concept of a culture was discussed, as well as the relationship between language and culture. Furthermore, intercultural teaching and the role of EFL textbooks in culture teaching were introduced. Also criteria for evaluating cultural content in textbooks were presented. Finally, some previous studies related to culture education were discussed. Next the focus will be on the role of culture in CEFR and in the Finnish National Curriculum.

4 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN CEFR AND IN THE FINNISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM

This chapter introduces what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Finnish National Curriculum for secondary school and upper secondary school state about the teaching of culture of as part of language learning and teaching. Both of these documents direct and regulate the foreign language learning and teaching in Finland since teachers have to follow the Finnish national curriculum in their teaching.

4.1 CEFR

According to CEFR (2003: 29), CEFR provides a framework for language learning and teaching for European countries. It is used as a basis e.g. for study programs, national curricula, degrees and textbooks. Therefore, also the guidelines of language learning and teaching in the Finnish National Curriculum are based on CEFR. CEFR basically describes what students should learn about languages in order to be able to communicate effectively. Furthermore, it also acknowledges the cultural context of language learning. The aim of CEFR is to overcome the problems in communication caused by the different educational settings in the different European countries and to reinforce the international cooperation in the field of language education.

It is stated in CEFR (2003: 147) that the knowledge of the social structure and culture of the target countries is an essential part of foreign language competence. It is important to remember that learners are not likely to have previous experiences of the target cultures and also the common stereotypes may distort their thinking. According to CEFR (2003: 147-149), the features that learners should learn about the target cultures are e.g. the situations and conventions of everyday life, living conditions, social interaction, the relationships between people, values, beliefs and attitudes, social and ritual behavior and body language. These features include also the regional differences, professional identities and institutions as well as the life-cycle.

According to CEFR (2003: 150), the intercultural knowledge helps learners to communicate and behave in the foreign countries. The features that learners should learn about the target cultures will help them to develop social skills required in the target culture. The cultural knowledge will also help learners to survive in the everyday life in the target culture: at work, at home and during past time. As it is stated in CEFR (2003: 149), *the intercultural awareness* develops when the language learner is aware of the relationship between one's own culture and the target culture, i.e. when the learner is aware of the similarities and differences between the cultures. It is important for learners to acknowledge and understand these differences. This type of wider knowledge of cultures helps learners to set the both cultures in their right context. In addition to the objective knowledge, the intercultural awareness also includes the understanding of how the target culture looks like from another culture's point of view (national stereotypes).

4.2 The Finnish National Curriculum

In the Finnish National Curriculum for secondary education (POPS 2004: 12), there is a section about general values that should be followed in teaching, and *accepting multiculturalism* is one of these values. Teaching should support and develop pupils' personal cultural identity as well as to increase the tolerance and understanding between different cultures. Furthermore, according to POPS (2004: 32-33, 135-136), *cultural identity* and *internationality* are also one the seven main themes in the Finnish secondary education. The aim of teaching is to help the pupils to understand the Finnish and European cultural identity, to find their own cultural identity and to develop their knowledge of intercultural communication. Pupils should also learn how to interact in a multicultural and international environment in an acceptable way.

In addition, pupils should be made aware of the great meaning of the cultural identity for an individual and for society. They should also learn about the human rights and about the trust and respect between different ethnic groups. Being aware of the routine behavior in the target culture is seen as an important skill. Pupils should be taught that values are culture-bound and they should get familiar with the history and the way of living of the

target culture.

In the Finnish National Curriculum for upper secondary education (LOPS 2003: 20-21) it is stated that the upper secondary education should provide the students with the possibility to develop their cultural identity. Students should understand the meaning of cultural identity and be aware of the *national cultural heritage* of Finland and realize what their role in it is. The students should be taught the common values of the Nordic and European countries as well as the *general humanitarian values*. It is also important that they realize how these values can be seen in their everyday life, in Finnish society and in the world in general. Upper secondary education should strengthen the students' positive cultural identity and the knowledge of foreign cultures. This enables the students to interact with different cultures and succeed in the international cooperation.

The main aims of the teaching are as follows (LOPS 2003: 20-21):

- Students know different definitions for the concept of culture and they can depict the special features of the target cultures.
- Students know which culture group they want to belong to.
- Students learn to value the diversity of cultures.
- Students learn to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds
- Students learn how they can actively be part in building a multicultural society.

According to LOPS (2003: 91), the teaching of a foreign language should develop the students' skills in intercultural communication and their knowledge and understanding of target cultures. Students should also learn to appreciate the target culture and be able to compare their own culture with the target cultures.

According to CEFR (2003) and both POPS (2004) and LOPS (2003), intercultural teaching is considered a very important theme at the European level and also in the Finnish education system. Especially the intercultural understanding and cooperation are highlighted in both documents. In CEFR, the broad guidelines for the teaching of culture are given, and these guidelines are specified further in the Finnish National Curriculum.

According to POPS (2004) and LOPS (2003), in secondary education, pupils are supposed to learn some basic skills and get some basic knowledge of culture and internationality and in the upper secondary education these skills and knowledge are developed even further. The Finnish National Curriculum and CEFR support the principles of intercultural learning and teaching and they also have a clear connection with the criteria by Byram et al. (1994) and Risager (1991) for analyzing and evaluating the content of cultural learning. For example internationality and the comparison between cultures, social interaction, ethnic groups, routine behavior and history were mentioned as important knowledge to be learned about the target cultures. Furthermore, since textbooks are supposed to follow CEFR and the Finnish National Curriculum, it could be expected that intercultural themes would be presented in the textbooks as well.

This chapter introduced what CEFR and the Finnish National Curriculum for secondary school and upper secondary school state about the teaching of culture of as part language learning and teaching. Next the research design of the present study will presented.

5 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, the research design of the present study will be introduced. Firstly, the research questions will be stated and secondly the method will be discussed. The present study is qualitative in nature and the method used is theory-based content analysis. As Johnsen (1993: 131) states, there is no single method for analyzing textbooks. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are commonly used and especially content analysis is a method that is used often. Thirdly, the data will be introduced and finally, the path of the analysis will be described.

5.1 Research questions

The present study aims at finding out how the cultural content related to America is presented in the contemporary and slightly older Finnish EFL –textbooks. The aim is to approach the material through the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) in order to find out whether the cultural content in textbooks also follow the principles of intercultural learning and teaching.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How do the aspects of American culture found in the data support the principles of intercultural learning and teaching as they are formed by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188)?
2. Are there any major differences between older and newer textbooks?
3. Are there any major differences between the secondary education and upper secondary education textbooks?

In the first part of the analysis, a theory-based content analysis will be done on the material and the material will also be evaluated based on the principles of intercultural learning and teaching as they are formed by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183,

188). Secondly, a comparison of the cultural content of the textbooks will be made in order to discover, whether there are any differences between older and newer textbooks. Finally, the possible differences in the cultural content between the secondary and upper secondary education textbooks will be discussed. There are some differences in the Finnish national curriculum for secondary and upper secondary education. The question is whether these differences can also be perceived in the textbooks?

The criteria, which were created based on the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188), are as follows:

1. *Social identity and social groups*: groups within the nation-state, including social class, regional identity, ethnic minority and professional identity.
2. *Social interaction*: conventions of verbal and non-verbal behavior in social interaction: situations of interaction, interaction and the subjectivity of characters: feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems.
3. *Belief and behavior*: routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group (either national or sub-national). The moral and religious beliefs as well as the routines from daily life belong to this section.
4. *Socio-political institutions*: institutions of the state (e.g. health-care) and their meanings and values. How do they characterize the state and its citizens?
5. *Socialization and the life-cycle*: Institutions of socialization, e.g. families, schools, employment offices and military service. What are the expectations and shared interpretations in these cases?
6. *National history*: periods and events, both historical and contemporary. What is their significance in the material and for the learning process?

7. *National geography*: geographic factors and characters. Which of them are significant for the members of the culture and which are important for outsiders in intercultural communication?
8. *National cultural heritage*: the cultural artefacts, which are known to the members of the nation, such as Shakespeare in Britain.
9. *Stereotypes and national identity*: what is typical for the target culture (both historical and contemporary)? Symbols of national identities, e.g. famous monuments and people.
10. *International and intercultural issues*: comparisons between the target culture and the pupil's own country, mutual representations, images, relations, cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict.
11. *Point of view and style of the textbook author(s)*: expressions of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) towards the country and the people.

These eleven criteria are used as a basis for the analysis of the textbooks.

5.2 Methods of analysis

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use (Krippendorff 2004: 18).

The method used in the present paper is called *content analysis*. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 91, 103), content analysis is one of the basic methods for qualitative research and with the help of it, it is possible to execute different kinds of studies. Content analysis enables the systematic and objective analysis of a textual data and it can also be used in quantitative studies. According to Krippendorff (2004: 18), content analysis provides new insights and increases the understanding of the studied phenomena. The difference between content analysis and *discourse analysis* is that content analysis searches

for meanings when discourse analysis aims to find out how these meanings are created (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 104). Also according to Krippendorff (2004: 21), the desire to discover meanings is the main reason for choosing content analysis instead of some other method.

As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 95-96) state, there are three different approaches to content analysis: *data-based*, *theory-guided* and *theory-based* approaches. In the data-based approach, the aim is to form a theoretical schema based on the data. Furthermore, the theory-guided approach has connections to some theory, but it is not directly based on the theory and theoretical framework is mostly used as a help tool in the analysis. Finally, theory-based content analysis is a traditional approach, which is directly based on some theory. The approach used in the present paper is theory-based since the aim is to find out whether the cultural content in textbooks follows the theory of intercultural learning and teaching, i.e. the theory in this case is the starting point for the analysis. Furthermore, Pohjanen (2007) used in her analysis both data-based and theory-based approaches. However, the data-based analysis did not give much new information since the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) that she used covered the material extensively. Therefore, I trust that the theory-based approach will be suitable for the present analysis.

According to Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009: 113, 114), theory-based content analysis is deductive in nature and the analysis of the data is based on a theoretical framework. Firstly, the relevant texts are collected and categorized after the chosen theoretical framework. Secondly, the data is reduced only to issues relevant according the theory since in structured theory-based content analysis only contents that belong under the chosen criteria are included in the analysis. The remaining data is categorized into subgroups. According to Weber (1990: 21), it is important to decide one's recording units, i.e. the level and accuracy of the analysis. Recording units can be words, paragraphs or even whole texts, depending on the nature of the study.

As Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009: 103, 108) state, the result of the analysis is a general and summarized presentation of the data, which will increase the information value of the data since scattered and irrelevant data is removed. Also Weber (1990: 5) adds that after the analysis the data will be more relevant and manageable. This approach is suitable for the present paper because of the rather wide data.

5.3 Data

For the present study, four EFL textbook series were studied: altogether 22 books. These series were chosen because they were all quite new and they were complete, i.e. all the books in the series had been published. There were some newer series available as well, but they were incomplete and therefore they were not included into the present study. Of the 22 books five were included in further analysis. These five books had content that relate to my research topic but the other 16 books had hardly any references to the American culture and therefore they were considered rather irrelevant for this study and they were left out of the analysis. By *American culture* is meant here all the references to America. Data for the present study consists of the books *Smart Moves 2*, *Key English 8*, *In Touch, course 2*, *Been there done that* and *Culture café, books 3 and 4*. Books for both secondary school and upper secondary school level were chosen in order to discover whether there are any differences in the cultural content between these two levels, just as the Finnish national curriculum suggests. The Finnish secondary school consists of classes 7 to 9 and the pupils are aged between 13 and 15. In Finnish upper secondary school pupils are aged between 16 and 18.

Smart Moves 2. Texts (Folland et al. 2007) is an EFL –textbook, which is currently used in Finnish secondary education with eight graders. This book was chosen because I have myself used this book in teaching and I find its cultural content interesting. The book is also rather new. *Smart Moves 2* concentrates strongly on culture: for example Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the United States of America are presented. Therefore it is very useful for my analysis. *Key English 8* (Westlake et al. 2003) is also an EFL-textbook for eight graders. *Key English 8* is slightly older book than *Smart Moves 2* but it is still used in

schools. Key English 8 concentrates on culture as well: themes are e.g. Europeans, holiday, travelling, Ireland, the USA and Finland. The American culture plays a major part in this textbook, which is quite interesting.

Culture Café (Benmerqui et al. 2003-2004) is a rather new EFL –series for upper secondary school. In *Culture Café* the texts related to the American culture were divided into two books and there were no single book built clearly around the culture. Themes in *Culture Café*, book 3 are school and studying abroad, graduating, summer jobs, au-pair experiences and different professions. In *Culture Café*, book 4 the themes are e.g. Finnish society, tolerance, immigration, globalization, terrorism and safety, religions, relationships and crime. *In Touch, course 2. Been there, done that* (Davies et al. 2001) is used as a course book during the second course in upper secondary school. In *Touch* book series is already a slightly older series but it is still used in some Finnish upper secondary schools. I myself used this series when I was in the upper secondary school and I found the series very unique and inspiring and therefore I included it the analysis. Themes in *In Touch*, course 2 are e.g. London, America, Australia and Finland, so this course is clearly built around cultural themes.

After I had chosen my data, I started reading the texts and titles through. The criterion of the selection of the texts was that they had to in some way deal with the American culture and they also had to fit into the analytical framework, which I had created based on the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188). After I had chosen the texts, I started analyzing them one at the time. My analysis unit was one chapter since it seemed to be a suitable analysis unit for this type of analysis. It did not seem meaningful to analyze only single words or sentences because it is necessary to deal with a larger context in order to get a clear view of the target phenomena. On the other hand, it was not purposeful to have whole texts as analysis units since there were usually several different topics discussed within one text.

6 FINDINGS

In this chapter the results of the empirical part of the study are introduced and discussed. The analysis concentrates on finding out how the aspects of American culture found in the data support the eleven criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) for evaluating cultural content in textbooks. The analysis is divided into eleven subsections, according to the eleven criteria. The following abbreviations are used for the textbooks:

Smart Moves 2= SM2

Key English 8= KE8

Culture Café 3 = CC3

Culture Café 4= CC4

In Touch 2= IT2

6.1 Social identity and social groups

This section discusses how the groups within the United States (social class, regional identity, ethnic minority and professional identity) are presented in the textbooks.

The *social classes* in America are discussed through the juxtaposition of *the rich and poor*. It is told that in America there are, on the one hand, the rich and famous celebrities, but on the other hand, the people suffering from severe poverty. Social classes are mainly discussed in the textbooks by presenting people with different backgrounds. For example in SM2 (117-118) a poor mother and her son are introduced. They are very poor and they have no money for food even though the mother has two jobs. The son knows an easy but illegal way to earn some money but the mother does not want him to break the law.

Furthermore, a rich girl from Beverly Hills is introduced (SM2: 118). She has a lovely family and a Porsche of her own. Her father owns a furniture company but he will have to fire at least a hundred workers in order to make more profit. Through these kinds of examples it is clearly pointed out that there are major differences in the standard of living in

the USA and that there are strong social classes in America. In IT2 (34-36), it is directly pointed out that the huge differences in the standard of living can be seen everywhere in America.

The living in a small town gets a great deal of attention in the textbooks and both the pros and cons of living in a small town are introduced. Perhaps the small towns are highlighted since people usually associate big cities with America. It is told that the life in small towns is pretty safe but not very exciting since everyone knows each other and people like to gossip (SM2: 114). It is also pointed out that the life in a small town is not for everyone. However, it is also mentioned that there is something very special about them. For example in Nome, Alaska, there are icebergs in the Bering Sea, few trees, many churches, ATVs, snowmobiles and lot's of dogs but no traffic lights (SM2: 116). The amazing nature is also one major reason for people to choose living in a small town.

Nevertheless, it is also discussed *what it is like to live in New York*, where everything is available around the clock (CC4: 32-33). New York also has more people from other countries than any other city in the world (KE8: 72). The images of the many big cities of America can also be found all over the textbooks. Furthermore, *the living in Texas*, where everything is bigger and of which the Texans seem to be very proud of, is discussed (SM2: 115). Some other states such as Minnesota, San Francisco, Nevada, Texas and Arizona are mentioned and there are some facts given about them, along with short descriptions from a tourist's point of view, but the actual regional identities of people who live in these areas are not presented in the same way as the identities of the people living in small towns.

Ethnic minorities are discussed from many different angles. It is commonly highlighted that there is a great number of people with different ethnic backgrounds living in the United States. It is said that America can therefore be described as a melting pot, a mosaic or even a great salad bowl. A melting pot is, "a place where people from different cultural backgrounds came and adopted the American culture" (KE8: 95). However, a mosaic might be a more suitable description since "the culture of the USA is made of many different pieces and each group has contributed the American culture with their customs" (KE8: 95)

The history of American immigration is discussed on many occasions and it is pointed out that many Americans have their family roots in Europe. According to the textbooks, Americans are usually well aware of their roots and they are proud of them. It is also described what it is like to be an immigrant in the new country and how difficult it can be to adapt to a new culture (CC3: 22). Some immigrants tell that they are happy in America and that they are proud to be Americans even though they would also like to visit their home country some day (SM: 121).

Many of the immigrants have come to America in a search for better life, or *in a search for the American dream*. The learners get to meet a woman from Mexico, who has come to America six years ago (SM: 122). It is told that she had no future in Mexico since there was no chance to get an education or work. However, moving to the USA does not automatically guarantee a better life. For example this Mexican lady is harvesting grapes and the pay is not good. A boy whose family comes from Mexico says that the so-called American dream only exists for the white middle class (IT2: 34-36). Through these examples it is clearly pointed out that the ethnic minorities are not necessarily treated equally in America.

Native Americans also get some attention. It is told that the Native Americans were the first people to live in North America but from the 16th century onwards the European settlers destroyed the native people and their culture (KE8: 94). The use of such a strong verb as “destroy” implicates that the disappearance of the Native American culture is indirectly criticized here. Furthermore, it is told that nowadays there are only about 1.5 million Native Americans living in the USA and one third of them live on reservations.

Other ethnic groups mentioned in the textbooks are the Inuits, African Americans and Hispanic Americans. It is told that the black people living in the USA nowadays are descendents of West Africans who were brought to America to work as slaves on tobacco and cotton plantation in the Southern states during the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries (KE8: 95). Hispanics, who are the fastest growing group in the USA, are told to be people of Spanish or Spanish-American origin. They come mostly from Mexico, Puerto Rico and

Cuba.

Racism is also shortly discussed. It is for example stated that Hispanic Americans are treated like unwanted guests even though there are many areas in the States where the majority of people actually speak Spanish (IT: 34-36). Furthermore it is told that the black people used to be called Negroes, but are now known as Afro-Americans or African Americans (KE8: 95). However, it is surprising that racism is not discussed more. Since there are so many different groups of people living side by side in America it is rather obvious that they also must face some difficulties.

The professional identity of Americans is mostly described by giving examples of professions but these examples are not elaborated further. Quite many examples consider *leading posts*. The learners meet for example a furniture company leader, a software company leader, a successful realtor and an engineer student who would want to start a business of his own. Some usually *highly appreciated professions*, such as doctor, elementary school teacher, firefighter and police officer, are mentioned as well. Firefighters and police officers were mentioned in texts that discuss the 9/11 attacks.

Other professions mentioned are a Taiwanese restaurant owner, a welder in a shipbuilding yard, factory worker, grape harvester, bakery worker and a park ranger. The work of a park ranger gets quite a lot of attention since one chapter actually concentrates on describing their work (SM2: 124). However, the learners do not get to know e.g. the most common and popular professions in the USA, which might be useful and interesting information for them.

To summarize, the social classes of Americans were mainly discussed through criticizing the differences in the standard of living and by presenting people with different backgrounds. Regional identities of people living in small towns were surprisingly well considered. Furthermore, also the identities of people living in big cities were discussed. Ethnic groups, such as Hispanic Americans and African Americans got very much attention in the textbooks. Also the American immigration and racism in America were discussed in

the textbooks. The professional identities of Americans were introduced mostly by mentioning some professions.

6.2 Social interaction

The examples of conventions of verbal and non-verbal behavior in social interaction, situations of interaction, interaction and the subjectivity of characters (feelings, values, attitudes and perceived problems) found in the textbooks are introduced in this section.

In the textbooks there are some examples of *the conventions of verbal behavior*. The examples are both formal and informal of nature. It is for example told that Americans love to use first names with everyone, even strangers, when they are talking to each other (KE8: 79). Furthermore, the social interaction in a small town is discussed. It is told that people in small towns know everything about each other and like to gossip (SM2: 114). On one occasion it is pointed out that when university students answer a question, they always start by saying “Well, I think” (CC3: 22-23). Moreover, it is told that it is an American feature to keep saying “Hey, what’s happening?” (IT2: 47). However, there is only one example of *non-verbal behavior* in America. It is pointed out that in the university classes the students are scribbling away in their notebooks during the lectures as if every word of the lecturer would be important (CC3: 22-23).

Many different *situations of interaction* are introduced in the textbook, such as giving a talk at a youth club, buying a ticket at a metro station, discussion between a customer and taxi driver, a dialogue between friends and family at home and a formal interview. Especially in the textbooks for secondary education there are several model dialogues given for the learners. The pupils are supposed to practice with their partner common situations of interaction, which they could face while travelling in English-speaking countries.

It is common for all these examples that the interaction between people goes on very smoothly and there *are no misunderstandings, hesitations, conforming questions or pauses*. However, in reality something unexpected may always happen and it is possible that people

may have to repeat their questions or they might mishear something. The only example of imperfect interaction is between an Irish exchange student and Americans. It is told that the American people find the Irish accent hard to follow (KE8: 60).

The nature of the interaction presented in the textbooks is usually more informal and subjective between close friends or relatives. For example when a girl is talking with her Grandmother about their family roots the style of the discussion and the language used is rather informal, which is quite likely due to their close relationship (SM2: 102). However, in some cases the Americans use informal language also with total strangers. For example a discussion between a student and a taxi driver is rather informal and subjective in nature, even though the participants do not know each other (SM2: 120-121).

However, the model dialogues given to the learners are very objective and formal of nature. In an example where learners are supposed to practice telling about their hometown, the given phrases are very conventional (Where do you come from? What's the population of the town?) (SM2: 113). This model will surely be helpful for learners but it would also be important to point out that the discussion does not necessarily follow the given model pattern. Moreover, the example of an interview is also very objective and formal (SM2: 124-126). At the beginning there are rather informal greetings and then the interviewers start asking questions about the job and the park ranger answers them. At the end of the interview there is a clear conclusion. The language used is very polished.

In conclusion, the textbooks included different types of examples of social interaction. Most of the examples considered conventions of verbal behavior and they were both formal and informal of nature. However, non-verbal behavior was mentioned only in one example. Many different situations of interaction were presented in the textbooks. It was typical for these examples that the interaction between people always succeeded and there were e.g. no misunderstandings.

6.3. Belief and behavior

This section presents the examples of routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group, the moral and religious beliefs as well as the routines from daily life of Americans found in the textbooks.

The taken-for-granted actions and the routines from daily life are mainly discussed through *national holidays, sports, eating habits and shopping*. The traditional American festivals, Thanksgiving, Halloween and Independence Day are introduced. Furthermore, an Irish festival, St Patrick's Day, is mentioned. It is celebrated also in the USA since many descendents of Irish immigrants live there. Some conventions of social behavior during all of these festivals are shortly discussed.

It is told about thanksgiving that before the actual Thanksgiving, a huge Thanksgiving meal, including turkey, sweet potatoes etc, is prepared (SM2: 129). At the dinner table everyone gives thanks for all that they have, e.g. family and friends. After the meal, people spend time together and relax. There is also a big football game on TV.

The Independence Day is also discussed. It is told that during the Independence Day, people across the United States are wishing each other a happy Fourth of July (SM2: 130). Family and friends go outside to play sports and eat hot dogs, hamburgers, ribs and apple pie. Practically every family has a barbecue or picnic. When the sun goes down, there is a firework. People have holiday and they decorate their homes with American flags (KE8: 92). Furthermore, the conventions of Halloween are introduced. According to the textbooks, children dress up as ghosts and witches and go trick-or-treating on their neighbor's door. There are also Halloween parties at schools and at homes.

The final national holiday introduced is St Patrick's Day. At St Patrick's Day children do not have to go to school but they can hang around with their friends and watch parades, concerts and fireworks (SM2: 131). It is also told that everyone is wearing green clothes. It is explained that St Patrick's Day comes from the Irish but Americans also like to celebrate the day. In conclusion, Americans have rather many national holidays and they are

presented as an important part of the American culture.

The American sports are also discussed in the textbooks. It is for example mentioned that the most popular sports in the USA are baseball, American football, basketball and motor sports (SM2: 111). It is told that baseball is the national pastime of Americans but bowling is probably the most popular participant sport in the States (KE8: 63). The biggest spectator sport is told to be auto-racing and soccer is also gradually becoming a popular game in schools. (IT2: 34-36).

The American eating habits are criticized in the textbooks. The meals are told to be “informal, enormous and often cooked outdoors at barbecues” (KE8: 79-80). It is even stated that “some people just live to eat in here, instead of eating to live” (IT2: 33-36). One small detail mentioned is that in Texas people cut up all their food first and then eat only with the fork. It is not surprising that the American eating habits are discussed in the textbooks since it is a topic which is discussed commonly in the media as well.

Shopping also seems to be a popular theme in the textbooks. It is told that there are enormous shopping malls everywhere in America and Americans usually do their shopping on Saturday. The malls do not only include shops but for example restaurants and movie theaters and therefore it is possible for the families to spend the whole day there. The malls are “Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 12 months a year” (KE8: 60-61). However, the shopping culture is also indirectly criticized in the textbooks since an exchange student states that visiting a shopping mall once was enough for him (KE8: 60-61).

Other themes mentioned in the textbooks are for example the fact that the favorite leisure activity in America is watching television (KE8: 97). Also the national parks are mentioned. It is told that America’s parks are so popular that there are too many visitors and their cars (KE8: 98). It is also mentioned that it is important to have a car in the USA “if you want to be someone” (IT2: 36). According to the text, having a car is a status symbol in America. An interesting fact mentioned and perhaps also indirectly criticized is that many Americans actually do have guns in their homes (KE8: 90).

The moral beliefs of Americans are mainly discussed by criticizing the differences in the standard of living and the double standards in America. In one example an American with a Hispanic background wonders “how some Americans can call Hispanics names behind their backs but still enjoy their Mexican food” (IT2: 34-36). However, overall the moral beliefs are given relatively little attention in the textbooks.

Religion is presented statistically in one example. It is told that 56 % of Americans are Protestants, 28 % are Roman Catholics, 2 % are Jewish, 4 % are some other and 10 % have no religion (KE8: 94). These facts are not discussed further. However, it is told that America used to be a more religious society and people went to church more often (CC4: 32-33). In one example it is stated that “when you grow up in America you are inculcated from the earliest age with the belief or the understanding that America is the richest and most powerful country on earth because God likes them best” (IT2: 47). This is a rather strong statement and it perhaps also criticizes the stereotypic world-view of Americans in which they believe to be the best and greatest country in the world.

This section introduced how the taken-for-granted actions and daily routines of Americans were presented in the textbooks. According to the results, the daily routines were mainly discussed through national holidays, sports, eating habits and shopping. Eating habits and shopping culture were also criticized. The moral beliefs of Americans were only discussed by criticizing the differences in the standard of living and double standards. Moreover, religion was presented statistically but there were also some comments made about Americans and religion in the textbooks.

6.4 Socio-political institutions

This section introduces the institutions of the state (e.g. health-care) their meanings and values in American culture.

In the textbooks there are only few references to the socio-political institutions and most of them are only mentioned by name and their meaning for the American society is not discussed further. It is for example mentioned that *the United Nations Building* is located in New York (SM2:109). FBI is mentioned twice and it is told that FBI fights against crime (KE8: 58). Other socio-political institutions mentioned are the NASA headquarters, the New York Fire Department (the NYFD), the Pentagon and the White House. The NASA headquarters is described to be “out of this world” (KE8: 90).

6.5 Socialization and the life-cycle

In this subsection the examples of institutions of socialization (families, schools, employment offices and military service) found in the textbooks are presented.

The American families are well presented in the textbooks. However, the traditional nuclear families get the most attention. In one example a family with both parents and a daughter is introduced. The family is very rich and the daughter e.g. has a car of her own (SM2: 118). It is common that the nuclear families presented in the textbooks are doing well financially. *Single-parent families* also get some attention. However, they are presented in a rather negative way. In one example, the single-parent mother and her son are very poor and they are struggling even though the mother has two jobs (SM2: 117-118). In another example a boy tells that he comes from a poor single-parent family but he did not let his background hold him back (IT2: 34). According to these examples, single-parent families are related with problems when the traditional two-parent family is the ideal and more successful form of a family.

Furthermore, there is one example of *a big family*. A woman who has come to America from Mexico tells that there were six children in her family and that there simply was not enough food for everyone and no chance to get a proper education (SM2: 122-123). Having many children is in this example connected with poverty and lack of education.

Schools and *education* are discussed from many different angles and educational institutions from universities to secondary education are mentioned. According to the textbooks, a good education is highly appreciated and young people want to get a proper education. Education is seen as a factor that will improve the quality of one's life since one cannot get a good job without education. For this reason young people take studying seriously (SM2: 120-123). Furthermore, it becomes clear that getting an education is not a self-evident privilege for everyone in the USA because of the major differences in the standard of living. In some families children and youngsters have no time for school since they have to work for their living.

The American school system is also briefly discussed (KE8: 69-70). It is told that children in America have long holidays, during the summer even three months. But since their parents have to work during the summer, the children have to go off to summer camps for four to eight weeks. This fact is criticized in the book. Furthermore, the school proms in the USA are mentioned. It is told that the prom is "the last chance for a year group to be together" (CC3: 31).

Even though *employment offices* are included in the criteria by Byram et al. (1994: 51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188), they were not discussed in the textbooks. However, *military service* is shortly mentioned. There is an image of Uncle Sam poster with the famous text "I want you for U.S. Army" on it (KE8: 92). It is told that Uncle Sam is a nickname for the USA and it comes from the popular image in a World War I poster, which was used to recruit young men to army.

Image 1. The Uncle Sam poster (KE8: 92)



This section presented some examples of American families, education and military service that were found in the textbooks. Families were given quite a lot of attention in the textbooks. According to these examples, it seems that the nuclear family is thought to be the ideal form of a family since other types of families were usually related with problems. Schools and education were also presented well in the textbooks. It was mentioned that a good education is highly respected and it is not a self-evident privilege for everyone in the USA. Military service was only mentioned in one example.

6.6 National history

In this section the periods and events in America, both historical and contemporary, found in the textbooks are introduced.

The presentation of the *national history* of the United States concentrates mainly on describing *the history of American immigration*. It is told that millions and millions of people wanted to find a new start for their lives and they believed that the “new world” would give them a new beginning and opportunities for life (SM2: 102-104). However, it took a lot of hard work to settle in to the New World (KE8: 71). In one example, the life of immigrants in the year 1953 is discussed from a point of view of an Irish immigrant (CC3: 22-23). He tells about his experiences when he tries to get education. According to the text, most immigrants think that they should “stick with their own kind”.

Image 2. American immigration (SM2: 102)



It is told that George Washington was the first president of the USA and the history of the American independence day – July 4, is discussed (KE8: 58, 92). It is told that on July 4 in 1776, the United States declared its independence from Britain. The battle of Alamo (1836) between Texans and Mexicans is also mentioned (KE8: 90). It is pointed out that

Americans like to remember the Alamo as a wonderful victory of freedom and the United States even though they actually lost the battle.

Furthermore, it is mentioned that when Spanish people came to America ca. 500 years ago, they thought they had come to India (KE8: 90). Therefore they called the native people American Indians. In addition, in *Key cards USA* (KE8: 94-15) it is told that Native Americans were the first people to live in North America and that they arrived in America ca. 40.000 years ago. European settlers arrived from the 16th century onwards. Furthermore, it is told that a great number of African Americans were brought to America during the 17th, 18th and early 19th century. Most of them worked as slaves. Interestingly, also the history of McDonald's and Coca-Cola is presented (KE8: 82-83). The story of McDonalds started in 1937 but Coca-Cola was invented already in 1885. Fast food and coca-cola are both important part of American culture and they are also something that everyone connects with America.

A more recent historical event described in the textbooks is the 9/11 terrorist attacks on World Trade Center. The attacks are discussed from different points of views. In one example, a young girl tells about the day (KE8: 118-119). In another example an adult man tells "how his private life and history were thrown together on that day" (CC4: 44-45). These examples demonstrate how terrible the attacks were and how strongly they affected the life of ordinary New Yorkers. Furthermore, a more recent history of American immigration is also mentioned. It is told that in the early 1990s Korean immigrants arrived to New York (CC4: 33).

To summarize, the historical events presented in the textbooks considered mainly the history of American immigration and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Some other topics discussed were e.g. the battle of Alamo, the history of fast-food and the discovering of America.

6.7 National geography

This section discusses the geographic factors and characters of America presented in the textbooks. Which of them are significant for the members of the culture and which are important for outsiders in intercultural communication?

Quite many *statistical* and *general facts* about the USA are given in the textbooks. For example the area of the USA is told to be 9,5 million km², which is 28 times the size of Finland (SM2: 110). It is also mentioned that there are fifty states in the USA (SM: 112, KE8: 56). In one example it is said that “the United States of America is the richest and one of the biggest countries in the world” and each part of the country is different “from Alaska in the north, covered with snow and ice, to tropical Florida in the south” (KE8: 56).

There are also many *maps of the USA* presented all over the textbooks. Interestingly, in some examples Alaska is not marked at all on the map, as if it was not a part of the USA at all. Other facts given about America are e.g. that Texas is the largest state in the USA and Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii (KE8: 58). Washington DC is told to be the capital of the United States (KE8: 94).

Cities also get some attention in the textbooks. New York City is told to be the biggest city in the USA and it is also presented often in the textbooks. Other big cities mentioned are Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, New Orleans, Houston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston and Las Vegas. About Las Vegas it is told that it is the gambling capital of the world (KE8: 89). Moreover, it is told that there are over 80 major cities in the United States.

The nature of the USA is well presented in the textbooks. Alaska’s unique nature gets quite a lot of attention. It is told that Alaska lies very close to Siberia, Russia, and that the nature in Alaska is very different from any other place in America. There is a lot of ice and snow, the sky is amazingly blue and Alaska also has its unique wildlife (SM2: 116). Wildlife in the other parts of the USA is also presented and e.g. alligator, buffalo, armadillo and bald eagle are mentioned in the examples (SM2: 127-128).

Furthermore, *the National Parks of America* are discussed. It is pointed out that there are 388 National Parks Service units in the USA (SM2: 125-126). Also a National Park called Crater Lake is presented. It is told that Crater Lake it is the deepest lake in the USA and one of the clearest freshwater lakes in the world (SM2: 124). *Popular places* mentioned are Death Valley desert in Nevada, the Giant Redwood forest, Yosemite Falls, Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

In conclusion, the national geography was mostly presented by giving some general facts about the USA. Most of these examples are important and interesting for a tourist to know. The presentation of the national geography therefore reminds a travel brochure. However, the nature of the USA was rather well discussed in the textbooks.

6.8 National cultural heritage

The cultural artefacts (known to the most of the Americans, such as Shakespeare in Britain) found in the textbooks are presented in this subchapter.

Most examples of *the cultural artefacts* of the USA present popular culture. For example *musicians, movie stars* and *film-makers* are introduced. One star mentioned on many occasions is Elvis Presley, the famous musician and the King of Rock ‘n’ roll (KE8: 58). Elvis Presley (1935-77) is described as “probably the most important single figure in the history of rock ‘n’ roll and one of the most popular entertainers of the 20th century” (KE8: 96). Other musicians mentioned are Steven Tyler and his band Aerosmith, Madonna and Faith Hill. Faith Hill is told to be a popular country music singer and learners can also listen to her song *Better Days* (KE8: 199). The movie stars presented in the textbooks are Marilyn Monroe, Tom Cruise and Pierce Brosnan as James Bond.

The learners also get to know the film director Steven Spielberg. Also Walt Disney (1901-1966), the film producer, is given quite a lot of attention. It is told that he created Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, and made the first long cartoon films (KE8: 96). Also the lyrics

of the American national anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner, are given to the learners in English and in Finnish (SM2: 112). It is told that the lyrics of the anthem are written by Francis Scott Key (1814).

The learners also meet many *authors* in the textbooks. Firstly, Toni Morrison is an author, who was first African-American to win the Nobel Prize for literature (SM2: 111). Secondly, an author Isaac Asimov (1920-1992) is introduced. He was born in Russia but grew up in Brooklyn. Learners can read his fictive text “The fun they had” (KE8: 65-66). Thirdly, an author Frank McCourt is introduced (CC3: 23). He was born 1931 in Brooklyn but he grew up in Limerick, Ireland. He returned to America in 1949 and taught for thirty years in various high schools and colleges. Learners get to read a chapter of his book *‘Tis*. Finally, an author Bill Bryson is presented (IT2: 47). He is an American writer, who grew up in America, but spent most of his adult life in Britain. He is best-known for his humorous travel books. The learners get to read a chapter of his book *The Lost Continent*. Furthermore, *other artists* mentioned are the famous playwright Arthur Miller and an artist Andy Warhol.

This subsection introduced how the cultural artefacts of the USA were presented in the textbooks. The results pointed out that most of the examples considered popular culture (e.g. singers, actors and films). There were also many examples of American authors given and some of their texts were also presented in the textbooks. However, other artists were given basically no attention.

6.9 Stereotypes and national identity

In this section it will be introduced what is typical for the American culture according to the textbooks. Symbols of national identities, e.g. famous monuments and people belong to this section.

The famous monuments of the USA get quite a lot of attention in the textbooks. The Statue of Liberty is mentioned in every book and in some books even several times. The Statue of Liberty is told to be a gift from the French to the USA's 100th anniversary in 1876 (SM2: 109). Other monuments that are mentioned often are the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, Empire State Building, the Hollywood sign, Niagara Falls, Mount Rushmore and the Grand Canyon. There are also images of all these tourist attractions. Other monuments mentioned occasionally are the Chrysler Building, Times Square and The White House.

The American flag, Stars and Stripes, is given a great deal of attention in the textbooks. For example in Key English 8 the image of the flag is presented 24 times and the colors of the flag are quite often used e.g. in the titles. Also in IT2 the colors of the flag are used in the layout. It is told that one can see the American flag everywhere in the United States and the colors of the flag are supposed to stand for courage (red), justice (blue) and liberty (white) (KE8: 81). Perhaps the authors want to emphasize how important the flag is for Americans by using it so much in the textbooks. Also *the National Anthem* is mentioned several times in the textbooks.

Image 3. The American flag (SM2:112)

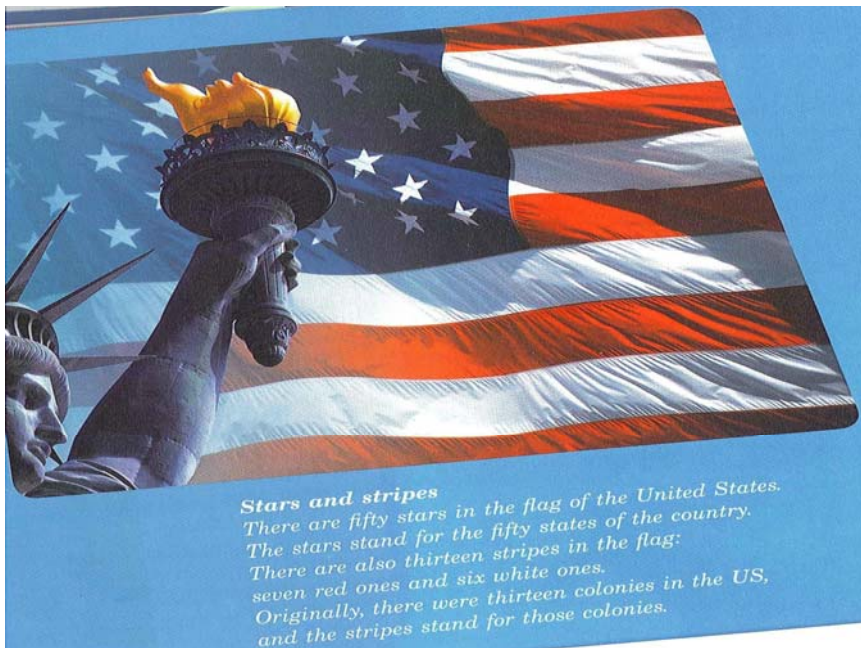
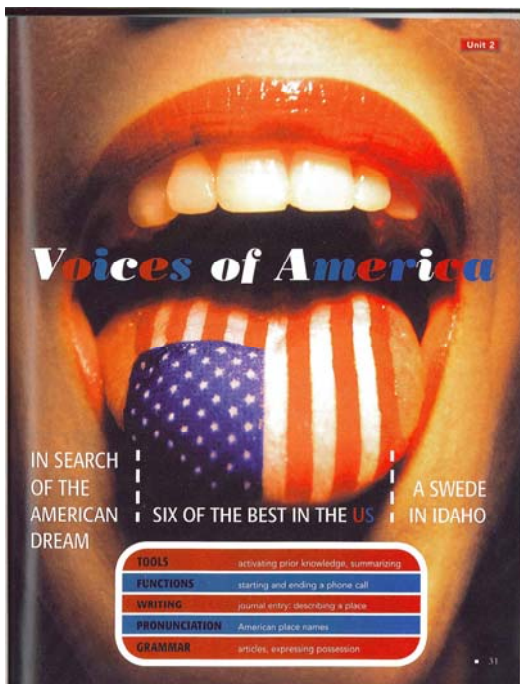


Image 4. The colors of the flag used in the layout (IT2: 31)



Some *famous American people* are mentioned in the textbooks. For example the former presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy are mentioned. Other famous people presented are Martin Luther King, Christopher Columbus, Neil Armstrong and Bill Gates. However, these people are usually only shortly mentioned and not discussed further. Also *common symbols* for America, the bald eagle and dollars, are presented (KE8: 58). It is also told that the bald eagle (or the American eagle) has been the national symbol of the United States since 1782 (KE8: 94, SM2: 127).

Some *stereotypical characters* of Americans are also discussed. It is for example told that everything is big in Texas and people wear cowboy boots (SM2: 115). Americans in general are supposed to wear sneakers and shorts (IT2: 36). Moreover, it is told that the Americans like shopping and sports (KE8: 60, 63-64). It is also stated that “most Americans don’t realize that pizza, tacos and curry are not native American food” (KE8: 79). Finally, it is told that Americans are patriotic and many of them eat too much (IT2: 34-36).

This section presented the stereotypes found in the textbooks. The textbooks included many images of famous monuments and many famous people were also mentioned. Furthermore, the American flag and its colors were used both in images and in the layout of the books. Some stereotypical characters of Americans were often discussed in a rather negative tone.

6.10 International and intercultural issues

In this section, comparisons between the American culture and other cultures found in the textbooks are introduced. The categories are mutual representations, images, relations, cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict.

Rather surprisingly, there were only few examples of intercultural comparisons in the textbooks. In one example it is pointed out that the United States is 28 times the size of Finland, which tells that our country is very small when compared with the USA (SM2: 110). In addition to this, the USA is compared with New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Wales,

England and Scotland. It is told that Irish speak English differently than Americans and that the school system in America is very different from Welsh. (KE8: 50, 69) Moreover, it is told that also the American spelling is different from the English spelling (KE8: 79). In IT2 a Swedish girl says that she likes Sweden more than the USA (IT2: 47).

Moreover, the American 24/7 culture is compared with Switzerland, where many groceries close earlier than in America (CC4: 33). Furthermore, the American prom night is compared with the British prom night (CC3: 30-31). It is pointed out that the British high school graduation ceremony resembles the American one.

6.11 Point of view and style of the textbook author(s)

The expressions of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) of the textbooks authors towards America and its people are discussed in this section.

In many texts *the author is left unknown* and there are no direct expressions of attitudes in the texts. However, there are also some texts, where *the authors are given*, e.g. the texts of Isaac Asimov, Elisabeth Neal Wells and Mark Jonathan Harris can be found from one of the books (KE8: 65-66, 74-76). Some texts are written from a point of view of young Americans who describe what it is like to live in America. However, the reader cannot be sure that these people even exist; the texts may be totally fictional and the attitudes of the young people may well be the attitudes of the textbook authors. It is typical that the real authors of the textbooks hide behind characters and they are only mentioned in the cover of the textbook. Only in one text it is mentioned that “the Smart Moves team” was doing the article (SM2: 125). However, it is clear that the authors choose which texts are included to the textbook and which features of America are highlighted and which not. *Some texts are authentic* since they are taken from newspapers, magazines or novels. For example an extract of the novel by Bill Bryson is given (IT2: 47).

Many texts also include *expressions of attitudes*. It is for example stated 9/11 that “it is not safe anymore anywhere in America” (CC4: 45). Secondly, the 24/7 nature of the American society is discussed (CC4: 33). The text both criticizes and praises the fact that time does not matter anymore in America. Thirdly, the differences in the standard of living are criticized, as well as the double standards (IT2: 35, SM2: 117-118). Racism and the eating habits of Americans are also critically discussed (IT2: 36). Bill Bryson ironically states in his novel (IT2: 47) that “America is the richest and most powerful nation on earth”. Furthermore, the shopping culture in America and the summer camps where many children must go are criticized (KE8: 61, 69).

According to these results, American culture was rather critically discussed at many points. The critic was usually indirect and in many texts the author of the text was left unknown. This means that the pupils using a certain textbooks do not even get to know whose opinions they actually are reading.

7 COMPARISON OF THE TEXTBOOKS

In this chapter the textbooks are compared with each other in order to find out whether there are any differences in the cultural content in newer textbooks and whether there are any major differences between the secondary education and upper secondary education textbooks.

7.1 The content of the textbooks

The following table presents quantitatively the main findings that were discussed in the previous chapter.

Table 1. The cultural content of the textbooks

Category/Book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. social classes	X	X	X	
2. regional identities	X	X		X
3. ethnic minorities	X	X	X	X
4. American immigration	X	X		X
5. racism	X		X	
6. professional identity	X	X	X	X
7. conventions of behavior	X	X		
8. national holidays	X	X		
9. sports	X	X	X	
10. eating habits	X	X	X	
11. shopping culture	X		X	X
12. moral beliefs		X	X	
13. religion	X		X	X
14. socio-political institutions	X	X		X
15. families	X	X	X	X
16. schools and education	X	X	X	X

17. employment offices				
18. military service	X			
19. national history	X	X		X
20. national geography	X	X	X	
21. national cultural heritage	X	X	X	X
22. famous monuments	X	X	X	X
23. famous people	X	X	X	
24. the American flag	X	X	X	
25. other symbols for America	X	X		
26. stereotypical characters	X	X	X	
27. intercultural issues	X	X	X	X
28. unknown author	X	X		
29. the author is given	X	X	X	X
30. authentic texts	X		X	X
31. expressions of attitudes	X	X	X	X
Percentage:	94 %	81 %	68 %	52 %

Table 1 shows that there are indeed some differences in the cultural content between the textbooks. According to the results, the slightly older textbooks, KE8 and IT2, have more America-related cultural content than the newer textbooks. KE8 includes 94 % and SM2 81 % of the topics that Byram et al. (1994: 52-53) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) consider important for culture learning. Furthermore, IT2 includes 68 % of the topics and CC3-4 52 % of the topics. The only topics that KE8 does not include are the moral beliefs of the Americans and employment offices. However, none of the five target textbooks handled employment offices. SM2 does not handle racism, shopping culture, religion and military service. It also does not include any authentic texts.

Moreover, both CC3-4 and IT2 do not introduce conventions of behavior, National holidays, military service and other symbols for America. Other topics that CC3-4 does not include are social classes, racism, sports, eating habits, moral beliefs, National geography, famous people, the American flag and stereotypical characters. IT2 does not handle

regional identities, American immigration, socio-political institutions and National history. Both CC3-4 and IT2 do not include texts that have an unknown author.

The results of the study also point out that there are some differences between the textbooks for secondary education and for upper secondary education. The textbooks for secondary education (KE8 94 % and SM2 81 %) and have significantly more cultural content than the textbooks for upper secondary education (IT2 68 % and CC3-4 52 %) even though the Finnish National Curriculum suggests that the role of the culture and intercultural learning should be highlighted in upper secondary education more than in secondary education.

To summarize, the slightly older textbooks include more culture-related content than the newer textbooks. Furthermore, the textbooks for secondary education have more cultural content than the textbooks for upper secondary education. In the next section the more specific differences between the textbooks will be discussed in order to find out where these differences arise.

7.2 The specific topics

The following tables show the specific America-related topics found in the target textbooks. The results are presented in five separate tables for better readability.

Firstly, Table 2 includes topics that belong under the criteria social identity, social groups and social interaction.

Table 2. Social identity, social groups and social interaction

Category/book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. social classes	rich and poor	rich and poor	rich and poor	
2. regional identities	facts about different states	small towns		cities
3. ethnic	racism,	Europeans,	racism,	Europeans,

minorities	Europeans, African- Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, American immigration	African- Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asians, Native Americans, Inuits, American immigration	African- Americans, Hispanic Americans	American immigration
4. professional identities	firefighter, police officer	leading professions, doctor, welder, elementary school teacher, restaurant owner, park ranger	leading profession	firefighter, police officer
5. conventions of behavior	verbal behavior, dialogue	verbal behavior, dialogues, an interview		verbal behavior, non- verbal behavior

According to Table 2, KE8 and SM2 have a similar approach to social classes and conventions of behavior. Furthermore, both of the books present many different ethnic minorities. However, KE8 only introduces some general facts about different states when SM2 concentrates on discussing small towns and the actual regional identities of American people. SM2 also presents many different professions whereas KE8 only concentrates on firefighters and policemen. Therefore it can be concluded that at least in this respect SM2 is more versatile than KE8.

Moreover, the textbooks for upper secondary education also have some differences. IT2 discusses the differences in the standard of living but CC3-4 does not mention them at all. IT2 also presents more ethnic minorities than CC3-4. However, CC3-4 introduces more professions than IT2 even though both of the books do not concentrate too much on the actual professional identities. IT2 does not mention regional identities of Americans but CC3-4 discusses the living in a city. Furthermore, CC3-4 presents some conventions of behavior when IT2 fully ignores them. It can be concluded that IT2 focuses on social classes and ethnic minorities whereas CC3-4 highlights the regional identities and conventions of behavior.

The next table presents the topics found in the textbooks that belong under the criterion belief and behavior.

Table 3. Belief and behavior

Category/Book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. national holidays	Halloween, Independence Day	Thanksgiving, Halloween, Independence Day, St Patrick's Day		
2. sports	baseball, basketball, bowling, auto-racing, soccer, football	basketball	basketball, baseball, football	
3. eating habits	general information, critic, fast-food	general information	critic, fast-food	
4. shopping culture	shopping malls, shop around the clock		shopping malls, shop around the	shop around the clock

			clock	
5. the moral beliefs		differences in the standard of living, double-standards	differences in the standard of living, double-standards	
6. religion	the most common religions in America		“God likes America the most”	America used to be a more religious society

Table 3 shows that both KE8 and SM2 discuss National holidays but SM2 concentrates more on them than KE8. Furthermore, KE8 does not include any moral beliefs of Americans but SM2 discusses the differences in the standard of living and double-standards. However, KE8 concentrates more on American sports and eating habits than SM2. Both of the books give some general information about the American eating habits but KE8 also criticizes them and discusses fast-food and its history. Unlike SM2, KE8 also presents shopping malls and the shop around the clock culture. SM2 does not handle religion at all. KE8 lists the most common religions in America but they are not discussed further. Therefore, religion is given very little attention in both textbooks.

Similarly to KE8, IT2 discusses American sports and eating habits but CC3-4 does not mention them at all. Both of the books discuss the shop around the clock culture of the USA but IT2 also considers shopping malls. Moreover, IT2 criticizes differences in the standard of living and double-standards. Both of the books also shortly discuss the role of the religion in American society. In conclusion, it can be stated that IT2 discusses belief and behavior more thoroughly than CC3-4.

Next, Table 4 introduces the specific topics that consider socio-political institutions, socialization, the life-cycle and national history.

Table 4. Socio-political institutions, socialization, the life-cycle and national history

Category/Book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. socio-political institutions	FBI, NASA headquarters, the NYFD	The United Nations Building, FBI	the Pentagon, White House	
2. families	nuclear families	nuclear families, single-parent families, big families	single-parent families	nuclear families
3. schools and education	the American school system, long holidays	higher education, the importance of education, high schools	the importance of education	higher education, high school proms
4. military service	the Uncle Sam poster, recruiting young men to army			
5. national history	the history of American immigration, the 9/11 attacks, the history of McDonald's and Coca-Cola,	the history of American immigration		the history of American immigration, Korean immigration of 1990s. the 9/11 attacks

	the battle of Alamo, the discovering of America and the first settlers, the history of American slavery			
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According to table 4, KE8 and SM2 both mention some socio-political institutions. Furthermore, KE8 only introduces nuclear families but SM2 also considers single-parent families and big families which is a clear improvement. Both of the books handle schools and education but SM2 presents the topic more thoroughly. However, SM2 does not introduce the National history too much since it only mentions the history of American immigration. KE8 is more versatile in this respect since it introduces many different historical events. KE8 is also the only book which mentions military service.

Moreover, IT2 mentions some socio-political institutions but CC3-4 ignores them. Interestingly CC3-4 presents only nuclear families and IT2 only single-parent families. In CC3-4 schools and education are discussed through higher education and high school proms whereas in IT2 the importance of good education is highlighted. Unlike other books, IT2 does not discuss the national history at all but CC3-4 introduces at least some historical events.

In the next table the focus will be on national geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and national identity.

Table 5. National geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and national identity

Category/Book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. national geography	the map of the USA, nature,	the map of the USA, nature,	the map of the USA, major	

	climate, the area of the USA, major cities, capital, the biggest state (Texas)	National parks, wild life, the area of the USA, the biggest city (NYC) major cities	cities, nature	
2. national cultural heritage	authors and artist, athletes, singers, actors, directors	authors and artists, athletes, singers	authors and artists, singers, actors, directors	authors and artists
3. famous monuments	the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the Golden Gate Bridge, Niagara Falls, Mount Rushmore, the Grand Canyon, The Chrysler Building, Times Square	the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, the Hollywood sign, the Golden Gate Bridge	the Statue of Liberty, the Hollywood sign, Niagara Falls, Mount Rushmore, the Grand Canyon, White House	the Statue of Liberty
4. famous people	Abraham Lincoln, Christopher Columbus	George Washington, Martin Luther King	John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Neil Armstrong,	

			Bill Gates	
5. the American flag	several images of the flag, the colors of the flag in layout, a key info box, about the flag	an image of the flag, information about the flag and the National anthem	images of the flag and the national anthem, the colors of the flag in layout	
6. other symbols for America	the bald eagle, dollars	the bald eagle		
7. stereotypical characters	shopping, sports, eating habits	stereotypical characters of Texans	patriotism, clothing, eating habits, sports, shopping	

Table 5 shows that KE8 and SM2 handle the National geography and National cultural heritage similarly. Both of them also present famous monuments but KE8 concentrates more on them than SM2. Both textbooks also introduce many famous people. SM2 mentions the American flag only once whereas in KE8 the images of the American flag can be found all over the textbook. Also the colors of the flag are used in the layout of the book. SM2 handles the stereotypical characters of Americans only by discussing Texans but KE8 concentrates on shopping, sports and eating habits. It can be concluded that KE8 presents more traditional stereotypes than the slightly newer textbook SM2. According to the results, it seems that at least in this respect there has been a positive development in the secondary education textbooks.

In IT2 and CC3-4 the National cultural heritage is presented through authors and artists. However, in IT2 there are more examples given (e.g. singers, actors, directors). The only famous monument presented in the CC3-4 is the Statue of Liberty. In IT 2 there are significantly more famous monuments (the Statue of Liberty, the Hollywood sign, Niagara

Falls, Mount Rushmore, the Grand Canyon, White House). IT2 also presents famous Americans and some stereotypical characters of Americans (for example patriotism, eating habits). Similarly to KE8, there are many images of the American flag in IT2 and the colors of the flag are also used in the layout of the book. According to the results of the study, it can be stated that IT2 includes more stereotypical content than the slightly newer CC3-4. Therefore, it seems that there has been a positive development in this respect also in the upper secondary education textbooks.

Next and final table will introduce topics that belong to international and intercultural issues or which consider the point of view and style of the author(s).

Table 6. International and intercultural issues, point of view and the style of the author(s)

Category/Book	KE 8	SM 2	IT 2	CC 3-4
1. intercultural issues	comparisons with Northern Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland	comparisons with Finland, comparisons with New Zealand	comparison with Sweden	comparisons with Switzerland and Britain
2. unknown author	dialogues, info-boxes	dialogues, info-boxes		
3. the author is given	young Britons, real authors	the Smart Moves team, young Americans	young Americans, authors	journalists, real authors
4. authentic texts	short stories		newspaper articles, an extract from a novel	an extract from a novel, newspaper/magazine articles
5. expressions of	shopping	the	the	it is not safe in

attitudes	culture, eating habits, summer camps, guns	differences in the standard of living, double standards, the destruction of the Native American culture	differences in the standard of living, double standards, racism, eating habits, the American world-view	America, 24/7 society
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Table 6 points out that in KE8 the USA is compared with different parts of Britain but in SM2 the USA is compared with Finland and New Zealand. However, in both books there is very little intercultural comparison. In both, SM2 and KE8, there are several texts with unknown authors. In SM2 the authors of the texts are possibly fictional young Americans and the Smart Moves team, whereas in KE8 the authors are possibly fictional young Britons and real authors whose short stories appear in the book. The American culture is criticized in both books. In SM2 the differences in the standard of living and double standards are criticized, whereas in KE8 the shopping culture, eating habits, summer camps and guns are critically discussed.

Moreover, there is only very little intercultural comparison in the upper secondary education textbooks. In IT2 the USA is compared with Sweden and in CC3-4 with Switzerland and Britain. In both CC3-4 and IT 2 there are texts by journalists and real authors. In both books there is an extract from a novel and newspaper articles. It seems therefore that authentic material is considered important in the upper secondary education textbooks. Similarly to the secondary education textbooks, both of the books also include expressions of attitudes. According to CC3-4 it is not safe in America anymore and it also criticizes the 24/7 society. IT2 criticizes American culture even more than CC3-4. The topics that it criticizes are the differences in the standard of living, double standards, racism

and eating habits.

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to find out how the cultural information about America found in the Finnish EFL textbooks for secondary and upper secondary education support the principles of intercultural learning and teaching as they are formed by Byram et al. (1994: 52-53) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188). The aim was also to compare the newer and older textbooks with each other and to find out whether there are any differences in the cultural content in the secondary and upper secondary education textbooks. In the chapters 2, 3 and 4 I provided background information about textbooks, intercultural learning and teaching, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Finnish National Curriculum. The method used in the present study was theory-based content analysis and it was introduced in chapter 5.

The results of the study pointed out that the slightly older textbooks, KE8 and IT2, include significantly more America-related cultural content than the newer textbooks, SM2 and CC3-4. This is rather surprising since I expected that the newer textbooks would have improved in this respect since the importance of the teaching of culture is nowadays better acknowledged. It is of course possible that the other English-speaking cultures than America have gotten more attention in the newer textbooks. Furthermore, the slightly older textbooks appear to include more stereotypes than the newer textbooks. Therefore at least some positive development has happened in the newer textbooks. However, despite the positive development, the famous monuments and people are still significantly highlighted in the textbooks. CC3-4 is a positive exception in this respect since it includes almost no America-related stereotypes.

What is more, the textbooks for secondary education follow the criteria for intercultural learning better than the textbooks for upper secondary education. KE8 includes 94 % and SM2 81 % of the America-related topics that Byram et al. (1994: 52-53) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) consider important for intercultural learning and teaching. CC3-4 only includes 52 % and IT2 67 % of the culture-related topics. This seems controversial since according to the Finnish National Curriculum, intercultural learning is considered to be even more important topic in upper secondary education than in secondary education (see

chapter 4). However, unlike the secondary education textbooks, the books for upper secondary education include only authentic texts, which is very positive.

Furthermore, the cultural topics presented in all the five target textbooks are surprisingly versatile and therefore the results of the present study do not fully support the results of Pohjanen's Master's thesis (2007). She pointed out in her thesis that the aim of the Finnish EFL –textbooks was to teach language mainly for travelling and tourism and the cultural content in the textbooks reminded travel brochures. Her analysis also showed that the cultural content in the textbooks consisted mainly of certain facts and it did not discuss the everyday life, beliefs and values of the people. The present study partially agrees with Pohjanen since there are clearly a great number of stereotypes presented in the textbooks and many facts are simply just mentioned but not discussed further. Especially the intercultural comparison was given very little attention in all of the textbooks, even though it is considered to be an important aspect of culture teaching. However, the everyday life and other important aspects of the target culture were overall rather well considered in the textbooks (for example the ethnic minorities, American immigration, schools and education).

The differences between the results of the present study and Pohjanen's thesis may be due to the fact that Pohjanen did not analyze any textbooks for upper secondary education and she also analyzed the presentation of all the English-speaking cultures. However, despite these differences, it seems that there has been at least some positive development in the cultural content of the Finnish EFL-textbooks. Moreover, in all the target textbooks the American culture was criticized in many ways. Therefore it is possible that the negative attitudes towards Americans, which Storhammer and Ailinpieti (1995:31-32) discussed in their study, partially arise from the textbooks. It is of course only natural that the USA is criticized. It is after all a superpower and the most powerful country in the world so it surely raises many thoughts and criticism. However, it is questionable whether it is correct to criticize the USA in the textbooks. It might be more rewarding to let the students to draw their own conclusions. It would be interesting to study whether the other English-speaking cultures are criticized as much in the textbooks as well.

Theory-based content analysis was a suitable method for the present paper since it gave the answers to my research questions. My aim was to get a rather general and summarized presentation of the America-related material and I succeeded in that. Since the criteria by Byram et al. (1994:51-52) and Risager (1991: 182-183, 188) are so comprehensive, the theory-based content analysis basically covered all the America-related material of the textbooks. Therefore, a data-based approach would not have given any significant and new information. Moreover, the criteria were successful since it gave versatile and interesting information about the presentation of the American culture in the textbooks. The present study could be elaborated further by increasing the data (i.e. adding more textbooks into the analysis). Furthermore, using critical discourse analysis along with the content analysis would give more depth to the analysis since now the level of the analysis is rather general, as it focuses on themes but does not analyze how the themes are handled in the texts. It might also be rewarding to analyze the culture-related images of the textbooks since they are used very much in the layout.

The present paper should be interesting for the teachers that use the target textbooks in their teaching since the results show that it still remains the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the pupils get enough intercultural information since none of the target textbooks perfectly fulfill the expectations of intercultural education. Teachers should be relatively critical towards textbooks and their content since they are not the same as the Finnish National curriculum. Furthermore, the present study could also be useful for textbook authors since it might help them to consider what kind of image they actually want to give about the American culture and about other English-speaking countries as well.

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