

# Presentation of the culture of the English-speaking world in EFL textbooks:

An analysis of the cultural content of Finnish EFL textbooks for basic education

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Englanti on yksi maailman valtakielistä, ja usein myös ensimmäinen vieras kieli, jota suomalaiset oppilaat alkavat opiskella koulussa. Englantia käytetään yleisesti lingua francana, ja englantia vieraana kielenä puhuvia on jo määrällisesti enemmän kuin englantia äidinkielenään puhuvia. Kulttuurien tuntemus ja kulttuurien välinen viestintä ovat yhä tärkeämmässä roolissa opetussuunnitelmissa ja sen myötä myös kielten opetuksessa. Oppikirjoilla puolestaan on aina ollut keskeinen osa kielten opetuksessa ja siksi niillä onkin suuri vaikutusvalta oppilaisiin ja siihen tietoon, mitä he kohdekuulttuureista omaksuvat.</p> <p>Tutkin maisterintutkielmassani kulttuuriin liittyviä viittauksia oppikirjasarjoissa Go for it! ja On the Go. Tutkimus keskittyi kirjasarjojen tekstikirjoihin ja metodina tutkimuksessa käytettiin sisällönanalyysia. Jokainen kirja käytiin järjestelmällisesti läpi, ja löydökset kategorisoitiin käyttämällä Hofsteden (2005), Byramin (1993) ja Eurooppalaisen kielitaidon viitekehyksen (2001) kriteerien pohjalta luomaani luokittelua. Analyysissä keskityttiin selvittämään mitkä englanninkieliset maat huomioidaan oppikirjoissa, ja saavatko tietyt maat enemmän huomiota kuin toiset. Huomioon otettiin myös viittaukset englannin käytöstä lingua francana.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa englanninkielisiksi maiksi laskettiin maat, jotka kuuluvat Kachrun (1982) mallin <i>sisäpiiriin</i>, eli Yhdysvallat, Englanti, Skotlanti, Irlanti, Wales, Australia, Kanada ja Uusi-Seelanti. Tutkimukset tulokset osoittavat, että molemmat oppikirjat esittelivät monipuolisesti englanninkielisiä maita, mutta Yhdysvallat ja Englanti olivat keskeisemmässä asemassa kuin muut maat. Oli myös tyypillistä, että viittaukset, jotka liittyivät Kanadaan, Uuteen-Seelantiin ja Australiaan olivat yksipuoleisempia. Suuri osa Kanadaan liittyvistä viittauksista liittyi jääkiekkoon, kun taas Australia esitettiin villin luonnon ja eläinten kautta ja Uuteen-Seelantiin liittyvät viittaukset käsittelivät pääasiassa luontoa ja extreme-urheilua. Wales, Irlanti ja Skotlanti jäivät kirjoissa muihin verrattuna taka-alalle. Aihealueista erityisesti urheilu, koulu, luonnonnähtävyydet ja kuuluisat rakennukset painoutuivat.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

English, with its approximately 2 billion speakers (Crystal 2008), is one of the dominant languages in the world, and often also the first foreign language Finnish students start learning in school. English is commonly used as a lingua franca, and there are already more people who speak English as a foreign language than people who speak English as their mother tongue (Crystal 2008). There are therefore multiple English-speaking cultures, although English-language textbooks often seem to emphasize the American and British culture.

The reason to study languages has changed during the years. Earlier English was the language for reading, and culture was not in an important role. Then people started traveling and English became the language for touring, and at the same time the role of culture became more important. Today, one encounters different cultures and languages everywhere and it should be borne in mind that language can be needed in any situation. Hence, studying English has become even more important as it is seen in the everyday life of people all over the world (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991:5). In addition, all the cultures have their own cultural norms, and because the norms can differ greatly from culture to culture, it may bring on conflicts. Thus, it is important to know the norms of other cultures to avoid problems in communication.

Learning about cultures is important because it is always interactive. While students learn about other languages and cultures, they also learn to better understand their own language and culture. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 (later referred to as NCC 2014) also emphasizes the role of culture in teaching. According to NCC 2014, students' interest in linguistic and cultural diversity should be supported. One of the goals of language teaching is also to motivate students to appreciate their own cultural background, and with-it other cultures, so that they can learn to encounter other cultures and people without prejudice.

According to Elomaa (2009), culture and intercultural interaction are both factors that make language teaching meaningful, push it forward and keep it vibrant. With this notion in mind, with this research I wish to get an up-to-date picture of how different cultures are reflected in English language textbooks. I aim to find out which English-speaking cultures are featured and what kind of cultural information textbooks convey. I will study the different ways in which cultural knowledge is transmitted and which English-speaking cultures are given more emphasis than other. I will also take into account the status of English as an International Language / Lingua Franca in my analysis.

In this study, the theoretical framework is built around three entities, the status of English, the definition of culture and its role in teaching EFL and the function of textbooks. Together these three main themes form the basis on which it is possible to build the analysis of the source material.

First of the main themes is the importance of the English language in the world. The purpose is to discuss the various terms and definitions used to define the status of the English. Under the theme, I will also discuss the teaching of English in Finland, and whether the role of the English language as Lingua Franca can be seen in teaching of English in Finland. The second main theme is, as expected, culture. Culture as a concept is very abstract and defining it for this study is very important. I will also present different models for categorizing cultural content. In this study, the understanding of culture is fairly broad, including the everyday life and behavior, culturally meaningful objects, symbols and institutions, national geography, national heroes and identity, as well as social practices and national history, beliefs and rituals. Under the third main theme, textbooks and their significance in teaching are introduced. The focus is still on teaching of English, but the use of textbooks is also being considered more broadly. The role of culture in textbooks will also be discussed. In addition, I look at previous research on the role of culture in English textbooks.

I chose to examine textbooks in particular, as textbooks often provide the very base for teaching (Luukka et al 2008). They determine to some extent what happens during lessons, and that is why it is important to research what is in them. NCC 2014 is also strongly present in the course of my work, and guides my research, as it largely determines the creation of textbooks as well.

*Go for It!* -series for primary school and *On the Go*- series for secondary schools were chosen to be examined because they are currently published and designed to match the needs of the NCC 2014. Because they are relatively recent, they should show how the culture is presented in Finnish schools at the moment. *Go for it!* -series goes from the third grade to the sixth grade, and *On the Go* could be the series continuing from that, starting from the seventh grade, and continuing through the ninth grade. Thus, these series could present the whole basic education journey of a student, and therefore give a good look at the cultural knowledge that the students may gain.

The aim of this research is not to praise or condemn any of the books, but to show objectively what kind of cultural information the books offer and how it is presented. Also, analysis is concerned only with the series' textbooks, and thus cannot exhaustively tell what the students learn in the classroom as it does not include the exercise books or online materials.

## **2 ENGLISH IN THE WORLD**

English is much more than just a language: it is a bridge across borders and cultures, a source that creates the feeling of unity in this rapidly changing world. English is the most widely spoken, read and taught language that has ever existed. As English has that endless number of speakers, it is clear that there are endless variations of the language as well.

In this section I will discuss the status of English in the world. As mentioned, the variations of English have many names, and in this chapter some of these terms will be explored in more depth. I will also define what are the differences between ELF (English as Lingua Franca), EIL (English as an International Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign language.) I will also inspect how English is taught in Finnish schools.

### **2.1 Roles of English**

As said, English is one of the most spoken languages in the world and its various forms have been studied in many ways. These variations have many names: World Englishes, World English (in the singular), International English, Global English, English as Lingua Franca, English as an International Language, and many others. Moreover, there are at least as many definitions for the proficiency of the English language. For example, many researchers claim that comprehensible non-native English that is used for intercultural communication should be accepted as a language in its own right, and thus it could not be evaluated by comparing it with native speaker norms. (see e.g., Jenkins 2006; Nizgorodcew 2011; Seidlhofer 2004)

Kachru (1982) has created a classification to explain the plurality of Englishes. The categorization was first created to map the origins of World Englishes, but many other

researchers still base their studies on this model. Kachru's classification is based on three circles of English, and according to that, in addition to the traditional native-speaker varieties, there are other varieties developed in other countries. In Kachru's model, *the inner circle* refers to the traditional native-speaker varieties, in other words to Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States and New Zealand. *The outer circle* and *the expanding circle* refer to the other varieties developed in other countries. *The outer circle* includes the societies where English shares its position with another language but is still widely used. English may have an official status in these countries, but there are other languages sharing that status. India, South Africa and Singapore are examples of Outer circle countries. *The expanding circle* refers to the societies where English is used as an international or foreign language. Finland is one of the societies that are included in the Expanding Circle.

Schmitz (1995) has taken a close look at Kachru's classification, and according to him the model contributes the thought that the world is multilingual and monolingualism is only an exception. He also considers that the societies in the inner circle and the outer and expanding circles are becoming more similar all the time. People move from one place to another, and that causes languages, as well as people, to be mixing. When people are moving, the culture comes with them. To conclude, besides the native speakers, there are many people who do not speak English as their first language in the inner circle as well. The lines of the circles are becoming increasingly obscure.

Even though Schmitz and many other researchers (see e.g., Bolton 2009) base their studies on Kachru's model, it is still questioned by others. For example, Sharifian (2009: 2) sees the English language as a whole and conceptualizes it as English as an International Language. EIL encompasses all the circles of Kachru's model and refers specifically to communication across these borders as well. Canagarajah (2006) has also challenged Kachru's classification, as he claims that the World Englishes can no longer be looked at through the three circles. The outer circle and the expanding circle are

now widely spread and the people from these societies may as well live now in the inner circle and therefore the inner circle societies are in touch with the World Englishes every day.

As said in the introduction, the people who speak English as a foreign language now outnumber the native speakers (Crystal 2008). English is repeatedly referred to as International Language (EIL) or a Lingua Franca (ELF), and as this study also aims to find out whether this aspect can be seen in the textbooks, it is important to define what these terms stand for.

Like said in the previous chapter, EIL encompasses all the circles of Kachru's model and refers specifically to communication across these borders. EIL acknowledges that the distinction between who is, and who is not a native speaker is not always easy to define. According to Davies (2005) the aim of EIL is to create a common language which does not depend on the native speaker model of British English or American English. However, he points out that the problem with developing a language like that is difficult, because language learning is always based on learning a model, and in this case, it is not clear what the model should be. Jenkins (2006: 160) points out that English as an International Language is sometimes shortened as International English. However, the use of this shorter version is misleading, because, as Seidlhofer (2004) specifies, "it suggests that there is one clearly distinguishable, codified, and unitary variety called International English, which is certainly not the case."

English as Lingua Franca, on the other hand, differs from other forms of English and has its own characteristics. Usually these are defined as language forms, or as communicative behavior. David Crystal (2003: 271) defines Lingua Franca as "an auxiliary language used to enable routine communication to take place between groups of people who speak different native languages". Jenkins' (2006: 160) claim goes a bit further and defines that in its purest form, ELF is a contact language used

only among non-mother tongue speakers. However, she also states that EFL is an alternative term for EIL. These two terms complement each other but it may raise confusion that they both are in use. It is somewhat unclear, and often up to the determinant, whether the term ELF also includes the communication where one of the participants is a native speaker of English.

English as Lingua Franca should not be seen as a monolithic variety of English. It is rather suggested that anyone participating in international communication should be familiar with certain forms that are widely used across groups of English speakers from different first language backgrounds. (Jenkins 2006: 161). Modigliano (2009: 61) points out that Lingua Franca can be any language, for example French or Arabic, and defines it as a universal language used by *non-native* speakers. According to him, ELF includes also native speakers communicating with non-native speakers, because in that situation native speakers must change their language behavior to be understood.

However, English has for many years been taught as a foreign language in many non-English speaking countries, and the same applies to Finland. According to Davies (2005), EFL in particular suggests that English used in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is taught around the world as a foreign language.

Even though the role of English in Finland is much wider than just a foreign language, it is still determined as a foreign language in the national curriculum (Ministry of Education 2016). Therefore, even though the role of English as lingua franca or an international language is largely admitted, this study will mainly base on the definition of English as a foreign language.

## **2.2 English language teaching in Finland**

In the previous years, Finnish students have started learning their first foreign language either in the first, second or third grade. However, from the year 2020 onwards, the first foreign language of all the primary school students will begin in the 1st grade. Although in many schools students can choose their first language to be Swedish, French or Spanish, just a couple to mention, English is still by far the most popular to be chosen as the first foreign language. During the first years of language studies, however, the lessons are mostly all fun and games. The goal is to learn basic vocabulary and to react in easy conversational situations, as well as to light the spark towards learning languages (NCC 2014).

The aim of language teaching in general is to learn to communicate, think, express thoughts, acquire information and interact in a foreign language. Studying a foreign language introduces the students not only to the language they are studying, but also to the culture surrounding the language. It also aims to increase the student's ability to understand the world and the different kinds of people who live in it. Foreign language objectives are defined in detail in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (see Chapter 3.3).

Research on the forms of English that Kachru and others have done has influenced the way English is taught and learned in the outer circle. English has not just two forms, American and British, but is ever changing. According to Modifiano (2009: 58), one can learn to be a better communicator by accepting the diversity of English. He also expresses that the reason for learning English has changed. English is not anymore learned to communicate with native speakers, but to engage in a great range of work related, educational and social activities, many of which do not include native speakers at all. Modifiano (2009: 66-67) continues by claiming the teaching of English in Scandinavia to be traditionally based on the model of British English. The teachers are the models for the language use and the goal of learning is to be able to mimic native

speakers. Yet, he presents that teachers can offer the students texts and materials from all cultures to raise awareness of the many varieties of the language and the cultural diversity.

Modifiano's argument does check out in Finland, because here too the teaching of English has traditionally been largely based on the British variant of English (Pohjanen 2007; Seppälä 2010). Textbooks provide a foundation for learning, and their emphasis has long been around Britain, or alternatively, the United States of America. Furthermore, the aim regarding language proficiency has generally been native-like communication (Davies 2005; Seidlhofer 2004). Recently, however, information technology has brought new opportunities for learning, and made authentic texts available to students. In their free time, students are also extensively involved with various variants of English, for example through social media.

Hence, Jenkins's (2006) proposal, in consensus with other researchers, for the learners of English not to be learning just one variety of English, but about Englishes, their similarities and differences, is definitely valid. Sharifian (2009:4) echoes the thought of Jenkins, as states that intercultural competence should be considered as a foundational element of proficiency because English is widely used for intercultural communication.

### 3 DEFINING CULTURE

In this section I will offer insight to the term *culture*. Culture is an extremely difficult term to define, but as it is one of the key elements in this present study, defining it is essential. I will start by introducing a few interpretations, and then I will specify which interpretation of culture is used in this study. The cultures considered English-speaking in this study, will also be introduced. National Core Curriculum strongly regulates all teaching in Finland and consequently, in this section, it will be discussed how culture is reflected in the curriculum. I will also explore the role of culture in language teaching.

#### 3.1 Definition of culture

There have been numerous endeavors to define culture in the past and the definitions differ from one researcher to another. In this chapter, I will do my best in interpreting the various cultural definitions and then explain how culture is understood in the present study.

Tylor (1871, cited by Chan et al. 2015) once created a definition of culture that has been the most influential for the development of the concept. He describes culture as a complex entity that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a member of society. He refers to culture as a synonym of civilization. His definition is very broad and descriptive, trying to offer an exhaustive list of the aspects of culture. Jenks (2005: 9) also, with reference to the dominant European linguistic convention, poses culture in a close relation with the idea of civilization. However, he also brings forward the German intellectual tradition which has assumed an effective place in our understanding of culture. In this sense, culture refers exclusively to the excellence in fine art, literature and music, rather than taking into account all human symbolic representation.

Hofstede et al. (2010) agree with the aforementioned, as they also posit that culture is commonly presented in relation to “civilization” or “refinement of the mind” and especially the results of it such as education, art and literature. Nonetheless, they claim that this is only the narrow view of culture, and presents that culture includes all the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. In addition to the activities assumed to refine the mind, also the ordinary things in life are included.

Geertz (1973, cited by Brody 2003: 47) points out that culture is not something that individuals know in their minds, but it is rather expressed in their interactions with other individuals. Culture is always someone’s perceptions of the world. According to Kramsch (2003), culture is a product of one's own and others' perceptions and can be thought of as a social symbolic construct. In addition to the facts that create the nation’s history, culture has evolved over time through discourses of different genres: maps and censuses, literacy and artworks and debates in the press and other media. The sense of community is shaped through all these aspects and is then shared by all native speakers of a language, even though they may have never been in any way in touch with each other.

In other words, the common view is that culture is not just knowledge, but something that is shared among individuals who take part in a certain way of life. It is not always something concrete, but also the way individuals think, feel and perceive the world. Also, as the world is constantly changing at a rapid speed, culture should no longer be thought as a fixed and defined phenomenon, but as an unsettled and flexible, interactive device for being (Rudby 2009). As people travel and move around the world, they encounter different worldviews and cultures. They learn to understand different ways to behave and may adopt the habits that they find suitable for them. Damen (2003) specifies that every individual belongs to at least one culture. Culture can be seen in the way people behave and how they solve their problems. The questions and problems that people have are universal, but the way they face and

solve them is unique in every culture (Damen 2003). For example, all the people need a place to live, but the forms of the housing vary from an underground cave to an apartment in a skyscraper. Damen (2003) also reminds, that culture makes life easier. It is designed to help individuals with the questions they encounter in their daily lives, including the way to dress, what to eat, how to greet others and who to consider as family. He points out, that culture is something so familiar for an individual that we do not even notice that we are following some kind of rules. However, cultures are learned just as languages are and new cultural patterns can be taught or acquired.

There have been multiple models for categorization of cultural content. Hofstede (2005: 7) presents a model of four terms; *symbols, heroes, rituals* and *values*, that together cover the whole concept of culture. In this model, the terms are displayed in four layers, and where the outermost layer represents the most superficial appearances of culture and the innermost layer the deepest manifestations of culture. The outermost layer, *symbols*, are easily seen from the outside, easily developed and may, as well, easily disappear. Words, gestures, objects that have a meaning in that society, ways to dress, flags and status symbols all belong to this layer. The next layer when moving inside is *heroes*. These are persons who have attributes that are highly valued in society. They may be alive or already passed, real or imaginary, but they nevertheless serve as models for behavior. The next layer, *rituals*, includes the activities that are practically unnecessary but considered socially fundamental within a culture. This includes for example ways of greeting and paying respect to others and other daily interaction. Also, social and religious ceremonies are part of this category. The innermost layer presents the deepest beliefs of a society. *Values* are universal habits to appreciate certain matters over others. For example, which one wins: evil versus good, forbidden versus permitted and unnatural versus natural?

Byram (1993: 34-35) presents a list that has traditionally been used as evaluation criteria for the cultural content in language textbooks. He does not put the categories

in any order to determine which ones are the most important. The categories are as follows:

- *belief and behavior*, including daily routines, morals, religious beliefs
- *socialization and the life-cycle*, including institutions like families and schools, and rites of passage
- *social identity and social groups*, including social classes, regional identities and ethnic minorities
- *social interaction*, including behavior in social interaction, differing levels of formality
- *stereotypes and national identity*, including assumptions of what is typical in that culture and symbols of national identity (for example famous people and important monuments)
- *national history*, including historical and contemporary events and periods
- *national geography*, including geographic factors seen significant by members
- *social and political institutions*, including state institutions like health care, law and order, social security, that characterize the state.

The Common European Framework offers a basis for curriculum guidelines across Europe. It describes what students must learn to use a language effectively for communication. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. This classification differs from other evaluation criteria for cultural content in that it was created specifically to highlight the aspects language teaching should cover. According to the Common European Framework (2001), the characteristics of a culture can be divided in seven categories. These categories are presented in a chart below.

<i>everyday living</i>	dietary habits, employment, free time activities
<i>living conditions</i>	ways of living and housing, welfare arrangements
<i>interpersonal relations</i>	the structure of the society and families
<i>values, beliefs and attitudes</i>	social classes, minorities, politics and religion
<i>body language</i>	habits in social conventions

<i>social conventions</i>	hospitality, punctuality, behavioral habits and taboos
<i>ritual behavior</i>	ceremonies like birth and death, other celebrations

In this study, the categories to evaluate cultural content were created based on the previous models. The contents of the previous models were combined and merged to form the most suitable categories considering the aim of this study. The categories are as follows:

1. *Everyday life and behavior: takes into consideration features that relate to the way of life of a certain culture. This includes daily routines, family structure, dietary habits, ways to dress and make up, employment or going to school, and free time activities, like for example sports.*
2. *Objects and symbols: including typical culture-related objects that are meaningful in a society such as flags, status symbols, maps and languages that are used. Also units of currencies and measurements are taken into account. In addition, institutions that characterize the state, like health care, law and order and social security are taken into account.*
3. *National geography and tourism: geographic factors that are considered meaningful in a society, including cities, towns, tourist attractions and sights.*
4. *Heroes and national identity: Including both persons that are valued in a culture, and normal citizens. They can be alive or passed, real or imaginary, created or authentic people that serve as models for behavior and as assumptions of what is typical in that culture. This category acknowledges different social classes, regional identities and ethnic minorities as well.*
5. *Social practices: including socially fundamental conventions like greeting and respecting others, giving and receiving hospitality (for example punctuality), differing levels of formality, taboos, gestures and body language.*
6. *History, religion and legends: historical events important for the culture, religious beliefs and ceremonies, morals, legends*
7. *Art: considers all the forms of the refinement of the mind. For example, references to the literature and movies or TV are acknowledged.*

This categorization was seen suitable considering the data of the study, as it highlights the aspects that are supposedly displayed in the EFL textbooks. Moreover, it encapsulates the essence of the evaluation criteria of Hofstede (2005), Byram (1993) and the Common European Framework (2001).

### **3.2 Culture in language teaching**

Language cannot be taught without considering culture as a part of it. Language is one component of culture, and vice versa, as language acts as the transmitter of culture. As Damen (2003: 72) said, "to ignore the interplay between language and culture is to play the language game without knowing the rules".

Culture is mainly expressed through language. According to Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), however, the cultural information alone does not help the students to become critical thinkers or clever users of the language. Even though the students knew the rules of the language and some cultural facts, they might not know how to use the language appropriately, as they do not know enough about the target culture. Saville-Troike (2003: 9) represents the same thought and underlines the importance of cultural content in language teaching because it improves the ability to communicate successfully in social contexts. Especially formalized verbal routines peculiar to a specific culture may produce inconveniences. Saville-Troike (2003: 9) presents an example of turn-taking, as in some culture's speakers wait for minutes before answering a question or taking a turn in conversation while in other cultures that long of a wait would be considered uncomfortable and embarrassing.

For as long as the goal of language learning has been communication, culture has inevitably been involved. Brody (2003) reminds that in addition to the target language culture, the culture of the learner is also present and serves as a stepping stone for learning, as the target language culture can be compared to learners' own culture. All in all, culture has always been an important part of language teaching, but as Liddicoat

and Scarino (2013:17) emphasize, the way culture has been handled has often been quite limited.

Liddicoat and Scarino 2013:18 discuss the way culture is usually seen in the context of teaching. According to them, the view of culture as high culture has dominated in the context of teaching. On this note, courses that included culture may have included texts by, for example Shakespeare, Dickens, and other highly valued writers. Hence, texts are seen as an installation of the national culture where the text was composed, and cultural competence can be evaluated in terms of knowledge of literature. Other views of culture are based either on the history and geography of the country or describe culture in terms of the practices and values that are typical in them.

According to the study conducted by Aleksandrowicz-Pedich (2005, cited by Nizegorodcew 2011) teaching culture the most often means teaching national target language culture, as in, the most often, British and American culture. The cultural information that is taken into account is varied, from traditions and customs to history, legends and myths, from popular culture and stereotypes to geography, religion and democracy, as well as from everyday lifestyles, cuisine and manners to politics and educational system.

Until the early 1990s, language teaching treated culture as a set of facts that can be learned about the target culture, and target culture in most cases referred to national culture. Culture was studied to absorb the students into the target language culture and acquire the language better. During the 1990's, it was understood that language and culture are complementary for successful language acquisition and this was seen in the way English was taught. Around the same time researchers started to question whether it is reasonable to talk about target language culture in the case of English as it was spreading and widely used as a global Lingua Franca. Since 2000, attention has shifted towards focusing on the cultural complexity and flexibility, and researchers

have argued that in this globalized world language teachers should encourage the students to critically reflect the differences between information and disinformation and between ideas and ideologies to be competent to communicate in the modern society. (Weninger and Kiss 2013).

Nizegorodcew (2011) too notes that the role of culture in teaching of English has had changes during the years. According to him, the 1950s and the 1960 were the times when English was mostly presented in context of the British native speaker middle class culture. During the next two decades, teaching communicative skills became more important, making teaching target language culture somewhat irrelevant. The 1990s returned the interest in teaching culture. Nizegorodcew (2011) continues, that as a consequence of the spreading of the English, the connection between the English language and the national culture of Britain or America also changed, and the learners of English understood that using English does not necessarily mean identifying with the culture of native speakers, or even communicating with them, but rather with others who speak it as a foreign language or *lingua franca*.

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 20-22) suggest that culture should be approached by combining different understandings of culture, uniting symbolic systems and practices in different contexts, and to manage that, culture has to be seen as more than knowledge about a particular society. One of the main problems of integrating culture into language teaching is that culture is presented as information about others as though it was a set of learnable rules that one can grasp. Besides, an approach like that does not take into account the variation within a society that may occur between for example age group and genders. Also, this view may conceive stereotypes of the culture.

Another problem that culture as a part of language teaching has faced is that teachers do not always feel comfortable teaching culture. Byram (2015) identifies the teachers'

hesitancy when teaching culture. Many of them seem to suppose that it is impossible to teach culture in a credible manner without having resided abroad. Byram's allegation supports Crawford-Lange and Lange's (1987) proposition that teachers feel incompetent in teaching foreign culture. As stated by Crawford-Lange and Lange (1987), teachers may only have limited experiences in the foreign culture, or no experience at all, and feel a pressure to serve culturally accurate information. They may also not know how to integrate culture with other areas of language learning, and therefore it comes easy to neglect culture or leave it for later.

All in all, to use the language appropriately, the students need to know enough about the target culture, and by enough I do not mean just some cultural facts. Thus, the importance of cultural content in language teaching is great because it improves the ability to interact in varied social contexts.

### **3.3 Culture in National Core Curriculum (NCC)**

The National Core Curriculum (NCC) is a guideline devised by the Finnish National Agency for Education that aims to give educational guidance that schools can implement in their own curricula and educational framework. The curriculum is to be implemented in every school in Finland and its purpose is to standardize the education offered in the comprehensive schools. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education has been revised multiple times and the newest one was published in 2014 and implemented starting from autumn 2016.

Culture is mentioned in NCC multiple times, and not only in the section of foreign languages. When listing the objectives for transversal competences in grades 3 to 6, one of the objectives is that the students learn to appreciate their cultural and linguistic roots and to consider the significance of their own background. This creates a good foundation for learning about other cultures as well. Generally, the NCC refers to the past and present culture of the school community and their local region, but then in

the section of foreign languages the focus naturally changes towards the target language cultures. However, even in the transversal competences it is said that the students should be familiarized with cultural environments, their change and diversity.

When proceeding to the grades 7 to 9, the objectives for transversal competences change, and the main culture-related aim is supporting the development of the students' own cultural identity. The students are to learn to interpret cultural messages around them and to see the influence of cultures and beliefs in society and individual's everyday life. Cultural diversity is presented as a positive resource, and the students have opportunities for experiencing the significance of culture to the individuals' and communities' well-being.

When it comes to teaching of foreign languages, as in teaching of English in the case of this study, in primary school the students' interest in the linguistic and cultural diversity is encouraged and they are guided to value other cultures and languages, as well as their speakers (NCC 2014: 218). Guiding the students to be aware of the linguistic and cultural richness of the world and the status of English as a language of global communication and encouraging the students to appreciate their own linguistic and cultural background and are both mentioned in the objectives for instruction, as well as in the criteria for assessment (NCC 2014: 219).

In secondary school the understanding of culture and its diversity is deepened and the objectives for instructions are different compared to the ones of primary school. The culture-related goals are to improve the students' ability to understand and reflect on the phenomena related to the status of English and its variants and to support the students to expand their understanding of the globalizing world and give them what is needed to be able to navigate in it (NCC 2014: 348). Both of these serve as criteria for assessment as well. In addition, 'Growing into cultural diversity and language

awareness' is the first one of the key content areas in the foreign language teaching in secondary school, and under that the students study the role of English as Lingua Franca and explore the ways of life in societies where English is the main language (NCC 2014: 349). Also, the status of English as the language of global communication is acknowledged.

As this paper studies language textbooks, and Finnish textbooks of English are often devised to meet the requirements of NCC, it offers a valid foundation for researching the cultural reflections in English textbooks.

## **4 TEXTBOOKS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Textbooks play a significant role in language teaching, and in this section, I will explore that role of textbooks thoroughly. I will present the advantages and disadvantages of textbooks, and differences between locally and globally produced textbooks. I will also discuss the importance of culture in textbooks, as well as the teacher's role as a mediator between the textbook and the students. Lastly, I will take a look at previous research on the role of culture in English textbooks.

### **4.1 Role of textbooks (in Finland)**

Textbooks have a fundamental role in EFL teaching in Finland; thus, they are an essential part of students' learning process. National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 (2016) does not determine textbooks to be used as a part of teaching, but still textbooks often provide a basis for teaching and strongly influence the understanding of what is central in language learning. The power of textbooks is based on the fact that they shape the structure of teaching and highlight certain issues and leave others for lesser notion (Luukka et al. 2008: 64).

According to a study by Luukka et al (2008), as many as 98 percent of foreign language teachers said they often use the textbook in their teaching. More than half of foreign language teachers reported that they rarely use works of fiction and 28 percent do not use them at all in their teaching. Only 5 percent of teachers use newspapers frequently, while more than half rarely or never. Only 22 percent of teachers used other leisure texts in their teaching. Thus, according to the teachers, the most important material was a textbook, and the students' thoughts were parallel. Elomaa (2009: 31) also brings up that students think that the good thing about the textbook is that it allows you to repeat what you have learned, if necessary. While this also applies to other materials, such as handouts, students still find textbooks more permanent sources of information, and when other materials can easily disappear. However, according to the students, different additional material can stimulate and at the same time

supplement the textbook. When teachers were asked to comment on the claim that textbooks are the most important learning material, half of foreign language teachers agreed, and 39 percent partially agreed (Luukka et al. 2008).

Pitkänen-Huhta (2003: 40) correlates language learning materials with instructional manuals. Lähdesmäki (2004: 529), in turn, has aptly compared textbooks to supermarket carts where one flings at least bread and milk and a few other basic groceries that one cannot cope without, and in addition to these basic items, some varied delicacies are added to cheer up the everyday life. In the context of a textbook, these basic items are the story-like texts and vocabularies that are repeated book by book and chapter by chapter, and then some songs, games, poems, and cartoons are added as these varied delicacies to break the routines.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999: 199) discuss the roles of textbooks. According to them, textbooks have many roles, but the most important definitions for this study are the roles of a resource and an authority. As a resource, the textbooks are seen as a set of materials and from which the most useful content will be chosen. Other parts may be left for lesser notion or completely ignored. As an authority, the students see the textbooks reliable, valid and written by experts. The (cultural) content in textbooks is therefore taken for granted and often unjustifiably considered as correct or even as the only interpretation.

Exercises, games and texts aim to teach students several skills, but also to entertain. Pitkänen-Huhta (2003: 40) reminds that textbooks are not meant to be read by the students on their own. In particular, textbook texts used in foreign language teaching have been produced to be read aloud and to aid discussion. She also adds that language structure and vocabulary of the texts are easier at lower levels of learning and more difficult at advanced levels, and therefore the texts may not be as interesting

or relevant to students in the lower levels as the content of the texts is not the most important matter but rather that the texts help to learn.

The general layout of the chapter to some extent determines the structure of the lessons, and word lists, grammar section and the texts itself offer the ground for tasks. The text has the biggest role as it offers the linguistic material for the activities and all the conversations during the lesson. Moreover, it lays out the purpose of the lesson and all the tasks completed during it and regulates and constrains talk and activities. Often also the grammatical forms that are used in the exercises come from the text. Wordlists displaying the foreign language words and their translations hold a prominent place in textbooks as well. As thoughts cannot exhaustively be expressed without words, communication is impossible without a decent vocabulary and thus learning vocabulary is one of the basic elements of learning a language. (Pitkänen-Huhta 2003: 154,191).

EFL textbooks have many textual and discursive layers. They aim at representing different genres and discourse types to display the language in its full variety. Lähdesmäki (2009: 375) notes that traditionally textbooks have offered transactional dialogues and highly informational texts on important subjects as history and nature, but now these text types have been supplemented with text types that can be considered more appealing to young readers.

Textbooks are always influenced by the current views on language teaching and pedagogical solutions. Textbooks apply the curriculum to practice and are often referred to as hidden curricula (Huhta et al. 2008: 204). In the past, the same textbook might have been used for decades, but today publishers tend to publish new textbooks to match new curricula to convey ideas and emphases of the curriculum to hands-on teaching.

Hannus defines (1996, cited by Karjala 2003: 13) the basic task of a textbook as to provide students with an interpretation of a particular content area that corresponds to their linguistic level. Central to how well the authors have managed to summarize a particular broad entity and express it so that students understand it with their limited skills, but still so that the student is able to gather information that can be used to move towards a deeper understanding of the material.

Consequently, many variables need to be considered when devising textbooks. Students' age and their interest define the topics that can be discussed, and the suitable activities should also be chosen taking into account the students' age. Students' proficiency defines how much information can be given and in which way, and their educational level may help to determine intellectual content and the breadth of topic choice. Student's mother tongue should also be acknowledged as it may affect learning grammar or vocabulary. Students may also be learning the language for different reasons, and that should also be considered when devising materials. Lähdesmäki (2004: 529) also points out that today textbooks should be, and often are, created in such a way that one can also return to them for reference outside of school.

Textbooks used in Finnish schools when teaching foreign language are for the most part produced in Finland. Textbooks often follow the guidelines given in the National Core Curriculum, but there is still a lot of room for the authors to use their imagination. NCC defines some themes and grammatical content that has to be considered, but the rest is built on the writers' preferences of what they see as worthy of teaching.

Nevertheless, Finnish learners are in an exceptional position, considering that instead of using global materials, the majority of the schoolbooks used in Finland are also devised in Finland and especially for Finnish students. López-Barrios and Villanueva de Debat (2014 :41) have determined four categories to present the advantages of

locally designed teaching materials: contextualization, intercultural reflection, linguistic contrasts, and facilitation of learning. The first category, *contextualization*, is probably the most interesting considering the focus of this study. Contextualization offers the possibility to connect the books to the world the students live in, for example by including local references like famous people and important places. It is also possible to consider the sociocultural norms that are characteristic to the culture of the students, by possibly excluding taboos or including matters that are important to discuss. The last aspect of contextualization refers to the consensus between the locally produced schoolbooks and national curricula. This is utilized in Finland as well, as the coursebooks are often devised to match the requirement of the national curriculum. Next interesting category, *intercultural reflection*, on the other hand, means being aware of similarities and differences between the students' own culture and the target culture. However, for intercultural reflection to evolve, the students should be encouraged to go beyond the superficial impressions for stereotypes to be challenged and their world views to be altered. The third category, *linguistic contrast*, refers to the possibility to compare the form, meaning and use of the target language to the student's L1, and *facilitation of learning* to inclusion of components that help the students work more independently, for example using L1 in the instructions.

Despite the significant role, or perhaps exactly because of it, textbooks have, however, been criticized as well. Lähdesmäki (2004: 271) points out that teachers often find textbooks "frustrating, annoying and dictatorial". In addition, Hutchinson and Torres express (1994: 315) that textbooks tend to make teachers inactive. They discuss how textbooks offer all the information the teachers need and give instructions on what to teach and how to teach. Therefore, there is a chance that teachers may passively follow the textbooks without using their autonomy in the classroom and blindly trust the textbook designers' judgement on what is important.

Masuhara (2010: 236) criticizes local textbooks often being so inflexible and constrained by syllabus and exams, that he has found it difficult to employ them in teaching. However, global coursebooks on the other hand, he says to include content that is too unfamiliar to students to be imported directly into classrooms. According to him, language teachers must work harder compared with other subject teachers, who do not have to adapt materials as much or produce supplements. In addition, Masuhara (2010: 245) points out that even though the materials that teachers have planned themselves may be a better fit for the students, the students often find the more eye-catching and professional looking coursebooks more valid and trustworthy.

It is good to keep in mind that textbooks alone do not tell us what happens in a classroom, because teachers can use materials in different manners. In everyday teaching, teachers are thus able to influence, through their own choices, how strong the impact of textbooks is in reality (Luukka et al. 2008: 65). However, textbook analyzes are usually based on the idea that the textbook and its texts largely regulate how they are used and interpreted.

Elomaa (2009), in his work *Oppikirja eläköön! Teoreettisia ja käytännön näkökohtia kielten oppimateriaalien uudistamiseen* (in English: *Long live the textbook! Theoretical and practical aspects for the renewal of language learning materials*), declares that the textbook should do exactly as said in the title, to *live* in the classroom and in the hands of the teacher. Indeed, textbooks require teachers both the ability and the desire to improvise. Elomaa refers to Neuner (1994), who emphasizes the role of the teacher as an improviser, as the teacher must omit parts of the textbook material and in turn supplement or change some parts.

One of the most important tasks of a teacher is to supplement the cultural image provided by the learning material with the themes which the students are interested in. Pupils' questions may also relate to topics that are generally considered taboo, but

it should still be possible to deal with them in an age-appropriate way. (Karjala 2003: 52) Supplementing the material with cultural content that interests both students and teachers, has several advantages. The teachers can convey their own interests to the students and motivate the students with their own enthusiasm. Students can also share their own experiences with each other, making learning more student-centered and personal.

Nonetheless, teachers have different approaches to learning materials and these approaches are discussed by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 102). According to them, some see particularly the textbook as a resource that must be followed faithfully and systematically. For other teachers, learning materials, on the other hand, are only starting points that can be supplemented, adapted, or modified according to their goals and the interests of the students. They point out that no single material can comprehensively meet the needs of individual teachers and their learners, and all materials require modification to suit that particular group of students. Adapting the material also enables better compatibility between the material and the teaching context, thus maximizing the value of the material. To conclude, learning materials only form a general basis, but the task of the teachers is to place the material in a context that takes into account the students' interests, needs, expectations and motivations.

The role of the teacher changes when interculturality is considered. Whereas usually teachers' role is, obviously, to teach, when cultures and cultural values are in a constant flux, teachers cannot be an all-knowing source of information. According to Damen (2003: 83), the role of the teacher in the culture learning process is more of a guide in the student's own cultural exploration. Thus, students themselves are active actors in the learning process, while teachers and textbooks only serve as a medium for learning.

## 4.2 Culture in textbooks

Given this view of language teaching, a textbook needs to do more than encourage positive attitudes through presentation of a harmonious image of the other culture. It needs to present that culture as it is lived and talked about by people who are credible and recognizable as real human beings. (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991: 180)

In addition to visiting the target culture and watching tv, listening to music and reading books, students form their understanding about different cultures by reading language textbooks, looking at the images in them and listening to the songs and stories in them. Hence, as Byram and Esarte-Sarries imply in the citation above, it is important that textbooks offer a vivid and authentic image of the target culture. Moreover, Lähdesmäki (2004: 260) remarks that attitudes can be seen as part of the content of foreign language teaching, and the aim is often to generate positive attitudes towards the target language and its speakers and to promote tolerance towards other cultures and people. Altogether, a Karjala (2003: 13) states, language textbooks and what has been chosen to be in them play an important role in helping students to build an image of the target culture, although, students get a lot of information also through the different media.

However, culture is not only taught explicitly, but it is also conveyed implicitly, that is, indirectly through all the content of teaching. Lähdesmäki (2004: 279-280) reminds that language teaching has always in some way taken culture into account, but during the last 20 years, teaching cultural knowledge has changed from explicit to implicit. In other words, whereas previously culture had its own sections, now cultural information is often embedded in the texts and activities.

Lähdesmäki (2004 : 536-538) also brings to light that according to many researchers, it is not at all clear what the target culture is when teaching English, as it is a language that is nowadays used more in communication between non-native speakers than between native speakers. Consequently, it is not necessarily justified to base English textbooks solely on British or American culture. Lähdesmäki (2004: 536-538) suggests that it would be good to combine source and target cultures in foreign language learning materials by comparing them for example. Textbooks could also take greater account of local culture to make it easier for students to identify with them. The materials used in Finnish schools have an advantage in this respect, as they are usually designed in Finland and produced by Finnish publishers. According to Lähdesmäki (2004: 536-538), examples of locality are texts referring to Finnish culture and society, as well as the appearances of Finnish people who have achieved international success.

Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 85) express a different experience and state, that “textbooks are designed to provide a comfortable encounter with a language rather than a nuanced encounter with a culture.” They explain that textbooks are often devised with reference to the culture of the learner, and not that much with reference to the target community. It seems that the readers are protected from the discomfort of encountering different worldviews, values and ways of living.

Risager (2018), on the other hand, has pondered if the culture context of English teaching should be culture-specific or culture-general, whereas culture-specific would mean referring to target language countries, and culture-general to more universal communication and understanding between people from different backgrounds.

Alptekin (1993) has examined the cultural picture of English textbooks from a psycholinguistic perspective and also criticizes them for their entanglement with British or American culture. According to him, language acquisition requires reconciling language structure and cultural knowledge, and because typical English

textbooks are based on cultural patterns that are very foreign to many English learners, they do not necessarily promote English acquisition but may even complicate it. The disparity between the learners' own culture and the target culture scenarios presented in the textbook may create reading comprehension difficulties. Furthermore, if the cultural content is too far away from the culture of learners, it might hinder their motivation as they are not able to see themselves possibly becoming a part of that culture. As said earlier, Finnish schoolbooks are the most often devised in Finland and that puts Finnish students in a privileged position, as the cultural content is traditionally not too far from the one that students are used to.

In addition to the question of the target culture, culture in EFL textbooks has received critique on other matters as well. The textbook writers often, consciously or not, spread their own views and beliefs of the target cultures. Both Alptekin (1992) and Gray (2000) raise that the biggest problem with cultural content in EFL materials is the stereotypic way the cultures are represented and that it does not reflect the diversity of cultures. Gray's survey (2000: 277) also reveals that EFL materials may include culturally uncomfortable topics, such as the drinking culture in Britain. For example, in cultures where alcohol is a taboo, this theme might be found uncomfortable or even offending. On that account, it is important that teachers still have their right to influence what they choose to highlight and what to give less attention.

Another matter that can be considered problematic is that textbook authors can define what is culturally acceptable and unacceptable. The matter is not only in the content of the text but in the status that the content acquires when it appears in the textbook. English language learning materials have indeed been criticized for presenting American and British culture with their values as the norm against which other cultures are positioned. Furthermore, global textbooks that are used in diverse cultural contexts around the world, often represent values and perspectives which may be very

unknown or even offensive to students of different cultural backgrounds. (see Alptekin, 1993; Colebrook, 1996; Gray, 2000)

### 4.3 Previous studies

There have been various studies on English textbooks, but most of them focus on other aspects than culture. These studies acknowledge, for example, gender roles or moral values (see. e.g. Piironen 2004, Varrio 2004) or lexical or grammatical items (see e.g. Tikkanen 1980, Pellikkä 1988, Pursiainen 2009). However, there is some research on the culture aspect of textbooks as well, and in this chapter, those will be introduced.

Pohjanen (2007) has researched how the target cultures are presented in two different series, *New Headlines* and *Key English*. Both of the series are aimed at grades 7 to 9 of Finnish basic education. According to this study, textbooks in question focused on teaching English for traveling and the way target cultures were introduced reminded travel brochures. Also, the study pointed out that the British and American cultures definitely received the most attention, yet neither of the series offered a sufficient amount of cultural information of any of the target cultures. Moreover, the books do not provide information about the everyday life of the residents of the target cultures, but rather certain small facts about the countries.

Lappalainen (2011) also has studied English textbooks and how they support the principles of cultural learning and teaching. The study also aimed to find out whether there has been some development on how the cultures are presented in the textbooks, as the data consisted of both older and more recent materials. It was also studied if there were any differences between the secondary school and upper secondary school textbooks. The books studied were *Smart Moves 2*, *Key English 8*, *In Touch 2*, *Culture café 3* and *Culture café 4*. The study focused on the presentation of the American culture only, and as well as the study of Pohjanen, it pointed out that the textbooks do not support the principles of cultural learning completely. Textbooks included

stereotypical knowledge of the target cultures, and often only state facts rather than analyze them in more depth. However, Lappalainen states that the development of the cultural information in textbooks has been positive. Even though the newer textbooks have fewer references to culture, the information is less stereotypical. In addition, textbooks for secondary school support the principles of cultural learning and teaching better than the textbooks for upper secondary school.

Lindström (2015), as well, has studied the cultural information textbooks offer. The study was based on three textbook series, *Wow!* for primary school, *Spotlight* for secondary school and *Open Road* for upper secondary school and studied the image the textbooks offer of the culture of the UK. The study of Lindström claims that intercultural communication was acknowledged decently, but the image the textbooks offer of the target cultures was somewhat problematic. The information about the target cultures was inadequate and England received the majority of the acknowledgement, and other countries of the UK were left for lesser notion. Moreover, the cultural information was quite superficial.

## 5 THE PRESENT STUDY

### 5.1 The aim and the research questions

In this study, I will focus on analyzing the cultural knowledge the English textbooks offer. More precisely, this research focuses on locally produced textbooks that are published in Finland and used in the Finnish basic education. The aim of this study is to find out which of the English-speaking countries are represented in English textbooks and what kind of cultural information the textbooks offer. The status of English as an International Language / Lingua Franca is also considered when executing this study.

The cultural content will be evaluated and categorized as defined in chapter 3.1. The categories are: *everyday life and behavior, objects, symbols and institutions, national geography and tourism, heroes and national identity, social practices and history, beliefs and rituals.*

As it was mentioned earlier, the English language can be seen as lingua franca, but English textbooks traditionally focus on the cultures of the Inner Circle. Based on the author's own experience, it is expected that at least American and British cultures are present in the source material.

Even though English is largely understood as a global language, this study focuses on the English-speaking cultures that use English as their primary language. This focus has its foundation on Kachru's model of *Three Circles of English*. As specified in 2.1, the inner circle refers to the communities where English is used as the first language, in other words Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States and New Zealand. In many contexts the United Kingdom is considered as one entity, but in this study, the English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh cultures will be considered separate.

One may ponder if it is meaningful to analyze a textbook without considering how it is used in the classroom, but the textbook typically contains some examples of how it can be used. According to Risager (2018), therefore, it is still possible to examine a textbook although taken away from the context of teaching. However, even though the textbooks often offer the very base for teaching, this study alone does not reveal what the students actually learn in class, but only what the *Go for it!*- and *On the Go*-series textbooks itself have to offer.

The research questions are as follows:

1. Which English-speaking cultures are represented in the textbooks?
  - In which ways is the role of EIL / ELF present?
2. What kind of cultural knowledge is presented and in which ways?
3. Are some cultures given more emphasis than others?

## 5.2 Description of the data

The data was collected by examining the primary school English textbooks *Go for it! 3* (Kanervo, Laukkarinen, Paakkinen, Sarlin and Westlake 2016), *Go for it! 4* (Kanervo et al. 2015), *Go for it! 5* (Kanervo et al. 2017) and *Go for it! 6* (Kanervo et al. 2017), as well as the secondary school English textbooks *On the Go 1* (Daffue-Karsten, Haapala, Ojala, Ojala, Peuraniemi, Rappold, Semi and Vaakanainen 2017), *On the Go 2* (Daffue-Karsten et al. 2017) and *On the Go 3* (Daffue-Karsten et al. 2018). All the textbooks mentioned have been published by a Finnish publisher Sanoma Pro Oy. Moreover, the books were created by Finnish teams and to meet the needs of the new National Core Curriculum 2014. These textbooks were chosen to be examined because they are newly published and therefore provide recent information of what kind of cultural knowledge the Finnish basic education students are offered.

Because of the limitations of the study, even though both series also offer exercise books and online-materials, only the textbooks were examined. This decision was made based on the assumption that the most part of cultural information comes from the texts and images that these textbooks include. Furthermore, textbooks commonly create the context that the other materials build on. However, it is good to keep in mind that the exercise books and the online materials may offer some additional cultural knowledge as well.

*Go for it!* is a primary school textbook series designed to meet the needs of the NCC 2014. The first opening of the textbook introduces the content of the book and introduces the reader to the structure of the book. The textbooks are divided into five units, all of which are similar in content. In addition to the three storylike texts, every unit includes picture vocabularies, games, drama exercises, and cartoons that support grammar learning. Some units also present *Easy Street* and *Fast Lane* texts that give the teacher a chance to differentiate. *Go for it!* series is built around the everyday life of an English family, the Nutties. The family includes mother Rosemary, father Herb and their children Coco, Hazel and Chip, and grandparents Honey and Basil. Their cats Salt, Mustard, Pepper and Chili are also an important part of the family. Throughout the book series, the Nutty family ventures first in England, next in America and then around Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Eventually, in the last book of the series, the focus shifts further away from inner circle countries as they embark on a trip around the world.

*On the Go*, on the other hand, is a book series by the same publisher, but aimed at students of grades 7 to 9 of basic education. Each *On the Go* -book has six units, and one unit is always built around the same theme. Each section consists of one main text that is presented both in a form of a cartoon as well as a text, communication exercises, and a geography/culture section. In addition, the unit contains several *Your choice-*

texts that can be processed together, nonetheless the primary idea is that the students themselves choose and study the topics they find interesting. Unlike the *Go for it!* -series, *On the Go* -series does not have a specific storyline or certain main characters and the books introduce various people from different backgrounds. The book gives information on geography and culture and focuses on young people's everyday lives in different parts of the world.

### 5.3 Method of analysis

As a method of analysis, I used *theory-based content analysis*, because it establishes the opportunity for examining the textbooks closely. According to Krippendorff (2018: 24), “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use”. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 91, 103) also point out that content analysis is one of the most common methods for qualitative research and it can be used for different kinds of studies. Weninger and Kiss (2015), on the other hand, refer to content analysis as a structured and systematic design that involves a careful documentation of procedures and an explicit theorization of text, context and inference. Considering the aim of this study, content analysis was seen suitable as this study does not aim to make generalizations but rather to describe and understand the cultural phenomenon in the source material.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 95-96) state, that there are three different approaches to content analysis: *data-based*, *theory-guided* and *theory-based*. The *data-based approach* aims to form a theoretical model based on the data whereas the *theory-guided approach* has connections to a theory, but it is not directly based on the theory and the *theory-based approach* is directly based on a theory. The approach used in this present study is theory-based since the study aims to find out whether the cultural content in textbooks follows the evaluation criteria for cultural content that was created for this study.

Krippendorff (2018) explains that content analysis involves systematic reading and observation of texts and artifacts around the texts to indicate the existence of interesting and meaningful pieces of content. Then, Krippendorff (2018) adds, by systematically categorizing these findings, the content can be analyzed quantitatively using statistical methods or qualitatively to analyze meanings of content within texts. In this study, I chose to analyze the data both qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition to wanting to find out what kind of cultural information the textbooks offer, this study aimed at finding out which cultures were given more emphasis than others, and thus I felt the need for numerical calculations as well.

With these guidelines in mind, I started the process of analysis by browsing the books to get an overall picture of the cultural content. Each textbook was examined individually, and notes were made in a similar manner about each book. As Lähdesmäki (2004: 279-280) points out, cultural knowledge is often embedded in the texts and images, and therefore, both the texts and pictures were considered when executing the analysis.

As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 113) state, theory-based content analysis is deductive in nature and the analysis of the data is based on a theoretical framework. Thus, the observations of the present study were first categorized according to the evaluation criteria created for this study (see chapter 3.1). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 114) also explain that in theory-based content analysis the data is reduced only to relevant observations and only the content that belongs under the chosen criteria is included in the analysis. Consequently, and due the extent of the observations, I created subcategories to clarify the structure of the analysis of the present study.

The findings of every category were then divided by country to see what kind of an image the cultural references create of each English-speaking culture. Lastly, findings were counted and presented in a form of a pie chart to describe the extent to which

certain culture is given emphasis in the textbooks. Indeed, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 108) Tuomi and note that the result of the analysis is a summarized presentation of the data, which increases the information value of the data since irrelevant data is deleted.

## 6 FINDINGS

### 6.1 English-speaking cultures in *Go for it!* and *On the Go*

In this chapter the findings of the study are introduced and discussed. The analysis concentrates on explaining and describing how the aspects of the English-speaking cultures are presented. The analysis is divided into seven subsections and analyzed according to the seven criteria.

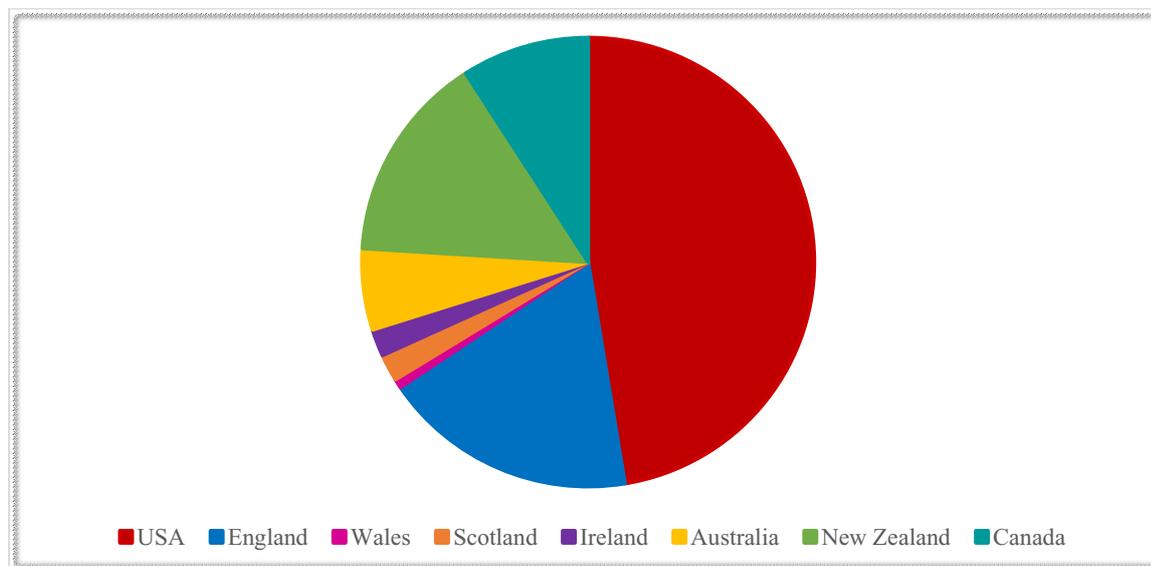
The following abbreviations are used for the textbooks:

Go for it! 3 = G3  
Go for it! 4 = G4  
Go for it! 5 = G5  
Go for it! 6 = G6  
On the Go 1 = O1  
On the Go 2 = O2  
On the Go 3 = O3

#### 6.1.1 Everyday life and behavior

This section discusses how the everyday life of the English-speaking cultures is presented in the textbooks. The section is divided into subcategories considering school and employment, free time activities and sports, way to dress and make up, dietary habits, family structure, and housing. The chart below demonstrates the division of the English-speaking cultures that are visible in this category.

Table 1. Everyday life



### School and employment

School in general is an important theme in all the textbooks analyzed. As *Go for it!* -series revolve around the life of the Nutty family, the American and English school systems are naturally demonstrated throughout the books. *On the Go* -series too has many texts elaborating on especially the American and English school systems. For example, the ages in which children start school in Britain and America are compared, as well as the length of the summer vacation (G4: 52). One of the textbooks also offers insight into the life in a boarding school, as one of the series' characters describes her life in one (O1:59). Also, the different class grade system is introduced as the character is currently in Y11 (O1:61). The book does not directly say what grade that would be in Finland, but it does say that the person is 16 years old, which implies that Y11 is equivalent to the first year of upper secondary school in Finland.

Whereas in America the students go to school wearing the clothes they choose (G4: 39-41), in Britain they wear uniforms (G3: 47-49, O1: 59,62). In America, the students are seen taking the school bus (G4: 52) to school, but in London the characters are seen walking to school together with their classmate (G3: 17). The after-school clubs seem to be in an important role in the children's life both in America and England. The

boarding school in England (O1:59) and Nutties' school in America (G4:52) are said to offer varied after school clubs which many students attend.

It is also implied that in America, not all the schools are equal. One of the characters, Cole, explains that their family has moved so he could go to a better school (O1: 46). The school system of other English-speaking countries is not explored in depth, but it transpires that children wear uniforms to school in Australia too, they just look different than in England (G5: 54). Also, their summer holiday is six weeks long and it is usually in December and January (O2:31). Of Canadian schools, the only fact mentioned is that every school day starts by singing the national anthem (O2:146).

It is also pointed out that American youngsters rarely spend the summer off, but rather attend a summer camp, often due the parents having to work over summer (O1: 7-16). There are different kinds of camps, and the themes vary from nature to art, sports, or religion.

Employment and the working life are not in a major role in the textbooks. However, some occupations can be seen in the illustrations and photographs and some are shortly mentioned in the text. Examples of this are a basketball player (O1: 34-35), a scientist (O1(36-37), a policeman (G4:10), a firefighter (G4: 31) and a park ranger (4: 95), and all this are presented in the context of the American culture. Opal mining as a source of livelihood is mentioned when introducing a small village in Australia (O2:22-23).

### Free time activities and sports

Even more important of a theme than school in both series is free time activities and sports. However, English sports are not highly on display, and the free time activities that are presented in the context of England, are doubtfully the most traditional.

Characters run laps, bake cakes, drink milk as fast as they can, build bikes and ride a bike all together balancing on each other (G3: 101), which supposedly do not represent the national sports of England or Britain. In addition to these, cricket, rugby and surfing are mentioned when interviewing local teenagers of their favorite activities (O1:97), the boarding school in England has a rugby team called All-Girls (O1:58-63), one of the characters is seen playing badminton (G3:114) and one loves formula 1 (G4:66).

American sports and sport teams, on the other hand, play an important role in both series. There are pictorial references to the baseball team New York Yankees (G4: 17, O2:128) and the ice hockey team New York Rangers (G4: 29) in the form of their logos. The basketball team Harlem Globetrotter is mentioned several times, as the main characters in *Go for it!* -series play a game against them (G4: 59). *On the Go*, on the other hand, offers a closer look at the life of basketball player Michael Jordan's life (O1: 35), and in that context basketball teams Chicago Bulls, Charlotte Hornets, Boston Celtics, and the Olympic Dream Team of 1992 are mentioned (O1:34-35). In the same manner, ice hockey teams Edmonton Oilers, Los Angeles Kings, St. Louis Blues, New York Rangers are mentioned when introducing famous ice hockey player Wayne Gretzky (O2:156).

American football is addressed multiple times, both in text and in images. Some characters are seen dressed in the American football gear (G4: 41, O1: 29), and there are American football equipment visible in the illustrations (G4:41, O1: 22). Also, when the book introduces new vocabulary related to free time activities, the sentence "I play in a team" is accompanied by an image of an American football team (O1:29). Moreover, the difference between soccer and football is discussed in text (G4: 42).

Other American free time activities on display are for example dancing (G4: 53), cheerleading (G4: 53), surfing (O1: 55) and skating (G4: 57) and the camp activities

archery, horseback riding, soccer, swimming, climbing, and canoeing (O1: 9-10). Of the less known sports, barn dancing and bull riding are mentioned (G4: 89).

Majority of the pages devoted to New Zealand have something to do with either rugby or some extreme and “adrenaline-packed” (O2:98) sport. Both national rugby teams, The All Blacks (G5: 41) and The Black Ferns (G5: 33), are introduced. Other activities that are mentioned are skydiving, heli-skiing, bungee jumping, scuba diving, mountain biking, snowboarding, shark tank diving and ogo, “a crazy, huge plastic ball” that can “go as fast as 50 kilometers an hour, over land and water!” (G5: 46, O2: 82-83, 91, 98-99). However, bungee jumping is the only one of these that gets more attention than a short introduction, as one of the characters has a go at it (G5: 40).

If New Zealander sports get a somewhat lot of attention, when it comes to Wales, there is only a question to the reader asking what the national sport of Wales is. The book does not tell the answer, but there is an image of an arena next to the question and on that a banner with a picture of men playing rugby (G5: 7). However, this pictorial reference may not be understood by the Finnish students, as rugby is not necessarily a familiar sport to them.

Scottish Highland Games are mentioned shortly, and it is said that there are “crazy sports, bagpipe competitions and country dancing” (G5: 29). Australian free time activities are mostly limited to surfing (O2:9, O2: 32), with the exception of a quiz in the end of the unit concerning Australia that has a question about the most popular sport in Australia. The answer box says it to be Australian rules football, but there is not an explanation of what that means. (G5: 66)

According to the series, the Canadiens are “crazy about hockey” (G5: 79) and they “live and breathe” it (O2:143). They play it themselves on their backyards (G5:79), they

watch it, and they cheer for their teams like Montreal Canadiens (G5: 95). They even have a concept of “pancake hockey night” (G5: 88), when they gather up in pubs to eat pancakes and watch their favorites play. Stanley Cup (O2:155) is mentioned as an important thing to ice hockey fans, and it is brought up that many sport teams in Canada are called Canucks (O2: 147). Irish sports and other free time activities are on display only in a quiz, which reveals that the national sport of Ireland is curling (G5: 102) and the Irish love dancing and especially river dance (G5: 103) and in one text introducing the history of step dancing (O3: 117).

### Way to dress and make up

As said, in England, the books’ characters wear uniforms to school (G3 :13,17,47, O1:62). Otherwise, people seem to be dressing quite formally, as all the men are dressed in business suits when on their way to work (G3: 47). Also, a teacher is wearing a formal jacket when going on their field trip with his class (G3: 47). Moreover, one of the books’ characters is wearing his dress shirt even when gardening (G3: 15). Dressing formally is not limited to the work environment only, as then men are wearing ties and women are spruced up in nice dresses when running errands and shopping (G3: 73).

According to the *Go for it!* -series, in America people seem to dress more casually than in England. For example, the characters are dressed informally when having a barbeque with their neighbors (G4: 34-35) and American teenagers are dressed in relaxed shorts and t-shirts or swimsuits at camp (O1:9-11). Also, the teacher in America is dressed quite laid-back (G4:41), and even the bus driver is wearing casual trousers and a shirt (G4: 52). Moreover, people wandering on Times Square are all dressed in casual clothes (G4: 54-55) instead of the suits and dresses seen on people running errands in London (G3: 73).

On the other hand, the series displays a variety of different American uniforms, like a police uniform (G4: 10), a firefighter uniform (G4: 31) and a park ranger uniform (4: 95). There is also a rancher wearing the clothes that are typical for cowboys (G4: 87-88, O1:32), and many others wear cowboy hats on the farmer's market in Texas (G4: 89).

In other parts of the English-speaking world, according to the *Go for it!* -series, people seem to dress quite ordinarily. Most of the people are dressed in normal trousers and t-shirts. Of traditional clothing, only kilt is mentioned in section of "strange stuff about Scotland" (G5: 29), and according to the series, they are popular but itchy to wear. In addition to the normal trousers, when the happenings place in Australia, the characters are dressed in safari-style clothes (G5: 57) or western style attire (O2: 11-12), and in New Zealand the characters are mostly wearing training clothes (G5: 33).

### Dietary habits

There are many references to the dietary habits of the English-speaking world, but the cuisine of England, on the other hand, is not introduced in a wide sense. However, tea and scones (G3: 45, O1: 85), fish and chips (G3: 68) and English breakfast (G3: 69) are all present in a form of an illustration. The characters of the books are rarely seen ordering food and eating. One exception to this is when two of the characters order and eat hamburgers at an English restaurant (G3: 89). However, hamburgers are often considered to be of American origin rather than an important part of English or British food culture. All in all, the food in England seems to be quite international, as the menu at Queen Mary's boarding school offers a variety of foods of which only fish and chips (O1: 76) is considered a traditional English meal.

In the United States the food seems to be quite unhealthy, and the food presented is for example ice cream and hotdogs (G4: 30), pretzels and apple pie (G4: 31) and there is even an illustration of raccoon drinking soda (G4: 30). The characters also eat tacos

when they visit California (G4:112), which can be seen as a reference to the Mexican culture that has a strong influence in the United States, and especially in California. In addition, the characters spend time together having a barbeque (G4: 33-35), Hazel describes the American burgers “gigantic” (G4: 46) and a billboard on Times Square advertises for Corona (G4: 54).

As said, especially the *Go for it!* - series gives a somewhat unhealthy image of American food. Moreover, one of the characters, Rock Bush, may be seen as an embodiment of the result of this unhealthy diet. He claims to be allergic to vegetables and berries, or pretty much to everything healthy, and lives with pizza and ice cream (G4: 24). Another example of the American diet is the rancher that the Nutties meet in Texas, who seems to be unaware of what a person can eat if not meat (G4: 87-88).

*On the Go!* - series does not focus on dietary habits of the English-speaking cultures either, but some dishes are mentioned in the texts or shown in the images. An ordinary camp breakfast is said to be cereal, yogurt, toast, bacon, and eggs (O1: 9) and dinner mostly hamburgers (O1:9). When the series takes a closer look to Florida, a cubano sandwich, key lime pie and orange juice are introduced as traditional dishes of Florida (O1: 19).

Of dietary habits of other cultures, the traditional dish from Scotland, haggis (G5: 28), is mentioned. In addition to a photograph of the dish, there is an explanation of what it is made of. Pancakes seem to be an important dish around the English-speaking world, since they are mentioned first in context of New Zealand (G5: 45), then Australia (G5: 63) and last Canada. However, whereas in Canada pancakes are called pancakes and served with maple syrup (G5: 78, O2: 146), in New Zealand they are called hotcakes (G5: 45), and the same applies to Australia, where the hotcakes are served with butter and strawberries on top (G5: 63). Of other Australian dishes, it is mentioned that breakfast is often a toast with Vegemite (O2:11) and lunch sausages

and mash (O2:12), however it is not explained what Vegemite is like. Nonetheless, it is explained that Australians love barbeque, and visitors should definitely try kangaroo steaks, witchetty grubs and goanna (O2:21), of which the book offers images and descriptions as well. Canadian dietary habits are basically limited to pancakes and maple syrup, but as the book introduces odd facts about Canada, it brings forward a traditional drink of Dawson City, the Sourtoe Cocktail (O2: 155), which is a drink with an amputated human toe at the bottom of the glass.

### Family structure

When it comes to family structure, the main characters of the *Go for it!* - series, the Nutties, and their neighbors, The Smiths, can both be seen as an embodiment of it. According to the picture that the series creates, English families are varied, and their understanding of a family is extended. The Nutty family consists of the mom and dad, their three children and the grandparents who live with them (G3:9). The same understanding of a family can be seen in the family tree of Hazel's friend John, which includes, in addition to his parents, siblings and grandparents, his stepdad, half-sister, uncle and aunt as well (G3: 24). This however can be partly for language learning reasons, to exhibit a variety of family related words for the students to learn.

The Smith family, on the other hand, represents the modern-day single parenting as the dad alone takes care of his two children. In the series the pets also are considered as an important part of the family, as the Nutties' cats are in an important role in the storyline of the books (G3, G4, G5, G6), and the dog of the Smith family also poses with them in the family picture (G3: 9). A family that Nutties meet during their trip, the Browns, is the image of the traditional nuclear family. They are a family of four; mother, father, daughter, and son, who all look alike and wear matching outfits (G3: 109).

Neither of the series offers clear examples of American family structure. The Hill family (G4: 33-35) features in the *Go for it!* - series, but the book does not present much information about them, or even who belongs in their family. Moreover, *On the Go* - series does not offer clear images of family structures, as the characters change from unit to unit. The characters are mostly teenagers, and their families are not present or even mentioned. However, one of the American teenagers is presented to be living with his dad and their dog (O1: 45), and one of them writes a letter to his mom and dad (O1:9-10). On the other hand, pets are considered an important part of the family in other parts of the English-speaking world as well, but the examples of it are somewhat over-the-top. For example, Canadians are seen considering bears as part of their family (G5:83), and Australians are told to be having lizards as pets (G5:75)

### Housing

Living conditions are not directly discussed in the books, with one exception. It can be interpreted that in London the Nutties live in a very typical town house (G3: 10-11) whereas in America they live in a skyscraper (G4:21-22). Other kinds of housing are not highly on display, apart from ranches in Texas, USA (G4: 84) and somewhere in the "Outback", Australia (O2:11) and the cabin-like houses in the woods of Canada (G5:83). None of these is discussed in the texts but can only be interpreted from the images and illustrations. However, there is a whole text dedicated to the underground houses in Coober Pedy, Australia (O2: 22-23). The text gives an example of how the people live in just this one city, but this cannot be generalized to the way people in total live in Australia. However, it is said that due to hot weather, they need to save water, and that concerns most of Australia.

In *On the Go* -series, different types of housing is mainly presented in a picture-form, and in many cases it is not clear to which country of culture the image refers to. One example of this is the illustration of a street view with different kinds of houses (O1:

42) and on the yard of one of them there is an American flag. However, without the flag, these houses could easily be anywhere in the English-speaking world.

### 6.1.2 Objects, symbols and institutions

In this section the examples of different culturally significant objects and symbols found in the textbooks are presented. The section is also divided into subcategories, considering vocabulary, flags, maps, currencies and measurements and culturally important objects. Table 2 demonstrates the distribution of the English-speaking cultures presented in this category, excluding the subcategories of flags and vocabulary. Chart 3 demonstrates the distribution of the visibility of the flags of English-speaking cultures in textbooks. The examples of vocabulary are not included in the charts, as they are unfeasible to categorize and calculate.

Table 2. Symbols and institutions

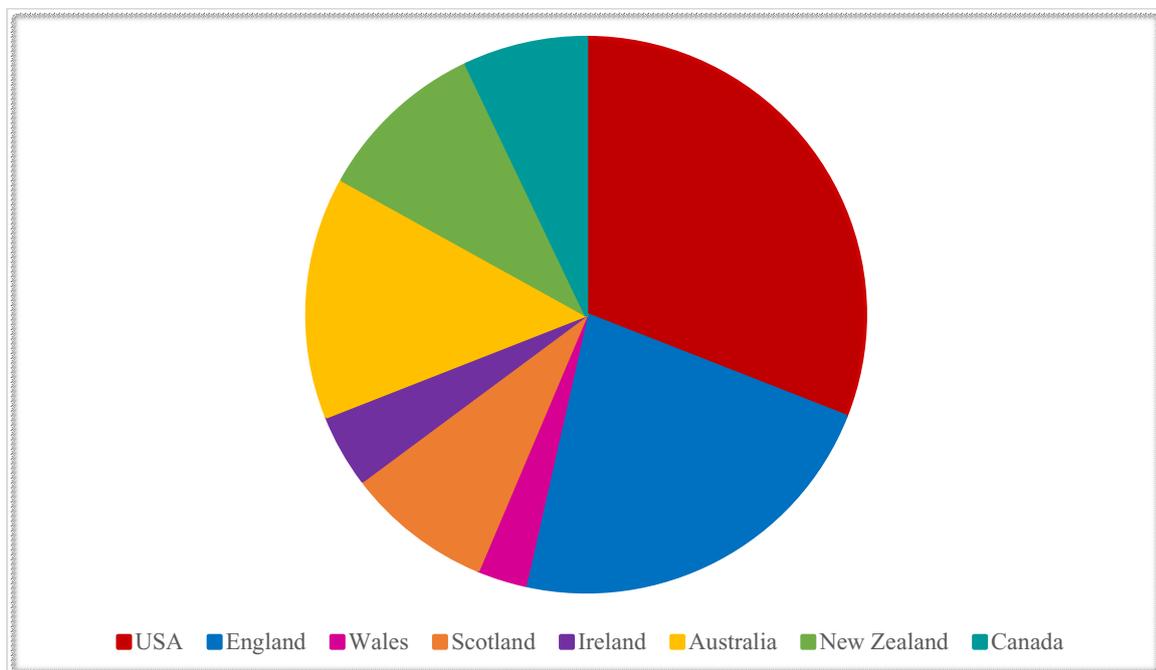
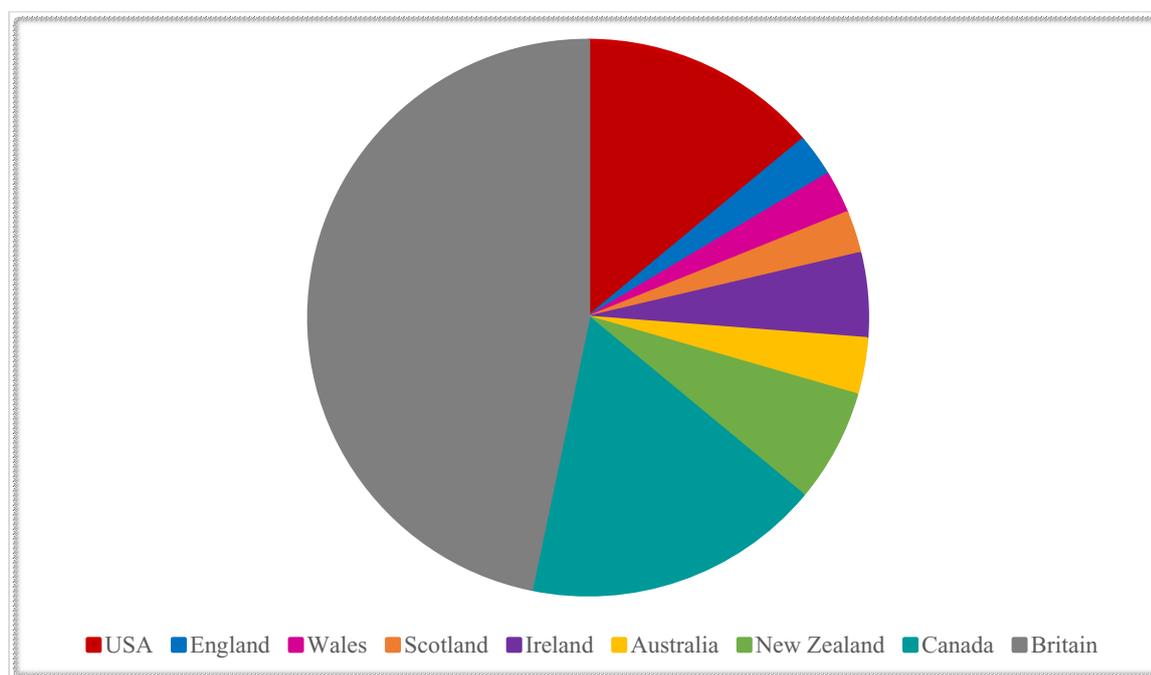


Table 3. Flags



### Vocabulary

Textbooks offer some variety when considering different dialects and variants of English although the British vocabulary predominates throughout the *Go for it!* -series. However, the differences between the American and the British variants of certain words are introduced and even discussed in texts. For example, vocabulary introduces both the American term “underground” and its British equivalent “subway” (G4: 8). Also, the difference between “soccer” and “football” (G4: 41) and “sneakers” and “trainers” (G4: 41) is discussed, as well as the difference between “chips” and “soda” and “crisps” and “lemonade” (G4: 35). British spelling and vocabulary prevails throughout the series as well, even when the texts explore the American, Australian or any other culture. For example, the word “color” is spelled with a *u*, as in “colour” (G4: 20) and when introducing different tools and utensils, the word “torch” is used instead of the American equivalent “flashlight” (G6; 61). British vocabulary is perhaps used because the main characters are British.

*On the Go* -series, on the other hand, seems to display both American and British spelling, depending on the culture and country the text is based on. An example of this

is that both “favorite” (O1: 9) and “favourite” (O1:38) are used in the books. The series also demonstrates some slang words in a specific “slang corner” (O1 :37,73), but the information in which culture this slang is used is missing.

Few features of the Australian or New Zealander dialects are displayed. The only example of the dialect of New Zealand is that according to the series, in New Zealand bungee jumping is spelled *bungy* jumping (G5: 46). About Australian dialect, it is mentioned that *bush* means *land* (G5: 58), and Australia is repeatedly called “Down Under” (G5: 69, O2: 9) which is commonly known as a nickname to Australia.

Moreover, textbooks take into account the multilingualism that prevails in some English-speaking countries. For example, the series acknowledges the Gaelic language in Scotland (G5: 28), the Maori language in New Zealand (O2:79), Irish in Ireland (O3: 116) and French in Canada (G5: 87, O2 :142). However, the Gaelic language is only mentioned a couple of times, and the only information given is that *loch* mean *lake* (G5: 28), and the Maori word “*aotearoa*” (O2:79) is featured next the map of New Zealand without an explanation of what it stands for. On the other hand, the French language has achieved more attention, as there are both English and French menu available and displayed when the characters dine in a Canadian restaurant (G5: 87), and the signs at the airport are both in English and in French (G5: 81). The same applies to the Irish language in Ireland, as there is a whole double-page spread devoted to the use and history of Irish language (O3: 116). Additionally, the readers are given some linguistic knowledge when the biggest languages and amount of the speakers are presented (O1: 72).

### Flags

Flags are the most important symbol present in the textbooks, especially in the *Go for it!* -series, and of all of the flags, the presence of the British flag is certainly the most

significant. It is present in the *Go for it! 3* alone eleven times. In addition to the traditional flag flying over the city, the British flag can be seen on a side of a bus (G3: 73), on a cap (G3:76), on an umbrella (O1:85), painted on a prop of a TV show (G3:109), as a background of a flyer (G3: 97) and even as the coloring of a gecko (G3:120). It also symbolizes the use of English language in all the exercises and games (G6:98). The flag of England, however, is only displayed on Hazel's shirt (G3: 26), and not even once as an actual flag.

The flag of The United States is not present as many times as the one of the UK, but still acts as an important symbol of the country. It can be seen on the side of an airplane (G4: 7), on the background of a photograph (G4: 30), and even the coloring of one of the character's hair (G4: 71). However, even when the events of the book take place in the USA or Australia, it is still the British flag that acts as the symbol of the English language in the games of the textbooks (G4: 50, G5: 26).

The flags of Wales (G5: 6), Scotland (G5: 6), New Zealand (G5:30), Australia (G5: 54), Canada (G5: 78, O2:142) and Ireland (G5: 102) are all present when introducing the units which explore these cultures. However, the amount of the flags is relatively small apart from the Canadian flag. Whereas the Australian flag is present four times, and the flag of Ireland six times, the Canadian flag is present 21 times total. The flags also act as signs of nationality, as they can be seen in the instrument cases of the Spice kids, characters in *Go for it! 4*, who each are of different nationality (G5: 15, 21).

### Maps

All the textbooks display maps of the English-speaking countries in a similar manner. Maps are illustrated, presenting the names of the most remarkable cities, territories, areas or states, the most important sights and objects of the countries. For example, the maps of USA (G4:78-79, O1: 33) are enriched with illustrations of surfers, hurricanes,

alligators, the Statue of Liberty and the White House and the map of Australia (O2:18-19) with illustrations of the Great Barrier Reef, spiders, kangaroos, surfers and the Sydney Opera House and the map of Canada (O2:152-153) with illustrations of an ice hockey player, a French street sign and traditional totem pole. In addition, the nearest countries, water systems, possible time zones and landmarks are displayed.

### Objects

Typical objects for the London cityscape seem to be double-decker buses (G3: 18), black cabs (G3: 45), tube stations (G3: 22) and underground signs (G3: 45), whereas in America the streets are crowded with yellow cabs (G4: 26), big SUVs (G4: 69) and yellow school buses (G4: 26). Even the song that introduces the unit that explores New York says it: “Yellow cabs, police cars, people everywhere. Skyscrapers in the sky.” (G4: 30). The United States of America is also portrayed as a country of everything big; strawberries are bigger, trees are taller, portions are huge (G4:26).

The textbooks do not really exhibit typical objects of Wales, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada or Ireland, apart from the illustrations that are used to enhance the maps of the countries, as mentioned above. These illustrations that are displayed in the context of the map, are not explained to the reader, and are sometimes quite vague. For example, there is an illustration of a leek by the map of Wales, but it is not explained what this vegetable has to do with Wales or Welsh culture. However, there are a couple exceptions. Bagpipes (G5: 29) are shortly introduced when talking about “Strange stuff about Scotland”, and didgeridoo and boomerang (G5: 54, O2:44-45) are featured when introducing Australia. Moreover, there are instructions on how to throw a boomerang (O2:44-45) and some information about the history of didgeridoo (G5: 58).

### Currencies and units of measurement

When the happenings of the text are located in England, and the characters go shopping, the currency they talk about is obviously pounds (G3: 77-79). Also, when presenting a menu of a school cafeteria, the prices are in pounds (O1:77). However, within the same theme, there is a game where the students are expected to talk about the prices of clothes, but the prices are in euros (G3: 88). American dollars are also presented within a café menu (O2:138), and when talking about prices in different contexts (O1: 33, O2:188). Any other currencies are not, in effect, talked about besides a fun fact that Canadian money smells like maple syrup (O2:154).

Of other units of measurement, feet (O1: 105), pounds (O2:137) Celsius and Fahrenheit (O2:84-85) are mentioned.

### Institutions

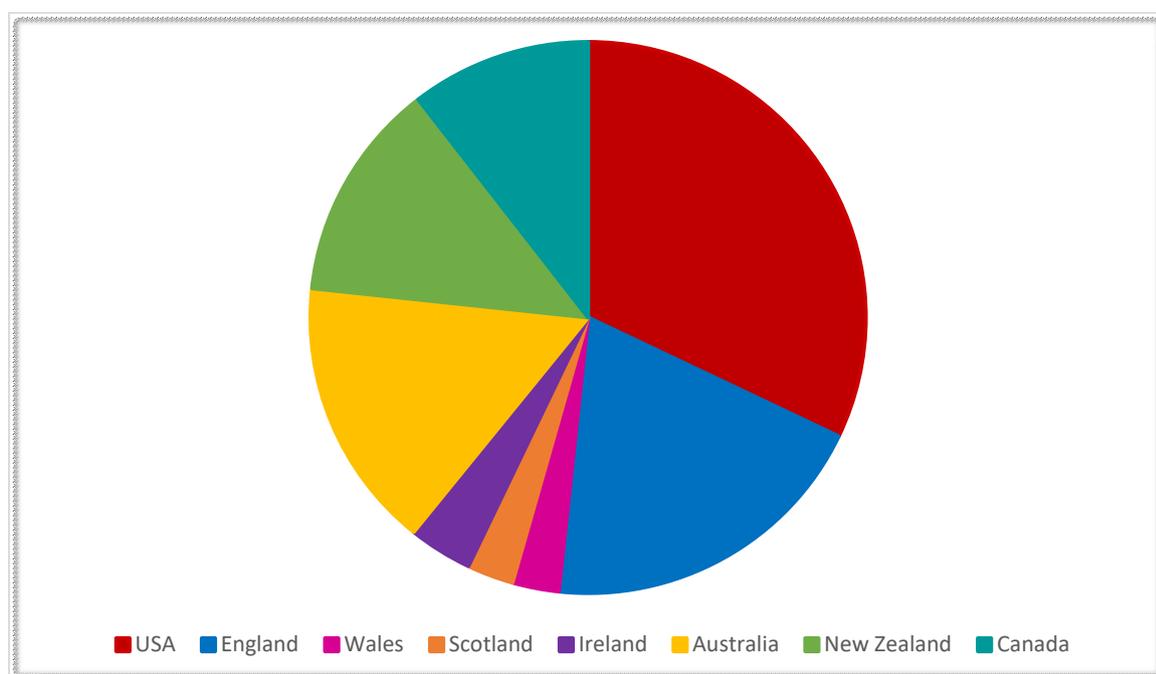
The British police or other authorities are not introduced, whereas American police officers have a role in the storyline of the *Go for it!* -series (G4:10). One of the characters drives on the wrong side of the street, and not only one, but two police cars and a helicopter appear to instruct her (G4: 11). This can be seen as an example of how everything is done big in America, but also as an example of the differences between the laws of England and USA, as the character in question is from England and used to driving on the left, whereas in USA they drive on the right. Laws concerning driving are talked also when it is said that in Australia they drive on the left as well (G5: 58) and in California there are four different kinds of driving licenses (O1: 47).

The independence of the nation seems to be a significant value for both the Australians and Canadians, since it is said that in both of these countries the national anthem is very important, and in Canada it is sung at the beginning of everyday school day (O2 :25, O2: 146). In addition to that, it is said that Canadians value equality and education above all (O2: 146).

### 6.1.3. National geography and tourism

This section discusses the national geography, including the cities and town as well as the touristic sites. Also, this section acknowledges the land and cityscapes presented in the textbooks. Table 4, again, demonstrates the distribution of the English-speaking cultures presented in this category.

Table 4. National geography and tourism



#### National geography

The national geography of the USA receives definitely the most attention, and the stories of the textbooks explore the States from coast to coast. As said earlier, the students are familiarized with the map of the USA. Moreover, the maps offer information about the objects and habits typical for that part of the country and that creates an image that the lifestyle varies greatly from state to state. However, the map and its illustrations give quite a stereotypical image of America. For example, according to the map, Hawaii is for surfers, Alaska has polar bears, astronauts work in Florida and show business is revolved in California (G4: 78-79).

The maps of the USA introduce all the states by name, and the texts of the book also take the reader to venture into many American cities, towns and neighborhoods. New York is described as “busy and loud” (G4: 21-27) and many of its neighborhoods are also mentioned, like Manhattan, Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn (G4:6, O2:129-130). The reader also finds out that New York is also called Big Apple (G4: 12, O2: 129).

According to the textbooks, Florida is fun, full of sunshine, tourists and alligators (O1:18-10, G4:79). All the biggest cities like for example Orlando, Tampa, Miami and Key West (O1:18-19) are mentioned by name but not introduced in more depth. Moving west from New York And Florida, Washington D.C. is introduced as the location of the White House (G4: 70) and the National Air and Space Museum (G4: 71).

The textbooks also take the reader to Texas to experience the ranch-life (G4: 87-89), by exciting Las Vegas (G4: 100), and into sunny California. One of the units that focuses on California, starts with a song that says “*Laughing, throwing frisbees. Playing, having fun. Swimming in the ocean under the sun*” (G4: 102), and it can be seen as an implication of the Californian lifestyle. Of Californian cities, San Francisco (G4: 104:107, Los Angeles (G4: 110-113) and Sacramento (O1:44) are introduced. The storyline takes the reader to all these places, showing some illustrations and images of them as well. The ever-changing weather of San Francisco is discussed (G4: 106) and Los Angeles is presented as the place for people to seek their way to fame (G4: 111, O2:138-139).

The national parks of the United States receive a remarkable amount of attention, as the characters venture Yellowstone in Wyoming (G4: 81, O3:90), Yosemite and Sequoia in California (G4: 81) and Mount Rushmore in South Dakota (G4: 82-83), Mesa Verde in Colorado (G4:93-94) and Grand Canyon in Arizona (G4: 95). In addition to only mentioning the national parks by name, some additional information is given, yet not very profound. For example, with mentioning Yellowstone, there is an illustration of

a hot spring, and the text also implies that hair and feet may get wet there (G4: 81). Of Yosemite, it is said that there is the highest waterfall in America, and in Sequoia one can see huge, old redwood trees (G4: 81).

Even though one of the books is completely devoted to life in England, apart from mentioning that some of the characters are originally from Manchester, London is the only place in England the books introduce. This creates to some extent the image that there is no more to England than that. The book offers, however, a couple of glimpses of the authentic London streets, like the street full of traditional townhouses (G3: 6-7) and the busy shopping streets where people are running their errands (G3: 68-69, 73). Moreover, the books offer information of the areas of London and what to do there (O1: 86-87). Of other cities, Cheltenham (O1:58), Sheffield (O1:58), Bristol (O1:70), Cornwall (O1: 89), Oxford (O1:105) and Bath (O1:105) are mentioned by name, but the reader is not offered more information.

The map of the UK displays the names of the biggest cities of England like Liverpool and Manchester. The river Thames is also marked. In addition, the definition of the terms United Kingdom, Great Britain and the British Isles are explained, and the countries included in are defined.

Other countries of the UK receive less attention, but still some of the geographical features are mentioned. Ireland, also known as the Emerald Island (G5:102), is introduced in two units and almost all the geographical information about Ireland comes from a quiz that introduces the unit that revolves around the Irish. The right answers of the quiz are not printed on the textbook, and thus the students are dependent on the teacher. Just reading the book, the students learn that Ireland is called an Emerald Isle, but the reason for it may be the greenery of the island, or the number of emeralds on the island (G5: 102). Lastly, reader also finds out that the capital of Northern Ireland is either Dublin, Belfast, or Cork (G5: 103). However, later on in

the books, the map of Ireland (O3:114) presents the capital of Ireland, Dublin, and some other major cities; Limerick, Belfast, and Galway.

The information of the geography of Wales is quite scarce, and the only city mentioned anywhere in the books is Cardiff (G5: 9-10) when some of the characters visit it. When it comes to Scotland, the amount of cultural information is not much larger. Edinburgh is mentioned as the capital of Scotland (G5: 21, O1: 84), and the maps display Glasgow (G5: 22, O1: 84), but that is all the geographic knowledge the books offer of Scotland.

Australian towns and cities are well on display. Australian maps show that Australia is divided in territories, and that the biggest cities are Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Victoria, Sydney and Brisbane (G5: 57, O2: 18-19). Coober Pedy (O2:22-23), the town of underground houses, and Byron Bay (O2:32), a popular coastal town, are both introduced in more depth in texts. The maps of New Zealand (O2: 79, G5:30) present New Zealand as the country of mountains and lakes, as in addition to the biggest cities, and unlike the other maps, now also most significant lakes and mountains are named. According to the map, New Zealand has two islands, North and South, the tallest mountain of New Zealand is Mount Cook, some of the biggest lakes Lake Taupo and Lake Wanaka, and the biggest cities Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch and Queenstown. Wellington is the capital of New Zealand. The stories of the textbooks also take the reader to Queenstown (O2: 91), Milford Sound (G5:45) and Black Knights Island (G5:46). Two of the latter ones are especially described as beautiful and green, and full of animals.

Canada is introduced as the second biggest country in the world (O2: 142). The map of Canada (O2: 152-153) displays provinces and territories, the biggest cities like Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Montréal and the capital Ottawa and major lakes like Lake Ontario and Lake Superior. The reader is informed that Canada has six time zones, and Toronto is its largest city (O2: 143). It is stated that most Canadians live

within 200 kilometers of the border of Canada and the USA. In that context, the town of Beebe Plain is acknowledged as being exactly on the border, half on the side of Canada and half on the side of the USA (O2:143). Of other towns and cities, Klondike is introduced as the place of the goldrush (G5: 79) and Quebec as “very French” (G: 87). Oak Island (G5: 99) and Vancouver Island (G5: 100) are mentioned when talking about local mysteries.

### Tourism

Textbooks introduce a variety of sights that one can venture. Even though it mentions many of them by name and there are illustrations or images of many of them, most of them do not receive more attention than that.

Sights of England are basically limited to sights of London. Hyde Park, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London Zoo, Piccadilly Circus, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Shard and The Gherkin (G3: 44-45) are all mentioned, but the textbooks do not offer actual cultural information about them. The storyline of *Go for it!* takes the reader to the Tower of London (G5: 95) and the London Eye (G5: 53), but again, the series does not offer much information about these either. The only exception to this is a two-page opening offering information about Harry Potter - themed sights around England (O1: 74-75).

If the textbooks did not offer any specific cultural information about the sights of England, the matter is a little different when it comes to the sights of the USA. The information is still quite lightweight, yet more than nothing. For example, in addition to presenting an image of the Statue of Liberty, the book explains where the statue is, how big it is and what it is made of (G4: 17, 27). The book does not clarify what the statue represents or why it is there, but quite the contrary, the characters ponder if the statue is holding an ice cream cone in its hand. As a second example, in addition to

the pictures of the Central park and its horse carriages, it is said that it is full of grass, trees and flowers, ice rinks, basketball courts and playgrounds (G4: 29).

In addition, the books display several images of sights one can spot around the States, like the Empire State Building (G4: 4), Times Square (G4: 54-55, O2: 125), the Golden Gate bridge (G4: 105, O1:40-41), the Niagara Falls (G4:53) and the Yankee Stadium (O2: 130), but of these only Golden Gate is explored in the texts (G4: 105). Textbooks offer an illustration of Mount Rushmore, and it is explained whose faces are on it, but there is no information of why the faces were carved in the mountain, or any other information. However, it is said that Mount Rushmore has 24 noses, ears, eyes and mouths (G4: 99). Grand Canyon is presented as a place full of tourists, and its size is discussed (G4: 95). However, it is not explained how it was formed or how it has been used through times.

Of Australian sights, only the Sydney Opera House (G5: 55, O2: 26) and Uluru (G5: 54, O2: 26) are present. The information about the Opera House is scarce, but the books explain that Uluru is a large, red rock located in the middle of Australia, and it is a special place for Aborigines (G5: 58, O2: 20). Moreover, Australia is presented as a country of nature and wildlife. Koalas (G5: 54), kangaroos (G5: 55), lizards, crocodiles, and whales (G5: 59), jellyfish (G5: 66), sloths (G5: 66) and Tasmanian devils (G5: 55) seems to play an important part in the Australian life and nature. Also, the Great Barrier Reef is featured both in images and text and the diversity of its species is discussed (G5: 55, 69).

When it comes to sights of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, the readers learn that there are many castles in Wales, but the only one mentioned by name is the Cardiff Castle (G5: 6). Of sights of Ireland, The Real Mary King's Close, Edinburgh Dungeons and Edinburgh castle are mentioned by name in a game (G5: 26), but there is no information of what these are, and what kind of role they play in the culture of

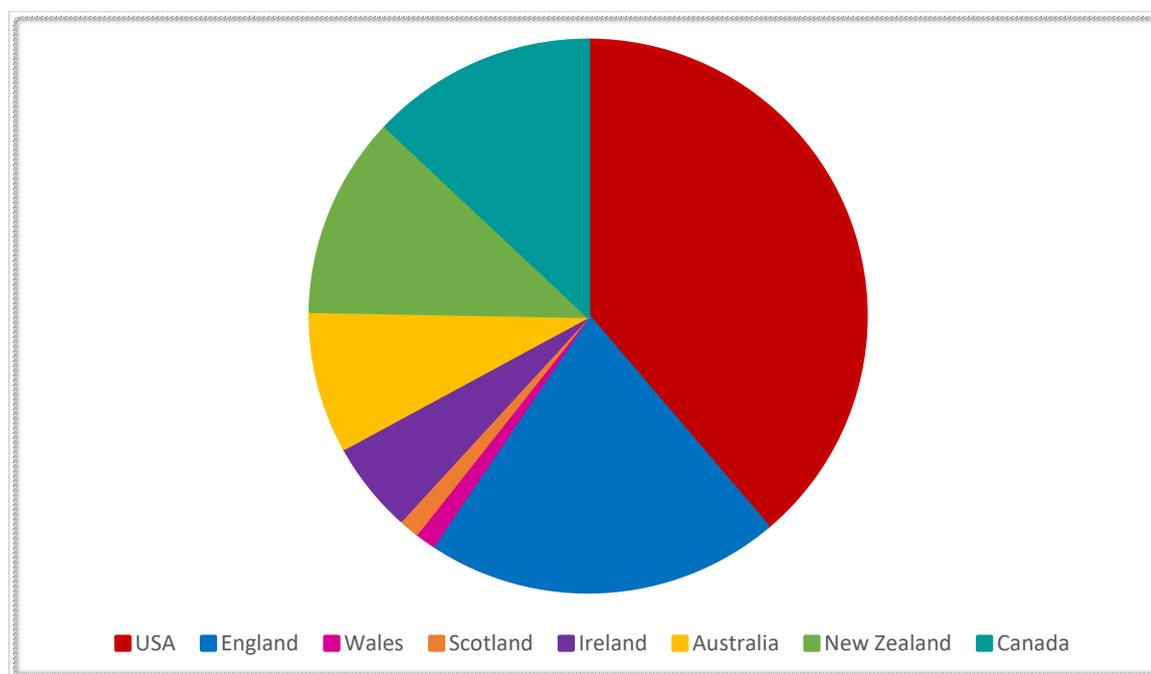
Scotland. Cultural information about Scotland is presented in a form of a quiz, and through that the learners figure out that Newgrange is very old, and that something special happens there on the December 21st every year, but it may be the shine of the moon, the shine of the sun or the tourists that the hole in the wall lets in on that day (G5: 102). The same applies to the information about The Giant's Causeway (G5: 102) and Blarney Castle (G5: 103). The reader will know these by name and know how they look like as the book includes a photograph of both. But the name of the giant who lived in The Giant's Causeway, or what people do to the Blarney Stone is up to the reader's own interpretation.

The sights of Canada or New Zealand are not in an important role in the textbooks, and the only two mentioned are the Kawarau Bridge in New Zealand (G5: 39), and the Niagara Falls in Canada (G5: 65). Neither of these is introduced more closely, but however, the Niagara Falls are discussed a couple more times, but in the context of the United States. On the other hand, New Zealand, as well, is pictured as a place of amazing nature and beautiful landscapes (O2: 66-67, 72, 75), that has thousands of hills (G5: 46), many waterfalls and numerous mysterious forests (G5: 45). The books display several photographs of the scenery, and mention its earthquakes (G5: 30), national bird Kiwi (G5: 31), dolphins, penguins, and whales (G5: 45). The wildlife and nature of Canada is also present, and the book presents photographs of black bears (G5: 78), caribou (G5: 79) and green forests (G5: 82). It is also said that the weather in Canada is extreme and can get both very hot and remarkably cold (O2: 155).

#### **6.1.4 Heroes and national identity**

This section describes both persons that are valued in the English-speaking cultures, and normal citizens that are present in the textbooks and serve as models for behavior and as assumptions of what is typical in that culture. Different social classes, regional identities and ethnic groups are considered as well. Table 5 illustrates the quantitative distribution between the English-speaking cultures.

Table 5. Heroes



### Normal citizens

The textbooks focus on the life of normal citizens. They introduce a variety of people from different backgrounds, but in quantity, an English family, The Nutties, receives the most attention. The Nutties are the main characters of the *Go for it!*-series, and the members of the family, Hazel, Chip, Coco, Herb, Rosemary, Honey and Basil appear in every *Go for it!*-book. However, they do not necessarily represent the most traditional English family. Their looks are somewhat extraordinary, as well as their hobbies and way to live. Another example of an English family is their neighbors in London, the Smiths (G3: 9), who represent the more traditional looking English family with their school uniforms and well-behaved manners. Other important characters that are of English origin are Regina (O1: 58-63) who introduces her life in a boarding school, and her friend Samantha (O1: 60-63, 70-71) who talks about being bullied. In smaller roles are a policeman (G3: 45), two TV hosts (G3: 45, 109-110), pupils at English schools (G3: 24, 53, O1: 61) and teenagers explaining their clothing styles in an interview (O1: 97). They only appear in one page, and do not have an important role in the storyline.

None of the American characters receives as much attention in quantity as the Nutties, but the variety of characters is now greater. To mention a few, two New York policemen (G4: 10-12), the Nutties' guide to American life Rock Bush (G4: 22-23), a schoolboy Grant Hill (G4: 33), a rancher (G4: 84,87,90), a park ranger (G4: 95), campers Ryan, Dave, Michelle and Cole (O1: 7, 8, 45) and Julie, who wants to be an actor (O2: 138-139) are all part of the storylines of the books, and appear both in text and pictures. However, the information the readers gain of them is quite superficial. In addition, there are images of Americans surfing and tanning (G4: 102-103), mingling (O1: 12) and cheering for their idols (O2: 124-125), but they are not even introduced by name, let alone in more detail.

*Go for it!* - series portrays the Canadians, the Irish, the New Zealanders and the Australians through a band called Spice Kids whose members are all of different origin. Sally Salt from Australia, Cherry Chilli from New Zealand, Mike Mustard from Canada, and Pete Pepper from Ireland (G5: 16) act all as embodiments of their culture, yet the actual information about them is rare.

In addition to these, the books exhibit Libby Harding, a young Australian girl living on a cattle farm (O2: 11) and a text describes her everyday life there. Also, two more people are told to be Australian, but that is the only information given of them (O2: 30-33, O2:51). John and Trevor (O2: 71-73) and Andy (90-93) are performed as the examples of New Zealanders. They are all very outdoorsy and adventurous compared to the people of other nationalities. Moreover, five other youngsters express their thoughts about their hobbies (O2: 98-99), which all are somewhat extreme, which strengthens the image of New Zealanders as adventurous and courageous people. Next, Kingsley, Sam, and Tara from Vancouver (O2: 145-146) act as models of Canadian teens. They work on a project focusing on the Canadian culture, and as its main point they present the fact that being a Canadian does not equal being an

American. They all seem to be annoyed by foreigners thinking that they are American. Canadians overall are presented as quite patriotic, as characters are seen, for example, wearing shirts that have the Canadian flag on them. Lastly, no other Irish characters, apart from Pete Pepper, are introduced. Images feature some people, but they are not mentioned by name, not to mention introduced in more detail. The same applies to the Welsh characters, and the only Welsh character that is featured in the textbooks is a shop assistant (G5:10) with few lines and no personal or culture related information.

In addition to the aforementioned, the textbooks include many characters but the information about them is limited to their name, and it is impossible to know their origin. Especially the *talk*-section of *On the Go* -series has a habit of dropping names the reader is not familiar with, and thus has no possibility to know where they come from.

### People known to the public

The books introduce several people known to the public from a variety of different fields of expertise. There are actors, singers, scientists, inventors, athletes and politicians. Of American public figures, presidents receive some attention. In pursuance of exhibiting Mount Rushmore, the textbooks mention the previous presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt (G4: 83, O1:55). However, there is no additional information about them or their reign. On the other hand, Barack Obama (O3: 162) is introduced in more detail, and the books also offer an extract of the speech that first made his name known to the American public.

Basketball player Michael Jordan is introduced in one two-page opening (O1:34-35) that offers a lot of information about him and his career. In that context, also his teammates Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and David Robinson are mentioned by name. The stars of the entertainment industry receive a considerable amount of attention as

the books display the actors Will Smith (G3: 49), Zac Efron (O2: 139) and Arnold Schwarzenegger (G4: 113), King of Rock Elvis Presley (G6: 48), directors George Lucas and Steven Spielberg (O2: 139), singer Lady Gaga (G6: 87), Daymond John from Shark Tank (O3: 118-119), magician David Copperfield (O1: 54) and model and television host Heidi Klum (O3: 118-119). However, these are only mentioned shortly by name or displayed in an image. Most of them are quite known in Finland also, so the readers should be familiar with their background.

Two more Americans, not necessarily known for the big audience, are introduced in more depth. Mo'Nique Bridges (O3: 118-119), known for his appearance in the TV show Shark Tank, is interviewed for his experience in the show and his enterprise Mo's Bows. Furthermore, explorer Robert Peary and his underpants that made history at the North Pole are introduced both in text and image (G6: 22).

The textbooks do not familiarize the reader with any other English publicly known figures except for Emma Watson (O3: 162). She is introduced in the same context as Obama, and even though many of the readers probably know her as Hermione from the Harry Potter movies. The book promotes her career as an activist for gender equality and offers an extract of her speech at the UN. Other English public figures that are displayed but not introduced, are Stephen Hawking (G5: 119), the Royal Family (G3: 68, O1: 61) and Jack the Ripper (O1: 86).

When it comes to the public figures of Canada, ice hockey is once again at center. Wayne Gretzky (O2: 156-157) is introduced in detail both as a hockey player and as a person. The book also offers images of his life. Another Canadian hockey player, Pat Wave (G5: 95), is introduced in the same manner, but after research the author of this study found out that he must be an invented character. However, a reader unfamiliar with hockey might assume him to be an existing figure. Textbooks also present some Canadian explorers. Bobby Leach, Nik Wallenda and Annie Taylor (G5: 94) are all

known for crossing the Niagara Falls, but all in a different way and at a different era. In addition, James Cameron (G6: 23), far-famed movie director, is now presented in the context of his excursion to the bottom of the sea.

Culturally important figures of other cultures are rarely mentioned. Australian bushranger and gang leader Ned Kelly ventures in a cartoon that may be based on true events yet offers quite a smoothed image of him (G5: 76-77). The story of an Australian teenager, Jessica Watson (O2: 24-25), is also told. She is the youngest person to sail around the world on her own and acts as a role model for many other youngsters. Regarding Irish heroes, authors Jonathan Swift (G5: 118) and Mark Boyle (O2: 174-175) are introduced. There is no information about Swift himself, but his most famous book is introduced in a nutshell. Mark Boyle and his lifestyle, on the other hand, is introduced in more depth as it fits the theme of the books. Through his story, the reader learns how one can manage completely without money. In addition to these, Irish pop duo Jedward (O3: 114) is displayed in an illustration, but it is up to the reader to spot and acknowledge them.

### Ethnic groups

In addition to presenting individual people, the books bring out different ethnic groups and their members. Of all the ethnic minorities, the Maori people of New Zealand receive the most attention. The reader is informed that Maori make up 15.6% of the population of New Zealand (O2: 78), a complicated type of tattoo, ta moko, is very important to them (O2: 102-103) and "Kia ora!" is a Maori way to greet another (O2: 102). Some other common phrases are also introduced. The books also tell a Maori legend of Kahukura and fish of the ocean (G5: 47).

A character named Amaroo (G5: 58-59) is one of the embodiments of the Australian Aboriginals. He explains that the Aborigines are the oldest people in Australia, and they love art and music. Their traditional instrument, didgeridoo, is also introduced (G5: 54,58) and later on, it is said that aboriginal used boomerangs for hunting (O2:

45). Moreover, the books offer a true story of three aboriginal children, Molly, Daisy and Gracie, who were taken away from their families by Europeans who came to Australia, but then escaped and walked across the country back to their families. The story is an extract from the book *Rabbit-Proof Fence* by Doris Pilkington Garimara (O2: 47).

Native Americans are featured in the textbooks, but the information about them or their culture is scarce. The books introduce a member of the Hopi tribe, who offers handmade jewelry for sale to the main characters of the books (G4: 94) and in that context their traditional type of clothing is also on display. In another context it is explained that Mount Rushmore and a sculpture near it called *The Crazy Horse* are holy sites for the Native Americans (O1: 55). Also, the Tlingit, the native people that live around Alaska, are introduced through a legend that explains their values and beliefs (O1: 38-39) and The Amish are featured several times in images and illustrations (G4: 16, 54), but only one of them, a 9-year-old girl Hanna, is introduced shortly (O3: 145). However, the book refers to an audio recording, which presumably contains more information about Hanna and her life as an Amish.

The books mention the original inhabitants of Canada, the Inuit, and the First Nation people several times (O2: 142). Yet, the books do not offer any information about them or their culture. Canada is introduced to be very multicultural and a list of nationalities living in Canada is displayed and includes more than 40 different origins (O2: 150). Furthermore, it is stated that almost half of the Canadian population over the age of 15 is foreign born or has at least one foreign born parent (O2: 151). This knowledge is elaborated with data of a big Finnish community living in Canada (O2: 158).

### 6.1.5 Social practices

In this section the examples of behavior in social interaction found in the textbooks are introduced including socially fundamental conventions like greeting and respecting others, giving and receiving hospitality, differing levels of formality, taboos, gestures and body language.

Hospitality and politeness come through when English characters are interacting with others. Even the children start the conversation with phrases like “How are you?” (G3:13) and “Nice to meet you” (G3: 10). Teachers are called Miss, Mr., or Sir (G3: 47, O1: 58), which is also a sign of respect and formality. For Americans, the books convey a more relaxed image. When the English characters meet American people for the first time, they automatically address them formally, but the American characters encourage them to use their first name (G4: 22). Americans are also seen to crack jokes, whereas the English main characters seem a little confused by the joking (G4: 87-88).

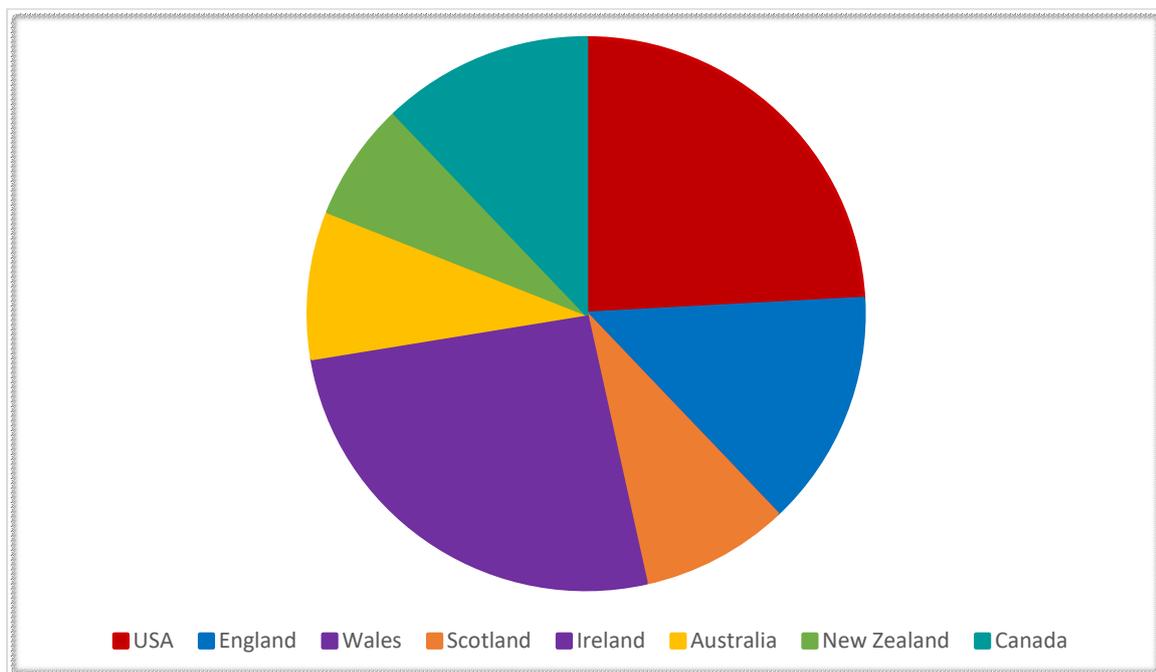
Canadians are said to be tolerant and respectful (O2: 149) and it is stated that they like to think that they are politically correct (O2: 146). The Irish is said to be humorous (O3 :115), and Australians are presented as a laid-back nation that greets everybody with a “G’day mate!” (G5: 45).

Other examples of culturally related interaction patterns are not easily found. However, the books offer many phrases that are traditionally used to greet and respect others, offers examples of different levels of formality and (see e.g., O1: 31, O2: 114-115, O3: 112-113)

### 6.1.6 History, religion and legends

This section presents the examples of the historical knowledge the books offer, as well as the references religion and local legends found in the textbooks. Table 6 demonstrates the quantitative distribution between the English-speaking cultures.

Table 6. History, religion and legends



#### Historical events

The history of the United States is acknowledged in little facts here and there. Native Americans are mentioned multiple times, and for example their mediums of communication are discussed. The books introduce the use of smoke signals (G6: 40), and express that the sign language was first invented by the Native American tribes (G6: 41). In addition, small details, like that Florida used to belong to Spain (O1: 18), Statue of Liberty was a gift from France and brought to country piece by piece (O1: 54), the first constitution was written in 1787 (O3: 166), Martin Luther King led the protest movements for equal rights in 1950s and 1960s (O3: 167) and the Twin Towers were destroyed in 2001 (O2: 135) are featured in texts, but not discussed or explained in more detail.

The same applies to the historical events of England. Kings Henry VIII (O1:104) and Charles I (O1: 75) are discussed but in different manners. King Charles is only introduced as a former resident of Christ Church college. In the same context the war in England is mentioned, but the events of it are not discussed. The story of King Henry VIII and his many wives, on the other hand, is introduced in some depth. According to the books, he had six wives of which he beheaded two and divorced two. In addition, the books feature a beefeater, a guardian of the Tower of London (G3: 93-97). However, his uniform and the location are the only facts that reveal his status.

The historical events of Canada build on the gold rush and Klondike is presented as the location where it started (G5: 79). Gold panning is still an important activity in Canada, and the characters of the book even try it when visiting Dawson City (G5: 84). Another point of view on the history of Canada are different attempts at trying to cross the Niagara Falls (G5: 94).

The history of Australia is obviously closely related to the history of Aboriginal people, and therefore they are discussed on many occasions. As mentioned earlier, the story of three aboriginal children is featured in the books, and that offers a glimpse into the life of the Aboriginals when the Europeans arrived in Australia (O2: 46-47). Moreover, the books introduce the history of Uluru and its importance to the Aboriginal people (O2: 20).

The history of Ireland is riffled through, starting from the Celtic people arriving in Ireland to the economic growth of 1995 (O3: 116-117). All the major events are listed as bullet points, apart from the Great Famine and the Troubles which are discussed in more length.

The books do not really offer information about the history of Scotland but mention a couple of places where people can go and explore the history; Edinburgh Dungeons and The Real Mary King's Close (G5: 26), which both are popular tourist attractions. However, the books do not explain the objective of these, but only mentions them by name.

### Religious beliefs and ceremonies

Religion itself is not an important them in the textbooks in question. The only this that is mentioned is that Ireland is Roman Catholic and the religion matters. Religion is also one of the main reasons why the island is divided in two (O3: 116).

According to the textbooks, St. Patrick's Day is the most important day of the year for the Irish (G5:103). Even though the celebration has a religious origin, the textbooks introduce it as a holiday for fun. Everybody is dressed in green, yet nobody really knows why. Fairy creatures called leprechauns are mentioned in the context of St' Patrick's Day (O3:115).

The textbooks describe how Christmas is celebrated in Australia (O2: 30), and Independence Day of America, 4th of July, is on display in the form of an image of the celebration, but not defined by name (G4:62). Harvest Festival and May Day in the UK, on the other hand, receive a full introduction enhanced with images (G6: 52). The history of these celebrations is not discussed, but the readers find out what the people usually do to celebrate.

Other holidays that are mentioned are Valentine's day, Easter, Mother's Day and Halloween (G4:62), April Fool's Day and Leap Day (G5:114) and the New Year's Eve (O2: 130). Nonetheless, they are not associated with any particular culture and the

ways of celebration are not described in more detail. Some of them, like Christmas and Valentine's Day are also used as attributes of time (O1- 70-71).

### Morals and legends

Starting with the famous Scottish legend, the tale of the Monster of Loch Ness is first referred to (G3: 92) and later on told in more detail (G5: 23). The books also mention the Witchery Tours as a popular attraction of Scotland, and in that context the books explain that Edinburgh's history is filled with tales of ghosts and witches (G5: 26).

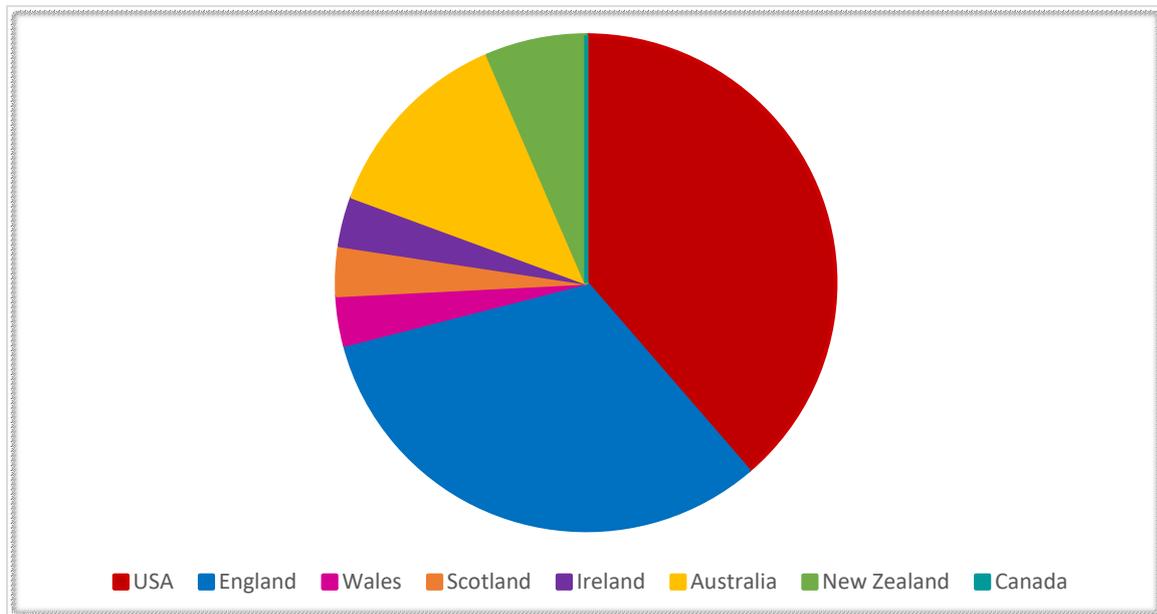
The books also refer to Bigfoot (G5: 100), as there are people sharing sightings of a big hairy creature and aural observations of horrible howls coming from the woods. Leprechaun are displayed in a form of an illustration (G5: 108) and located in the context of the St. Patrick's Day in Ireland (O3: 115), but not described in more detail.

Finally, the books present two Maori legends. First, a story of a young Maori man called Kahukura and a bunch of elves. The legend explains how the Maori learned to fish and what kind of a role Kahukura and the elves played in it (G5: 47). Second, the story of Maui and the sun describes how Maui tamed the sun, and made it move slower to the people to have time to hunt and play in the sunlight. It also explains the changing of the seasons (O2: 104-105).

### **6.1.7. Arts**

In this section the examples of different forms of arts displayed in textbooks are considered. Table 7, again, illustrates the distribution the information of the English-speaking cultures presented in this category.

Table 7.Arts



Starting from the forms of American art, different musicals, like for example *Phantom of the Opera* and *Wicked*, are featured in the billboards on the Times Square (G4: 55). A poster of the *Star Wars* movie is displayed when introducing a unit that discusses different forms of fame (G6: 78). When the storyline is action packed, one of the characters refers to the action movie *Mission Impossible* (G5: 63-65). American movie series *Pirates of the Caribbean* and its main character Jack Sparrow are also mentioned, but rather as a weak example of a true pirate (O2: 176). The importance of the American movie industry is also acknowledged, as one text introduces actors that move to Hollywood to seek fame. In that context, many movie directors are mentioned (O2: 139). Literature receives the least attention, and only an extract of the story of Tom Sawyer is presented in a form of a cartoon (O1: 20-21).

Of English forms of art, the *Harry Potter* books and movies receive a decent amount of attention. Some attractions related to the story of *Harry Potter* are introduced (O1: 74-75), the actor of Hermione is introduced, yet in context with her political career, (O3: 162) and even quotations of the books are displayed (G6: 100). In addition to the quotations of *Harry Potter*, there are quotations of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll in the same manner (G6: 100). Another

famous fictional character that is mentioned is Sherlock Holmes alongside his friend Dr. Watson (O1: 86). The only painting the books talk about is the painting of Saint Wilgefortis, and through that painting it also explains a bit of the history of England (O1: 105).

Australian arts are mostly limited to movies. However, all the movies that are mentioned, are introduced to at least some extent. Rabbit-proof Fence by Doris Pilkington Garimara is based on true events (O2: 47), as well as the movie called Lion that is based on a book called Long way home which is a memoir of Saroo Brierley (O2: 147-148). In addition, the books tell the story of Jessica Watson, the youngest person to sail the world on her own, and advertise her book, True Spirit, where one can read the whole story (O2: 24-25).

The textbooks offer an excerpt of New Zealander author Lloyd Jones' novel Mister Pip (O3: 168-169). However, even though the author is from New Zealand, the novel is set in a village in Papua New Guinea, and the happenings relate more to that culture than to the culture of New Zealand. In that context, English author Charles Dickens and his novel Great Expectations are introduced and cited as well. The only other reference to the arts of New Zealand is the acknowledgement that the Lord of the Rings movies were filmed there (O2: 91). In this instance as well, the movie or the books that the movies are based on are not created by New Zealanders but by the English.

Other references to the arts of the English-speaking world are a cartoon based on the novel Treasure Island by a Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson (O1: 106-108) and a mention that poetry literature and music are important for the Irish (O3: 115). Nevertheless, there are no examples supporting this claim.

## 6.2. ELF in *Go for it!* and *On the Go*

In this section the use of English as Lingua Franca is discussed, and I will offer examples how the use of EFL is acknowledged in the books.

First, the characters meet people in New Delhi, India (G6: 34), Nairobi, Kenya (G6: 57) and Stockholm, Sweden (G6: 88) and have conversations with them in English. For example, one of the characters meets a Swedish movie director and they talk about the movie he is filming, called Pippi Longstocking. Later the same character writes a letter to thank the movie director for the tour at the film studio and the letter as well is written in English. In all these countries, English is not the first language, yet in some of them it has an official status. However, this is not discussed in the textbooks.

Second, there are texts that are formed in the style of a column published in a magazine. For example, people all over the world have sent in their questions for professionals of different areas to answer. One instance of this is the page where there are questions about language use in different countries around the world, and the people that have sent these questions are for example from Finland, Singapore, Delhi and Latvia (O1: 72). All the questions are asked and answered in English which implies that the common language between all these nationalities is English. In one column, teens have also introduced their best friends, and this is done in English even though the people are from Finland and Japan for example. Moreover, they introduce some words of their own language as well (G5: 45). In another column, people from different cultures, like Mexico, Germany and Tahiti, introduce their traditional dishes in English (G6: 77).

The *Talk-* section also displays conversations between people of different nationalities. One of the conversations is between a local and a tourist. In one case, the local is Arttu from Finland, and the tourist asks Arttu for directions (O2: 57). Their common language is English. However, it is not mentioned where Arttu or the tourist are

actually from, and the only sign of Arttu's origin is his name which is clearly Finnish. Later, the same section also introduces a discussion between two students, who talk about studying English and their difficulties with it, which implies that they do not speak English as their first language yet use it to communicate with each other. Also, two Finnish people are seen to have a conversation in English (G6: 49), yet probably because the conversation is presented in an English textbook.

Textbooks do explain that English is used all over the world, and also in the countries where it is not the official language. Examples of this are presented through signs found in restaurants, hotels, and other services all over the world. However, the signs have something funny in them, as they include a mistake that changes the actual meaning of the sign. For example, one of the signs says, "Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar" (O3: 82). Other kinds of signs that are featured in the textbooks are the signs at the airport in Hong Kong. The signs are first in Chinese, but below that also in English (G5: 106). English does have an official status in Hong Kong, but it may be assumed that the English texts are presented as the language is largely recognized as Lingua Franca as well. Textbooks also imply that English is not spoken everywhere and by everyone in the world. For example, when an Indian student Rishi talks about his life, he points out that some of his school friends only speak English, and therefore cannot talk with everybody they meet (O1: 52). Moreover, different ways to communicate through times are introduced, starting from smoke signals to emojis today (G6: 40-41).

The fact that the textbooks are devised by Finns and aimed at Finnish readers, is also acknowledged in many ways. For example, when the Finnish and the British school systems are being compared, is done through the introduction of a Finnish student Mira and an English student Regina (O1: 58-59). In this context Mira is presented to be communicating and introducing her school in English. Also, a Finnish girl named Hanni (O3: 154-155) talks about her life in New Zealand in English an image of two

presumably Finnish girls watching a basketball game and holding posters saying “Go Finland!” (G6: 79) is displayed.

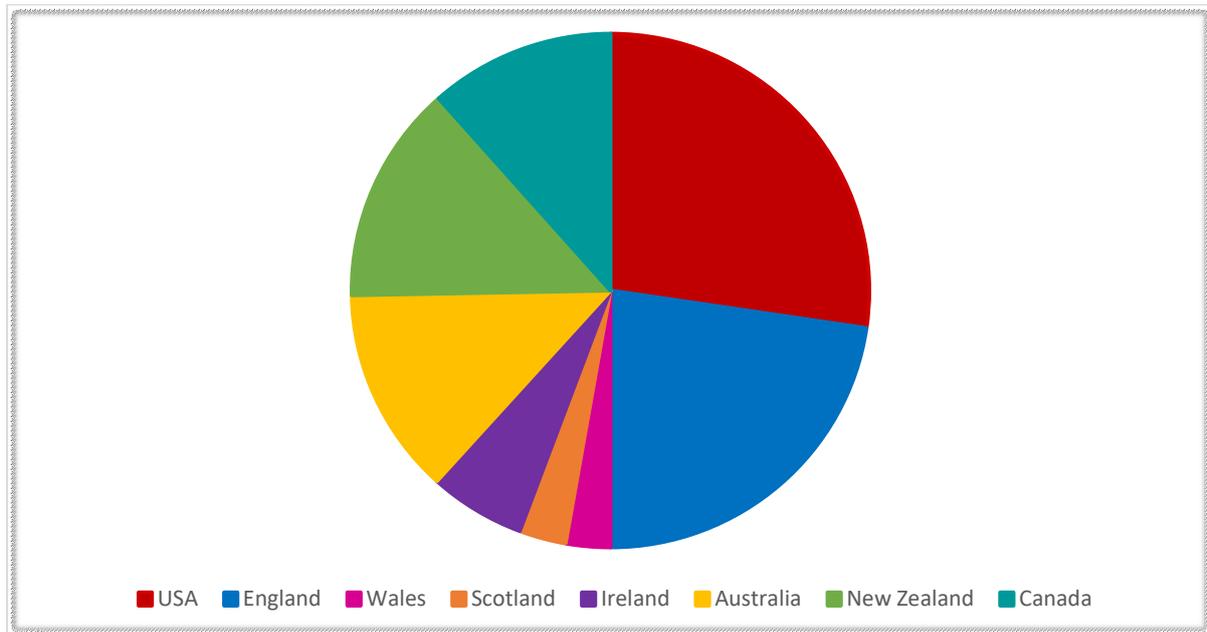
## 7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings will be discussed and analyzed in more depth. First, typical content of every category is analyzed and then the image the textbooks create of the English-speaking cultures is explored. The findings of this study are also compared to the results of previous studies of the same topic. Last, the role of EFL in the textbooks is discussed.

The aim of this study was to find out which English-speaking cultures were represented in the textbooks, what kind of cultural information the textbooks offer and to which extent the cultures receive attention. Moreover, the role of English as Lingua Franca in the textbooks was considered.

Due the previous studies, the hypothesis was that at least the English and the British culture are acknowledged in the books, and probably dominant in the number of references as well (see Pohjanen 2007; Lappalainen 2011; Lindström 2015). It was also predicted that all the categories will be represented, but there might be imbalances in the amount of attention they receive. Some categories are more appealing to the readers, and thus they would be dominant to catch their attention. All the predicaments were proved correct.

Table 8. Cultural information by country



As table 8 shows, the presence of American and British cultures was dominant. In this study, the cultures of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland were considered separate, and of them England and the English culture received the highest amount of attention. Cultural related information of Canada, New Zealand and Australia received almost the same amount of recognition. The results were in line with the study of Pohjanen (2007), which pointed out that the British and American cultures definitely received the most attention, and the study of Lindström (2015), which revealed that England received more attention than other countries of the UK.

As predicted, all the cultural categories were present, but to different extent. The aim of the books is clearly to catch the readers' attention by introducing themes that interest the readers and the textbooks take into account the presumed age of the reader. Lähdesmäki (2004: 279-280) has noted that cultural information is often embedded in the texts and activities and the same applies to the data of this study. Culture is not the main topic of the books, but the information is rather presented implicitly in the texts and images. The following table presents quantitatively the main findings that were discussed in the previous chapter.

Table 9. Cultural categories by country

	USA	England	Wales	Scotland	Ireland	Australia	New Zealand	Canada
School and employment	x	x				x		x
Freetime activities and sports	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Way to dress and make up	x	x				x	x	x
Dietary habits	x	x		x		x	x	x
Family structure	x	x				x		x
Housing	x	x				x		x
Flags	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maps	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Objects	x	x	x	x		x		
Units of measurement	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Institutions	x	x				x		x
Cities and towns	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sights / tourism	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Normal citizens	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Famous people	x	x			x	x		x
Ethnic minorities	x					x	x	x
Social practices	x	x			x	x		x
Historical events	x	x		x	x	x		x
Religion and ceremonies	x	x			x	x		
Legends				x	x		x	x

Art	x	x		x		x	x	
percentage	95%	90%	38%	57%	57%	95%	57%	86%

Even though the books revolve around the *Everyday life* of the characters, there are not many examples of their actual everyday habits like for example what people eat and what kind of clothing they wear. This statement agrees with Pohjanen (2007), who in her study notes that textbooks do not provide information about the everyday life of the residents of the target cultures, but rather certain small facts about the countries. School, and sports, however, are definitely the most important topics of this category. Nevertheless, going to school is discussed in detail only in the context of England and the United States, whereas other cultures receive a short mention or are not considered at all. Sports, on the other hand, are discussed in the context of all the cultures. As said, ways to dress up are not really discussed apart from school uniforms, and the knowledge of dietary habits is restricted to introductions of traditional dishes. All in all, Hofstede et al. (2010) posit the ordinary things in life as an important part of culture, yet the textbooks fail to offer insight to the daily habits of the characters.

According to Hofstede (2005: 7), symbols are the presentations of culture that are the easiest to notice from the outside. They are easily developed and may, as well, easily disappear. In this study, in the category of *Symbols and objects*, flags are the most important symbol. All the flags are displayed at least once, and the flag of the United Kingdom symbolizes the use of English language in the games the books offer. Maps are also important in all of the books, and the cultures of nations are often displayed through them as they are enhanced with illustrations. However, the images are somewhat stereotypical, and their presence is not explained. Some of the images would definitely need an explanation, as they are not familiar to the readers. As there are no explanations for the images, they might not be understood, or the explaining is left for the teacher.

*National geography and tourism* is to great extent name dropping. Many places are mentioned and featured in the images, but their history or meaning in the culture is not discussed. Textbooks offer many so-called fun facts about geography and touristic sites, but yet the actual information is quite vague. However, according to Pohjanen (2007), previously textbooks focused on teaching English for traveling and the way target cultures were introduced reminded travel brochures, but this does not apply for the textbooks in question in the present study.

*Heroes*, the person values in the culture and the normal citizens, are naturally highly on display in the books as the books revolve around the everyday life of different characters. Normal citizens of every culture are introduced as well as the people known to the public. In addition to that, precisely the heroes of these cultures are introduced, like for example as the Canadians are said to live for ice hockey, the books introduce two ice hockey players. People related to politics are introduced only in the context of the United States and England. Ethnic minorities are introduced in context of some cultures, and all in all the population of the English-speaking countries is presented to be very multicultural.

*Social practices* are mostly introduced out of the context of any culture. Same examples of cultural behavior and interaction patterns are implied in the texts, but the knowledge is scarce and hard to recognize. *Talk-* section of *On the Go* particularly delves deeper into the knowledge of interaction skills mostly through oral exercises. Nevertheless, this is done out of the context of any certain culture, and the origin of the people presented in the exercises is not made known. Moreover, like Hofstede (2005: 7) states, social practices are activities that are practically unnecessary but considered socially fundamental within a culture. Consequently, they might be taken for granted or difficult to notice for someone who is not familiar with that culture.

Knowledge of *History, beliefs and legends* is mostly little facts mentioned here and there. However, there are some texts focused on the history of certain countries, but yet they are scarce. Legends play a bigger role in the textbooks than was expected, and they are usually told in much detail. There is little discussion of religion, but illustrations and images present people of all religions. Ceremonies and holidays receive some attention, but they are mostly introduced as national holidays, and their religious background is not introduced. Most of the holidays are also not discussed in context with any certain culture but more on a general level.

Different forms of *Art* are basically restricted to books and movies. The textbooks introduce some authors and display a couple of excerpts and quotes of works of literature. Movies that are introduced are mostly based on true events and introduced through the story of the writer. Other forms of art receive little or no attention at all.

Table 9 also shows that there are indeed some differences in the cultural content offered of the English-speaking cultures. According to Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: 180) a textbook needs to do more than encourage positive attitudes. They continue, that textbook needs to present cultures as they are lived and talked about by people who are credible and recognizable as real human beings. Furthermore, Lähdesmäki (2004: 260) points out, that attitudes can be seen as part of the content of foreign language teaching, and the aim is often to generate positive attitudes towards the target language and its speakers and to promote tolerance towards other cultures and people. Thus, the image English textbooks create of English-speaking cultures plays an important role in what the students learn to think about these cultures.

*The United States of America* is presented as the country of diverse sports and different sports teams are highly on display. The diversity of the country is also introduced, as life can be very different from state to another. The textbooks also include many references to American movies and literature. Their traditions are discussed to some

extent, but for example Thanksgiving is not mentioned even once, even though it is a very important event for the American culture.

*England* and the English people are presented to be quite formal, and the books create an image that England is more or less limited to London only. The books display a variety of sights of England, or actually London, yet information about them is scarce and vague. The history of the sights or their importance to the English is not discussed.

Aborigines are in an important position when the books introduce *Australia* and its culture. Their history is discussed on several occasions, but their importance to the Australians today is not discussed. Images of Australia often feature wildlife, and different animals of Australia are introduced. All in all, Australia is introduced as the country laid back people and interesting, yet also dangerous animals.

*New Zealand*, on the other hand, is presented as the country of extreme sports and outdoorsy and sporty people. Almost all the characters are wearing workout clothes and the textbooks display many images of the beautiful nature and outstanding landscapes. The Maori people are also mentioned many times, and their importance to New Zealand is seemingly great, as two of their legends are also introduced in the books.

The whole *Canada*, lives and breathes ice hockey. The heroes presented in the books all have something to do with ice hockey, and its importance to the culture is discussed. Geographical information about Canada reveals that most of the population centers are located close to the border of the United States, but the books emphasize that being different from Americans is very important to the Canadians. The textbooks also introduce Canada as the cradle of multiculturalism, and equality is presented as an important value to the people of Canada.

The information about Wales, Scotland and Ireland is quite scarce and the examples are little. *Scotland* is presented as the country of crazy sports, odd food and weird clothing. Information about the daily habits of Scots or geographical information of Scotland is very limited. *Ireland* is presented as the country of interesting history and colorful traditions. *Wales* and its culture is clearly left for lesser notion, as the only facts the readers find out is generally that Wales has many castles and its capital is Cardiff. However, some facts of the English and their culture and traditions may be generalized to all the British, yet this is not pointed out in the textbooks.

When it comes to the role of EFL in the textbooks, there are several aspects to consider. However, the findings of this study are in agreement with the study of Lindström (2015), that claims that intercultural communication is acknowledged decently in Finnish textbooks of English. However, it is often difficult to define if English is used as Lingua Franca or as a foreign language. Most of the conversations displayed in the textbooks take place between people of the same nationality, or at least both of the interlocutors speak English as their first language. The books display conversations for example, between school friends, between the teacher and the students and between family members. All the texts are obviously in English, but in some cases clearly for language learning reasons only. For example, the books display conversations between two Finns. On many occasions, the nationality and the first language of the speakers is unclear, and therefore it is also imprecise if English is used as first language or as Lingua Franca. Moreover, when the characters are seen traveling around the world, not even once are they pictured asking their interlocutors if they speak English, but the conversation is started without formalities.

## 8 CONCLUSION

In this section, the aims and findings of the present study will be summarized and ideas for future studies will be presented. The aim of the present study was to find out what kind of cultural information the Finnish EFL textbooks for basic education offer about the English Speaking countries. The criteria for evaluating the cultural content was created based on the models of Hofstede (2005: 7), Byram (1993: 34-35) and The Common European Framework (2001). The aim was also to compare which cultures receive the most attention, and to find out if some cultures are left for lesser notion. Moreover, the presence of ELF was also studied.

In the Chapters 2, 3 and 4 I presented background information about the role of English in the world, culture in general and the use of textbooks and the National Finnish Curriculum. The method used in the present study was content analysis and it was introduced in Chapter 5. The data of this study was also introduced in the same chapter. Both textbook series were devised by Finnish material designers and aimed at Finnish students. Such shared cultural background of authors and readers creates opportunities for cultural reflection and thus promotes cultural awareness.

The results of the study showed that all the English-speaking cultures considered in this study were mentioned in the textbooks. However, the dominance of American and English cultures is quite significant, and the cultures of Wales, Scotland and Wales receive clearly fewer mentions than others. In the number of mentions, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia fall between these two ends.

Furthermore, the topics presented in the textbooks are quite versatile, and examples of all the categories created for this study were found. The most important categories were *Everyday life*, *National geography and tourism* and *Heroes*. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013:17) have emphasized that the way culture is handled in language teaching has

often been quite limited, but according to this study, the textbooks present a quite versatile range of cultural topics.

The study also pointed out that the knowledge the *Go for it!* -series offers is different from the information the *On the Go* -series provides. This is supposedly because of the readers' skills level, as in the *Go for it!* -series cultural information is more on the general level, and mostly displayed in images, whereas in *On the Go* -series the information is deeper and more detailed. However, this same progression can be seen inside the series as well, as some cultural notion can be first made in the picture form, then with a short explanation, and later on in the next books of the same series it might be explained in more detail when the language level improves.

The use of English as Lingua Franca was not defined or discussed in the books, but yet displayed in several instances. However, Jenkins' (2006: 160) has claimed that ELF is a contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers. In the data of this study, the use of ELF occurred mostly between two interlocutors of which one was a native speaker of English and the other non-native. Nevertheless, all these actions were acknowledged, as it often is up to the determinant whether the term ELF also includes the communication where one of the participants is a native speaker of English.

Content analysis was a suitable method for the present study as it gave the answers to my research questions. As Tuomi and Sarajarvi (2009: 91, 103) define, content analysis does not aim to make generalizations but rather to describe and understand the cultural phenomenon in the source material. The aim of this study was to get quite a general and summarized presentation of the cultural information offered in the books and in that manner the study was successful. The categories to evaluate cultural content that were created for this study based on the models of Hofstede (2005: 7), Byram (1993: 34-35) and The Common European Framework (2001) were successful as

they gave versatile information about the presentation of the English-speaking cultures in the textbooks.

The present study could be elaborated further by taking into account the workbooks and online material as well. Also, it would be interesting to observe how teachers use this material in the classroom, as it is the only way to evaluate what kind of cultural information the students actually receive. Furthermore, the same material could be analyzed using critical discourse analysis, as it would give more depth to the analysis and reveal how the cultural topics are handled in the texts, in addition to just considering the topics that are present.

The present paper should be interesting for teachers who use the data of this study in their teaching. Even though the textbooks examined in this study provide a sufficient amount of cultural information, as Luukka et al. (2008: 65) have stated, it remains the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the information is handled in the way that is possible for students to comprehend. Even though these textbooks are created to fit the demands of the Finnish National curriculum, teachers should be relatively critical towards the cultural image they offer and be prepared to offer additional information (Luukka et al. 2008). Moreover, the present study may also be useful for the designers of textbooks as it might help them to scrutinize what kind of image they want to give about English-speaking countries.

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