

Presentation of English-speaking cultures in EFL  
textbooks

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Kulttuuriaiheiset tavoitteet ovat yhä keskeisemmässä roolissa kieltenopetuksessa, mikä näkyy uusimassa opetussuunnitelmassa ja näin ollen myös sen mukaan tehdyissä oppikirjoissa. Oppikirjoja puolestaan käytetään paljon opetuksessa, mikä tarkoittaa sitä, että oppilaat saavat paljon kulttuurista tietoa niiden kautta. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarkastella miten englanninkielinen maailma esitetään uuden opetussuunnitelman mukaan tehdyssä yläkoulun englannin oppikirjasarjassa <i>On the Go</i>. Tutkimus toteutettiin sisällön analyysin avulla, eli havainnot tehtiin aineistona olleen oppikirjasarjan pohjalta. Huolellisen tarkastelun jälkeen oppikirjoista karsittiin kaikki tutkimukselle epäolennainen pois, minkä jälkeen jäljelle jääneestä materiaalista alettiin etsiä kulttuuriaiheisia teemoja, jotka tulivat esiin eri englanninkielisten maiden kohdalla. Tämän lisäksi oppikirjasarjasta koottiin yhteen kaikki kirjalliset viittaukset eri englannin variantteihin liittyen. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että tarkastelun kohteena olleesta oppikirjasarjasta löytyi tietoa useista englanninkielisistä maista ja niiden varianteista, mutta fokus oli enimmäkseen niin sanotuissa <i>inner circle</i> maissa. Kirjasarja tarjosi muun muassa turisteille sopivaa informaatiota, maantieteellistä ja historiallista informaatiota, tietoa eri ihmisryhmistä ja heidän traditioistaan. Eri varianttien kohdalla huomiota saivat eniten britti- ja amerikanenglanti. Jatkossa voisi olla mielenkiintoista tutkia esimerkiksi kuinka Wales, Pohjois-Irlanti ja Skotlanti esitetään oppikirjoissa, sillä ne jäävät usein Englannin varjoon. Myös esimerkiksi Kanadan, Australian ja Uuden-Seelannin presentaatioita oppikirjoissa voitaisiin tarkastella lähemmin. Tämän lisäksi voitaisiin keskittyä myös kirjojen äänitteisiin eri varianttien tarkastelussa.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Due to globalisation, people from different cultural backgrounds are nowadays more and more in contact with each other. Therefore, it is important that the school prepares the pupils for that reality by providing them information about different cultures. Indeed, nowadays culture has an increasingly important role in language teaching, which can be seen in such language policy documents as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the National Core Curriculum, both of which guide language teaching in Finland. When we are introduced to different cultures at a young age, it can be expected that we grow up to be more tolerant of others from different cultural backgrounds and consequently learn to get along with each other. This is naturally important in a world filled with prejudice and hatred.

As Finnish textbooks of English are expected to follow the guidelines set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the National Core Curriculum, it is only natural that they contain plenty of cultural information. In Finland, textbooks are widely used in English teaching: in 2013, 97.8 % of English teachers used textbooks in their teaching (Tergujeff, 2013). Consequently, the contents of the textbook can have a great impact on the pupils. Textbooks have been criticised, for instance, for their avoidance of difficult topics (Risager 1991) and excessive positivity (Byram 1989), but nowadays it is more common to include less positive topics as well. Furthermore, the focus has traditionally been on the UK, or more precisely England, which, on the one hand, is understandable as it is the home of the English language, but on the other hand, English is also spoken either as a first or as a second language in various other countries. Nowadays, though, it is common that Finnish textbooks of English focus on other English speaking countries as well besides the UK.

The present study focuses on the presentation of different English speaking countries and their cultures and varieties in a recently published textbook series. Culture is here understood as a concept that includes both the traditional high culture and a more recent idea of culture as everyday life of people. The definition of culture will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.1. As the focus of English teaching has traditionally been on the UK and more recently also on the USA, this study focuses on the whole English-speaking world and its presentation in the series. The aim of the study is therefore to find out how different English-speaking countries and their cultures and varieties are presented in the series.

The present study is made up of the following parts: at first, in Chapter 2, the definition of culture is given after which the relationship between language and culture and the benefits of culture in foreign language teaching will be discussed. Next, in Chapter 3, the status of the English language in the world and its different varieties will be discussed, after which the focus will be shifted on Finland and the kind of status English has there (Chapter 4). The same section also introduces some previous studies on cultural content in textbooks as well as the culture-related aims in language policy documents. Then, in Chapter 5, the research questions, data and methods of data analysis will be introduced, after which the findings of the present study will be discussed. Finally, the main findings of the study will be summarised, some improvement suggestions regarding the textbook series will be made, the limitations of the study will be addressed and some suggestions for future research will be made.

## **2 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

This section focuses on the concept of culture and its relationship to language. At first, culture is observed from the point of view of some different research disciplines after which the focus is shifted towards language studies and how culture is and has been understood there. After that, the relationship between language and culture will be discussed. Finally, some benefits of culture-related content in foreign language teaching will be presented.

### **2.1 Defining culture**

Culture is not a simple concept to define. In fact, it has been suggested that there are as many definitions of culture as there are researchers studying the concept of culture (Kulick 1992: 143, cited in Elomaa 2009: 109). Therefore, a thorough examination of the concept of culture is not possible due to the nature of the current study, but some ideas will be presented. Brown (2014: 184) is of the opinion that nowadays it is almost impossible to define culture as monolingual and monocultural countries are becoming increasingly rare due to globalisation. As various research disciplines are interested in culture, it is rather obvious that there is no one correct definition of culture that everyone agrees on. Instead, every research discipline

approaches culture from a slightly different angle. Corbett (2003: 5) presents some of these disciplines and their views on culture, stating that

”*Anthropology* investigates in general how membership of a particular social group is related to particular sets of behaviour; *ethnography* seeks, partly through structured exposure to other cultures, to explore and describe how the speech systems and behaviours of groups are related to their social structures and beliefs; and *cultural studies* seeks to understand and interpret the way that members of a group represent themselves through their cultural products (whether those products are poems, songs, dances, graffiti, or sports events).”

Matsumoto and Juang (2004: 10), who approach culture from the point of view of psychology, define culture as

”[...] a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours, shared by a group but harbored differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time”.

This definition, among many others, includes the idea of culture being dynamic, which means that the beliefs and language of different groups will change over time as the groups are always negotiating their norms and values among their members (Corbett 2003: 20). The concept of culture will now be discussed from the point of view of language teaching, which is more relevant in terms of the present study.

Culture has always been a part of language teaching one way or another, although before the 1950s textbooks mainly contained linguistic and grammatical matters as well as extracts of literature (Risager 1991: 181). Until the Second World War, culture in language teaching meant the study of literature (Kramsch 2006: 11). In the period of audiolingual methodology there was a tendency to separate language and culture in textbooks, which meant that the cultural information was placed at the end of the chapters and only dealt with if there was some extra time (Byram 1991: 17-18). Seeley (1994: 15) points out that for the most part, culture in the language teaching profession has been associated with the fine arts, geography and history, which are, according to him, components of the narrow definition of culture. However, in the 1970s and the 1980s, as a result of the communicative approach in language teaching, culture became understood as the way of life and behaviour of members of speech communities

(Kramersch 2013: 64). According to Seeley (1994: 15-16), this is the type of cultural content that prepares learners to understand people from different backgrounds, which is of course important in the ever-globalising world.

The concepts of big C culture and the little c culture further explain how culture is and has been understood in language teaching (Kramersch 2013: 65-66). The big C culture is the traditional way of teaching culture and it emphasises the knowledge of literature and the arts. This is the kind of knowledge that has traditionally been associated with the cultivated middle-class. However, as was already mentioned, the arrival of communicative language teaching and its idea of culture as a way of life has caused the big C culture to take a back seat. Even so, the prestigious big C culture still remains in the background.

The little c culture has been the most relevant concept of culture since the 1980s. It comprises such matters as the native speakers' ways of behaving, their customs, beliefs and values as well as their talking, dwelling and eating habits. In other words, the little c culture focuses on the everyday life of people. What is problematic with the concept of little c culture is the fact that the focus often remains on the typical, or stereotypical, habits of the dominant group of native speakers and on national characteristics. In other words, the little c culture ignores the variety of people's everyday cultural practises. This concept also lacks historical depth (Kramersch 2013: 66).

Kaikkonen (1994: 69) defines culture as a mutual agreement between members of a community on their values, norms, rules, expectations and meanings that guide the behaviour and interaction of the community. He points out that this definition takes into account both the viewpoint of the individual and the community. Kaikkonen (1994: 72-78) also presents Robinson's (1988) ideas of different learning theories and how they can be used to define culture. These are the behaviouristic definition, the functional definition, the cognitive definition and the symbolic definition. The behaviouristic definition sees culture as the behavioural patterns of the target culture, such as their traditions, habits or rituals. Culture is, therefore, something that is easy to notice. The behaviouristic definition in foreign language teaching focuses on for example such matters as what a British family is like. This view has been popular among foreign language teachers. The functional definition sees culture as a social phenomenon and seeks to explain social behaviour. The cognitive definition focuses on the process that happens in learners when they are learning about cultures. According to this



definition, culture is not a concrete phenomenon, but a process that happens inside learners' minds. In the symbolic definition, culture is defined as a system of symbols and meanings. From this point of view, the task of foreign language teaching is to develop a system of foreign symbols and meanings in the learners that contains the linguistic view of the language, its non-verbal communication and communication strategies that are typical to the target culture.

As can be seen, culture is a complex concept that can be observed from many different perspectives. In this study, culture will be understood as a concept that includes both the big C and the little c aspects of culture, that is, the traditional high culture and the more recent idea of culture as everyday life of people. As the present study focuses on a textbook series aimed at secondary school students, I expect to find more content related to the little c culture. This idea is supported by Kaikkonen (1994: 19) who states that students are likely to find everyday culture of foreign people most interesting and meaningful. Therefore, it can be expected that current textbooks aimed at secondary school students focus mainly on the little c culture. However, as the little c culture tends to focus only on the habits of the dominant group of native speakers, I will also make use of Corbett's (2003: 19) concept of culture. This concept takes into account the fact that cultures of different countries are made up of communities characterised by such factors as age, gender, class and ethnicity. As different minority groups or ethnic groups are likely to be present in English textbooks, Corbett's (2003) point of view is useful here.

## **2.2 The relationship between language and culture**

Having considered some definitions of culture, it is now time to consider the relationship between language and culture. It is an acknowledged fact that the two are closely connected. Sajavaara (1999: 74) states that it is very difficult to separate language from culture and culture from language. This statement is supported by Kaikkonen (2000: 51) who states that language is an inseparable part of culture. Kaikkonen (1994: 166) also calls language a product of the society that surrounds it. Risager (2006: 4) points out that "Human culture always includes language, and human language cannot be conceived without culture". Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 5) state that "It [language] expresses and embodies the values, beliefs and meanings which members of a given society, or a part of it, share by virtue of their socialisation

into it and their acceptance of and identification with it". Byram (1991: 18) also points out that language and culture should be taught together, because if they are not, students may come to the conclusion that the foreign language functions in the same way as their first language.

The relationship between language and culture goes a long way back. At first, cultural knowledge was passed on orally from one generation to the next (Kaikkonen 2004: 103-104). Written language was developed in order to support the preservation of cultural and other kinds of important knowledge and made it possible to preserve such knowledge more permanently (Kaikkonen 2004: 106). At the early stages of language use, the purpose of language was to protect one's own culture from those who came from a different cultural background, whereas nowadays the goal is mutual understanding and communication between different nations (Kaikkonen 1994: 70). Consequently, language skills are considered important in the modern world. However, in order to truly understand another language, one has to understand the cultural context that has produced the language (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994: 11). Even if a person has mastered the forms of another language, he or she may still find it difficult to behave in a way that is socially acceptable in the new speech community (Saville-Troike 1991, Becker 1992, cited in Kramersch 1993: 43). In other words, only being fluent in another language does not guarantee successful communication with people from the target culture (Kaikkonen 1994: 97). Therefore, in order for the communication to run smoothly between people from different cultural backgrounds, it is important to have knowledge about the conventions of different cultures. I will now present some examples of cultural conventions it is useful to be aware of.

First of all, the way things are verbally expressed varies considerably between different cultures (Kaikkonen 2004: 25). In some cultures it is common to express oneself in a very concise manner. In other words, in those cultures it is common to get straight to the point. Kaikkonen (2004: 25) points out that this is very typical of the Finnish culture and the Finnish people are probably one of the most direct nations in this respect. In some other cultures, on the other hand, it is polite to approach the topic cautiously while paying compliments or asking about one's well-being.

In addition to verbal communication, also non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions and other types of body language is culture-specific (Kaikkonen 2004: 27). Some familiar examples of non-verbal communication in different cultures are, according to Kaikkonen, the way the Chinese or the Japanese bow or convey various messages with a smile,

the way the French kiss on the cheek or the way the Germans shake hands. Matsumoto and Juang (2004: 7) point out that handshake is also a common ritual in American culture. Indeed, the way we greet each other depends on our cultural background.

Another interesting culture-specific convention is the use of silence in communication. In some cultures, for example in many Central European countries, long pauses in the middle of a conversation are not tolerated well, whereas in Finland they are more acceptable (Kaikkonen 2004: 27). In those cultures where silence is not well tolerated, the interlocutors take turns in holding the floor in order to avoid any awkwardness (Kaikkonen 2004: 27). Social distance is also dependent on culture. Kaikkonen (2004: 28) states that in order to be respectful towards people of different cultural backgrounds, one should pay attention to such factors as the physical distance between oneself and the interlocutor and whether it is acceptable to touch someone. These are only some examples of different conventions of different cultures, but as can be seen, there is plenty of variability in how people of different cultural backgrounds behave.

Kramsch (1993: 1) points out that "[...] culture is difference, variability, and always a potential source of conflict when one culture enters into contact with another". Rather obviously, culture-specific behavioural conventions may result in misunderstandings between people (Byram and Morgan et al. 1994: 8). Therefore, it is important that cultural matters are discussed during foreign language lessons, so that students learn to behave respectfully in the company of foreigners. Even if some people were never to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, having knowledge about different cultural conventions can be an eye-opening experience. Next, some benefits of cultural content in foreign language teaching will be introduced.

### **2.3 The benefits of culture in foreign language teaching**

As has been seen, language and culture are strongly connected and as a result, they should be taught together. This is important since due to globalisation, people from different cultural backgrounds are nowadays more and more in contact with each other. While this situation may be ideal for personal challenge and growth, such diversity can also lead to misunderstandings between people, which may then result in confusion and anger (Matsumoto and Juang 2004:

1). Such feelings towards other people are understandable as everyone is a product and member of their own cultural environment, community and society (Schmitt 1989: 159, cited in Kaikkonen 1994: 120) and, as a result, it may be difficult to understand other kinds of behaviour. According to Matsumoto and Juang (2004: 64), our negative feelings towards people from different cultural backgrounds stem from differing ideas of what is appropriate behaviour. Matsumoto and Juang explain that as we grow up, we are taught to behave according to certain rules, which we then adopt as norms. Then, as we meet people who transgress against our norms, we experience those negative feelings. It is, of course, also possible to experience such feelings when interacting with people with whom we share a cultural background, but it is more common to feel such negativity towards people whose cultural background is different from ours (Matsumoto and Juang 2004: 63-64). However, the fact is that there are no better or worse cultures, but instead there are cultural differences that influence our behaviour (Kaikkonen 1994: 115). In order to avoid excessive feelings of negativity towards other cultures in later life, children should be introduced to different cultures from an early age. A foreign language classroom is an ideal place for that. English teachers, in particular, are in a valuable position as they can acquaint their pupils with several English-speaking countries and their cultures. As different cultures come increasingly into contact with each other, it is important that the school prepares pupils for this reality by offering them information about different cultures. Consequently, when pupils later come into contact with representatives of different cultures, they are, hopefully, able to show respect and get along with them. Kaikkonen (1994: 17) points out that in order to truly understand and communicate with representatives of other cultures, one has to have knowledge about their culture and home country. Such knowledge promotes respect towards diversity and curiosity about behavioural differences (Kaikkonen 2004: 137). Language teachers are therefore expected to introduce cultural matters to their pupils and consequently prepare them for interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Besides the important task of preparing pupils for a culturally diverse world, learning about cultures has been found to be beneficial in many ways. To begin with, it has been traditionally claimed that language learning and travelling creates tolerance for otherness (Byram 1989: 57). Culture teaching and learning also enriches us as we acquire a wider world-view and gain access to the non-native cultural capital (Buttjes 1991: 8). It is rather noteworthy that while we are learning about other cultures, we are also learning something about ourselves. Learning about different cultures enables us to take notice of the characteristics of our own culture,

especially of those behavioural patterns that have become so automatised that we use them without paying attention to them (Kaikkonen 1994: 52). Learning about foreign cultures thus enables us to reflect on our behaviour with respect to other kinds of behaviour, which then improves our self-knowledge and helps us to understand why we behave in a certain way (Kaikkonen 1994: 82). In other words, foreign language teaching functions at best as a means of developing the learner's identity (Kaikkonen 2000: 52).

Learning about different cultures can also help us to get rid of inaccurate stereotypes. Stereotypes are generalisations that we have about different groups of people (e.g. Matsumoto and Juang 2004: 86). In everyday language use stereotypes are often seen as something negative, but it is also common to associate different groups of people with positive stereotypes, for example, Asians are often thought to be hardworking (Matsumoto and Juang 2004: 69). According to Peapody (1985, cited in Kaikkonen 1994: 65), an individual forms his or her opinions about foreign cultures mostly on the grounds of insufficient information. A pupil may also have such negative perceptions about the culture or cultures in question that those perceptions may consequently hinder the learning process (Kaikkonen 1994: 50). Byram (1993: 33) suggests that stereotypes should be talked about at first in foreign language lessons so that pupils learn to understand their limitations. According to Kaikkonen (1994: 65), it is useful to find general national characteristics when teaching foreign languages, but one should be careful with generalisations. Byram (1993: 48) is of the same opinion, stating that generalising phrases about different nationalities should be avoided in textbooks. He suggests that phrases such as "The Germans are..." should be replaced with "Some people believe that Germans are...". It is important to remember that national cultures are divided into many subcultures and because of that and the kind of upbringing people have received, everyone is different (Kaikkonen 1994: 89). Peapody (1985, cited in Kaikkonen 1994: 65) points out that there are usually more differences between different national groups than between different nationalities, stating that young people from different countries have more in common with each other than the young and the elderly within the same society. Consequently, foreign language teachers should be able to present different cultures to their pupils without making too many generalisations.

It has also been found out that cultural content motivates language learners. According to Buttjes (cited in Byram, Morgan et al. 1994: 13), cultural content is a chief motivator for language learning. Elomaa (2009: 107-108) is of the opinion that cultural matters make

language learning and teaching meaningful. However, it has also been found out that cultural content in foreign language teaching can cause negative feelings in students. Some students may feel that their identity is threatened if cultural matters are emphasised too much, and if the students come from more modest backgrounds, they may feel that their own culture is inferior to other cultures (Kramersch 2013: 59). Even though students may be unwilling to assume the practices or beliefs of the target culture, they should at least try to understand them if they wish to learn the language properly (Corbett 2003: 20). However, most of the English learners around the world are willing to learn the language, because good English skills will give them access to a culture and lifestyle they admire (Kramersch 2013: 59). As English is such a widely spread language, it is indeed useful to learn it in order to communicate with people from other countries. The following section will discuss the widespread status of the English-language in more detail.

### **3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD**

This section focuses on the global status of the English language and how its current position was achieved. After that, the *three circles of English* model by Kachru (1985: 11-36) is introduced, as well as some features of different varieties of English.

#### **3.1 English as a global language**

English has achieved a unique position as a global language. A global language is defined as a language that is widely spoken and understood (Pahta 2004: 26-27) and, as a result, holds a special role that is acknowledged in every country (Crystal 2003: 3). According to some estimates, English is spoken by as many as two billion people in most countries of the world with the majority being those who speak it as a second or a foreign language (Jenkins 2009: 2). As a result, English is more commonly used as a lingua franca between non-native speakers than between native speakers and non-native or second language speakers (Ranta 2010: 157). The current global language status of English is therefore down to its non-native speakers in countries that have decided to make English an official language or, alternatively, have prioritised the language in the country's foreign language teaching programme (Crystal 2003: 4). Once a language achieves the status of a global language, it is no longer the "property" of

native speakers – instead, everyone who has learned it, is allowed to use it in their own way (Crystal 2003: 2-3). However, it should be kept in mind that even though English is such a widely spread language, the majority of the world's population are unable to use it (Crystal 2003: 69). From a practical point of view, a global language is often seen as a positive phenomenon as it enables communication between people who do not share a mother tongue (Pahta 2004: 38). However, English has also been criticised for being a threat to other languages, as well as for being the language of imperialism, colonialism and oppression (Pahta 2004: 39). Indeed, the global status of the English language is due to the political and military power of its speakers (Crystal 2003: 9). I will now briefly explain how English spread around the world and achieved its status as a global language.

Languages are typically spread via territorial conquests and immigration that follows after (Nevalainen 2004: 10). This is the case with English as well. Pahta (2004: 28-29) provides a clear summary on how English spread around the world, which will be presented next.

The spread of English outside the British Isles started at the end of the fifteenth century by explorers and accelerated as a result of the British colonialism. The first permanent colony outside of Britain was established in 1607 in North America, which was followed by the establishment of several colonies on the east coast. During the following centuries, English speakers had taken over almost the whole continent. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, English started to spread in Canada as well after Britain had taken over the French colonies.

Around the same time, in 1770, a British captain James Cook arrived in Australia as the first westerner. A couple of decades later the British founded there a penal colony, which became the first English-language base of the continent. After that, around the mid nineteenth century, the first British colony of New Zealand was established. The British also took hold of the Cape of Good Hope in 1806 and the settlement of the area began in 1820. Eventually, Britain also took possession of India. As the British Empire continued its reign until the early twentieth century, the language spread in different parts of Africa, South-eastern Asia and the islands of the Pacific Ocean (Pahta: 2004: 28-29).

It can be argued that any other language could be in the position that English is today. As was

already mentioned, a language typically spreads as a result of the power of its speakers and The British just happened to be more powerful than others. Crystal (2003: 120) calls English a language "which has repeatedly found itself in the right place at the right time." He further explains this statement by saying that at first, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English was the language of the nation that led colonialism, which of course was Britain. Britain also led the industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After that, in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the USA became the leading economic power of the world and the situation remains so.

Due to the wide distribution of the language, the English language we know today consists of many distinctive varieties with their own specific sounds, grammar and vocabulary (Crystal 2003: 29). Some features of different varieties of English will be shortly presented, but before that, the model of three circles of English will be introduced.

### **3.2 The three circles of English**

The worldwide spread of English has traditionally been thought of as three concentric circles: *the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle*. These circles represent three different groups of English users around the world, that is, those for whom it is a mother tongue, those who use it as second language and those for whom it is a foreign language (e.g. Jenkins 2009: 15, Crystal 2003: 60-61, Bolton 2009: 291-292). Generally speaking, in the inner circle countries English is used in all domains, in the outer circle countries English is the language of education and administration, and in the expanding circle countries English is learnt in order to interact with people internationally (Bauer 2002: 22). The model was developed by Braj Kachru (1985: 11-36) and since its publication it has been an influential model to understand the worldwide spread of English (Bolton 2009: 292-293, Jenkins 2009: 17). The model is based on history rather than how English is currently used (Jenkins 2009: 20). The division into different circles was originally made on the basis of the order in which English spread around the world: first the language was taken into settler colonies in Australia, North America and New Zealand and after that English was taken to African and Asian countries as a result of British administrative colonies (Bolton 2009: 293). Lastly English found its way to the expanding circle countries. Bauer (2002: 24) summarises this situation by stating that "The



inner circle represents places to which people were exported and the outer circle the places to which the language was exported”, although he also states that this view is not entirely accurate and the model does have its shortcomings which will be discussed shortly below.

As was already mentioned, the *inner circle* represents those countries where English is used as a mother tongue. Furthermore, these countries can be thought of as the ”traditional bases” of English where English is the primary language (Crystal 2003: 59). These countries are also said to be ”norm-providing” in terms of the kind of English that is spoken there (Jenkins 2009: 18). The countries in question are often said to be the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and, according to most sources, these countries seem to be clear cut inner circle countries. However, not everyone agrees: Ireland, for example, is absent from Bolton's list of inner circle countries (Bolton 2009: 292 ), but Bauer (2002: 24) argues that because of the vast amount of time that English has been established in Ireland, their variety of English behaves more like an inner circle variety than like an outer circle variety.

There are also other countries which present problems in terms of the model and whether they should be included in the inner circle or the outer circle. South Africa has many features of the outer circle, one being that most South Africans use English as a second language, but because of the long history of English being used by some people in all domains, South Africa can be placed in the inner circle (Bauer 2002: 24). Jamaica is also often absent from the lists that name the inner circle countries, but Jamaica is a country where English is the only language to have an official status and millions of people use the language as their mother tongue (Crystal 2003: 3, Kachru 1986: 128). Therefore, Jamaica can be considered an inner circle country.

The *outer circle* comprises countries where English is used as a second language in clearly multilingual societies, such as Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories (Crystal 2003: 60). In such countries, English is only one language among others, but it usually has an official status and is for example the language of law and education (Bolton 2009: 292). English is often acquired after the mother tongue has been learned (Kachru 1986: 128). The varieties of English in outer circle countries have become institutionalised and they are said to be norm-developing, meaning that they are developing their own standards (Jenkins 2009: 18-20). However, it can very challenging to place the speakers of English purely in only one of the circles (Jenkins 2009: 15). This can be seen especially in terms of the inner and the outer circles: nowadays there are many Indians and Singaporeans who only speak English (Bauer 2002: 22).

However, India has traditionally been seen as an outer circle country and it is treated as such by all the researchers whose studies have been examined for this study. Pakistan is in a similar position as India in terms of its English use: the English used in Pakistan is an institutionalised second-language variety, which is used in education, administration and legal systems (Kachru 1986: 19). Therefore, Pakistan is also seen as an outer circle country. When it comes to regions such as Hong Kong, both English and Chinese have an official status there and the two languages are often mixed in speech (Crystal 2003: 59). Although most people in Hong Kong speak Chinese (Cantonese) and English is the language of government or military administration, law, business and the media (Crystal 2003: 59), millions of people speak English as a second language (Jenkins 2009: 155). However, while there is a Hong Kong English variety that is often acknowledged, many Hongkongers prefer the British English norms instead (Jenkins 2009: 155). As can be seen, the situation of Hong Kong is not simple in terms of the circle model. Hong Kong often regarded as belonging to the outer circle, but then again, some would place it in the expanding circle (Jenkins 2009: 155).

Even though the focus of the study is only on the inner and the outer circle countries, I will briefly explain what is meant by the expanding circle. As was already mentioned, in the expanding circle countries English is learnt as a foreign language, mainly in order to interact with people globally. The countries that belong to the expanding circle are for example Greece, Indonesia, Israel and Russia (Bolton 2009: 292). Also Finland, like other Nordic countries, belongs to the expanding circle. The expanding circle countries are said to be norm-dependent, meaning that they are dependent on the standards that are set by the inner circle speakers of English (Jenkins 2009: 18-20). In these countries the English language does not have an official status. However, there are also some problematic matters regarding the expanding circle and its demarcation. Kachru himself stated already in 1985 that the outer circle and the expanding circle have plenty of similarities and that a country where English is used as a second language may at one point become an expanding circle country or vice versa (Bolton 2009: 293). Furthermore, young Finns are said to have rather good English skills (Ranta 2010: 159) and their skills are likely to get even better in the future due to the strong presence of English in the Finnish society and the fact that nowadays pupils start learning their first foreign language already in the first grade. That language in question is very likely to be English as English is by far the most popular first language choice in Finland. Consequently, the circle model is not entirely reliable in terms of the proficiency level of its English users: a native speaker of English may have difficulties with several areas that have to do with the language, such as vocabulary,

whereas a non-native speaker may be very competent in those areas (Jenkins 2009: 20). Therefore, some people from expanding circle countries may end up achieving a near native-level of English (Pahta 2004: 30).

As can be seen, the model is not perfect and not every country fits seamlessly in the three circles. It can be argued whether it is even necessary to make that kind of division anymore between different groups of English users as the status of English is changing in expanding circle countries (Pahta 2004: 41). However, the three circles model is still seen as a helpful approach to understand the spread of English around the world (Crystal 2003: 60). It is rather notable that there is no one correct answer everyone agrees on. However, as was already mentioned, there are certain countries that practically everyone acknowledges as inner circle countries. Those countries are the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with Ireland being absent from some lists. Also India is seen as a traditional outer circle country. As English keeps spreading, it may be that in the future countries that are now regarded as expanding circle countries end up being more like outer circle countries.

Finally, it is rather notable that the norm-providing inner circle is the smallest one. It is quite difficult to estimate the number of speakers of different languages, because not all countries have reliable statistics concerning that (Pahta 2004: 29). The number of English speakers could be as high as two billion, and the vast majority of these people do not speak it as their first language (Jenkins 2009: 2). Therefore, as has already been established, the spread of English has been down to its non-native users (Kachru 1986: 90) and the language continues its spread in outer and expanding circle countries (Bolton 2009: 305). As a result, the inner circle no longer owns the language and everyone is allowed to use it in their own way (Crystal 2003: 2). However, English teaching in Finland (and in other expanding circle countries) has traditionally focused on standard British English and standard American English varieties (Leppänen et al. 2009: 55). This has been called into question as English is used more as a lingua franca between non-native users than between non-native users and native-users (Ranta 2010: 157). The situation is slowly changing and nowadays Finnish textbooks of English seem to contain more and more information about other English-speaking countries and their varieties besides the UK and the USA.

### 3.3 Different varieties of English

Having discussed how the English language spread around the world and came to be used as a first language, a second language or a foreign language, it is now time to shift the focus on the different varieties the distribution of the language has produced. Naturally, due to the nature of the study, it is not possible to delve deeply into every single variety there is. It would simply be too vast a topic. Therefore, only some very basic distinctive features of some inner and outer circle varieties of English will be introduced in order to provide some background for the possible presentation of different varieties of English in the textbooks. Before introducing the different varieties of English, it is important to define the concept of variety. According to Bauer (2003: 4, cited in Bolton 2009: 290), a variety can mean a language, a dialect, an idiolect or an accent. In other words, a variety refers to any kind of language production. This definition truly brings forth the vastness of the concept. I will now present some pronunciation features of English from different continents.

It makes sense to start with the UK, as it is the home of the English language. Even though the UK is a relatively small country, plenty of different varieties of English are used there. As to the varieties found in England, I will only focus on Received Pronunciation, or RP, as it is the variety that has traditionally been used in English textbooks. This is rather interesting since Received Pronunciation has traditionally been spoken by only a small percentage of the English people. According to Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 9), only 3-5 per cent of English people use Received Pronunciation. With this being the case, they point out that students of English may find it difficult to understand the other 95-97 per cent of the population. Furthermore, Received Pronunciation is generally equated with the upper-middle and upper classes and as a result the attitudes towards those who have successfully acquired an RP accent may be rather poor (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 9-10). However, because RP has become a regionless accent, people throughout the country are likely to understand it (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 9). The reason why Received Pronunciation has been used in English teaching is due to fact that it has been a well-documented variety (e.g. Kachru 1986: 86). As Received Pronunciation is the accent associated with the upper-middle and upper classes, I will give a couple of examples that demonstrate this background. In the traditional, conservative RP the vowels in words such as *paw*, *pore* and *poor* are pronounced respectively as /ɔ:/, /ɒ/ and /ʊə/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 11). However, as languages evolve, this feature has started to disappear and younger

generations no longer make a distinction between those vowels: in other words, they pronounce all those words similarly, with /ɔ:/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 11).

As to Scottish English, Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 94) state that its pronunciation differs greatly from most other varieties and therefore it can be difficult to understand. Scottish English is a rhotic accent, which means that /r/ is pronounced in words like *far* and *farm* Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 14, 95). They also point out that in Scottish English short vowels remain distinct before /r/. This means that word pairs such as *row* /ro/ and *roar* /ror/ can only be distinguished by the presence or absence of /r/.

The English that is spoken in the Northern Ireland originates from Scotland, but educated Northern Irish English differs from Scottish English for example in the way the /au/ and /r/ are pronounced: in fact, the Northern Irish English /r/ in words like *bird* and *card* actually resembles the Northern American English pronunciation (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 102). Some pronunciation features of English in the Republic of Ireland are the use of /æ/ in words like *path* and *dance* instead of /ɑ:/ and /u:/ in words like *book* and *cook* instead of /ʊ/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 104-105). Also in Welsh English words such as *last* and *dance* tend to be pronounced with /æ/ instead of /ɑ:/ and there is no difference between the vowels /ʌ/ and /ə/ so a word like *rubber* is pronounced as /rəbə/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 33).

As has already been mentioned, the first place where the English language found its way outside the British Isles was North America. In addition to Received Pronunciation, General American, or GA, is often used in English textbooks. The term General American is used to describe American accents that do not have north-eastern or southern characteristics (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 45). The population of North America is close to 600 million so, rather understandably, it is not possible to discuss the different American English varieties in detail. Instead, I will present some of Trudgill's and Hannah's examples on how Received Pronunciation and North American English differ from each other in terms of the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. First of all, in Received Pronunciation there is a difference between the sounds /ɒ/ and /ɑ:/, that is, words like *bomb* and *balm* are pronounced differently, whereas in North American English they are pronounced the same with /ɑ:/. Unlike RP, North American English is rhotic and therefore /r/ is pronounced in words like *hard* and *car*. In Received Pronunciation words such as *path*, *laugh* and *grass* are pronounced with /ɑ:/ whereas in North American English these words are pronounced with /æ/. Finally, unlike in RP, in North

American English words such as *better* and *latter* are pronounced with a vocalic flap, meaning that the /t/ sound in the middle of the word is pronounced as /d/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 38-42).

Canadian English resembles the North American English in many ways and as a result, foreigners are often unable to tell the difference between the two (Crystal 2003: 37, 39). However, Canadian English has its own distinct features, even though to many British people Canadian accent sounds like the North American accent and, on the other hand, to many Americans Canadian English sounds more like British English than American English (Crystal 2003: 39). According to Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 51), the most characteristic feature of Canadian English is something called *Canadian Raising*. This means that before voiceless consonants, such as /t/, the diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ are pronounced in a way that results in such pronunciations as [næt taim] (*night time*) and [əʊt laʊd] (*out loud*). Also, in Canadian English, there is an /ou/ sound in words such as *borrow*, *sorrow* and *sorry*, which is not the case with General American (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 51).

The pronunciation is once again different on the other side of the world. Despite the vast distances between the Southern Hemisphere varieties of English, that is, Australian English, New Zealand English and South African English, they are rather similar in many ways and as a result, people from other English-speaking countries often find it difficult to tell them apart (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 16). There is naturally regional variety in such a large country as Australia, just like there is regional variety in other English-speaking countries, but here are a couple of examples of Australian English as presented by Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 18). First of all, unlike in most other varieties, /ɑ:/ is produced at the front of the mouth so that it sounds like [a:]. Words that end in /ə/ sound, such as *ever*, are often pronounced in a very open way, so that the word *ever* sounds like [evə]. Also, the /ʊ/ vowel is usually formed with much more lip-rounding than it is in English that is spoken in England. Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 24) state that New Zealand English accents are very similar to Australian English in terms of phonetics and phonology, but one feature that tells an Australian and a New Zealander apart is how the vowel /ɪ/ is pronounced in words like *bid*. An Australian would pronounce the word *bid* as [bid] whereas a New Zealander would pronounce it as [bəd]. In addition, in New Zealand English there is no strong distinction between /ɪ/ and /ə/, so words like *finish* and *Philip* sound like [fɛnɪʃ] and [fɛləp] (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 24). A unique feature of South African English (as spoken by native speakers of English) is the lack of intrusive *r* and linking *r*

(Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 31). This means that expressions such as *four o'clock* and *law and order* become [fo:(?)əklɒk] and [lo:ɹo:də]. It is also typical that in South African English there is no aspiration in /p/, /t/ and /k/. This means that a word like *pin*, which is pronounced [p<sup>h</sup>ɪn] in RP, is pronounced as [pən] in South African English (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 31). Standard Jamaican English is characterised for example by being rhotic and by the tendency of reducing final consonant clusters, so that *wind* is pronounced as /wɪn/ (Trudgill and Hannah 1994: 117-118).

As to Indian English, Trudgill and Hannah (1994: 128) point out that the pronunciation of Indian English is dependent of such factors as the speaker's native language, educational background and amount of exposure to native English. They provide a list of some generalisations and state, for example, that diphthongs such as /ei/ and /ou/ are often pronounced as /e:/ and /o:/, there is no aspiration in /p/, /t/ and /k/, and that the English spoken by most educated Indians is non-rhotic.

It is rather obvious that this chapter has only scratched the surface of some different English varieties. As English is such a widely spread language, it is not possible to delve into the topic within the current study, but some basic features of different varieties have been introduced. In addition to being a first or a second language of various countries, English has also become an important language in traditionally non-English speaking countries. In fact, English is taught as a foreign language in over one hundred countries (Crystal 2003: 5). Finland is one of these countries and the following section will focus on the status the English language has in Finnish society.

## **4 TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND TEXTBOOKS**

This section focuses on the status the English language has in Finland, English textbooks and some studies that have been conducted on them, as well as the role of culture in language policy documents.

### **4.1 English in Finland**

The status of the English language in Finland has gone through some major changes during the

past few decades, as back in the 1980s, English was still learned as a foreign language in order to communicate with foreigners, whereas nowadays English is often used even between native Finnish speakers (Leppänen et al. 2009: 15). Unlike many other countries, Finland has never inhabited that many English speaking immigrants, so the growing visibility of English cannot be explained by that (Leppänen et al. 2009: 15). In fact, there are more speakers of Russian, Estonian and Arabic in Finland than there are speakers of English (Tilastokeskus). Leppänen et al. (2009: 15) state that such matters as modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation have all contributed to the growing importance of English in Finland. Because of globalisation, good English skills are nowadays a requirement for many jobs in Finland (Pahta 2004: 36).

In terms of daily exposure to English, Finnish people are in a fortunate position as English-language TV shows and news interviews are never dubbed or translated with voiceovers, but they are subtitled in Finnish instead. This provides plenty of opportunities for hearing the language. Ranta (2010: 159) points out that English has a rather notable role in Finnish working life and English is the official language in many large Finnish companies. English is also present in the form of signs and advertisements in Finnish cities (Pahta 2004: 37). Furthermore, as English is the language of the internet, many Finnish people are in daily contact with it. The strong presence of English in Finland has enabled especially younger generations to acquire rather good language skills, but English is nevertheless still regarded as a foreign language in Finland (Ranta 2010: 159). It has to be mentioned that even though the usefulness of English as a lingua franca is recognised, some fear that it poses a threat to other languages and the motivation to study them (Pahta 2004: 38-39). This can already be seen in Finland and the matter will be discussed in the following section.

## **4.2 Teaching English in Finnish schools**

English is by far the most popular first language choice in Finnish schools and has been so for decades. However, despite its popularity it is not a compulsory subject (even though it may be regarded as such as in many Finnish municipalities it is not possible to choose any other language than English for one's first language). In 2017, 99.4 % of secondary school students (grades 7-9) studied English as the first language (Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry) and the popularity of English continues: statistics from 2019 show that 90 % of primary school students studied English as the first language (Finnish National Agency for Education). Traditionally, students have started their first language studies (or A1 language as it is called in Finland) in



the third grade. However, since the autumn of 2019 first language studies have already started in the first grade in many municipalities such as Jyväskylä, and as of spring term 2020, everyone begins their first language studies in the first grade (Finnish National Agency for Education). Based on previous statistics, English is likely to remain the most popular first language choice. Such an early start with the language will no doubt result in better English users in the future, but, on the other hand, the popularity of English has led to the narrowing down of other language skills among Finnish people (Finnish National Agency for Education). The Finnish National Agency for Education states that because of the global status of English, many think that it is enough to know English. However, they also remark that many students are willing to study other languages, but it is not always possible because of lack of resources. As to the earlier start of the first language, parents and their children have been encouraged to choose some other language than English, such as Chinese or French, which are more difficult in terms of pronunciation (Perkkiö 2018). For such a small country as Finland with only about 5,5 million inhabitants, having versatile language skills is crucial in order to succeed in ever globalising world (Elomaa 2009: 13).

Traditionally, English teaching in Finland has emphasised the native-speaker ideal and the focus has been on Anglo American varieties of English, first on British English and later on also on American English, which became equal to British English in the curricula in 1985 (Ranta 2010: 159). However, it has been discovered that many Finnish students do not even want to sound like native speakers and they prefer instead their own variety of English which shows their background (Ranta 2010: 163). English teaching in Finland is also often said to be too focused on grammatical correctness instead of getting one's message across, although this situation is nowadays slowly changing. However, the traditional focus on grammar and vocabulary teaching instead of teaching cultural matters can be explained by the fact that many teachers find it difficult to teach cultures they are not that familiar with (Kramsch 2013: 58-59).

### **4.3 English language textbooks**

In Finland, textbooks are widely used in English teaching. Many foreign language teachers have been dependent on ready-made teaching materials planned by others (Kaikkonen 1994: 5). Such teaching materials have been regarded as safe, and in case students have shown any

lack of understanding, it has been possible to lay part of the blame for the teaching materials (Kaikkonen 1994: 6). A more recent study by Luukka et al. (2008: 64) shows that textbooks have such a central role in teaching that they are seen to function as a so-called hidden curriculum. As textbooks are institutional texts, they have a strong influence on teachers and their ideas on what is central and important in language learning (Luukka et al. 2008: 64). However, Luukka et al. (2008: 65) point out that in addition to textbooks, teachers also use their own materials and are naturally able to control how much textbooks are used.

The continuing popularity of textbooks can also be seen in an even more recent large-scale study by Tergujeff (2013), which found out that 97.8% of English teachers use textbooks in their teaching, although electronic resources are also becoming more common (Tergujeff 2013: 35). Teachers often prefer ready-made materials, because they do not have the time to create their own materials, but then again this places great responsibility on study material designers, as teachers assume that the materials follow the curriculum (Tikkakoski 2018: 3). However, many teachers have also found textbooks frustrating and restrictive from time to time (Lähdesmäki 2004: 271). Because of such an extensive use of textbooks, it is important to study them in order to find out what kind of cultural information they contain and how different cultures are presented to students. Lähdesmäki (2004: 271) remarks that textbooks can have a considerable influence on students and the kind of knowledge and attitudes they absorb from them, so selecting materials for a textbook can be a very challenging task.

English teaching and publishing of teaching materials are both a part of big international business, and plenty of time and money is spent on the planning and marketing of teaching materials (Lähdesmäki 2004: 273). The textbooks used in Finnish schools are normally products of Finnish publishers (Lähdesmäki 2004: 277-278). In general, the English textbook makers in Finland are Finnish with the addition of at least one native English speaker. The most common variety in the textbooks is British English, but other varieties are introduced as well (Tergujeff 2013: 30). Geography and special features of the target culture used to be common topics in textbooks, but nowadays they seem to have given way to such topics as environmental issues, multiculturalism and tolerance (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272). Also such topics as friendship and healthy eating habits are common in textbooks aimed at adolescents (Lähdesmäki 2004: 280). The general tone of textbooks is often rather neutral and correct, which can be explained by economics: in order to sell the books to as many people as possible, they have to be "acceptable" (Lähdesmäki 2004: 279). However, such neutrality does not necessarily reflect

real life.

English textbooks have traditionally focused on the UK, which is understandable as it is the home of the English language after all. However, due to the global status of English, it is important that textbook writers include other countries as well. There has been some progress in terms of a more versatile presentation of different cultures and over the years English textbooks have started to contain more and more information about other English speaking countries. However, such versatility has not always been the case. According to Kubanek (1991: 193) the developing world was not dealt with in English textbooks used in Germany because it was considered too difficult and unfamiliar a topic for textbook writers due to the lack information from developing countries. With the development of the internet this is no longer the case and there is plenty of information available for textbook writers.

Another common source of culture related textbook criticism has been the habit of representing target cultures stereotypically, for example as patriarchal and heterosexual. Such views do not reflect the reality and are problematic in culturally important institutional texts as they only help to maintain stereotypical and unequal paradigms (Lähdesmäki 2004: 274-275). However, stereotypical thinking is also a natural characteristic of human beings: without it, life would be very difficult to handle (Kaikkonen 1994: 57). In other words, stereotypes help us to understand the world and to interact with people from other countries (Keller, 1991: 120). What is problematic with stereotypes, then, is the fact that people get treated as if they all have the same characteristics only because they belong to a certain group of people when in reality everyone is an individual (Kaikkonen 1994: 57). These are the kind of matters that should be discussed during language lessons, as students may have formed their opinions on different groups of people based on very limited experience (Byram 1993: 48). It is useful to discuss general national characteristics during foreign language lessons, but the teacher should be careful not to make generalisations (Kaikkonen 1994: 65). Older English textbooks may have contained plenty of stereotypes, but because of a more recent focus on political correctness, there are hardly any insensitive cultural stereotypes in current English textbooks (Lähdesmäki 2004: 279).

Textbooks have also been criticised for their uncritical representation of target cultures (Corbett 2003: 19). A common feature of textbooks has been their objective and neutral style and

avoidance of difficult topics (Risager 1991: 189). Even though the focus of the present study is on English textbooks, I will present some findings made on a French textbook, which show that there has been excessive positivity in other language books as well. Byram (1989) has investigated a French textbook *Action! Graded French* by Michael Buckby from the early 1980s. Interestingly, one of the aims of the author was to "foster positive attitudes towards countries where French is spoken and to speakers of French" (Byram, 1989: 123). With this being the starting point, it is no wonder why the book presents such an uncritical and unrealistic image of the French culture. According to Byram, only royal visits run so effortlessly. The people introduced in the series are young and attractive with a permanent smile on their faces. They are also always willing to help. Some matters are criticised, though, for example French driving habits, but other than that, French culture is presented so positively that it is not believable (Byram 1989: 125-126). A reason for such neutrality can be attributed to the "principle of cultural appropriacy", which regulates the making of language textbooks globally. This principle aims at avoiding politically and culturally sensitive topics in textbooks, (Gray 2001, cited in Lähdesmäki 2004: 279) but then again, such neutrality does not provide a realistic picture of any culture. However, sensitive topics such as unemployment, pollution, being a single parent and belonging to ethnic minorities have been introduced as well even in older textbooks (Mennecke 1993: 47). A French textbook *Orientations* from 1985 covers such topics as world hunger, colonisation of Senegal, nuclear testing and racism (Starkey 1991: 219), but in general earlier language textbooks have provided a very uncritical view of the target culture (Corbett 2003: 18). Language textbooks may have come a long way since Buckby's overly positive presentation of French culture, but they have still been criticised for being so neutral that students cannot identify with them (Gray 2001, cited in Lähdesmäki 2004: 281). Many researchers have emphasised the importance of realism in textbooks (e.g. Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991: 180). This is especially important in textbooks aimed at adolescents as being an adolescent is rarely trouble-free and therefore excessive positivity is not going to appeal to them (Byram 1989: 17). Textbook making is no way easy, but in order to appeal to students, textbook writers should try to avoid overly harmonious depictions of the target culture and include conflicts as well, as conflicts are a natural part of life (Mennecke 1993: 47). Also, as societies are becoming increasingly multicultural, it is important to present people from different backgrounds that students can compare themselves with (Byram 1989: 54). Finally, even though the aim of the teaching may be to create positive attitudes towards the target language and culture, (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272) textbooks should always be credible in their presentation of the target culture (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991: 180).

#### 4.4 Previous studies on cultural content in textbooks

Study materials and their planning in language teaching are both relatively new research topics: they have been systematically studied for only the past few decades (Elomaa 2009: 30). However, despite this, there is a moderate amount of research conducted on English textbooks (Lähdesmäki 2004: 273). According to Lähdesmäki (2004: 278) particular attention has been paid to gender stereotypes and women's roles in textbooks. Textbooks have been criticised for supporting stereotypical gender roles and portraying men in more authoritative and versatile professional roles than women. Nowadays textbooks are more equal in terms of their portrayal of men and women (Lähdesmäki 2004: 279), so such criticism has enabled positive changes to happen. However, as the focus of this study is on culture, this section will concentrate on studies conducted on cultural content in textbooks.

Cultural content in English textbooks has been studied from different viewpoints. Some have analysed how the books teach cultural matters and others have studied the contents of the books as cultural products and how they embody certain cultures (Lähdesmäki 2004: 273). In addition to gender roles, cultural content in English textbooks has also received strong criticism. One common source of criticism has been the focus on Anglo American culture (Lähdesmäki 2004: 274). Lähdesmäki (2004: 277) continues that Anglo American culture has been presented as the norm in textbooks and, as a result, native English speakers have been placed in the position of privileged norm-providers when in reality nobody owns the English language due to its global status.

A number of MA theses such as Pohjanen (2007), Lappalainen (2011), Lamponen (2012) and Lindström (2015) have also studied the presentation of Anglo American culture in Finnish-made English textbooks. Pohjanen (2007) studied two English textbook-series, *The News Headlines* 1-8 and *Key English* 7-9, and found out that even though the series contained information about Hong Kong, India, Jamaica and South Africa, the main focus in *The News Headlines* was on Great Britain (England in particular), whereas *Key English* focused on American culture. She also criticised the textbooks for providing mere facts about the target cultures, which makes the books resemble travel brochures. She stated that such an approach fails to increase intercultural understanding, as students do not get to learn sufficiently about

the values, beliefs and everyday life of people from other countries. Lappalainen (2011) studied the presentation of the American culture in older and newer English textbooks (published between 2001 and 2007.) She also criticised the books for resembling travel guides as certain facts were merely stated. However, there was some progress as she found out that the newer textbooks did not contain as much stereotypical information as the older ones. She also commended the textbooks for providing information about ethnic minorities. Lindström (2015) focused on the presentation of the UK in primary, secondary and upper secondary school textbooks (respectively *Wow!*, *Spotlight* and *Open Road*.) Her decision to focus "only" on the UK was based on the fact that British culture is traditionally given most attention in textbooks, and her study therefore aimed at finding out whether the representation of Britain was comprehensive enough. Her findings showed that England was given more attention than other countries of the United Kingdom and that the focus was on London at the expense of other towns. She also criticised the primary school series *Wow!* for presenting the target culture too positively, which is unrealistic. Lamponen (2012) had a slightly different approach in her study as she examined both English and Swedish textbook series. Like Lindström (2015), she looked into *Open Road* series and found out that the series did not support the development of intercultural understanding and competence in students and that the focus was on the UK and the USA.

Pohjanen (2007), Lappalainen (2011), Lamponen (2012) and Lindström (2015) all made use of pre-existing cultural categories in their analyses developed by Risager (1991), Byram (1993), Ammer (1999) and Karjala (2003.) These categories list the kind of cultural information every textbook should contain. Byram (1993: 31) calls this information "minimum content" and his list includes for example such matters as social identity, belief and behaviour, national history, national geography and stereotypes and national identity. Such categories provide a useful starting point, but they will not be utilised in the present study as the present study is data-driven. However, based on these fairly recent studies, it is rather notable that the Finnish-made English textbooks still focus on the UK and the USA as they have done traditionally, and there has been an interest to study what is said about these countries at the expense of other English-speaking countries. This situation is further criticised by Ranta (2010), who argues that such a focus on the native speaker model in Finnish schools is problematic as English is a global lingua franca used mainly between non-native speakers. She argues that such "school English" will not prepare students for real life, and there should be a shift from teaching native-speaker English to teaching English as a lingua franca that is used

by people from different backgrounds. Such a shift has not been possible because of the matriculation examination at the end of upper secondary school, which demands the use of standard English used by native-speakers.

## **4.5 Culture in language policy documents**

### **4.5.1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, from now on abbreviated as CEFR, is a guideline for language teaching, learning and assessment in Europe. It provides guidelines on the skills learners are expected to acquire as well as levels of proficiency, which enable learners to see where they are in their language learning process. CEFR also functions as a starting point in the planning of language syllabi, curricula, examinations and textbooks (CEFR: 2001: 1). Consequently, the Finnish National Curriculum and language textbooks made in Finland have to follow the guidelines set by CEFR.

As has already been established, culture is an important area in language teaching and learning. The importance of culture can also be seen in CEFR, which introduces several culture-related skills that language learners should eventually be able to handle. These skills are sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, intercultural skills, sociolinguistic competence and sociolinguistic appropriateness.

As the name implies, sociocultural knowledge refers to knowledge about different societies or communities and their cultures. It is important to acquire such knowledge as learners' ideas about different cultures may be distorted by stereotypes due to lack of experience. CEFR (2001: 102-103) gives a list of culture-related features that characterise different European societies. These are for example: everyday living (e.g. food and drink, meal times, table manners), interpersonal relations (e.g. class structure of society and relations between classes), values, beliefs and attitudes (in relation to such factors as national identity, politics and humour), body language, social conventions (e.g. punctuality) and ritual behaviour (e.g. birth, marriage, death.) However, this kind of cultural knowledge may also in turn result in

stereotypical thinking if a learner is unable to understand that everyone inside a certain community is an individual.

Intercultural awareness has to do with the knowledge and understanding on how one's own culture is different or similar in relation to the target culture. Intercultural awareness also deals with the awareness on how different communities appear in the eyes of others. Such awareness is usually present as national stereotypes (CEFR 2001: 103).

As different cultures are more and more in contact with each other, there is a need for intercultural skills. These are:

”the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other”

”cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures”

”the capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one’s own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations” and

”the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships” (CEFR 2001: 104-105).

Sociolinguistic competence has to do with the learner's ability to use the language appropriately in different social contexts (CEFR 2001: 118). This competence includes such areas as linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions and dialect and accent. Linguistic markers of social relations include the use and choice of greetings, use and choice of address forms, conventions for turntaking and use and choice of expletives. These, of course, vary from one culture to another, as do politeness conventions. Politeness conventions are often a source of cultural misunderstandings as polite expressions may be interpreted in a literal sense. Recognising different dialects and accents is also a part of sociolinguistic competence. (CEFR 2001: 119-121).

Finally, CEFR introduces different competence levels of sociolinguistic appropriateness,



ranging between levels A1 and C2. A learner who has achieved a level C2:

”Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly. Can mediate effectively between speakers of the target language and that of his/her community of origin taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.”

At the other end of the spectrum is an A1 level learner. An A1 level learner:

”Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.”  
(CERF 2001: 122).

By the end of the ninth grade, Finnish students of English (English as a first language) should achieve the level B1.1, which means that the student has a good command of English (grade 8).

#### **4.5.2 National Core Curriculum for Basic Education**

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, from now on abbreviated as NCCBE (2014), is the starting point for primary and secondary school education in Finland. It is planned by the Finnish National Board of Education and the local curricula are made according to its guidelines. The curriculum contains, among other things, information about the objectives of instruction and the contents that should be dealt with. The curriculum therefore provides guidelines for teachers and textbook writers. In other words, teachers and textbook writers are expected to follow the guidelines set by the curriculum.

The most recent curriculum was introduced in 2016, first in primary schools (grades 1-6) and then in secondary schools (grades 7-9) between 2017 and 2019 (Finnish National Agency for Education). The current curriculum is based around the concept of transversal competence, which aims for example at such skills as multiliteracy, participation and influence, ICT skills and cultural competence. As the focus of this study is on secondary school English textbook series and its cultural content, I will now introduce what the curriculum states about culture-related aims in the English language in grades 7-9. The aims are written for English as an A

syllabus, meaning that English is the language the students have studied the longest.

The foreign language section starts by providing a general view on the task of the subject. In terms of culture, it states the following:

”It (the language learning) provides material for the formation and appreciation of a plurilingual and multicultural identity” and ”The pupils' interest in the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school community and the surrounding world is supported, and they are encouraged to communicate in authentic environments. At school, the pupils are guided to appreciate other languages, their speakers and different cultures” (NCCBE 2014: 374-375).

The following part, which focuses specifically on the objectives of the English language, states that ”The pupil's perception of cultural diversity is enhanced by discussing different value-based phenomena related to language communities” after which culture-related objectives are introduced in more detail. These objectives (O1, O2, O3), which are listed under the headline of *Growing into cultural diversity and language awareness* are not directly related to the present study (even though O1 does mention the variants of English), but as they are related to culture, I will introduce them. The objectives in question are the following:

O1 ”to promote the pupil's ability to reflect on phenomena related to the status and the variants of English and to provide the pupil with prerequisites for developing his or her intercultural competence”

O2 ”to encourage the pupil to find interesting English-language contents and environments that expand his or her perception of the globalising world and opportunities for acting in it”

O3 ”to guide the pupil to observe the regularities in the English language and how the same concepts are expressed in other languages and to use linguistic concepts as support for learning” (NCCBE 2014: 376).

In addition to these objectives, another culture-related aim is mentioned under the headline of *Evolving language proficiency, interaction skills*. Once again, this aim (O8) is not directly related to the present study. However, as it is related to culture, it makes sense to mention it, since by introducing all the culture-related objectives found in the Curriculum, one gets a better idea on how much cultural matters are actually emphasised there. The aim is the following:

O8 to help the pupil recognise cultural features in communication and to support the pupil in constructive intercultural communication (NCCBE 2014: 376).

After these objectives, the key content areas related to the objectives are introduced. In other words, these are the content areas that teachers are expected to include in their teaching. The culture-related content is once again under the headline of *Growing into cultural diversity and language awareness* and it is the following:

C1 The pupils explore cultures and ways of life in countries where English is the main language of the society. [...] The pupils acquire information about some varieties of English (NCCBE 2014: 376).

This content area is of course the focus of the present study, as it mentions the exploration of English-speaking countries, their cultures and varieties. Since such matter are mentioned in the Curriculum, it is clear that learning about different English-speaking countries and their varieties is seen as important, and as a result, I expect to find such content in the English textbooks that are made according to this Curriculum.

The content area titled *Evolving language proficiency, interaction skills, text interpretation skills, text production skills* also has a topic that is somewhat related to the present study, as it mentions the distribution of the English language. The topic is the following:

C3 The distribution and status of the English language as the language of global communication are taken into account (NCCBE 2014: 376-377).

Finally, the curriculum offers assessment criteria for the numerical grade 8, which stands for good knowledge and skills in English. In terms of cultural knowledge, the pupil will get grade 8 if:

”The pupil is able to describe in general terms where English is spoken, identify reasons for the distribution of English, and reflect on phenomena connected to the status, variants, and appreciation of the English language. The pupil is able to reflect on the relationship between language and culture in the context of the English language. The pupil realises that values differ depending on individual experience and cultural point of view”.

In addition to this, the following is demanded of the level 8 grade pupil:

”The pupil indicates that he or she knows the most important rules of politeness. The

pupil is able to take into account some key perspectives related to cultural practices in his or her interaction.” (NCCBE 2014: 378-379).

As can be seen, the curriculum includes plenty of culture-related content and objectives that should be reached. In general, the pupils are expected to learn to appreciate other cultures, languages and their speakers. When it comes to the focus of the present study, the pupils are expected to learn about English-speaking countries, their cultures and varieties. Indeed, the word *varieties* or *variants* is mentioned a couple of times in the above-mentioned extracts of the curriculum, so learning about them is obviously seen as important. It is also rather noteworthy that culture-related objectives are mentioned before other objectives in the Curriculum. Such a choice makes it clear that culture is seen as a crucial part of language teaching and learning and consequently, the emphasis on cultural matters should be visible in English textbooks as well.

On a final note, Tikkakoski (2018) notes that the viewpoint of English as a global language is strongly emphasised in the current curriculum. This can be seen for example in the following objectives of the curriculum which Tikkakoski mentions:

”The pupils construct their perception of the multilingualism and parallel use of languages in the world as well as linguistic rights. They also study the development of English into a global lingua franca. The pupils explore cultures and ways of life in countries where English is the main language of the society. [...] The pupils acquire information about some varieties of English. [...] The distribution and status of the English language as the language of global communication are taken into account” (NCCBE 2014: 376-377).

Tikkakoski (2018: 2) states that the role of English as a global language is important to recognise in teaching as it supports diversity and equality among English users. She continues that the global viewpoint of English can be seen as the opposite of standard language ideology, which according to Piller (2015) is based on the idea that a certain variety of English is intellectually, morally and aesthetically above other varieties (Piller 2015, cited in Tikkakoski 2018). As was already mentioned, English teaching in Finland (and elsewhere in the world) has traditionally focused on British English and later on also on American English, so it can be concluded that these two varieties have been seen as superior to other varieties. Nowadays, however, other English-speaking countries and their varieties are getting more and more visibility in English textbooks as a result of the objectives of more recent curriculums. This is a positive development, because the reality is that English is an exceptionally widely spread

language and it is spoken either as a first or as a second language in many other countries besides the UK and the USA. Therefore, it is important that English textbooks represent this reality.

## **5 DATA AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

In this section, the present study is introduced more thoroughly. At first, the research questions are presented, then the data of the study and finally the method of data analysis.

### **5.1 Research questions**

This study examines different English-speaking countries and their cultures and varieties in Finnish textbooks of English aimed at secondary school students. In this study culture is understood as a concept that includes both the high culture and everyday life of different communities within different countries. It seems that after a long-term focus on the UK and the USA in English textbooks, other English-speaking countries are starting to get more and more visibility. Consequently, the focus of this study will be on the English-speaking world and its presentation in a new textbook series.

The research questions are the following:

- 1) How are different English speaking countries and their cultures presented in *On the Go* series?
- 2) How are the different varieties of English presented in *On the Go* series?

### **5.2 Introducing the data**

*On the Go* is a new English textbook series aimed at secondary school students published by Sanoma Pro, the biggest publisher of study materials in Finland. *On the Go* 1, which is aimed at seventh graders, was first published in 2016. The first edition of *On the Go* 2 (aimed at eighth graders) was published in 2017 and *On the Go* 3 (aimed at ninth graders) was published in 2018. The series consists of three textbooks and three exercise books, meaning that there are two books for each grade (7-9.) This series was chosen because it is new and made according

to the most recent National Core Curriculum (2014). In addition, the introduction to the series makes promises on culture-related content, stating that the series will introduce different countries and their English varieties, geographical and cultural information, and everyday life of young people around the world.

The different sections of *On the Go* textbook are comprised of the following parts: *Start* (warm-up to the theme), *Study* (main texts meant for everyone) *Know* (vocabulary), *Talk* (oral tasks) and *Your choice* (optional texts). The different sections of the exercise book in turn consist of the following parts: *Words* (vocabulary lists), *Start* (different exercises as a preparation for the *Study* exercises), *Study* (exercises related to the *Study* texts in textbook), *Learn* (grammar), *Listen* (listening exercises), *Write* (written assignments), *Talk* (conversation and pronunciation exercises), *Choose* (optional exercises) and *Your choice* (optional exercises). In this study both the textbooks and exercise books will be examined.

The English-speaking countries (or regions) that can be found in *On the Go* are England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Jamaica, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. It may seem at first glance that the English-speaking world is rather well-presented in the series, but a closer inspection reveals that its representation is very uneven. While some of these countries have their own bigger sections, some are only mentioned with a couple of sentences or have only one longer text about them. These matters will be shortly discussed in more detail, but before that, the above-mentioned countries will be placed either in the inner circle or the outer circle in order to find out how *On the Go* represents the English-speaking world in terms of the circle model.

As has already been mentioned in the chapter that discusses the model of three circles of English, the generally accepted inner circle countries are the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with some disagreement over the placement of Ireland. In this study Ireland is regarded as an inner circle country as English has been established there for such a vast amount of time, as mentioned by Bauer (2002: 24). As can be seen, all the clear-cut inner circle countries are included in the series.

As opposed to the clear-cut inner circle countries, *On the Go* also includes some countries that are more difficult to define in terms of the circle model. These countries (or regions) are South

Africa, Jamaica and Hong Kong. It seems that there is no clear consensus on which circle these countries belong to. Depending on the source, South Africa and Jamaica are regarded either as inner circle or as outer circle countries, whereas Hong Kong is considered to belong either in the outer circle or the expanding circle. In this study South Africa and Jamaica will be regarded as inner circle countries, because, as has already been mentioned, English has a long history in South Africa and it is used there by some people in all domains, and in Jamaica, English is the only language to have an official status and it is spoken as a mother tongue by millions of people. *On the Go* also has a couple of chapters about Hong Kong, which is rather refreshing in an English textbook series. In this study Hong Kong is placed in the outer circle based on the fact that Asian Englishes can be divided into two categories, which are institutionalised varieties of the outer circle and non-institutionalised varieties of the expanding circle (Jenkins 2009: 44-45). Jenkins places for example such countries (or regions) as India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Pakistan and Singapore in the category of institutionalised varieties of the outer circle, whereas for example Japan, Korea and Thailand can be found in the other category. As can be seen, also India and Pakistan, both of which can be found in *On the Go*, are mentioned in Jenkin's list of outer circle countries and they are regarded as such in this study and in general. One final English-speaking country that appears in *On the Go* is Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea is an outer circle country with its millions of people who speak English as a second language (Crystal 2003: 64).

As has already been mentioned in Chapter 3.2, there is no clear consensus among researchers regarding the placement of different countries in the circles. In this study the decisions have been made on the basis of what different researchers have said about the issue and my own understanding of the English-speaking world. Some may disagree over how different English-speaking countries have been placed in the circles in this study, but as has been stated, there is no one correct answer everyone agrees upon. To further clarify, in this study the following countries are regarded as inner circle countries: the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Jamaica, that is, countries where English is the mother tongue of millions of people and is used by them in all domains. This decision is further supported by Pahta (2004: 30) who groups the same exact countries as belonging together in terms of mother tongue use. India, Hong Kong, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea, all of which can be found in *On the Go*, are regarded here as outer circle countries. As all the clear-cut inner circle countries can be found in *On the Go*, the series seems to emphasise them at the expense of the outer circle countries or territories, those of which there are over fifty in the world. The emphasis on

the inner circle countries in secondary school English teaching is understandable, though, as their varieties are said to be norm-providing and pupils are expected to use such "proper" English in their writing. However, even though all the inner circle countries can be found in the series, it does not mean that they are all equally well-represented.

### **5.3 Method of data analysis**

The present study is carried out from the point of view of qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research, which produces mainly numerical data, the data collection procedure of qualitative research produces mainly open-ended, non-numerical data, which is analysed by non-statistical methods such as content analysis (Dörnyei 2007: 24). Indeed, content analysis is the starting point of the present study, or, to be precise, data-driven content analysis. Content analysis is a basic method of analysis and it can be used for all kinds of qualitative research (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 103). It can be used to analyse different types of documents such as books, articles, interviews and speeches systematically and objectively (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 117). The aim of content analysis is to get a general and summarised description of the phenomenon under examination (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 117). Even though content analysis is a useful method of analysis, it also has its drawbacks. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018: 117) point out that many studies that have been conducted from the point of view of content analysis have been criticised for being incomplete. They state that some researchers may have described the analysis in great detail, but instead of making meaningful conclusions, they have presented the organised data as results.

As was already mentioned, the method of analysis of the present study is data-driven content analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 122), data-driven content analysis can be thought of as a three-step process. This process involves the reduction of the data, grouping of the data and finally, abstraction of the data. The first step of the analysis, that is, the reduction of the data, means that all the information that is irrelevant to the study will be left out. The reduction of the data can be done by looking for expressions that describe the research problem. As to the current study, I started getting acquainted with *On the Go* textbooks and exercise books by glancing through them in order to get a general view of the series. Once I had done that, I started reading the books more carefully with a focus on everything related to the English-speaking world. As I went along, I made plenty of notes.



Whenever I encountered an English-speaking country that had not been mentioned before, I wrote it down as a headline and then collected all the information I could find about that country underneath it. It quickly became apparent that there were no particular culture sections in the series, but instead, culture was a key theme throughout the six books, just as the introduction to the series had promised. However, it also became apparent that there were some sections, such as *Talk* and *Learn*, that focused less on the topic of the study, but then again, sometimes they did contain some relevant information, so it would be incorrect to say that the series contains sections that do not convey any kind of cultural information at all. However, in addition to all the information about different English-speaking countries and their cultures, I noticed that the series also contained plenty of texts and exercises that had nothing to do with the viewpoint of the current study, so they were omitted. The omitted parts were, for example, texts about such topics as environmental issues, climate change, space exploration, science, future of work, different inventions and teenage life. Consequently, by omitting all the irrelevant parts in the series, I was left with the parts that focused specifically on the English-speaking world.

The second step of data-driven content analysis involves the grouping of the data. Grouping involves the setting up of the basic structure of the research and tentative descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 124). What it meant in terms of the present study was that after I was left with the parts that focused on the English-speaking world, I started looking for themes that came up in connection with different countries and their cultures. Even though there is some variety in how different countries and their cultures are presented in *On the Go*, I noticed that there were certain themes that came up in connection with many different countries and their cultures, such as information that is suitable for tourists. In terms of different varieties of English, I went through the books and wrote down all the instances that provided some kind of information about the varieties.

The last step of data-driven content analysis is the abstraction of the data. This involves the separation of the essential information and the possible formation of theoretical concepts. Abstraction continues by combining classifications for as long as it is possible from the point of view of the content of the data. In short, data-driven content analysis involves combination of concepts, which then provides an answer for the research problem. This type of analysis is also based on interpretation and deduction and it proceeds from empirical data to a more conceptual view of the phenomenon under investigation (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2018: 125-127).

In terms of the current study, I combined themes and formed categories to get a general picture of the elements of culture that are presented in the textbooks.

## **6 FINDINGS: CULTURAL CONTENT IN *ON THE GO***

### **6.1 The English-speaking world in *On the Go***

I will start this section by summarising the kind of information that is conveyed about the different English-speaking countries in *On the Go*.

Let us start with the UK. The UK has its own section towards the end of *On the Go 1*. *On the Go 1* textbook presents us information about boarding schools in England in the form of fictional characters, pros and cons of school uniforms, a short story about a bullied school girl, Harry Potter-related travel tips across England and Scotland, a chapter about fictional English school girls who are planning to open a pop-up restaurant, the map of the UK with clarifications of the terms The United Kingdom, Great Britain and The British Isles, travel tips on what to do in London and a chapter about a fictional boy who visits different historical places in England with his mother. *On the Go 1* exercise book has exercises related to these texts. Interestingly, the UK is not nearly as much emphasised in the series as one might expect. Even though it has its own section in *On the Go 1*, the UK is hardly mentioned in *On the Go 2* and *On the Go 3*. In *On the Go 2* there are only a couple of references to the UK. For example, the pupils are asked to translate the words *the River Thames* and *the English Channel* into Finnish and combine some cities (one of which is London) and their nicknames. *On the Go 3* textbook has an optional chapter about a boy who first moved from Uganda to Sweden and then to London. However, despite the lack of UK-related sections in *On the Go 2* and *On the Go 3*, *On the Go 3*, in particular, provides some information about the accents of the UK.

What is rather notable and concerning in terms of the presentation of the UK is the fact that the focus is entirely on England. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are only briefly mentioned and none of them have their own bigger sections or chapters. Even though *On the Go 1* textbook has a section called Let's Go UK (84-85), the chapter that follows it is about London. There is a map of the UK in *On the Go 1* textbook (84-85) with some cities and sights of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland written on it and an information box, which explains what is meant by

The United Kingdom, Great Britain and The British Isles, but other than that, the section does not provide any information about Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. The series does have some scattered exercises related to the three countries, such as an exercise book exercise in *On the Go 1* (179) that asks the pupils to find out what the national foods of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are. *On the Go 1* exercise book (170) also has an exercise with questions "What is the highest mountain in Great Britain?", "Where is Belfast?" and "What is the capital of Wales?". In case the pupils decide to do an optional exercise in *On the Go 3* exercise book (177), they learn that Ulster is another name for Northern Ireland. An exercise in *On the Go 1* exercise book (171) informs the pupils that the Giant's Causeway is a famous tourist attraction in Northern Ireland. *On the Go 3* textbook (117) also has a short text (six sentences) about the Troubles between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. However, the text is optional. Another optional text about Harry Potter-related sights in *On the Go 1* textbook (74-75) informs the pupils about about a Scottish railway viaduct. However, even though Scotland does not have its own chapters, some information about its variety is presented in the series, but this will be discussed later. In general, the presentation of the UK is rather poor as the focus is on England at the expense of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is unfortunate that even when the other three countries are briefly mentioned in the series, the mentions are often found in optional texts or exercises. Therefore, in case the teacher only uses this series in his or her teaching without any additional texts or exercises about Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it may be that the pupils do not learn much about the three countries in secondary school, at least during English lessons, which would provide ideal circumstances to learn about them. Secondary school students are likely to be more familiar with England (and its capital London) than for example Wales (and its capital Cardiff) as they are usually introduced to it in primary school. It would be useful to shift the focus of secondary school English teaching from England (and London) to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and their cities.

The presentation of Ireland is a lot better as opposed to its neighbouring countries. Ireland has its own bigger chapter in *On the Go 3* textbook (114-117) with a full page map of the country with some of its cities marked there. However, the problem with the chapter about Ireland is that it is optional, so there is no guarantee that every student decides to read it. *On the Go 3* exercise book also has four pages of exercises about Ireland (176-179). However, these exercises are also optional and most of them are related to the chapter so in order to do them, one would have to read the textbook chapter. In case the students decide to read the chapter

about Ireland, they learn that the Irish have spread around the world, on St Patrick's Day people wear green, there was a famine in the 1800s, both Irish and English are used, religion is important, there was a period of violent fighting called the Troubles, Celtic jewellery is popular around the world and that the Irish have their own type of step dancing. In addition to these, there is also a timeline of some major historical events of Ireland. This is a very unique feature in the series as similar timelines cannot be found about other countries. As was already mentioned, the exercise book exercises are mostly related to the textbook chapter, but there are also exercises that ask the students to present an Irish musician or band, find some Irish jokes, google top tourist attractions in Ireland and present some of them to other, google Irish accent and write down how it differs from British English, google street signs in Ireland and write the name of an Irish town in both English and Irish, watch a step dancing video, draw a St Patrick's Day costume, draw a Celtic knot, google murals that were painted during the Troubles and draw one and find about common Irish names. *On the Go* also provides some information about the Irish English variety as can be seen in one of the exercises mentioned, but this will be discussed later. As can be seen, the series provides some rather varied information about Ireland, but unfortunately, all of it is optional. As a result, the students may not learn much about Ireland during secondary school English lessons.

Out of all English-speaking countries in the series, the USA seems to have the biggest role. There are plenty USA-related chapters and exercises that are optional, but the series also has some USA-related content that is meant for everyone. The whole series starts with a USA section with USA-related chapters and exercises. In addition to that, the series also provides occasional chapters and exercises about the USA in *On the Go 2* and *On the Go 3*. The optional chapters in *On the Go 1* (and exercises related to them) are about different summer camps, Florida, Tom Sawyer (cartoon), Michael Jordan, a legend of North American people, different sights around the USA and the California Gold Rush that happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *On the Go 2* textbook has a couple of optional USA-related chapters and they are about a French man who walked a tightrope between the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York, a story about a Chicagoan model who commits a crime and a waitress from New York who wants to make a breakthrough in Hollywood. *On the Go 3* textbook also has the same optional chapters as *On the Go 2* as the series is built around the idea that students can have plenty of choice over the texts they read. Therefore, the same chapters are also included in *On the Go 3* as some students may have not read them in *On the Go 2*. The chapters that are meant for everyone are about fictional characters, which is common in primary and secondary school language books.

In fact, in this series many chapters about different English-speaking countries and their cultures that are meant to be dealt by everyone involve fictional characters. The USA-related chapters in *On the Go 1* that are meant for everyone are about a fictional boy who attends a summer camp and tells about his experiences in a letter to his parents (9-10), a girl who writes about her experiences at a summer camp (25-26) and two friends who spend time together in California (45-46). *On the Go 2* has an optional chapter about (possibly) fictional people who talk about their favourite events in New York (129-130). As most of the USA-related content can be found in *On the Go 1*, that is, the book for seventh graders, it is understandable that many of its chapters deal with teenage life. *On the Go 3*, on the other hand, focuses more on international issues, which is understandable as it is meant for ninth graders. The series also includes information about the American English variety, but once again, this will be discussed later.

Canada has a bigger section in *On the Go 2*. The same information is also presented in *On the Go 3*. The Canada section in *On the Go* textbook (142-143) starts by presenting some basic information about the country, for example, that it is the second largest country in the world, people started arriving there about 15,000 years ago from Asia, it is a multicultural and bilingual country and that Canadians love hockey. Once again, the chapter that is meant for everyone involves fictional characters. The chapter (145-146) is about three Canadian teenagers who are writing an assignment on Canadian culture. The chapter introduces some matters that are typically Canadian, such as multiculturalism, the French-speaking minority, maple leaves and maple syrup. Canadians are also said to be generally very patriotic and tolerant and that they value equality and respect minority rights. Another section (150-151) lists some nationalities that can be found living in Canada with some questions about immigration to Canada. The rest of the chapters are optional. The chapter *Odd facts about Canada* (154-155) presents some unique details about Canada, for example, that Canadian money smells like maple syrup and that Canada was the first country in the world to build a UFO landing pad. What follows next is a chapter about a Canadian hockey legend Wayne Gretzky and his career (156-157). The final chapter is about Canadian people of Finnish descent (158-159). *On the Go 2* (and 3) exercise books have exercises related to the textbook chapters and in addition to them, the students are asked to find out what certain Canadian words mean and to watch a lacrosse video online and combine some lacrosse terms (238-239). However, as there is only one chapter about Canada that is meant for everyone, most of the exercises are optional. The series introduces some features that are typical of Canadian English,

but these will be discussed later.

Australia has its own section at the beginning of *On the Go 2*. The Australia section in *On the Go 2* textbook starts by stating that the seasons are opposite in Finland and Australia and that as a result, it is very hot in Australia on New Year's Day (9). There are two Australia-themed chapters that are meant for everyone and once again, they are about fictional characters. The first chapter introduces a typical day of an Australian teenage girl (11-12) and the other one involves an Australian teenage boy and his family and friends who travel to the coast for their summer holiday, like many families do, according to the chapter (31-32). The optional texts are about Australian sights and food, opal mining, a teenage girl who sailed around the world alone, Australian animals, an interview with a lifeguard on Bondi Beach, instructions on how to throw a boomerang and a true story about three Aboriginal girls who walked 1,600 kilometres back to their families after they were forced apart by the Europeans. The last chapter is very different from the other Australia chapters in terms of its subject matter. Unlike the other chapters, which deal with very light-hearted matters, this chapter (46-47) informs the students about the very bad treatment of the Aboriginals. Having this type of information included in the series is very important as it brings some kind of balance and realism amid all the positiveness. However, the chapter is optional which is very unfortunate. Once again, *On the Go 2* has exercises related to the chapters. Some features of Australian English are introduced as well and they will be discussed later.

Like Australia, New Zealand has its own section in *On the Go 2*. There are two chapters that are meant for everyone and once again, they are about fictional teenagers who travel around New Zealand. The first chapter is about two teenage boys who are a team in a reality show, which involves travelling around New Zealand and solving clues. The another chapter is about two Singaporean boys who have travelled to New Zealand as exchange students. They go hiking with their host family's teenage son and due to bad communication, their trip does not go as expected.

The other chapters are optional and they inform the pupils about such matters as the different ethnic groups in New Zealand, detector dogs at the airports, shark attacks around Stewart Island, what kind of activities to try out in New Zealand, Maori tattoos and a Maori legend. *On the Go 2* exercise book has exercises related to these chapters. As can be seen, there are two chapters dedicated to the Maori, but they are both optional. In case the pupils decide not to read

neither of them, they do not learn anything about the people who inhabited New Zealand before the Europeans arrived there. It would be good if one of the chapters about the Maori was a *Study* text, that is, a main text meant for everyone. However, *On the Go 2* exercise book has one Maori-related exercise in its *Study* section, so the pupils who do not read the optional chapters about the Maori gain at least some kind of knowledge about the Maori. The exercise in question informs the pupils that every New Zealander studies at least some Maori in school and then the pupil is asked to learn the Maori numbers from one to ten by heart as quickly as possible. There are also some other variety-related matters in this section, but they will be discussed later.

South Africa is introduced to the pupils in *On the Go 3*. There is one chapter with fictional characters that is meant for everyone. The chapter involves two cousins, one of whom lives in South Africa and another who lives in New Zealand. They keep in touch via e-mail and converse about such topics as cultural misunderstandings between a Finnish exchange student and South Africans. What follows then is a short essay about South African culture written by the said Finnish exchange student. There are two optional chapters, one of which tells an African folk tale and another one which tells the pupils about such matters as the varied cultural backgrounds of South Africans, colonisation, Apartheid, Nelson Mandela and the animals and natural sights of South Africa. *On the Go 3* exercise book has exercises that are related to these chapters. Some features that are typical of South African English are introduced and these will be discussed later.

Jamaica has its own section in *On the Go 2* (the same section can be found also in *On the Go 3* as the series is designed so). The section is very short in comparison to the above-mentioned countries. However, the section has a chapter that is meant for everyone. The chapter in question is about a fictional Jamaican teenager who tells us what it is like to live with hurricanes. After that, some tips for hurricane survival are presented. There is one optional chapter that talks about the importance of music in the Caribbean and then introduces Bob Marley and a Jamaican band called The Dreads. *On the Go 2* has exercises related to the chapter about hurricanes. There are also optional exercises. These include a chart where the pupils are asked to fill a Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt's information and a map where they are asked to name the Caribbean countries, as well as colour the flag of Jamaica. There are also optional exercises related to the chapter about music. There is also a listening exercise about the Atlantic slave trade. As can be seen, the series also includes some information about sensitive historical

topics, which is good as such matters should not be ignored. As to the Jamaican English variety, there are not any examples of it expect for the use of the word "man" at the end of one sentence. However, it can be assumed that a native Jamaican English speaker reads the chapters, which then allows the pupils to hear what Jamaican English sounds like, but in this study the focus is only on the written texts.

India has one bigger chapter in *On the Go 1* and a bigger section in *On the Go 2*. In addition to those, *On the Go 3* also has a India-themed chapter that is meant for everyone. The chapter is written in the form of a film review. The film tells a real-life story of an Indian boy who gets lost as a child and is adopted by an Australian couple. The chapter in *On the Go 1* textbook is optional and the exercises related to it in *On the Go 1* exercise book are naturally optional as well. The chapter introduces an Indian teenage boy, his family, everyday life and interests. In addition to the exercises related to the chapter, there is also an exercise, which asks the pupils to combine words and their definitions, such as Bollywood – The Hindi language film industry. The bigger India-themed section in *On the Go 2* has one chapter with fictional characters that is meant for everyone and it focuses on the differing treatment of boys and girls in Indian families. In addition to that, there is only one optional chapter, which familiarises the pupils with the colonisation of India, Mahatma Gandhi, Indian inventions, The Taj Mahal, Hinduism and the contradiction between the rich and the poor. In addition to the exercises related to the chapters, there is also one exercise which describes a festival called Holi. Some features of Indian English are presented in the series and they will be discussed later.

Hong Kong has its own section in *On the Go 2*. The chapter that is meant for everyone presents a fictional Australian girl, who has come to visit his friend in Hong Kong. They go out on a street market, and the girl is taught to haggle. There are three optional chapters. The first one introduces a tradition called dragon boat racing, some popular tourist attractions, film star Jackie Chan and a dish called dim sum. The second optional chapter is similar to the one about the Indian teenage boy in *On the Go 1* and it introduces a teenage girl from Hong Kong and her home. The last optional chapter is a cartoon about a traditional Chinese love story. Once again the exercises in *On the Go 2* exercise book are related to the textbook chapters. As to the English variety used in Hong Kong, there are no written examples about it, but it can be expected that a native Hong Konger reads the chapters.

Pakistan and Papua New Guinea do not have similar or as many chapters as the other countries



mentioned above, but they are included in the form of a novel excerpt by a New Zealand author Lloyd Jones and excerpts from a speech and an autobiography by Malala Yousafzai. All of these can be found in *On the Go* 3. Yousafzai is a young Pakistani activist who was shot in the head when she refused to stop attending school. She has fought for the children's right to attend school and has won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work. Part of her speech is included in a chapter that is meant for everyone. In addition to that, there is an optional four page excerpt from her autobiography, which tells about her life in Pakistan during the time of the assault. The optional chapter about the novel *Mister Pip* by Jones is set in Papua New Guinea during the civil war in the 1990s, which Jones covered there as a journalist. The story is told from the point of view of a thirteen-year-old girl named Matilda. The excerpt introduces the only white man left in a Papua New Guinean village, Mr Watts, who loves Charles Dickens and has volunteered to teach the children after all the teachers have fled. The subject matter of all of these texts is rather bleak, but it is important that the pupils learn about the realities of the world.

Having summarised the type of information the series presents about different English-speaking countries, it is time to focus on the bigger themes that can be found in the series.

## **6.2 The different themes in *On the Go***

As has already been mentioned, there were certain matters that came up regularly when different English-speaking countries were introduced. However, not every theme comes up in connection with every single country as the presentation of the countries is rather uneven, but there are plenty of similarities in the way the countries are introduced. As certain matters or themes come up regularly, it can be concluded that the authors of the series consider them to be important. The bigger themes I was able to identify are the following: *information for tourists, geographical information about different countries, historical information about different countries, information about different groups of people within different countries, information about different customs, traditions and celebrations* and *some generalisations*. I will now introduce the kind of information that is presented about the different English-speaking countries in *On the Go* in terms of the different themes.

### 6.2.1 Information for tourists

The first theme, *information for tourists*, is one of the most notable themes in the series. The series provides the pupils with plenty of information about different tourist attractions and tips on what to do in different countries as a tourist. In fact, the pupils are occasionally even addressed as if they were tourists and some texts actually resemble guidebooks. Similar findings have been made by Pohjanen (2007). The chapter *Fun Florida* in *On the Go 1* textbook exemplifies this by stating the following:

”If you are going on vacation with your parents, you will definitely need some excitement. You may want to hit the sea and go kiteboarding, snorkeling or kayaking. Or perhaps you want to splash around in some cool swimming pools instead. In the evenings, you can do a 'Teen Night Out' activity program, where you can hang out, make new friends, play computer games and board games, or just chill”. (Fun Florida, *On the Go 1* textbook, 18-19).

The chapter also presents some famous Floridian foods. The pupils are encouraged to ”try the following tasty treats”, which are a Cubano sandwich, key lime pie and orange juice. Key lime pie is Florida's official pie and the pupils are told that ”you can't leave Florida without having a slice” (Fun Florida, *On the Go 1* textbook, 18-19).

In *On the Go 1* exercise book (65) the pupils are introduced to some sights in the USA via the following instructions:

”You'll need a raincoat with you when you visit this sight on the border between the US and Canada”.

”You can't miss these four former presidents as their heads are 18 meters high”.

”Don't forget to take plenty of water with you as this is one of the hottest places in the world”.

Similar examples can also be found in chapters *Follow in Harry Potter's footsteps* and *What to do in London* in *On the Go 1*. The former chapter states the following:

”You will find a sign that says Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ . You can try and run through the brick wall like the Hogwarts students used to do, but you will almost certainly hit your head”

”In real life, the train is called ‘The Jacobite’ and it will take you through beautiful Scottish scenery, but you can pretend it is the Hogwarts Express if you like”

”You will recognise this castle immediately, as it is very often used in TV series and films. Here, you can take flying lessons on a broomstick at the very spot where Harry Potter had his first flying lesson. Don’t forget your camera!” and

”There are over one hundred deadly plants in her poison garden, and you should not touch any of them”. (Follow in Harry Potter's footsteps, *On the Go 1* textbook, 74-75).

The latter chapter, as the name suggests, gives the pupils some tips on what can be done in London. They are told that by visiting the London Dungeon they will learn about London's 1,000-year-old history, ”but if you get scared easily, this is not for you”. They are also told that ”you meet some people from London (played by actors of course), like Jack the Ripper, who tell you their terrible stories”. The chapter also provides information about some tourist attractions that are free of charge. The pupils are told to ”watch the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, where the royals live”, ”go to Covent Garden and watch the street performers”, ”visit the science museum”, ”walk around Camden Market” and ”discover the Natural History Museum, where you can see the famous skeleton of ”Dippy” the dinosaur and over 80 million other items from the natural world”. (What to do in London, *On the Go 1* textbook, 86-87).

The pupils are also addressed as if they were tourists in *On the Go 2*. In chapter *Have a blast in NZ!* they are told to ”take a helicopter ride to the top of a live volcano and snowboard down” and in case they attend a rugby match they should ”pick a team [and] cheer at the top of your voice” (Have a blast in NZ! *On the Go 2* textbook, 98-99).

In chapter *Hello, Hong Kong!* the pupils are told that Victoria Peak is the highest point in Hong Kong and that

“Up here, you have an incredible view of the city's skyscrapers, woods and mountains, with China far in the background. Getting there is pretty exciting too: take the 125-year-old funicular, Asia's oldest tram”.

In addition to that, they are told that

”If you want to see what Hong Kong looked like to fishermen and pirates in the past, you can sail on a ”junk” (a traditional Chinese fishing boat) past secret caves and small deserted islands. Drop anchor somewhere quiet and dive into the water for a swim. But stay away from the port”.

The pupils are also told about the world's largest permanent light and sound show in downtown Hong Kong, which is ”not to be missed” (Hello, Hong Kong! *On the Go 2* textbook, 60-61).

In terms of Australia, the pupils are introduced to some Aboriginal foods with the encouragement ”try one of the following”. (What's up Down Under? *On the Go 2* textbook, 20-21).

Finally, in chapter South Africa – A world in one country, the pupils are told about a famous flat-topped mountain in South Africa. They are told that in order to get to the said mountain, ”You can take the Aerial Cableway to the top (easier) or you can walk up (more fun)”. (South Africa – A world in one country. *On the Go 3* textbook, 79).

As can be seen in the above-mentioned sentences, there are some parts in the series that resemble guidebooks and address the pupils as if they were actually planning to visit these places. Such an approach is far from realistic and may cause annoyance in some pupils, as not everyone is actually able to go on expensive holidays. Then again, such texts also provide important general education, as it is considered important to know something about certain sights and tourist attractions. All in all, tourism is largely present throughout the series. The pupils are, among other things, asked to plan trips to the British Isles and the USA, find out about tourist attractions in Ireland, Australia, Canada and the USA and then present the information to others, give reasons why and what places they would like to visit in the UK, the USA and Ireland, read tips what kind of activities to try out in New Zealand and design travel advertisements about Australian and South African sights. In terms of India the pupils are told that the Taj Mahal is one of India's most visited buildings (*On the Go 2* textbook, 121), The Giant's causeway is a famous tourist attraction in Northern Ireland (*On the Go 1* exercise book, 171) and that Boulders Beach is a popular tourist stop in South Africa (*On the Go 3* exercise book, 119)

## 6.2.2 Geographical information about different countries

The second theme, *geographical information about different countries*, is another notable theme in the series. Having geographical knowledge is considered important in terms of general education and by presenting plenty of geographical information about different English-speaking countries, the pupils are likely to gain plenty of factual knowledge about them.

The series provides geographical information (to varying degrees) about the following countries: the UK, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Jamaica and India. Geographical information is therefore not provided about Pakistan, Hong Kong or Papua New Guinea. Geographical information is mostly provided in the exercise book exercises, some of which are related to the maps of different countries that can be found in the textbooks. In other words, the maps are there to help the pupils to answer the geography-related questions in the exercise books. In terms of the UK, the pupils are asked to look at the map of the UK in *On the Go 1* textbook (84-85) and answer the questions related to it in *On the Go 1* exercise book (170). The questions are the following:

- What are the four countries in the UK?
- What are the Hebrides?
- Where is the English Channel?
- What is the highest mountain in Great Britain?
- What is the river that flows through London?
- Where is Belfast?
- What is the capital of Wales?

As can be seen, the whole of the UK is represented in the above-mentioned questions, as the highest mountain in Great Britain is in Scotland, Belfast is in Northern Ireland, the capital of Wales is Cardiff and the Thames flows through London. However, it is rather surprising that the geography of the UK is dealt with so briefly when the geography of the United States is focused on in a couple of separate exercises as will be seen shortly. Then again, the United States is such a large country that it makes sense to give it more attention than the UK.

In terms of Ireland the pupils are asked to look at the map of Ireland in *On the Go 3* (114) and

answer the following questions in *On the Go 3* exercise book (176):

Name four cities in Ireland

What three seas surround Ireland?

What country shares a border with Ireland?

As can be seen, there are only three questions about the geography of Ireland, but then again Ireland does not have a very notable role in the series, so it is good that at least some geographical information about Ireland is provided there.

*On the Go 1* exercise book has a couple of geography-themed exercises about the USA. Exercises 243 and 244 in *On the Go 1* (64) are meant to be done with the help of the map of the USA in *On the Go 1* (32-33.) The questions of exercise 243 are the following:

How many states share a border with Mexico?

Name three states that share a border with Canada.

Name three states on the east coast.

How many states are there on the Pacific coast in the west?

What's the capital of the US?

In exercise 244 the pupils are asked to correct the following statements with the help of the map in the textbook:

California is by the Atlantic Ocean

Minnesota is bigger than Texas

Arizona is a colder state than Michigan

Colorado is east of Kansas

Texas is by the Pacific Ocean

When it's 2 p.m. in Utah, it's 5 p.m. in North Carolina

In addition to these exercises, the following geography-themed questions are asked in exercise 245 in *On the Go 1* (65):

How many states are there altogether?

What's the biggest state in the US?

What's the biggest city in the States?

As can be seen, quite a few questions are asked about the geography of the United States. It

can be expected that quite a many pupils are already somewhat familiar with its geography due to its powerful status in the world, and therefore I think that it would be a good idea to focus more on the geography of some other countries, such as Ireland, which was introduced rather briefly.

In terms of Australia, the pupils are asked to correct the following statements in *On the Go 2* exercise book exercise 152 (30) with the help of the map of Australia in *On the Go 2* (18-19):

Sydney is the capital of Australia

There are six states in Australia

Queensland is in the western part of Australia

Victoria the smallest state in Australia

Brisbane is by the Indian Ocean

Papua New Guinea is south of Australia

The Indian Ocean is east of Australia

The Great Barrier Reef is in the South Pacific Ocean

As can be seen, some basic geographical facts about Australia are rather nicely introduced in the series (although very briefly, of course, because the series cannot cover everything in great detail). This is very good, because Australia may be quite unfamiliar to some students due to its distant location.

The geography-themed questions about New Zealand in exercise 440 *On the Go 2* exercise book (122) are the following, and once again, they can be answered with the help of the map of New Zealand in *On the Go 2* (78-79):

What's the capital of New Zealand?

What's the sea between New Zealand and Australia called?

What's the highest mountain in New Zealand?

What's the third largest island in New Zealand?

On which island is Queenstown located?

What is the area between the North and South Island called?

What is White Island?

As can be seen, the geography of New Zealand is given almost as much attention as the geography of Australia. I think that, once again, this is very good as many students may not be

that familiar with New Zealand due to its distant location.

In terms of Canada, the following questions are asked in exercise 841 in *On the Go 2* (238). Once again, the questions can be answered with the help of the map of Canada in *On the Go 2* (152-153).

Canada is divided into provinces and territories. What is the largest and northernmost territory called?

What is the name of the French-speaking province?

The smallest province is an island. What is it called?

What is the name of the province that borders the USA and the Great Lakes? It's also the most populous province.

The three largest cities in Canada are Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The fourth largest city is the capital of Canada. What is it called?

How many time zones are there in Canada?

What are the names of the oceans that lie east, north and west of Canada?

As can be seen, Canada is given a similar amount of attention as New Zealand and some basic geographical facts are introduced.

South Africa is introduced in *On the Go 3*. The pupils are asked to answer the following questions in *On the Go 3* exercise book (116) with the help of the map of South Africa in *On the Go 3* (76):

Name three neighbouring countries of South Africa.

Name a country that lies inside South Africa

Which ocean lies to the east of South Africa?

Where can you go skiing in South Africa?

What's the name of the national park in the north-east?

What's the name of the island near Cape Town?

In addition to these questions, the pupils are asked to answer the following questions in *On the Go 3* exercise book (116): South Africa has three capital cities. What are they called? and What's the largest city in South Africa?



As can be seen, there are eight questions about the geography of South Africa, which is the same amount of questions as with the geography of Australia.

The final country in the series to have questions that can be answered with the help of the map is India. With the help of the map of India in *On the Go 2* textbook (118) the pupils are asked to answer the following questions in *On the Go 2* exercise book (182):

Name three neighbouring countries of India

What is the name of the mountain range in the north?

Name two rivers in India

Name two cities on the coast

Which ocean lies to the south of India?

What is the name of the sea that lies to the west of India?

As can be seen, there are only six questions about India so its geography is given less attention than many of the above-mentioned countries.

Finally, in terms of Jamaica, the pupils are asked to write down the names of some countries in the map of the West Indies (*On the Go 2* exercise book, 262).

As can be seen, the series provides some geographical information about various countries, (although to varying degrees), which is good as it is important to be able to look beyond the borders of one's own home country. The geographical information in the series also brings forth the idea that nowadays it is common to combine different subjects: in this case geography and English are taught together. This idea also applies to the next theme, which is *historical information about different countries*.

### **6.2.3 Historical information about different countries**

*On the Go* provides some *historical information* about the following countries: England, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, Jamaica, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. As can be seen, various countries can be found under this category. However, the series does not provide any historical information about Wales, Scotland, New Zealand or Pakistan. Also, the past is often dealt with rather briefly,

which is understandable, as the series is not meant to function as a history book. Still, some useful historical information is provided about the above-mentioned countries, which is good, as it is important to understand the past in order to understand the present.

Some information about the history of England is presented in *On the Go 1* textbook chapter titled *A saint, a queen and a wig* (104-105). The chapter is about a fictional boy who travels around the south of England with his mother, who is a history professor. As they visit different historical places, the pupils learn about King Henry VIII, who lived in Hampton Court Palace and had all in all six wives, two of whom he beheaded. The pupils are told about one of his wives, Catherine Howard, in more detail. She was first imprisoned in the palace due to her assumed infidelity and after her escape, she was beheaded. It is said that the ghost of the woman can be heard screaming at night. The fictional boy and his mother also visit a small church in Oxford and Fashion Museum in Bath. In the church they see a painting of Saint Wilgefortis, which shows a young woman with a beard. By growing a beard she avoided an unwanted marriage. In the Fashion Museum they see some decorative wigs, which were, according to the text, used by both men and women in the past. The pupils are told, among other things, that women liked to wear very high wigs and that animal fat and wax were used to make the hair stay up. Unfortunately, the animal fat attracted mice and different types of insects.

*On the Go 3* textbook presents some information about the history of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in chapter FYI: Eire (115-117). The pupils are told that "back in 1609, Scottish and English Protestants moved into a province in the north called Ulster" and that "the descendants of these settlers have always felt closer to Protestant England than to Catholic Ireland, and to this day this part of the island is part of the UK". The pupils then learn about the Great Famine between 1845 and 1847, which resulted in the death of about one million Irish people. The famine caused many people to emigrate to the United States, which provides a partial explanation for the large number of Irish descendants in the USA. The pupils are also told about more recent historical events in Ireland, that is, the Troubles. The chapter presents the following text about the Troubles:

"Some Irish people think that Ireland should be one, united country. Others, especially those in Northern Ireland, want to stay part of the UK. These differences led to a period of violent fighting known as the Troubles. For nearly 30 years, Irish people fought each other with bullets and bombs. Thousands died, families were torn apart and some parts of Belfast and Derry were divided and dangerous. It's calmer now, but the situation is

still difficult”.

In addition to the above-mentioned information, the chapter also provides a timeline of “a brief history of Ireland”. This is a very unique feature in the series and similar timelines cannot be found in relation to any other country. The timeline presents some major historical events in Ireland from 8000 BCE until 1995, such as the arrival of Celtic people in 600 BCE, arrival of Saint Patrick in 432 CE, which resulted in peoples' conversion to Christianity, Ireland becoming part of Great Britain in 1801, Northern Ireland becoming part of the UK in 1921 and the Troubles beginning in Northern Ireland in 1969. All in all, the series presents plenty of historical information about Ireland, but then again, the text where the above-mentioned examples are from, is an optional *your choice* chapter.

Even though the USA has a rather notable role in the series, its history is dealt with very briefly. *On the Go 1* textbook has an optional chapter about the California Gold Rush (56-57) that happened between 1848-1855. In the textbook chapter, *California Gold Rush*, a fictional boy tells about his experiences in a letter to his mother. Even though the text is fictional, it can be assumed that it is based on reality. The boy writes, for instance, that he and his father work and sleep in the same clothes, he has not had a bath in weeks, they never buy fruit because it is too expensive and that there are gold diggers in California from all over the world. *On the Go 1* exercise book has exercises related to the text. The pupils are also asked about some historical events in an exercise in *On the Go 2* exercise book (168). In terms of the USA, they are asked to finish the following sentence with the correct century: “The United States became an independent country\_\_\_\_\_.” Some historical information about the USA is also provided in the next section that introduces the references to the history of Canada, but no other historical information is presented about the USA.

As to Canada, the pupils are told in *On the Go 2* textbook (p. 142) that “People started arriving in Canada about 15,000 years ago from Asia. At that time land joined Asia and North America. The original inhabitants of Canada were the Inuit and the First Nations people”. In addition to that, a chapter titled *North to North* (*On the Go 2*, p. 158-159) informs the pupils in the form of a fictional interview that there are over 130,000 Canadians with a Finnish background. According to the interviewee, at the time of the emigration from Finland to Canada at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “almost all Finns first went by ship to the US or to Alaska, and then moved to Canada from there”. He also says that the Finns moved to Canada in order to work and buy

land and that at the time of their emigration, people had started to build the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Finns helped with that. Furthermore, he says that after the Finns had moved to Canada, the Finnish men worked on farms, did logging, mining and construction work. The Finnish women worked as maids, boarding house keepers and lumber camp cooks. Once they had made enough money, they bought some land. The chapter is also related to another theme, *information about different groups of people within different countries*, and the findings related to that will be discussed later.

In terms of Australia, the pupils are told in a chapter called *What's up Down Under? (On the Go 2, 20-21)* that "Aboriginal people had been living in Australia for about 60,000 years by the time the Europeans first arrived in Botany Bay in 1788".

In addition to that, the pupils also learn about the bad treatment of the Aboriginals in a chapter titled *Walking across Australia* in *On the Go 2* textbook (46-47). Before the actual text, they are informed about something called "the rabbit-proof fence". According to the short text

"Originally there were no rabbits in Australia. The English brought rabbits from Europe. Soon there were millions of them everywhere, moving from east to west, eating everything. In 1901, the government decided to build a fence to protect the farms in Western Australia from the rabbits. The fence was 1,833 km long, took six years to build and was the longest fence in the world at that time".

This information is related to the chapter that follows. The chapter tells the true story of three Aboriginal girls who were separated from their families, escaped from a institute established by white Australians and managed to get back home by following the rabbit-proof fence. The chapter starts by providing the following information:

"When the Europeans first came to Australia, they treated the local people very badly. They stole their land. When the Aboriginal people fought back, they put them in prison. Sometimes they killed them. Aboriginal children were often taken away from their families and sent to live in government or church institutions. There they were trained to become workers for the Europeans. The children had to speak only English. They were told to forget their own language, their families and their homes. Today, these children are called the "Stolen Generation".

As opposed to some older textbooks that made a conscious effort to present the target cultures in a very positive light, this chapter provides some much needed realism as the spread of the English language around the world was not a peaceful process, but instead, plenty of people suffered in the hands of the English. By presenting some unpleasant facts, the pupils will be

exposed to some unfortunate realities of the world, which is important, as it enables people to take responsibility for their wrongdoings and consequently improve their character and attitudes. In other words, one is more likely to make more humane decisions when one is aware of the injustice in the world.

Some historical information about South Africa is presented in a chapter titled *South Africa – A world in one country* in *On the Go 3* textbook (77-79). In fact, the chapter has a short section dedicated to the history of South Africa under the subheading "A brief look at history". The following information is presented under the subheading:

"Southern Africa has had a rich cultural history for thousands of years. The first Europeans arrived in 1652. Why did they go there? The main reason was trade with the wealthy East. Before the Suez Canal opened in 1869, the only way Europeans could get to the East was to sail around Africa. It was a long way to go and they needed to get provisions on the way. The Dutch set up a trading post in what is now Cape Town, and the colonisation of the country began. In 1806, South Africa became a British colony. Once gold and diamonds were discovered, more and more Europeans arrived, leading to often violent clashes with the local population. In 1948 the Europeans in the country formed a minority government that excluded everyone that was not white. White people ran the country and only they could vote".

In addition to that, the chapter also provides information about a more recent period of time in South Africa's history, that is, Apartheid. The chapter states the following about Apartheid:

"Apartheid was an infamous system of government that existed in South Africa from 1948 until 1994. The basic idea was to keep the different races in the country apart. They were not allowed to mix at all. If you were black, it was against the law to go to a white party, date a white person, attend a white school. Different races lived in different areas. Everything was segregated: separate movie theatres, separate post offices, hospitals, even separate beaches".

As can be seen, the pupils are once again provided with some painful historical facts, which is good as such information enables people to understand what went wrong in the past.

Some information about the history of India is presented in *On the Go 2* textbook (119-121) in a chapter titled *Incredible India*. The pupils are provided with the following information under the subheading *The past*:

"It's hard to imagine just how old India is. More than three thousand years ago, Indian engineers built cities with sewage systems and flushing toilets. Indians practised medicine, art and science long before Europeans did. Over time, India became very rich

and attracted Europeans from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. First they traded, then they colonised the country. The English stayed until 1947 when India became independent again. During this time, Britain had a big influence on Indian culture. That is also why English is so widely spoken there and why they drive on the left in India”.

Unlike Australia and South Africa, the presentation of the history of India does not mention violence between the local population and the Europeans. The text only mentions that “first they (the Europeans) traded, then they colonised the country”. Such a choice of words gives the impression that unlike the people in Australia and South Africa, the Indians did not even attempt to fight back, but merely surrendered. The tone of the text also gives the impression that the time the English stayed in India was very peaceful, which was not the case.

The pupils also learn from the same chapter that Mahatma Gandhi, an Indian political leader, led people to collect their own salt from hundreds of miles away when the British added a tax on salt and that after several attempts, Gandhi was killed by his opponents in 1948. Furthermore, the pupils are told that it took twenty-two years to finish The Taj Mahal and that the building was built in the memory of the favourite wife of the emperor Shan Jahan.

When it comes to the history of Jamaica, another difficult topic is presented in *On the Go 2* exercise book (255) in the form of a listening exercise. The exercise is about Triangular trade, and the pupils are asked to answer some questions related to it, such as “What were the slaves needed for?” “Why did not the local people do the work?” “What three places were part of the Triangular trade?” “Why were so many slaves needed?” and “What happened to Jon after he ran away and was caught?”. In addition to these questions, the pupils are asked to write down the products that were traded in Triangular trade.

As to the history of Hong Kong, the pupils are asked the following question:

”Hong Kong was a British colony for 156 years. When did it become part of China again?”

Finally, *On the Go 3* textbook (168-169) has an excerpt of a novel *Mister Pip* that is based on the realities of a daily life during the time of the civil war in Papua New Guinea in the 1990s. In the excerpt the only white man left in the village introduces the Papua New Guinean children to Charles Dickens.

As can be seen, the series provides some historical information about various countries and

many difficult time periods are presented to the pupils, which is good as it is important to be aware of the struggles people have faced in order to make better decisions in the future. Unfortunately, most of the above-mentioned examples are from optional *your choice* texts, so in case the pupils decide to read other optional texts, they may not learn much about the history of the English-speaking countries, at least from the series in question.

#### **6.2.4 Information about different groups of people within different countries**

The fourth theme, *information about different groups of people within different countries*, is also a rather notable theme in the series. In addition to majority groups, *On the Go* also provides some information about indigenous peoples and minority groups, which is good as a versatile representation of different groups of people within different countries provides the pupils a more realistic view of the world. The countries that provide some information about their minority groups are the following: England, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Even though the United Kingdom is composed of various minority groups, only one chapter deals with a member of a minority group in England. The chapter in question is called *My Space* and it can be found in *On the Go 3* (152-153). In the chapter the pupils are introduced to a 15-year-old William Mugula who was born in Uganda, but currently lives in London with his family. When William was younger, he lived in Sweden and went to a boarding school in Ireland. While his nationality was somewhat a bigger issue in Sweden and in Ireland, William says the following about his background in London: "Here in London I don't really know – people aren't so hung up on where you're from because in London there are people from all over the world. So there's nothing strange about it here".

As to the USA, the pupils are briefly introduced to a native people called the Tlingit in *On the Go 1* textbook chapter *How mosquitoes came to be* (38-39). While the vast majority of the Tlingit live in Alaska, some of them also live in Canada. The pupils are told the following about the Tlingit:

"The Tlingit are a native people who live on the northwest coast of North America. Their name means "People of the Tides". Tlingit people believe that all life forms – plants, trees, birds, fish, animals, and human beings – are equal. Tlingit people are well-known

for their colorful totem poles. Every village has one or two. There are giants, and even mosquitoes, on some of them”.

What follows next is a Tlingit legend about the birth of mosquitoes. *On the Go 1* exercise book (73) also has an exercise in which the pupils are asked to find out how the following words are related to the indigenous peoples of North America: *Cherokee*, *Geronimo*, *reservations*, *tomahawk* and *Little Bighorn*.

In addition to the Tlingit, other groups of people in Canada are mentioned in the series as well. The pupils are told in *On the Go 2* textbook (142) that ”The original inhabitants of Canada were the Inuit and the First Nations people”.

It is a well-known fact that Canada is a very multicultural country. *On the Go 2* textbook (142) informs the pupils that ”Most Canadians are descendants of British and French settlers, but there are a lot of immigrants from all around the world”.

Some of the nationalities living in Canada are listed in *On the Go 2* textbook (150). The following page (151) informs the pupils that ”By 2031, almost half of the Canadian population over the age of 15 will be foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent”.

The same page also provides a chart of the top 25 nationalities living permanently in Canada. With the help of the chart, the pupils are asked to discuss the following questions:

”What were the top six countries from where the immigrants came to Canada in 2015?”

”In 2015, many Syrians started to immigrate to Canada. What were some of the possible reasons?”

”Which European countries were among the top ten? What makes settling in Canada easy for people from these countries?”

The multiculturalism of Canada can also be seen in a chapter called *Go Canada!* (*On the Go 2*, 144-146), in which three fictional Canadian teenagers discuss their backgrounds. As was already mentioned, the chapter *North to North* in *On the Go 2* textbook (158-159) is also related to this theme. According to the chapter, [...] ”there are over 130,000 people of Finnish descent living in Canada today [...], there is a Finnish-language newspaper, a place called New Finland and people even play pesäpallo”.



In addition to that information, the Finnish-born interviewee says the following about Canadians of Finnish descent:

[...]”some continue to speak Finnish at home, the kids take extra Finnish classes, and they visit Finland every now and then. But mostly we are seeing a mixture of Finnish and Canadian cultures. I prepare both Karelian pasties and pancakes with maple syrup, for example, and we have sauna every weekend”.

In terms of Australia, the pupils are provided with some information about the Aboriginal people. The chapter *What's up Down Under?* in *On the Go 2* textbook (20-21) informs the pupils that

”Aboriginal people had been living in Australia for about 60,000 years by the time the Europeans first arrived in Botany Bay in 1788. Uluru (called Ayers Rock in the past) is a very important cultural place for Aboriginal people. [...] Tourists are asked not to climb the rock because it is a holy place”.

The same chapter informs the pupils about something called *bush tucker*, which means ”all kinds of traditional Aboriginal food from the bush”. The pupils are told that

”Grilled kangaroo tail was a very popular Aboriginal meal in the past”.

”*Witchetty* is an Aboriginal words for these fat, juicy grubs. Healthy and very high in protein, they were a staple in the Aboriginal diet”.

”Aboriginal people catch goannas by digging a hole in the ground where they live and dragging them out by hand”.

*On the Go 2* textbook (37) tells the pupils that ”There used to be around 750 Aboriginal languages in Australia, but only 70 have survived”.

The pupils are also told in *On the Go 2* textbook (45) that ”Aboriginal people in Australia hunted with non-returning boomerang. They also used them as weapons” and ”Aboriginals used returning boomerangs for leisure, just like we do today”.

As was already mentioned under the theme of *historical information about different countries*, the series also sheds some light on the bad treatment of the Aboriginals. Finally, *On the Go 2*

exercise book (69) has an exercise in which the pupils are asked to find out about Aboriginal art, tell their partner what they think about it, and then draw some Aboriginal art themselves.

When it comes to New Zealand, the series includes plenty of information about the Maori, that is, the indigenous people of New Zealand. At the beginning of the New Zealand section in *On the Go 2* textbook (78), the pupils are presented a chart of different ethnic groups in New Zealand. According to the chart, 74.6% of New Zealanders are European or other, 15.6% are Maori, 12.2% are Asians, 7.8% are Pacific peoples and 1.2% are Middle Eastern, Latin American and African. In a chapter titled *Have a blast in NZ!* (*On the Go 2* textbook, 98-99), the pupils are told that *haka* is "a Maori war dance, traditionally used on the battlefield to frighten the enemy". A chapter titled *Ta Moko in New Zealand* (*On the Go 2* textbook, 102-103) is about Maori tattoos, which are an important part of the Maori culture. *On the Go 2* textbook (104-105) also has a Maori legend about the sun titled *Maui and the sun*. *On the Go 2* exercise book has exercises related to these chapters. The pupils are also introduced to some Maori words. In *On the Go 2* textbook (37) the pupils are told that "The Maori word for New Zealand is Aotearoa, which means the 'land of the long white cloud'".

The chapter Ta Moko in Zealand introduces the pupils to the following Maori words:

Kia ora! Hello/Good luck/Good health

Haere ra! Goodbye (to the person going)

E noho ra! Goodbye (to the person staying)

Meri Kirihimete! Merry Christmas

Pakeha: New Zealand Europeans

In *On the Go 2* exercise book (136) the pupils are introduced to the Maori numbers from one to ten, after which they are asked to memorise them. *On the Go 2* exercise book (159) has yet another exercise about Maori words. In this exercise the pupils are asked to combine some words in Maori and in English that mean the same thing.

As to South Africa, the pupils are told in *On the Go 3* textbook (77) that

"South Africa is a very multicultural country. Its 55 million citizens are a mix of colour, religion, culture and languages. It's not called the rainbow nation for nothing! About 79% of the population is black, but while they are all South Africans, they speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. 16% are white and of mixed

descent, and 2.6% are Asian. Most South Africans are multilingual, and almost all higher education is in either English or Afrikaans. There are eleven official languages, but the five main languages (and the ones used to broadcast TV news, for example) are English, Afrikaans, Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa”.

As can be seen, the series takes into account different groups of people within different countries, which is good. In other words, the focus is not only on the majority groups, which is good as multiculturalism is a normal condition in many countries and pupils should be aware of that. However, once again most of the above-mentioned texts and exercises are optional, which means that some pupils may not learn much about the minorities or the indigenous peoples in different countries. In case the pupils decide to read some other optional texts and do some other optional exercises, they may get a rather one-dimensional view of the inhabitants in different English-speaking countries. It would be good if the chapters that focus on the indigenous peoples were meant for everyone because, after all, these people were the original inhabitants of the above-mentioned countries.

### **6.2.5 Information about different customs, traditions and celebrations**

The fifth theme, *information about different customs, traditions and celebrations*, focuses on matters that are typical of different English-speaking countries. In other words, the series introduces some matters that are characteristic of different countries and these matters are here combined as different customs, traditions and celebrations. The series introduces such information about England, the Republic of Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Jamaica, India, Hong Kong and Pakistan, which means that such information is not provided about Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Papua New Guinea.

In terms of England, the pupils learn from *On the Go 1* textbook (59) that in England pupils wear school uniforms, there are many after-school clubs and some pupils go to a boarding school. In *On the Go 1* exercise book (172) the pupils are asked to find out the date of Notting Hill Carnival (an annual event in London) and what people do on Guy Fawkes' Night (which is not just celebrated in England, but also elsewhere in the UK).

*On the Go 3* textbook (115) has a short text about an Irish celebration, St Patrick's Day. According to the text

”On the 17th of March, St Patrick’s Day celebrates Irish culture around the world. On this day, partygoers wear green. Nobody is exactly sure why, but one explanation is that Irish people used to think that wearing green makes you invisible to fairy creatures called leprechauns. They had a nasty habit of pinching everyone in sight – and if they couldn’t see you, they obviously couldn’t pinch you”.

As to the USA, the pupils are told in *On the Go 1* textbook (16) that

[...]”there are more than 11 million children and adults who attend over 7,000 overnight camps in the U.S. [...] Camps offer summer jobs for older students as counselors, and many come from other countries. Most working American parents don’t have a long vacation and need to send their kids somewhere for the summer”.

The pupils are also told that it is common to attach nicknames of the different states in the number plates of cars (*On the Go 1* exercise book, 66). In the same book, on page 65, the pupils are asked the following question: ”Why is July 4<sup>th</sup> a special day in the States?”

The chapter *Bites from the Big Apple* in *On the Go 2* textbook (129-130) informs the pupils of some events that take place in New York every year. These are the Opening Day of the baseball season in April, The Museum Mile Festival, The Central Park Film Festival, The Chocolate Show and New Year's celebrations on Times Square.

In terms of Australia, the pupils are told that many Australians like to spend their summer holiday (in December and January) by the seaside. In addition to that, the pupils are told that the Australians do not have any particular Christmas food, but many like to have a barbecue at Christmas (*On the Go 2* textbook, 31-32).

As to New Zealand, *On the Go 2* textbook (99) tells the pupils that the All Blacks rugby team perform a Maori war dance *haka* before each match.

The pupils are told the following information about Canada in *On the Go 2* textbook (146):

”At the beginning of every school day, students stand, face the flag and listen respectfully while the national anthem plays. Talking or moving around while the anthem is playing is disrespectful and unacceptable. We love our flag and Canadians travelling abroad will often have a small flag sewn on their backpacks”.

In addition to that, the pupils are told in *On the Go 2* textbook (154) that ”Vehicle licence plates

in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories are shaped like polar bears.

In terms of South Africa, the pupils are told that teachers should not be addressed by their first name, but such expressions as *Sir* and *Mr* should be used instead (*On the Go 3* textbook, 70) A short essay written by a fictional character about South African culture provides some insights into South African way of life (*On the Go 3* textbook, 72) According to the essay, South Africans often tend to invite people over and share what they have. South Africans, and Africans in general, live by something called *Ubuntu*, which means that they [...] "try and get on with other people, talk to them, show interest even if we sometimes don't feel like it". What is also typical of South Africans, according to the essay, is that they think that silence is rude and they do not find it so important to be somewhere on time.

As to India, according to *On the Go 2* textbook (112),

"Compared to Finnish parents, Indian parents have a lot more influence over the everyday lives of their children. They are also stricter with their daughters than with their sons". The same page also informs the pupils about arranged marriage, which is still common in India, even though "In educated Indian families today, almost nobody is forced to get married to someone they don't like".

*On the Go 2* textbook chapter *Incredible India* (121) provides some information about some matters that are characteristic of Indians. According to a short text

"Hinduism is the main religion in India. Hindus believe in one main god, called Brahman, but under him there are millions of other gods. Students are especially fond of Saraswati, the goddess of learning and wisdom. Hindus are vegetarians and they believe in reincarnation. Yoga and meditation are also part of the Hindu religion, as is wearing a bindi, a dot on your forehead. Many Hindus visit the temple daily and offer flowers and food to their favourite gods".

In *On the Go 2* exercise book (175) the pupils also learn about an Indian festival called *Holi* by completing some sentences with the help of some Finnish expressions.

As to Hong Kong, the pupils learn from *On the Go 2* textbook (52) that haggling is part of the culture and it should be done so that nobody loses face. What this means in practise is that while haggling, criticism should be avoided, one should always be polite, smile and never lose their temper. Also, instead of expressing one's honest opinion about something, such as bad-

tasting food, one should just keep quiet about it.

What is characteristic of Jamaica is the constant presence of music. According to a chapter titled *Music in our blood* (*On the Go* 2, 172) "In the Caribbean, music is a way of life. [...] On the bus, on the beach, in clubs and cafés, everywhere and at any time of day, music pulses through the air".

Finally, *On the Go* 3 textbook (170-173) provides some information about a typical school day in Pakistan. According to a text written by a real Pakistani girl before she was forced to leave her home country school days in Pakistan would start with a morning assembly during which certain words were said aloud. In addition to that, the pupils are told the Pakistani pupils would go to school six days a week.

As can be seen, the series provides a fair amount of information about different customs in English speaking countries (such as the use of school uniforms, after-school clubs, summer camps, listening to the national anthem at the start of each school day, how to address teachers and how to properly haggle) and traditions and celebrations (such as Guy Fawkes' Night, St Patrick's Day, annual events in New York, typical Australian Christmas, haka dance, Hinduism and Holi festival) in different English-speaking countries. Such information enables the pupils to learn about some characteristic features of different nations and consequently compare them with their own reality. At best, the pupils will realise that their own culture is not some kind of norm, but things can be done differently. However, even though many people with similar backgrounds do many things in the same way, it is important to keep in mind the fact that everyone is an individual. This relates to the next and final theme, *generalisations*.

### **6.2.6 Generalisations**

This theme, that is, *generalisations*, is slightly different from the other themes as it probably cannot be said that the authors of the series have decided to make some generalisations about different nations because they find that kind of information important. Also, this theme is not as notable as the other themes, but as some generalisations came up in connection with different countries, I thought that was interesting and worth a closer inspection. The series makes

generalisations about people from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Hong Kong and they will be introduced next.

In terms of the USA, the pupils are told in *On the Go 2* textbook chapter *Bites from the Big Apple* (129) that "New Yorkers are always in a hurry [...]". According to *On the Go 2* textbook chapter *What's up Down Under?* (21) "Australians love their barbecues, and they will grill almost anything over an open fire outside". In addition to that, the pupils are told that "As soon as the schools break up, everybody heads for the coast" and that "Australia is a big place, and Aussies think nothing of travelling up to 20 hours to reach their destination" (*On the Go 2* textbook, 31). As to New Zealand, a chapter titled *Have a blast in NZ!* in *On the Go 2* (99) informs the pupils that "Kiwis live and breathe rugby", "Rugby is as important to us as hockey is to Canadians" and that "We kiwis love the ocean". It does not come as a surprise that hockey has a rather big role in the Canada section, and *On the Go 2* textbook introduction to Canada (143) actually states that "Canadians live and breathe hockey". It is even claimed in an *On the Go 2* exercise book exercise (227) that "Everybody admires Wayne Gretzky, who was an unbelievably good hockey player". Yet another hockey related generalisation about Canadians is made in *On the Go 2* exercise book (219). The exercise in question states that "Canadians are interested in hockey and winter sports". The pupils are also told that "In general, Canadians are very patriotic, and we value equality and education for all", "We (Canadians) love our flag", "Canadians are tolerant and generally respect minority rights" (*On the Go 2* textbook, 146) and "In general, Canadians are patriotic, polite and tolerant" (*On the Go 2* textbook, 144). In addition to the exercise book exercise that claims that Canadians are interested in hockey and winter sports, the following statements are made about Canadians in the same exercise: "Canadians want to know where they are originally from", "Canadians value equality and education" and "Canadians are patriotic and tolerant". Finally, the pupils are told in *On the Go 2* textbook chapter *Hello Hong Kong!* (61) that "Everyone in Hong Kong eats dim sum".

As can be seen, some generalisations about different nations can be found in the series. Even though many Canadians, for example, may identify with the above-mentioned sentences, it is obvious that not everyone does. Therefore, it would be better to use such expressions as "many Canadians" or "some Canadians" instead of claiming that everyone feels exactly the same way about something. It is true that hockey, for example, is very important to many Canadians, or even to the majority of Canadians, but surely not everyone cares about it as passionately as the series claims. Not liking something popular does not make anyone any less of a "proper citizen"

in their home country. Generalising is often regarded as a rather annoying habit so instead of claiming that every single person does this or that, it would be better to express one's ideas in a way that takes into account the fact that everyone is an individual. This idea is also supported by CEFR in chapter 4.6 who state that one should try to overcome stereotyped relationships.

### **6.3 Different varieties of English in *On the Go***

Having discussed the presentation of different English-speaking countries and their cultures in *On the Go*, it is time to shift the focus on the second research question, that is, how different varieties of English are presented in *On the Go*. As was mentioned in Chapter 4.3, the most common variety that is used in English textbooks is British English. This is understandable as Britain is the home of the English language. However, nowadays it is common that English textbooks introduce other varieties as well and this can also be seen in *On the Go*. Before introducing the actual findings, a couple of things have to be mentioned. First of all, in this study the focus was only on the written texts. In other words, the texts were only read, not listened to. What this means in practise is that even though the series does not provide as much written information about all the varieties, the pupils still receive valuable information about their pronunciation, as it can be assumed that, for example, New Zealand related texts are read by native New Zealanders. Second of all, the series is written in standard English, which is understandable as the pupils are expected to use such English in their written assignments and exams. In other words, the language used in the series is generally very formal, which means that the personal characteristics of different varieties do not truly emerge, at least in the written form. There are some colloquial expressions here and there (whose command is considered important by CEFR in Chapter 4.6) such as the use of the word "man" in a Jamaica-related text in *On the Go 2* textbook (172) but other than that, the tone of the texts is rather formal. Finally, even though British English is generally the most used variety in English textbooks, the sections that focus on other English-speaking countries obviously use spelling that is typical of them. This can be seen, for example, in the USA-related texts where words such as "vacation" and "colorful" are used instead of "holiday" and "colourful".

Having made some things clear, it is time to focus on the actual findings, that is, the presentation of different varieties of English in the series. The series provides some information about the following varieties of English: British English, Scottish English, Irish English,



American English, Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English, South African English and Indian English. Even though Jamaica has a bigger section in *On the Go 2*, the pupils are not provided with any written information about its variety and how it differs from other varieties, except for one sentence which indicates that Jamaicans tend to use the word "man" at the end of some sentences (*On the Go 2* textbook, 172).

As can be expected, British English and American English are given more attention than other varieties. While the pupils are provided with a fair amount of information about British English and American English varieties, they are only given a couple of examples of some other varieties, which is understandable as British English and American English have traditionally been focused on in English teaching in Finland. One way in which different varieties of English differ from each other is their vocabulary and vocabulary related matters are also introduced to the pupils in *On the Go*. I will start by introducing what *On the Go* teaches the pupils about different varieties of English in terms of their vocabulary.

### **6.3.1 British English and American English vocabulary**

Let us start with British English and American English vocabulary. In *On the Go 1* textbook (100) the pupils are told that "The London Underground is called the Tube".

*On the Go 1* exercise book (100) has an exercise in which the pupils are asked to write down the British English equivalents to the following American English words: *an apartment building, an apartment, a row house, the first floor, the second floor, a story, a living room, a couch, a stove, a yard* and *an elevator*.

In *On the Go 2* exercise book (82) the pupils are presented with ten British English words (*a cashpoint, a car park, the ground floor, a lift, a lorry, a pavement, petrol, a postcode, a roundabout* and *a block of flats*) and ten American English words (*an apartment building, a traffic circle, a zip code, gas, a parking lot, a sidewalk, an elevator, the first floor, an ATM* and *a truck*) and they are asked to pair them up. In addition to that, the pupils are asked to write down whether the words in the two lists are British English words or American English words.

In *On the Go 3* exercise book (213) the pupils are told that there are pronunciation and

vocabulary related differences between British English and American English. They are then asked to write down the following American English words in British English: *fall*, *a train station*, *a vacation*, *an elevator*, *a principal* and *an apartment building*. After that, they are asked to underline the word that is written in American English out of such word pairs as *a theatre/a theater*, *a litre/a liter*, *canceled/cancelled* and *a centre/ a center*. The pupils are provided with some help in the form of a "helpbox" that tells them the following information: *a metre*, *humour* and *a traveller* are spelled in British English, whereas *a meter*, *humor* and *a traveler* are spelled in American English.

In addition to the above mentioned examples about American English vocabulary, the pupils are presented the words "howdy" "warn't" and "shucks" in a cartoon about Tom Sawyer, a character created by an American writer Mark Twain (*On the Go 1* textbook, 20-21). In the same book, on page 43, the pupils are told that "Americans don't use the word toilet. They use the words bathroom or restroom instead". *On the Go 1* textbook (100) also informs the pupils about the word *subway* by stating that "New Yorkers take the subway". Finally, in *On the Go 3* exercise book (110) the pupils are provided with the following sentence "Cheers mate, I appreciate that", which tells them that British people use the word *mate* at the end of some sentences.

### 6.3.2 Scottish English vocabulary

As to Scotland, the pupils are presented the Scottish word "loch" in *On the Go 1* exercise book (170) in the form of the following question: "What does the word 'loch' mean in Scotland?"

In *On the Go 3* exercise book (110) the pupils are presented the following Scottish English sentence: "She's a wee bonnie bairn", which means "She's a little beautiful child".

### 6.3.3 Irish vocabulary

In terms of Ireland, the pupils are not introduced to any Irish English words, but they are told that *Dia dhuit Eire* means *Hello Ireland* in Irish (*On the Go 3* textbook, 115) and in *On the Go 3* exercise book (176) they are asked the following question: "How do you say "welcome" in Irish?"

### 6.3.4 Australian English vocabulary

When it comes to Australian English vocabulary, the pupils are presented the word "salties" in *On the Go 2* textbook (40) in the following sentence "Five-metre long Australian saltwater crocodiles (called "salties") are the largest reptiles on earth".

They are also introduced to the common Australian greeting *g'day* in a chapter titled *G'day from Bondi Beach!* (*On the Go 2* textbook, 42-43). The same word appears once again in *On the Go 3* exercise book (142) in an exercise where the pupils are asked to combine some greetings and the countries where they are used. The Australian greeting in the exercise is *g'day mate*.

In *On the Go 2* exercise book (27) the pupils are told that abbreviations are common in Australian English and that their meanings can be concluded. They are then asked to write down the longer forms of the following abbreviations: *barbie*, *bikkie*, *brekkie*, *chewie*, *chokkie* and *mozzie*.

The word *brekkie* is mentioned once again in *On the Go 3* exercise book exercise (110) in which the pupils are asked to imitate some accents. In terms of Australian English vocabulary, the pupils are presented the following sentence "That brekkie was grouse mate".

In Australian English, *brekkie* is short for breakfast and *grouse* means excellent. The sentence also indicates that, like the British, Australians also use the word *mate* at the end of some sentences.

The chapter *What's up Down Under?* in *On the Go 2* textbook (20-21) presents the pupils the words *bush tucker* and *witchetty grubs*. According to the text, *bush tucker* is "[...] all kinds of traditional Aboriginal food from the bush" and "Witchetty is an Aboriginal word for these fat, juicy grubs".

Finally, in *On the Go 2* exercise book (16) the pupils are told that there are plenty of strange place names in Australia, such as *Pannawonica*. They are then asked to listen to seven other

place names and write them down.

### 6.3.5 New Zealand English vocabulary

In terms of New Zealand, the pupils are told in *On the Go 2* exercise book (122) that the word *kiwi* means three things: the bird, the fruit and a person from New Zealand. The word *kiwi* also appears in the headline of the chapter *The big kiwi race* (*On the Go 2* textbook, 71). In *On the Go 2* exercise book 2 (135) the pupils are asked to find out what the following nature-related words mean in New Zealand English: *a hoiho*, *a tuatara*, *a bach*, *the bush*, *a kumara* and *a weta*.

In an *On the Go 3* exercise book exercise (142) the pupils learn that *Kia ora* is a typical greeting in New Zealand. As has already been mentioned, *Kia Ora* is Maori.

In addition to the above-mentioned New Zealand English words, the pupils are also introduced to some Maori words, some of which have already been mentioned.

### 6.3.6 Canadian English vocabulary

As to Canadian English, the pupils are introduced to the word *eh* in *On the Go 2* textbook chapter *Odd facts about Canada* (154-155). They are told that

”Eh? Pronounced /ei/, this word is often used at the end of a sentence, indicating agreement or confirmation. It is also used as a question. You can always tell a Canadian from an American when you hear them say ”Eh?”.

The pupils are also told that the word *Canucks* is ”a slang term for Canadians. Different Canadian sports teams are also called Canucks” (*On the Go 2* textbook, 147).

In *On the Go 2* exercise book (238) the pupils are asked to find out what the following Canadian English words mean: *a washroom*, *a loonie*, *a pop*, *a canuck*, *a chinook*, *a toque* and *poutine*.

In *On the Go 3* exercise book (42) the pupils are asked what is the English word Canadians use

for the word toilet.

### 6.3.7 South African English vocabulary

In terms of South Africa, the pupils are told that plenty of loan words from languages such as Dutch and Afrikaans are used in South African English (*On the Go 3* exercise book, 119). They are then asked to find out what such words as *braai*, *howzit* and *lekker* mean.

*On the Go 3* exercise book presents the pupils the following sentence in South African English: "That was a bakgat braii", which means "That was an excellent barbecue".

The pupils also learn that *howzit* is a South African greeting (*On the Go 3* exercise book, 142) and that "Ubuntu is like an African philosophy of life" (*On the Go* textbook, 72).

### 6.3.8 Indian vocabulary

In terms of India the pupils are not introduced to any particular Indian English words, except for the word *holi*, which has already been mentioned (*On the Go 2* exercise book, 175).

As can be seen, the series presents some vocabulary that is typical of different varieties of English, although British English and American English are given the most attention. However, it is good that the series provides at least *some* vocabulary-related information about varieties that the pupils are presumably less familiar with as it may be that they will never encounter such information outside of school. Having some knowledge on the different varieties of English is likely to help the pupils to understand the fact that there is no one correct way of using the English language and it may, consequently, encourage them in their own language use.

## 6.4 Different varieties of English in *On the Go*: pronunciation

In addition to the vocabulary-related matters of the different varieties, the series also provides some information about the pronunciation of the different varieties. As has already been mentioned, it can be assumed that the longer texts are read by native speakers, which enables

the pupils to hear what the different varieties sound like. In addition to such recordings, the series also provides exercises which enable the pupils to practise their own pronunciation and find out how different varieties of English differ from each other in terms of their pronunciation. The pronunciation-related exercises in *On the Go* will be introduced next.

Exercises that request the pupils to *Listen and repeat* something are common in language textbooks and such exercises can also be found in *On the Go*. In *On the Go 3* exercise book (110) the pupils are told that they will hear some sentences in South African English, Indian English, British English, Australian English and Scottish English accents, which they are then asked to repeat precisely. The sentences are the following:

South African English:

”That was a bakgat braai!”

(”That was a great barbecue!”)

Indian English:

”What is your good name?”

(”What is your full name?”)

British English:

”Cheers, mate! I appreciate that.”

(”Thanks! I appreciate that.”)

Australian English:

”That brekkie was grouse, mate!”

(”That breakfast was fantastic.”)

Scottish accent:

”She's a wee bonnie bairn.”

(”She's a small beautiful child.”)

In addition to the above-mentioned exercise, there are two other pronunciation-related exercises on the same page (*On the Go 3* exercise book, 110). In the first exercise the pupils are asked to discuss the following statements:

"British accent is the easiest to learn".

"American English is easier to understand than British English".

After sharing their opinions, they are told that they will hear different English accents, which they are asked to rate on a line segment in terms of their intelligibility and whether they can speak like that themselves. The accents in questions are American English, Irish accent, Indian English and South African English.

In *On the Go 3* exercise book (142) the pupils are told to combine some greetings and the countries where they are used. After that, they are asked to listen and repeat them. The greetings are the following:

"How's it hanging?" (The USA)

"G'day mate" (Australia)

"Howzit?" (South Africa)

"How's the form?" (Ireland)

"Kia ora!" (New Zealand)

In addition to that, there is another pronunciation exercise on the same page (*On the Go 3* exercise book, 142). The pupils are presented three sentences, which they will first hear in British English and then in American English. After that, they are asked to repeat the sentences and then read them aloud to their partner in both accents. The sentences are the following:

1. It was **hard** for Tim to **park** his **car** so **far** away from the **square**.
2. **After class**, I have a **chance** to **ask** the teacher more about the environmental **craft task**.
3. My **writing** about the **native** animals in Yellowstone would be **better** if you brought me some **water**.

In *On the Go 3* exercise book (178) there is also the following pronunciation-related exercise: "Google "Irish accent" and listen to some examples. How is it different from British English?"

Finally, *On the Go 2* exercise book (58) asks the pupils the following Canada-related question: "How do you pronounce 'eh'?"

As can be seen, in addition to the texts that are presumably read by native speakers, the series also presents the pupils some information about the pronunciation of different varieties in the form of exercises. In terms of Canada, however, the pupils are only informed about the pronunciation of the word "eh". This is understandable as there are plenty of similarities between Canadian English and American English, but, then again, as was mentioned in Chapter 3.3, Canadian English also has its own distinct features, which are not introduced at all in the series apart from the longer texts which are presumably read by native Canadians. Different varieties of English differ greatly from each other in terms of their pronunciation as was seen in Chapter 3.3, and while the series does present some information about them, it is done rather briefly and superficially. The pupils are mainly asked to repeat some short sentences, which is good on one hand as imitation is a good way of learning pronunciation, but on the other hand, it would also be good to inform the pupils about such matters that were presented in Chapter 3.3, that is, some basic distinctive pronunciation features of different varieties of English. By introducing the pupils some example features of different varieties of English, they would gradually become better at recognising them, which is a useful skill in itself. However, it may also be that such information might be too advanced for secondary school pupils and should be focused on later.

### **6.5 Different varieties of English in *On the Go*: information boxes**

One final variety-related finding in *On the Go* has to do with "information-boxes", which can be found throughout the series. Rather interestingly, such boxes only provide information about British English and American English varieties apart from one example in *On the Go 2* exercise book (8) where the pupils are told that Australia and New Zealand use celcius for measuring temperature. In terms of the USA, the pupils are told in *On the Go 1* exercise book (31) that dates are written so that the month is written first and then the day, so that Christmas Eve is 12/24. On page 43 (*On the Go 1* exercise book) the pupils are told that "Americans don't use the word toilet. The use the words bathroom and restroom instead".

*On the Go 1* exercise book (68) also informs the pupils about the measuring system in the USA,



stating that *feet* and *inches* are used to measure one's height, whereas pounds are used to measure one's weight. The same box which informs the pupils about the use of celcius in Australia and New Zealand also tells them that in the USA fahrenheit is used to measure temperature. In *On the Go 3* exercise book (123) the pupils are told that a full stop is used after such abbreviations as Dr in American English. *On the Go 3* exercise book (180) also informs the pupils of the fact that one's shoe size is expressed differently in different countries after which they are asked to find out what their show size is in the USA and England. As to Britain, the pupils are told in *On the Go 1* textbook (59) that "Teachers are called Miss or Sir in British schools".

The same information is also provided in *On the Go 1* exercise book (122) with the addition that English pupils do not use the teachers' names. Finally, in *On the Go 1* textbook (77) the pupils are provided with some information about the British monetary unit by stating that £1.45 is said and written as one pound forty-five pence and 88p is said and written as eighty-eight pence. As was already mentioned, such information is not provided about any other varieties, which is understandable as there simply is no room to include everything.

Finally, even though the series presents some examples on how different varieties differ from each other in terms of their pronunciation (as can be seen for example in the exercise which asks the pupils to read some sentences in both British English and American English accents), the series seems to focus more on vocabulary-related differences between different varieties than how they differ from each other in terms of their pronunciation. This is not a bad thing per se, but as communication skills are nowadays more and more emphasised in language learning and teaching, it would be beneficial to focus more on pronunciation-related exercises during the actual English lessons instead of vocabulary, as it is quite likely that many people find it easier to learn single words than pronunciation on their own.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study was to find out how different English speaking countries, cultures and their varieties are presented in a new English textbook series *On the Go*. I will start this section by summarising the main insights into the research questions after which I will make some suggestions on how the series could be improved, address the limitations of the study and finally make some proposals for future research.

As was seen in Chapter 6, I was able to identify six different themes that came up regularly in connection with the different English-speaking countries. The themes were the following: *information for tourists, geographical information about different countries, historical information about different countries, information about different groups of people within different countries, information about different customs, traditions and celebrations and some generalisations*. In other words, the different English-speaking countries were often introduced to the pupils through these themes, even though the last theme, *generalisations*, was not as prominent and a slightly different theme than the others. The actual findings related to the different themes are presented in Chapter 6 and hence they will not be discussed here in such detail.

The first theme, *information for tourists*, was rather notable and it came up in connection with the following countries: the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and Hong Kong. *Geographical information about different countries* was also a rather notable theme and such information was provided about the UK, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Jamaica and India. The pupils are provided with some *Historical information* about England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, Jamaica, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. In terms of *different groups of people within different countries*, the pupils learn something about the minority groups in England, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Information about *different customs, traditions and celebrations* is provided about England, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Jamaica, India, Hong Kong and Pakistan and some *generalisations* are made about the people from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Hong Kong. As to the different varieties of English, the pupils are provided (written) information about the following varieties: British English, Scottish English, Irish English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English, South African English and Indian English. All these findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of findings

	Information for tourists	Geographical information about different countries	Historical information about different countries	Information about different groups of people within different countries	Different customs, traditions and celebrations	Generalisations	Different varieties of English
England	x	x	x	x	x		x
Wales	x	x					
Scotland	x	x					x
Northern Ireland	x	x	x				
The Republic of Ireland	x	x	x	x	x		x
The United States	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Australia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
New Zealand	x	x		x	x	x	x
Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Jamaica		x	x		x		
South Africa	x	x	x	x	x		x
India	x	x	x		x		x
Pakistan					x		
Hong Kong	x		x		x	x	
Papua New Guinea			x				

As has already been mentioned, it may seem, at first glance, that the series does a very good job at introducing the English-speaking world to the pupils, but a closer inspection reveals that the representation of the English-speaking countries and their varieties in *On the Go* is very uneven from time to time. This was particularly noticeable in terms of the representation of the UK, as there was a heavy emphasis on England at the expense of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Unlike England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland do not have their own bigger sections in *On the Go* and even the only bigger chapter about Ireland is optional, which is rather concerning. Similar findings about the dominance of England in textbooks have been made for example by Lindström (2015). With this being the case, it would be good if future textbooks of English managed to include more information about the other countries of the UK, as England (and its capital London) have been so overly focused on. Furthermore, England is likely to be the country many pupils are most familiar with already.

In general, the focus of the series seems to be on the inner circle countries, which is understandable as they are the so-called *norm-providing* countries that set the standard for the expanding circle countries such as Finland. However, the series also provides information about some outer circle countries, as well as other inner circle countries besides England and the USA. This may indicate a shift of focus from England and the USA to the rest of the English-speaking world, which is good as the English-speaking world is much more than

England and the USA, which have traditionally been focused on in English teaching. It was very refreshing to see a bigger section about Hong Kong in an English textbook series, which not everyone realises is an English-speaking region. It can be assumed that future textbooks of English will contain more and more information about outer circle countries, but naturally the focus is going to remain on the norm-providing inner circle.

Another important insight concerns the optional *Your choice* texts. As has been mentioned, *Study* texts are the main texts that are meant for everyone and they often deal with rather light-hearted matters. Many *Your choice* texts, on the other hand, deal with culturally painful matters, such as the bad treatment of the Aboriginal people in Australia. While it is good that the series introduces some difficult topics along with more cheerful ones, it is unfortunate that many of such topics are dealt with in optional *Your choice* texts. Many pupils may favour other types of texts and consequently not learn much about the history of different groups of people, for instance. It would be good if at least some more serious texts were made "compulsory" as one cannot understand the present if one does not have knowledge about the past.

As to the different varieties of English, the focus was, rather predictably, on British English and American English pronunciation and vocabulary. All in all, the series seemed to focus mostly on vocabulary-related differences between the different varieties. The varieties were introduced rather superficially and briefly, which is understandable as the series is aimed at secondary school students. It is good, though, that the pupils are introduced to at least *some* features of some other varieties than British English and American English, as such information will help them understand the diversity of the language. What really stands out in the series is the poor representation of Canadian English pronunciation. Despite having its own bigger section, the pupils are only informed about the pronunciation of the word *eh* in addition to the chapters that are presumably read by native speakers. As many secondary school students are already quite familiar with the American English pronunciation, it would be good to give the Canadian English pronunciation more attention, as, despite resembling both American English and British English in some ways, it also has its own distinct features, some of which were mentioned in Chapter 3.3. This is something textbook writers might want to consider in the future. It was also suggested in Chapter 6 that it would be beneficial to provide the pupils some basic information about some distinctive features of different varieties as such information

might make them better at recognising different varieties. However, such information might prove to be too advanced and consequently only confuse the pupils. As the pupils are often guided to learn to use one variety consistently, it is understandable that the focus remains on British English and American English.

Despite the fact that this type of study makes it possible to observe things from a wider perspective, it is not possible to include everything. This study has its limitations and weaknesses too. While both textbooks and exercise books were examined, none of the texts or exercises were listened to, which is rather concerning in terms of the second research question, which focused solely on the presentation of the different varieties of English. It was merely assumed that the different sections that had to do with different English-speaking countries and cultures were read by native-speakers of the target countries, which would, therefore, provide the pupils some information about the pronunciation of the different varieties. However, it is questionable whether it is enough to learn about different varieties by merely listening to some texts read by native speakers. In other words, it would be good to focus on the different varieties in other ways as well. Furthermore, as this study was qualitative in nature and did not make use of numerical data, it is not possible to repeat the study in a way that provides the same exact findings. In other words, another researcher might end up focusing on and emphasising different matters than I did. Also, in terms of the *three circles of English*, another researcher might disagree over the placement of the countries.

In terms of future research, it would be rather interesting to focus solely on the presentation of such inner circle countries as Canada, Australia or New Zealand in different English textbook series, as all of these countries are often included in textbooks, but they are often overshadowed by the UK and the USA. It would also be interesting to focus on the presentation of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in English textbook series, as it turned out that they were very poorly represented in *On the Go* and have been so also according to Lindström (2015). Also, one might want to delve deeper into the different themes with the help of discourse analysis.

Even though the presentation of different English-speaking countries and their varieties in *On the Go* is rather uneven at times, it is notable that the series includes as many countries, cultures and varieties as it does. Obviously, it is not possible to include everything and take everything

into consideration, but the series manages to include plenty of countries that almost certainly would not have been included in older textbooks of English, such as Papua New Guinea. While the focus of *On the Go 1* is on the UK (mainly England) and the USA, *On the Go 2* focuses on a variety of different English-speaking countries, and such is the case with *On the Go 3* as well. It is rather notable that the UK (or England) has its bigger section in *On the Go 1*, but after that it is only briefly dealt with. This indicates a shift of focus from the UK to other English-speaking countries, which is good as they should be taken into consideration as well. What I find particularly successful in the series is the decision to include more serious cultural topics along with more cheerful ones. This provides the pupils some much-needed realism, unlike Buckby's overly positive French textbook from the 1980s (Byram, 1989: 123), which was discussed in Chapter 4.4. I think that it is very important to consider both "pros and cons" of different cultures, because without acknowledging the more negative sides, it is not possible to strive for better. There are no perfect cultures in the world and once we realise that and do not try to sweep the more unfortunate sides of different cultures under the carpet, we will get a more comprehensive and realistic picture of any given culture.

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