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THE REPRESENTATION OF ESTONIAN CULTURE
IN THE *I LOVE ENGLISH* TEXTBOOK SERIES

MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the aim of foreign language learning is believed to lie in communicative competence. However, communicative competence also has an essential cultural dimension that defines the appropriateness of language structures in use. Communicative competence also includes intercultural competence, that is, a speaker's ability to identify differences and similarities between her native and other cultures, being able to facilitate an intercultural dialogue in our globalised world. The aim of this thesis is analyse the potential of the *I Love English* textbook series printed and used in Estonia to develop intercultural competence through the representation of Estonian culture.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two core chapters and a conclusion. The introduction provides the motivation for the study, the research questions, and presents the structure of the paper. The first chapter analyses the previous research on teaching culture in a foreign language class, including the definitions of intercultural competence, international and Estonian discussion on textbooks' abilities to provide substantial resources for teaching/learning target and native cultural elements. The second chapter gives the overview of the Estonian cultural topics and values in the *I Love English* series and defines its possibilities for the development of intercultural competence. The conclusion provides a summary of the findings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EFL - English as a foreign language

ESL - English as a second language

FL - foreign language

ILE - *I Love English* textbook series

L1 - native language

L2 - target foreign language

SB - a student's book

WB - a workbook

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays communication in a foreign language (FL), especially English, is supposed to be a crucial skill for a successful career, even when one plans to work in one's native country. When people talk about language skills, they usually mean fluent oral communication, rich vocabulary, and correct grammar structures. However, it has been proved by scholars (Kramsch 1993, 2013; Byram and Grundy 2003; Resiger, 2010, 2012; Broady 2004; Latorre 1985; Piatkowska 2015) that mastering a FL also includes knowledge of the foreign language context, that is teaching and learning its cultural background. In my experience, while attending international conferences and seminars for students and young scholars, challenges in understanding foreigners speaking English were created by direct translations from other languages, with little awareness of cultural appropriateness or politeness rules in English. This made me think about the role of culture in language learning and led me to this thesis topic.

I am not the first MA student to approach the topic at the Department of English Studies at the University of Tartu. Several earlier MA theses have analysed sections dedicated to culture in EFL (English as a foreign language) textbooks, including those printed in Estonia. For example, Saluveer (2004) shows the limitations of the representation of English-speaking countries in them. The limitations in the representation of culture in EFL textbooks make it harder to achieve the aims set in the national curriculum. The current Estonian national curriculum for basic schools (*Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava* 2011) lists cultural and value competence among the 8 general competences to be developed during the secondary education in Estonia (Division 2. Learning and Educational Objectives. § 4. Competences). Cultural competence described as follows:

ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; to sense and value one's ties with other people, the society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value creation and shape the sense of aesthetics; to value general human and societal values, to value human, cultural and natural diversity; to acknowledge one's values.

Cultural competence is relevant because in today's world EFL learners are likely to communicate more with non-native speakers of English and thus having learned about a single target culture might not be enough. Instead, students should develop their intercultural communication competence (Pjatkowska, 2015) which, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), is seen as the knowledge about cultural similarities and differences between learner's own culture and the target one.

Several international scholars have investigated the representation of national culture in the ESL (English as a second language) textbooks published in non-English-speaking countries. For instance, Siddiqie (2011), Jia (2015), Arifani (2016) and Parsaiyan et al. (2014) agree that their existence is explained by local national curricula as well as their abilities to provide understandable contexts for learners (especially, in Asian countries which have distinct cultural values comparing with European ones) and develop intercultural communication competence. To my knowledge, the use of Estonian culture in the EFL context has not yet been studied and my thesis will try to fill this gap.

In the current Estonian national curriculum for basic schools, the topic of Estonia as a homeland is one of the six themes to be taught in foreign language classes. According to the curriculum, the topics of the state, its capital, peoples, seasons, and the description of Estonia should be addressed during the first stage of study (the 3rd grade), the country's location, symbols, national holidays, city and countryside, Estonian nature, weather, behaviour in nature during the second stage (the 4th-6th grades), and nature and its

preservation, environment-friendly and sustainable behaviour, life in a city and in the countryside, Estonian sights in the third stage (the 7th-9th grades). To follow the curriculum, ESL teachers in Estonia have two main options: to use some additional text materials (for example, the English version of the web-site www.visitestonia.com) and to create comprehension exercises for them or to explore the textbooks printed in Estonia which contain texts and tasks necessary to cover the curriculum requirements in class.

The textbook series *I Love English* is one of the local textbooks used by ESL teachers in Estonia, thus it is relevant to research the representation of Estonia in that series to describe what image of Estonians and Estonian cultural identity is being created and what basis it provides for intercultural communication competence. The aim of the present thesis is to analyse the elements of the cultural self-image provided by the textbooks which are used to develop the intercultural communication competence of Estonian students. This image could be defined as an officially accepted national discourse (Gulliver, 2010), and it is clearly separated from other identities by the national curriculum where the topic of “states and their cultures” is defined, too. Ideally, the construction of self-representation should facilitate awareness, tolerance of cultural differences, and avoidance of stereotypes (Gulliver, 2010). Thus, my research questions are as follows: How is Estonia represented in the textbook series *I Love English*? Do the representations have the ability to develop intercultural competence?

My hypothesis is that the series does not provide enough information about Estonia, might facilitate its stereotyping, and provides quite in limited support for the development of intercultural competence.

In order to research the questions mentioned, in the first chapter, I will analyse previous studies on teaching culture in a FL class, with particular attention to native

culture, intercultural competence, and their representations in textbooks. Then, in the second chapter, I will investigate the textbook series *I Love English* for the elements and descriptions of Estonian culture, compare them with the requirements of the Estonian national curriculum for basic schools and discuss the potential of developing intercultural competence using these materials.

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Teaching culture in a FL classroom

Teaching culture in a foreign language class is widely discussed as a necessary part of language training which enriches the communication skills (with their linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences according to CEFRL) of the students who should master a foreign language in its context of use (Kramersch 1993, 2013; Byram and Grundy 2003; Resiger, 2010, 2012; Broady 2004; Latorre 1985; Piatkowska 2015). Byram and Grundy (2003:1) believe that the discussion started in the 1980s when foreign language teaching became socially and politically significant due to globalisation and the growth of foreign language speaking as a practical necessity. Thus, researchers were searching for possible ways to improve the communicative results of FL teaching. At that time, FL learners could read, write, and translate but their speaking skills could be limited. The shift to more culture-oriented foreign language teaching is connected to the communicative approach (when language learning is seen as a process to acquire language skills in a real communicative situation) within language learning research community in the 1970–80s (Kramersch 2013:64; Byram and Grundy 2003:2; Resiger 2010:3). According to these researchers, knowing a target language culture should help learners to communicate in a foreign language through their comprehension of language structures in use. This is a part of the *little c* culture, that is, how native speakers behave in different everyday situations and what they do and say in order to express their feelings and needs (Kramersch 2013:66). *Little c culture* should be differentiated from the *big C culture* which includes critically acclaimed literature and arts and is associated with nation-building and state power of the 19th century (Kramersch 2013:65).

The understanding of the interrelation between culture and language has brought researchers to the idea that “the field of culture” (the combination of *big C* and *little C* cultures) is broader than language by itself, and the latter should be taught as a “multisystem” in the framework of culture pedagogy involving all levels of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational learning outcomes (remembering, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). In practical terms a foreign language instructor should teach cultural literacy and make her students individual agents who retain their own cultural identities and are able to manage and produce messages understandable for representatives of other cultures (Arens 2010:322).

One of the possible difficulties that a teacher might encounter when teaching language as culture is identified by Byram and Kramsch (2008) who point out controversial political and historical dimensions as possible obstacles and causes for misunderstanding, non-understanding, and even confrontations in class. The authors provide an example of a class for German language teachers in China in which a heated discussion occurred on the topic of the Berlin Wall where different interpretations of historical/cultural events clashed. In such cases, the differences between the native and target cultures might create conflicts deriving from different perceptions of the world because “different views on history are not only difficult to grasp but, for many, impossible to accept” (Byram and Kramsch 2008:21). The possibility of cultural differences and complications within a class demands more preparation and attention from an instructor, who sees culture as a beneficial part of language learning as culture and language constitute a single block of knowledge.

1.2. Intercultural competence in FL teaching

Interest in culture started as target culture study within foreign language learning. Researchers have by now come to the understanding that in everyday life foreign language speakers will encounter everyday “clashes” between their own culture and the target one, and these differences should be explained, communicated properly, and used for better language learning. For example, in the USA, the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has adopted *World-Readiness Standards of Learning Languages*, which include 5 goal areas (Cs) for any foreign language teaching and learning (Huth 2010:154):

- Communication that includes the standards of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication and means effective communication in more than one language in different situations;
- Cultures that combine the standards to use a language to obtain cultural competence and to understand other cultural practices, products, and perspectives;
- Connections as inter-subject knowledge and the use of a foreign language by making connections and acquiring information and diverse perspectives;
- Comparisons of language and culture in order to develop cultural competence;
- Communities as the use of a language as a means of communication within school and global communities and lifelong learning process which includes continuous goal setting and reflection to enjoy and enrich communication.

The Standards have influenced the development of new foreign language curricula designed by FL teachers for their American learners and facilitated the discussion on language learning and its connection to culture (Arens 2010:322).

The Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011) follows a similar approach indicating that foreign language competence includes the ability “to understand and value ... similarities and differences” between Estonian and other cultures and to follow “relevant cultural practices”.

The aim of this pattern of learning where native culture is as important as target culture, the learners communicate across cultures being aware of “the inseparability of language and culture” and their knowledge is not limited to cultural facts is known now as intercultural communicative competence (Piatkowska 2015:402). Other scholars have used the terms transcultural or translingual competence (the latter term was introduced by the Modern Language Association (Byram and Kramsch 2008:20)) but the two have not been used extensively by researchers. The one exception is the work of Meyer and Kordes (1990, cited in Piatkowska 2015: 404) who argue that only after intercultural competence development can a learner obtain transcultural competence which means an ability “to negotiate cultural meanings, solve intercultural problems and mediate between cultures” (Piatkowska 2015:404) that appears to be the highest level of intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence requires sociocultural knowledge (about culture and society of a target language) and intercultural awareness (Resiger 2012:9) which means “the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’” (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 103). This awareness facilitates “a dialogue of cultures“ based on mutual respect (Savignon and Sysoyev 2002: 510) and could prevent possible misunderstanding between FL learners and native speakers if they have substantial historical, traditional, or cultural differences. An (2011:190) adds that cultural difference is one the important

milestones to be taught in order to make foreign language learning and further communication more effective.

However, the linguistic and cultural differences between source and target cultures that are a part of intercultural competence might create new challenges. Kubota (1998:303), discussing EFL teaching in Japan, claims that EFL textbooks in Japan could help to formulate “the uniqueness” of the Japanese culture, to construct the Japanese cultural identity, and even foster the development of the strong nationalistic resistance to the Westernisation of Japan which he thinks to be a possible negative consequence of native-culture-oriented teaching approach.

Additionally, Kubota (2003) argues that the idea of comparisons might be dangerous as it could provoke national or racial disputes. Following Edward Said’s reaction to the 9/11 events in the USA where Said criticises the binary approach to the West and Islam, Kubota (2003:68) argues that in some extreme situations in contemporary world cultural differences derived from comparative work might be used for radicalisation and make teaching foreign languages with cultural context even more difficult than before: “His [Said’s] insight indeed raises the possibility that Japanese language educators in the United States might unintentionally create a rigid dichotomy between the United States and Japan, or US and THEM.” This problem might appear in teaching other languages as well. Thus, the method chosen by a teacher to promote intercultural competence should be tolerant and avoid stereotyping and any cultural dominance as well as artificial homogenisation of nations and cultures. This balance is difficult to reach because the most discussed historical and cultural events and traditions could be already a part of media coverage and be connected to widespread stereotypes. However, intercultural competence with its clear

understanding of cultural differences, perceptions, and stereotypes could be a tolerant answer for teaching a foreign language in the multinational and conflicting world.

Summing up, intercultural competence is based on two main domains: target language culture and native culture but it is not a simple sum of cultural knowledge about the two. When relevant connections are made between cultures, they are reflected on and accepted, this could develop a person who is aware of her own and her communication partner's cultural identities without prejudices and intolerant attitudes.

1.3. Analysing cultural components in FL textbooks

In order to teach cultural elements and develop intercultural competence in a FL class effectively, a teacher should use appropriate teaching materials. Textbooks are the most available sources and can help teachers save their time for preparing lessons for groups with different levels and purposes of FL learning. In some countries, as in Estonia, a teacher can choose what textbook (if any) to use in class (*Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava*, 2011)). The only limitations might be financial (school's or learners' funds). In other countries, as in Ukraine, for example, a teacher can only use a textbook recommended by the Ministry of Science and Education that is usually written and printed locally and may use other textbooks and materials as supplemental materials (*Zakon Ukrainy "Pro Zagalnu Serednyu Osvity"*, 1999). In both kinds of contexts, textbooks are most widely used tools in language teaching.

Thus, it is vital to understand what kinds of materials FL textbooks contain about the target and native culture and how they could help teachers develop their students' intercultural competence. In the culture model of FL textbooks proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and developed by Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015:184), the representation

of culture can be divided into source culture (the native cultural elements of a FL learner, L1 cultural elements), target culture (the cultural elements of a FL, L2 cultural elements), international culture (the cultural elements that could be met in the globalising world), and culturally neutral elements (topics and texts that do not have any clear attributes of a particular culture). Naturally, international FL textbooks produced in the country of a target language include the elements of a target culture with minimal or even no native culture points. Thus, the cultural focus of these textbooks is based on target cultural elements that could offer some insights for native culture studies, too.

Another classification of cultural elements in FL textbooks is provided by Musumeci and Aski (2010:26) who make a distinction between explicit and implicit representations. The first include those textbook features which focus on “cultural topics, concepts, and information”, the second on language practice that incorporates cultural elements. The latter approach divides the cultural elements according to textbook tasks and their use in class while the former one focuses more on the cultural topic discussed. In my research, I will use both classifications in order to show what themes are presented in the *I Love English* textbook series and what types of texts and exercises contain cultural information.

Being multimodal by their nature (texts, pictures, photos, sound, video etc.), designed, and printed in different historical, political, and temporal contexts, FL textbooks (like any other school materials as well) are viewed as “curriculum artefacts that embody particular ideologies and legitimise specific types of knowledge” (Canale 2016:225). Following the tradition of historical narratives, some researchers decipher the hidden curriculum of FL textbooks which is interpreted as “the social practices promoted by and through the schooling process, as well as in transmitting social ideologies” that form the

textbook discourse (Apple and Beyer (1983), cited by Canale 2016:226). For instance, Chappelle (2010: 143-144) argues that French FL textbooks written in the USA underrepresent Canada as a French-speaking country, and it could create false expectations for American learners because they are likely to speak French with their closest neighbours – Canadians – and thus they should know the French Canadian culture better than the continental French one. In a different example, Gulliver (2011:120) discusses how the “banal repetition of the established tropes and symbols of Canadian identity” like Canadian flag and maple leaf constructs the Canadian-ness in the FFL textbooks produced in the country and used for teaching immigrants.

Another issue discussed in analysing target culture components in FL textbooks is stereotyping. As culture corners (separate units or unit parts dedicated to the target culture descriptions like national holidays, festivals, book extracts etc.) are gradually eliminated from today’s textbooks (Furstenberg, 2010:329), the question of how to incorporate target cultural elements while following the authentic features of the language taught needs to be addressed. Thus, Broady (2004:69) distinguishes between factual (the information about cultural phenomena and behaviour) and non-factual (the perception of cultural elements by the representatives of different nations) components of culture. Latorre (1985:673), Kramsch (2013:59), and Drewelow (2011) believe that teaching factual elements could lead to the formation of national stereotypes. For example, due to the limited format and space, a textbook cannot include all varieties of cultural behaviour and traditions or even might misrepresent the minorities who speak the target language as a mother tongue (Azimova and Johnston 2012:347). The same conclusions are drawn by Matsumoto and Okamoto (2003:43) while discussing how “standard” Japanese language and culture

(officially supported by the Japanese government, generalised, and without regional dialect representation) are presented in the reputable JFL textbooks in the USA.

Thus, cultural elements in FL textbooks are widely analysed through the prism of a target language and culture. The questions that arise are connected to the format and official discourse of cultural materials in the textbooks and their impact on learners. The latter could be stereotyping of target culture and its representatives as well as silencing of ethnic minorities as a part of target culture.

1.4. Native culture in FL textbooks

While there is rather extensive literature on target culture components in FL textbooks, the other side of intercultural communication competence, source culture, mostly presented in local textbooks, has been investigated less. The most likely reasons for this could be the local nature of the textbooks that does not allow international scholars to study them as well as their perceived lower quality in comparison with the international editions as well as longer time periods of revisions and new editions (Türk and Zagura 2016). On the basis of my language teaching experience in different countries, I claim that some teachers rate the locally produced FL textbooks as poorly-edited, unsatisfactory and containing factual and grammar mistakes. Having been trained to teach target culture elements in class, some teachers do not even wish to use such textbooks because of the native culture elements that they do not know how to explain.

Target-language orientation could be also rooted in the popular teaching model which recommends avoiding the use of the learner's native language in class or any texts written by non-native speakers (that could be seen as "inauthentic") in FL textbooks (Colebrook, 1996:4). However, locally produced textbooks usually follow the national

curriculum of the countries where, as it was mentioned before, intercultural competence is described, and native culture elements are an obligatory part of FL learning. Thus, using source culture in FL textbooks requires attention to the dichotomy between representing target culture and placing it in a context familiar to the learners.

According to Shin et al (2011:256) the majority of the research on the EFL textbooks published in non-English-speaking countries and widely used to complete national curricula uses quantitative analysis to find the percentage of national culture presented in textbooks in comparison with English-speaking countries and international cultural elements. At the same time, the qualitative approach is also popular. In a study of Chinese culture in EFL teaching, Jia (2015) points out that despite being obliged by the national curricula to include Chinese cultural elements in FL learning process, most teachers and teacher training institutions do not see any necessity to do it and, as a result, 50% of the Mongolian students cannot describe their culture or Chinese culture in English although native culture context is a natural part of intercultural communicative competence and more suitable for a FL class especially in the remote Chinese districts where the majority of population is the representatives of ethnic minorities, e.g., Mongolian.

Different conclusions are reached by Majdzadeh (2002:12-19) who shows the huge prevalence of Iranian culture in Iranian EFL textbooks as one of the possible causes of the poor knowledge of English by Iranian students who have few encounters with English-speaking culture and language context and do not have enough language practice in class. The same conclusions on the dominance of source culture are drawn by McKay (2003) who studied Chilean EFL teachers. They have to use the only governmentally accepted EFL textbook entitled "Go for Chile" where all texts deal with the Chilean landscape, climate, and other local concerns because English is supposed to be used in a Chilean

context when working in the international companies located in Chile or studying in the Chilean universities where English is a language of instruction (McKay, 2003:142). Discussing the Bangladeshi EFL textbooks officially approved by the government, Siddiqie (2011:114) calculates the percentage of local (26%), international (all cultures outside Bangladesh, 22%) and mixed (when communication between cultures presented, 36%) cultural contents (texts, exercises etc.) and concludes that international culture representation is sufficient in the textbooks although local culture dominates.

Thus, the local textbooks that have been analysed in studies that could be found in the process of research for the present thesis follow the pragmatic circumstances of the countries where they are produced: the national curriculum, the state's isolation from the world, the practical needs to communicate in FL within a home country.

Having understood that native culture is somehow neglected in international research, scholars from non-English-speaking countries, following the ideas of Kramsch (1993), additionally justify the position of the learners' culture in a FL classroom as a mediator between learners and foreign culture. Arifani (2016:1) and Parsaiyan et al. (2014:89) argue that it is easier for learners to acquire a foreign language when it is taught in a familiar context (for example, with pictures of people in familiar clothing speaking a foreign language). To support the idea, Arifani (2016) develops and tries out a reading textbook with an Indonesian context, while Parsaiyan et al. have translated and incorporated Persian literary texts into an EFL class. They both conclude that using the local and familiar context was welcomed by their learners. For Siddiqie (2011:111), native culture in a foreign language context is a way to develop intercultural communication competence by developing the learners' ability to present themselves and their culture in a target language.

The approach to intercultural communication accepted by the researchers discussed above as an effective basis for any FL learning does not seem to derive from an extensive analysis of native culture elements in FL textbooks. The majority of research on textbooks has focused on the target culture. Being viewed as an important part of language learning facilitation, native culture is presented mostly in locally designed textbooks with limited circulation that makes the researchers who have dealt with the topic justify the idea of studying these cultural elements first and then explore the extent of local culture presented in the textbooks.

1.5. Research on culture in Estonian EFL textbooks

Several MA theses defended at the Department of English Studies at the University of Tartu have analysed target culture in EFL textbooks, including those printed in Estonia. For example, Saluveer (2004) provides an extensive overview of approaches to teaching culture in a FL class including the discussion of different teaching materials, and studies how British culture is taught in an Estonian secondary school context using surveys of teachers and students. The results show that teaching culture in EFL classes in Estonia was quite unsystematic at the time of the study although teachers believed that culture is essential for EFL classes, and students' knowledge of the British target culture was rather limited. In her work special attention is given to textbook categorisation (international, local, and specially printed for cultural courses), including those printed in Estonia (with the exception of the *I Love English* series that I will analyse in this thesis) and detailed evaluation checklists for their cultural components. The author criticises the locally produced textbooks for having a low level of target culture representation and argues that most cultural information is about native culture (Saluveer 2004:48-54).

Kruus (2007) analyses culture-related topics (both Estonian and of English-speaking countries) in the *I Love English* and *Welcome* textbook series, creating her own classifications of the themes: national symbols, nature and weather, sights etc. and compares internationally and locally printed textbooks. The extensive statistics and descriptions of topics and exercise types leads to the conclusions that cultural information in the textbooks mostly has a tourist dimension and includes cultural facts. Similar results are also reached by Kiis (2010) who describes the types of cultural texts and exercises in the textbooks *I Love English 2, 3, and 4*.

More recently, Lehiste (2014) and Talvik (2015) have analysed the representation of gender, which is also defined as one of cultural components by Kramersch (1993), in *English Step by Step 5, I Love English 5, and Key English* textbooks. Mõts (2016) discusses the use of pop songs in *Key English 7* textbook. Their results, however, are not relevant in the present thesis and thus their findings will not be covered in detail.

Summing up, it can be said that the predominance of the communicative approach in foreign language learning affects the introduction of cultural elements (both target and native, and their comparisons) into national curricula and everyday practice of FL teachers, including FL textbooks published internationally and locally. According to current research, textbooks represent the ideas and opinions predominant in a society, which could lead to the stereotyping of a nation or a country and creating obstacles for intercultural relations. In order to build tolerant and trust-based relations while speaking a foreign language, a person should develop intercultural competence, which is based on the combination of communication and culture and might help FL learners communicate effectively with native and other speakers of a target language describing their own culture and respecting other cultures and languages. The twofold nature of intercultural

competence is presented mostly in locally produced FL textbooks where target culture elements are mediated within a native culture. While target culture research, including in FL textbooks, is widespread, and deals with numerous languages and aspects, investigations on source culture are limited, and tend to attempt to find the appropriate role of native culture in a FL class. As far as I was able to determine, Estonian native culture as a separate topic in FL textbooks has not been studied yet.

CHAPTER II. ESTONIAN CULTURE IN THE *I LOVE ENGLISH* TEXTBOOK SERIES

2.1. Methodology of research

The present chapter focuses on the analysis of the written and spoken (for listening) texts about different features of Estonian life in the *I Love English* textbook series. The series was chosen as a locally printed textbook which is widely used in Estonian secondary schools (Tammiste 2013:1; Tammearu 2013:4; Gellert 2012:14). The series consists of seven textbooks which cover English language teaching for basic schools in Estonia where EFL study starts from the third grade. At the moment, there are 17 books in the series: *I Love English 2, 3, and 7* (the newest edition of the last one will be available in August 2018) have two editions, *I Love English 1, 4, 5 and 6* three editions published between 1997-2017 by two publishing houses, Koolibri (Tallinn) and Studium (Tartu). In my analysis, I will explore all textbooks (student books and workbooks) mentioned due to the fact that Estonian culture is not a main focus of the EFL coursebooks and thus there would not be enough information otherwise.

As a rule, each textbook consists of 20 units (for the deviations see Table 1) with a leading text or a dialogue, supportive activities to develop four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), grammar explanations and exercises (mostly in the workbooks).

My analysis will cover the texts and visuals that can be identified as Estonian: containing an explicit reference to Estonia (the name of the country, other geographical names and locations like Tartu, Tallinn, Värskä, etc.) or implicit information based on my own knowledge of Estonian culture (for example, text about dodgeball or the pictures of

black bread and a swede (ILE 2 2012) because this kind of information does not appear in internationally published coursebooks like *Access*, *Upstream*, or *Click On* for the CEFR level). As a result of this categorisation, it can be said that there are 48 texts, 12 dialogues, 403 exercises, including 131 grammar exercises, and 118 visuals (photos and pictures) in the student's and workbooks of the series that have connections to Estonian culture.

In my analysis, I will apply the culture model for FL textbooks proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and developed by Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) where the representation of culture is divided between source culture, target culture, international culture, and culturally neutral elements. Using this approach, I will identify what topics and cultural elements of the source culture are shown to describe Estonia.

As a result, the analysis will identify the cultural elements that Estonian students are encouraged to transmit to the international community and form the representation of their country in the world. For this purpose, I will use the cultural components inventory of nine categories proposed by Razi (2016): intellectual values, lifestyles, behaviours, artistic values, media, family, minor and major values, formal values.

As it is pointed out by Gulliver (2010), the image of a nation could be built on the "we-other" relations, and the national cultural identity is constructed "vis-a-vis other identity categories" (Thompson 2013: 952), so I will also analyse how elements of Estonian culture are differentiated from and interact with the target and international cultures. In other words, I will additionally identify textual/visual representations which discuss the differences between Estonian and target culture.

Table. The representation of Estonian culture in *I Love English* textbook series, 1999-2017 (number of instances)

	Texts	Dialogues	Exercises for language skills development	Grammar exercises	Pictures	U n i t s (E s t o n i a n c u l t u r e / n u m b e r o f u n i t s i n a t e x t b o o k)
<i>ILE 1 (1997)</i>	1	1	9	13	6	9/16
<i>ILE 1 (2003)</i>	1	1	9	13	6	9/16
<i>ILE 1 (2011)</i>	7	3	8	4	8	8/15
<i>ILE 2 (2004)</i>	1	0	1	1	3	3/22
<i>ILE 2 (2012)</i>	4	0	8	6	9	13/20
<i>ILE 3 (2005)</i>	1	0	1	2	3	3/22
<i>ILE 3 (2014)</i>	1	0	18	3	25	10/20
<i>ILE 4 (2000)</i>	3	2	19	6	5	10/24
<i>ILE 4 (2006)</i>	6	2	17	32	9	13/23
<i>ILE 4 (2015)</i>	3	0	11	3	1	3/20
<i>ILE 5 (2001)</i>	0	0	26	9	1	12/23
<i>ILE 5 (2008)</i>	5	0	21	13	8	12/23
<i>ILE 5 (2016)</i>	4	1	16	9	9	11/20
<i>ILE 6 (2002)</i>	0	0	23	6	3	9/20

<i>ILE 6 (2009)</i>	2	0	15	2	3	9/20
<i>ILE 6 (2017)</i>	0	0	15	0	3	5/20
<i>ILE 7 (2003)</i>	4	0	27	5	2	11/19
<i>ILE 7 (2010)</i>	5	2	28	4	14	15/21

As can be seen in the Table above, each textbook in the series discussed contains information about Estonia. It could be a separate chapter named “Estonia” or “Trip to Estonia” or some details about Estonian culture in other thematic units; for example, in “Reading books” there are some facts about famous Estonian writers and Estonian literature (ILE SB 4 2006:83). I will discuss the representation of Estonia thematically in the following section in connection with geography, tourism, national holidays and symbols, history, and Big C culture. These elements will appear according to the amount of materials they are represented in the series.

Although being published when the different versions of the national curriculum were in force, there does not seem to be a systematic difference in the textbooks discussed when it comes to the topics covered or approaches to Estonian culture. Thus, based on my analysis, it is not possible to trace any significant changes between the different textbook editions.

2.2. Geography

The factual information about Estonian geography is accompanied by an opinion statement where the country is described as “small and beautiful” (ILE SB 3 2014:29). The general image of Estonia is represented by reference to its “excellent” geographical

location (ILE SB 7 2010:139) and visualised by its map (ILE SB 4 2000:71). In all textbooks, there is a vector map of the country (or even several) where the main towns are indicated. The textbook represents Estonia as a small Baltic country (ILE SB 7 2010:50) with many islands (ILE WB 5 2016:110) that lies by the Baltic Sea (ILE WB 6 2009:99) and has Scandinavian and other Baltic countries as its neighbours (ILE WB 6 2009:121-122; ILE SB 6 2002:87; ILE SB 3 2014:30; ILE WB 7 2003:19). Thus, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway are mentioned many times, including in the grammar exercises in the workbooks (for example, ILE SB 4 2006:12; ILE WB 4 2006:38). At the same time, Russia is less visible. It appears to have negative connotations, as can be seen from an exercise where students should correct mistakes in the text where the example sentence is “We do not live in Russia. We live in Estonia” (ILE WB 5 2001:27; ILE WB 5 2008:33). Such connotations are absent in texts about other neighbouring countries.

At the same time, it is stressed that Estonia is located in Europe and can be reached by travellers from other European countries. For example, there is a European map presenting Tallinn and Estonia with a journey route drawn from London around the Baltic Sea (ILE SB 4 2000:30-31). Additionally, it is shown as a place unknown to many Europeans who might consider it as a Scandinavian country (ILE SB 4 2000:70) while Eastern Europe is not mentioned at all.

It is remarkable that the Baltic region is represented quite extensively not only by three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) but it also includes “the extended circle” with Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Russia, and Germany, that is, all the countries which lie by the Baltic Sea (ILE SB 4 2006:61).

In one textbook (ILE SB 4 2006:37), there is an addition about the European Union and Estonia joining it in 2004. It seems that it was important immediately after the date,

but it was quickly forgotten as well as joining to the Eurozone that was described in the textbook printed in 2009 only (ILE SB 6 2009:102).

Climate is discussed much less frequently. From the book series, students get to know that the Estonian weather is very changeable (ILE SB 6 2009:102), and there are two seasons only: summer (“July is the hottest month in Estonia” (ILE SB 4 2000:30; ILE WB 4 2006:33) while the sea is usually cold (ILE SB 2 2012:122)) and winter (ILE WB 5 2008:123) that could be very cold (ILE WB 4 2006:33), with temperatures as low as -35 degrees Celsius (ILE SB 7 2003:96).

Estonian fauna is described within the general topics on animal life where students are supposed to learn the names of raccoon dogs, wild boars, roe deer or elks that could be killed on Estonian roads (ILE SB 5 2008:120). The same is true for the flora as well: aspen, lime, rowan are mentioned (ILE SB 5 2008:150-151).

Ethnic diversity and ethnic minorities are mostly invisible. In the editions of the early 2000s, Russian neighbours and the Russian language seemed to be a part of the society, as can be seen from examples like “It is important to learn Russian” (ILE SB 6 2002:31) or “My brother has started learning Russian” (ILE WB 7 2003:12). In many grammar exercises, it is repeated that “We live in Estonia. We speak Estonian” (ILE SB 5 2001:80) and “Estonian is our mother tongue” (ILE WB 4 2006:47). Since there are no references to regional differences, this creates a sense of Estonia as a homogeneous nation, without references to the 190 nationalities that really live in Estonia today. The latest editions mention the bilingual people living in Estonia (Estonian and Russian (ILE SB 7 2010:104); Estonian and Finnish (ILE WB 4 2006:11)) and those having an accent while speaking Estonian (ILE SB 5 2016:62) but their nationalities and origins are not discussed. In addition, there is an exercise where students have to speak about people who have settled

in Estonia in which it is stated that “I do not think that people from the USA would like to immigrate to Estonia” (ILE SB 5 2008:94, 97). However, there is some fragmented information about immigrants from Russia (ILE SB 4 2006:83) or relatives/grandparents being of other nationalities than Estonian, without any specification (ILE SB 5 2001:82).

At the same time, it is possible to trace the topic of Estonian emigrants. In the series, there are the images of people of Estonian descent living abroad: “My mother is half-Estonian”, says an English boy, “and she wants to visit her relatives” (ILE SB 4 2006:19). The idea of keeping in touch with Estonia and preserving the Estonian language is also important. Discussing Mark Kalev Kostabi, an American artist of an Estonian origin, the textbook authors underline that he does not speak Estonian (ILE WB 7 2003:24-25). The stories tend to explain emigration as a forced decision influenced by political circumstances, usually of the Soviet time. For example, we get an explanation of Estonians who migrated to Sweden and the USA in order to escape the new regime that came into power after WWII (ILE SB 4 2015:20).

Summing up, the geographical location of Estonia is one of the most important topics that is covered in the textbook series. It fully complies with the current national curriculum where the country’s location should be discussed during the second stage of secondary education (the 4th–6th grades) as well as the curricula of 1996 and 2002 where the same notions were to be taught in the 3rd–6th grades (*Eesti põhi- ja keskhariduse riiklik õppekava* 1996) and in the 6th–9th grades (*Põhikooli ja gümnaasiumi riiklik õppekava* 2002) appropriately. This geographical knowledge is usually visualised by a map and the repeated information about the Baltic Sea region (in its extended version). It is easy to trace the tendency to locate Estonia in a broader Scandinavian and European context while its closeness to the Russian Federation as well as to Eastern Europe is not underlined.

The other elements of physical geography including climate, flora, and fauna are presented in a fragmentary manner and this prevents students from seeing a complete picture, although these topics are mentioned in the national curricula. Estonian social and economic geography is underrepresented: the country is shown as a mostly homogeneous region with some mentioning of ethnic minorities without naming their nationalities, origins or numbers. At the same time, the immigration of Estonians due to the political (not economic) reasons is described with several examples. The economic and regional development of the country is not shown while in the current national curriculum states that the peoples of Estonia (the 3rd grade) and life in a city and in the countryside (the 4th-9th grades) should be discussed.

2.3. Estonia as a tourist destination

The regional diversity of Estonia is not shown in the textbook series. The main focus is on Tallinn as an external (“quite chilling comparing with London” (ILE SB 7 2010:50)) and internal tourist destination. Tallinn is presented as the capital of Estonia, famous for its medieval Old Town (drawings and photos included, for example ILE SB 3 2014:35; ILE SB 4 2000:21; ILE WB 5 2008:78). From the series it appears that Tallinn is attractive to tourists as a UNESCO heritage city (ILE SB 6 2009:103) with its viewing platforms (ILE SB 6 2017: 117), medieval and modern architecture (ILE 6 2017:117), Tall Herman, Old Thomas, St. Olaf’s Church, House of the Blackheads (ILE SB 6 2009:103), and KUMU museum (ILE SB 5 2016:37). There are activities in which students should read about or describe the visit to Tallinn of their foreign friends (ILE SB 6 2009:100-102, ILE SB 6 2017:122; ILE WB 4 2000:17; ILE SB 4 2006:14; ILE SB 4 2006:34; ILE WB 5 2008:65; ILE WB 4 2006:22). To get to Tallinn, one can use a plane from London Gatwick (ILE SB

4 2006:20) to Lennart Meri Airport (ILE WB 6 2017:73). But the city is also popular with local tourists who can travel to Tallinn by bus/train/car (ILE SB 4 2000:30; ILE WB 4 2006:88).

The most frequently mentioned region of Estonia is South Estonia where children go to visit their grandparents in summer (ILE WB 4 2000:16; ILE WB 4 2006:17). It is a place with “gorgeous landscapes” (ILE SB 6 2009:129) and diverse nature (pictures included, ILE SB 3 2014:33). Other parts of Estonia are named only, for instance North Estonia (ILE WB 3 2014:34) or West Estonia as a summer destination (ILE SB 4 2000:10; ILE SB 4 2006:10).

The less frequently described and discussed places include Tartu, the cultural capital of Estonia (ILE WB 6 2017:73), with its university dating back to the 17th century and a brand new Estonian National Museum (a photo included, ILE SB 6 2017:60; ILE WB 5 2016:104), Saaremaa, Narva, famous for its castle (ILE WB 5 2016:27) and the “biggest bridge in Estonia” (ILE WB 7 2003:81), Otepää, Pärnu, Värskä (ILE SB 2 2012:110), Võru (ILE SB 2 2012:127), etc. Their descriptions are fragmentary. For example, the only information we get about Pärnu is that it has a beach (ILE SB 4 2006:22, 28), that people go there in summer, and that it hosts Tattoo and Line Dance Festivals (ILE SB 5 2008:65). Saaremaa is usually presented as a summer destination (ILE WB 5 2008:8, 129) and a place where you can get by ferry from Virtsu (in the units dedicated to transport and travelling) (ILE SB 6 2009:27, ILE WB 6 2009:20). Viljandi is mentioned as a place of the folk festival (ILE SB 6 2017:120; ILE SB 7 2010:99; ILE SB 5 2008:65).

Another tourist attraction is Estonian nature, which is beautiful and pure and includes “interesting wild life” (ILE SB 6 2017:117). For example, from the series, we get to know a lot about its forests that cover “almost 52% of Estonia” (ILE SB 6 2017:121-122). Other

examples are Tuhala Witch's well (including its picture), the famous water attraction in Estonia (ILE SB 5 2016:84; ILE SB 5 2008:115), and lake Peipsi (ILE WB 2 2012:59). It is also mentioned that Estonian rivers do not have tides (ILE WB 7 2003:85).

Although the topics presented fully comply with all editions of the national curriculum where the Estonian capital, city and countryside, Estonian nature, life in a city and in the countryside (only in the current curriculum), Estonian sights should be addressed, they are mostly illustrated as a tourist guidebook with a huge emphasis on Tallinn as the main tourist destination and with little factual information concerning other Estonian regions. If the textbook were to be used as a main source of knowledge concerning Estonia, the country would appear to be too small and boring to visit with the exception of its capital.

In addition, according to all national curricula for basic schools, Estonian nature should be presented in conjunction with behaviour in nature (the 4th–6th grades), its preservation, environment-friendly and sustainable behaviour (the 7th–9th grades). These topics appear in the culturally-neutral units without mentioning Estonian nature.

2.4. National holidays and symbols

Several holidays are mentioned in the series: Christmas, Easter, Estonian Independence Day (usually the date only (ILE SB 2 2012:103; ILE SB 2 2004:74) and the traditional military parade (ILE SB 4 2006:42)). Other important dates are Europe Day (May 9), the date of accession to the EU (May 1, 2004), the Estonian National Flag Day (ILE SB 3 2014:62). Surprisingly, the popular Midsummer's Eve and Day do not receive much attention and are usually mentioned in the list of all Estonian festivals (ILE WB 5

2008:108-109; ILE WB 4 2006:41). It could be connected to the fact that they are celebrated during summer holidays and thus cannot be discussed in lessons.

Christmas is the most widely celebrated holiday, according to the textbook series, because each edition contains a separate chapter on this topic including the descriptions of traditional Christmas dishes and other traditions, for instance visiting graveyards (ILE WB 5 2016:60). The tradition of Christmas markets is described as a continuation of the German influence that started when the first Christmas tree was installed in Tallinn in 1441 (ILE WB 5 2016:57).

Another topic connected to holidays and festivals is traditional food. It is especially relevant to Christmas in connection with which the textbook talks about black pudding, gingerbread, and roasted meat (ILE SB 4 2000:110; ILE SB 5 2016:53; ILE WB 5 2016:60). Additionally, Estonian food appears in the units where meals in general are illustrated. In such chapters, there is information about radish (ILE WB 2 2012:64, 96), rhubarb (ILE SB 6 2002:97; ILE WB 3 2014:7; ILE SB 2 2012:66), beetroot, swede (ILE SB 5 2016:100), and bread is always presented as a rye bread (not wheat bread) (ILE SB 2 2012:66; ILE SB 2 2004:54; ILE WB 2 2004:66).

National symbols are less visible and less frequently mentioned than the vector map: we get to know that swallow is the national bird (ILE SB 3 2014:32; ILE WB 3 2014:67) and see the Estonian flag (ILE WB 3 2014:35).

According to the textbook series, Christmas is the biggest festival in Estonia because it is represented in each textbook in the series while in the national curriculum national holidays need to be addressed in the 4th–6th grades only. Other celebrations are less visible and discussed, especially the Midsummer Day which is not seen in the textbooks although it is one of the most popular holidays in the Baltic region. The topic of national symbols

follows the curriculum of 1996 for the 7th–9th grades, of 2002 that of the 6th–9th, and of 2011 the 3rd–6th grades.

2.5. History

The historical image of Estonia is represented through a limited number of topics such as Vikings, the Middle Ages, foreign rule, and the Soviet time. All of them, with the exception of the Soviet regime, are presented neutrally and follow the factual approach to history. For example, Vikings are shown as a neutral element of European and British history (ILE SB 4 2000:34-35) and also connected to Estonia, for example, there is a reference to two Viking ships found in Estonia in 2012 (ILE SB 5 2016:30; ILE WB 5 2016:26). A similar method is used when mentioning that Estonia was governed by many foreign rulers (ILE SB 5 2008:59; ILE SB 5 2001:54), as well as “German knights” (ILE WB 7 2003:31). Medieval history is mentioned within the tourist information about the architecture of Tallinn and castles, including their pictures and drawings (castles in Rakvere, Saaremaa–Kuressaare (ILE SB 5 2016:28-29), and Haapsalu (ILE WB 5 2016:97)).

In contrast, the Soviet period is described quite negatively (for example, in indirect references like “about 10 years ago Estonians did not travel much” (ILE WB 4 2000:30)). In the ILE 4 textbook (2015:40), a schoolgirl’s granny talks about her childhood after WWII. At the beginning of her story, she describes “the town... in ruins“, and “the communist youth organisation“ with their “hated red scarves“. Then she tells about her adventures in a summer camp when she had to “hunt for imaginary enemies“ at night and lost one of her white tennis shoes which could be bought after standing in “queue for them on certain days“ only. Thus, the whole idea of a summer camp appears to be quite silly

(imaginary enemies), dangerous (children at night alone), associated with the loss of valuables (tennis shoes that were difficult to replace). The negative image is supported by the illustration where an upset small girl with a torch and without one shoe is trying to find something under the bushes in the woods at night, but there is a scared hare only.

The topic of history is not stated in the current national curriculum explicitly, while the integration of different subjects and cross-curricular topics (§ 14) are underlined, so it is not covered much in the series. However, it is possible to draw two conclusions about the representation of history: the neutral attitude to the medieval history of Estonia (with little details about Vikings and Teutonic knights) and the negative one concerning the Soviet time when people were forced to leave the country, suffer from the arbitrary policies and other limitations.

2.6. Big C culture representation

Big C culture representation could be divided into several groups: theatre, art, music, literature, and sports. All of these topics are usually illustrated by names, titles, and dates without any sufficient information given.

The series talks about the two famous theatres in Estonia (ILE SB 4 2000:76): Estonia Theatre, established in 1913 (ILE SB 5 2016:62) and Vanemuine, established in 1865 (ILE SB 5 2016:62; ILE WB 5 2016:104), where the first Estonian ballet was created in 1943 by composer Eduard Tubin who emigrated to Sweden because of the Soviet regime (ILE SB 5 2016:62). More details are presented about the life of ballet dancers Age Oaks and Toomas Edur who emigrated to Britain where Age even has changed her name into Agnes which sounds more familiar to English-speakers (ILE WB 7 2003:25).

Estonian art (ILE SB 4 2000:76) is also illustrated by names like Jüri Arrak (ILE SB 7 2010:100), Navitrolla (ILE SB 4 2006:83; ILE WB 4 2006:90), and Mark Kalev Kostabi (ILE WB 7 2003:24-25). Kostabi is the one artist about whom students learn more than only his name: his family's emigration to the US and his lack of Estonian language skills. The film *Class* (ILE SB 5 2008:65) can also be placed in this category.

Music as a part of Estonian traditional culture is mostly represented by the Song Festival tradition which began in Tartu in 1869 (ILE SB 5 2016:62) and continues to this day. Other traditional culture elements are national costumes (ILE WB 5 2016:65), Viljandi Folk Festival (ILE SB 7 2010:99; ILE SB 5 2008:65), and School Dance Festival (ILE SB 5 2008:65). In addition, there references to some contemporary musicians: classical composer Arvo Pärt (ILE SB 4 2006:83), and conductor Eri Klas (ILE SB 4 2006:83), but also popular bands and singers (Vennaskond (ILE SB 7 2010:99), Iris Vesik (ILE SB 7 2010:100) and Hanna-Liina Võsa (ILE SB 4 2006:83)).

References to Estonian literature (ILE SB 5 2008:86) are limited to two names: Aidi Vallik (ILE SB 4 2006:83) and Leelo Tungal (ILE SB 4 2006:83).

The sportsmen who students find in the series are Andrus Veerpalu, an Olympic gold medalist in skiing (ILE SB 4 2006:83), and badminton player Gert Künka (ILE SB 7 2003:49-50). The latter story has more details: his childhood and the first interest in badminton which is connected to the topic of British influence on Estonia.

In the national curriculum, the big C culture topics are not included in the description of Estonia. Thus, they are very fragmentary and limited and usually include names and the area of activities only. The whole series contains detailed stories about four famous people where their choice is not quite obvious: the ballet dancers Age Oaks and Toomas Edur, an artist Mark Kalev Kostabi, and a badminton player Gert Künka.

2.7. Intercultural competence development

The current national curriculum for basic schools does not include intercultural competence in the list of the necessary competences to develop but it emphasizes the importance of understanding similarities and differences between students' native culture and the target one (*Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava* 2011) that could be described as one of the intercultural competence features (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 103). Thus, the textbook series discussed (especially those printed after 2011 when the new curriculum was approved by the Estonian government) should pay attention to the aspect mentioned.

Most units of the series where other countries are described (usually English-speaking countries like England, Scotland, the USA, Australia, New Zealand) make an attempt to compare them with Estonia. The comparisons include:

- size (“Is Estonia bigger than Scotland?” (ILE WB 2 2012:11; ILE SB 2 2004:36; ILE SB 7 2003:94)),
- population (“Compare the population of England and Estonia” (ILE SB 7 2003:94; ILE WB 5 2008:60)),
- climate (“The winter in Finland is usually colder than in Estonia” (ILE WB 2 2004:40-41) but it is colder in Estonia than in England (ILE WB 7 2003:108-109));
- flora and fauna (“Do we have heather moors in Estonia?” after the text about Scotland (ILE WB 5 2001:65)),
- traditions (“Compare British and Estonian Christmas traditions” (ILE SB 6 2009:143; ILE SB 2002:121; ILE WB 3 2014:125; ILE SB

5 2008:144; ILE SB 4 2006:121), compare Christmas in France and Estonia (ILE SB 5 2016:53), speak about St. Valentine's Day in your school (ILE SB 6 2017:71), holidays in the EU and Baltic States which joined it in 2004 (ILE SB 4 2006:39)),

- food ("Compare British and Estonian Christmas food" (ILE SB 4 2000:110))
- summer activities (ILE SB 4 2000:19)
- important dates (the list of the Independence days in many countries including Estonia as well (ILE SB 3 2014:62)),
- names (Estonian and English versions (ILE WB 7 2003:61; ILE SB 7 2010:66)),
- language (the list of words in Estonian and English that have a Latin origin (ILE SB 5 2001:50)),
- history (compare Vikings in Britain and Germans in Estonia (ILE WB 2001:62)),
- general comparison ("Compare Estonia and Ireland" (ILE SB 6 2009:137; ILE SB 5 2016:94-95, 98))

At the same time, most topics about other countries may contain exercises (usually speaking exercises) to describe and talk about similar phenomena in Estonia without comparing this information. For example, when discussing London as a city there is a task to tell/write about Estonian towns and their location, transport, meals and history (ILE SB 6 2009:107; ILE SB 6 2002:68, 71) or, when talking about Ireland and its traditions, students are asked to recall Estonian proverbs, riddles, folk tales and ancient beliefs (ILE SB 6 2002:67).

The same might apply to the culturally-neutral units like food or travelling. For example, the task might ask students to describe Estonian food 50 years ago without a prior input (a text, for instance) (ILE SB 2002:101; ILE SB 4 2006:126). The unit dealing with animals contains the task to name mammals and birds in Estonia (ILE SB 4 2000:105) or farm animals in Estonia (ILE WB 5 2001:120).

The textbook series discussed has the exercises on comparing Estonian cultural elements with English-speaking countries' ones that is the requirement of the national curriculum. At the same time, these tasks are mostly speaking activities and students are supposed to use their own knowledge about Estonian culture without any prior vocabulary and factual input from the textbook. Thus, the series could facilitate the intercultural competence development when it deals with similarities and differences between Estonia and English-speaking countries only. On the other hand, the exercises proposed do not include sufficient prior information about Estonian culture, and it appears that the textbook authors think that students should already have that knowledge or obtain it during other courses. From my experience of teaching EFL with the use of *I Love English* in the classes with the representatives of ethnic minorities who are less aware about Estonian culture, I would say that those tasks were the most difficult for complete. We usually did them in class, and I precede them with an additional input (a short text, presentation, video, pictures etc.) which enables students to do it successfully. It was time- and resource-consuming, and sometimes met by opposition as not directly connected to EFL learning process.

2.8. *Cultural values*

According to Razi (2016), a cultural background is represented by cultural values that he has divided into nine categories: intellectual values, lifestyles, behaviours, artistic values, media, family, minor and major values, formal values. As it is seen from the analysis above, most of them concerning Estonian culture are difficult to identify in the textbook series. While it has a lot value-based information and appeals on family, media, formal and other behaviours (each textbook in the series contains culturally-neutral topics on family relations, behaviour at school or nature etc.), the textbook does not connect them to the Estonian lifestyle and its peculiarities trying to represent these topics as culturally-neutral.

Nonetheless, it might be possible to define some aspects of Estonian values based on the cultural elements depicted in the series. First of all, family values are obviously present because in all situations concerning travelling around Estonia, school holidays, national holidays, even historically sensitive topics about forced immigration and the Soviet time include the notion of family which is usually represented by three generations: grandparents, parents, and children/grandchildren. The youngsters are in touch with their grandparents visiting them in the countryside and talking with them about the past. So, an Estonian family is nuclear in the textbooks but also close to older generations who live separately or even abroad.

Another important value is the Estonian language which might be defined as a major value by Razi (2016). There are many references to the Estonian language as a crucial identification for an Estonian, and continuous repetition that “we live in Estonia”, not in Russia, for instance. Intellectual and artistic values are limited in the series due to

the fact that intellectuals (mostly writers) and artists are usually mentioned by names only. The national dimension can be traced through the life story of Eduard Tubin who has created the first Estonian ballet and the long-lasting Song Festival tradition. The other part of the possible national values could be connected to the only negative attitude to historical events – the Soviet time when people were supposed to live abnormally and emigrate by political reasons.

Nonetheless, formal values are quite representative because students could have enough information about national holidays (especially Christmas and Easter, with less data about Independence Day or Midsummer's Day), traditions including song and dance festivals, and national symbols. Meanwhile, the social and political formal values like politeness or democracy are not illustrated. Overall, the authors of the textbook series *I Love English* do not seem to be interested in the value-based image of Estonia when presenting different value categories as culturally-neutral. At the same time, the notions of nuclear family and Estonian nationality are shown in the texts.

CONCLUSION

The belief that foreign languages should be studied for communication is widespread among teachers and researchers. However, communication involves not only a target language vocabulary and grammar rules but also intercultural competence that suggests a learner communicates her own culture and understands how a speaker of a target language sees different cultural phenomena. The idea is present in the Estonian national curriculum for basic schools and illustrated within the framework of the cultural competence necessary to be developed in every class including the foreign language one.

The studies of the topic prove that teaching culture in a FL class could facilitate the learning process by providing the necessary context for using language skills but it may also create obstacles like stereotyping, inadequate representation of a country/nation or even a clash between different cultures based on nationalist discourse. In this context, textbooks are seen as a possible methodological aid for creating an appropriate teaching/learning ground if the amount of data concerning the target and native cultures, their differences and similarities is sufficient and appropriate. Mostly, this approach can be developed with the help of locally printed textbooks that usually illustrate native culture as the national curricula require or place a learner in a familiar context. In some countries, native culture could even predominate over the target one due to some cultural and political reasons.

In my analysis of the textbook series *I Love English*, I aimed to answer the following research questions: How is Estonia represented in the *I Love English* textbook series? Do the representations have the potential to develop intercultural competence? My hypothesis that the series does not provide enough information about Estonia and therefore

may cause stereotyping, and might not support the development of intercultural competence was proved by my analysis.

The textbook series *I Love English* has 17 sets with up to 3 editions for the 3rd to 9th grades. It has been published in Estonia between 1999 and 2017 to facilitate teaching English as a foreign language in basic schools according to the Estonian national curriculum. Estonian culture is presented somehow in each textbook. The analysis has shown that it is not possible to identify any significant changes between its editions in the representation of Estonian culture.

The largest amount of data is dedicated to Estonian geography, visualised by a vector map in each textbook and described by the Baltic Sea and mostly Estonia's western and southern neighbors. Estonia is represented as a tourist destination, with its capital Tallinn as a main attraction, described as a beautiful well-preserved medieval city. This capital-centered approach provides little information about other towns and regions of the country, although the textbook was printed in Tartu, not Tallinn. Generally, other parts of Estonia are described by one prominent fact (for example, good beaches in Pärnu). At the same time, ethnic diversity, history, Big C culture, national holidays and symbols as well as cultural values appear in a very limited manner.

Estonia is mostly represented as an ethnically homogeneous state where the Estonian language is seen as a major value. The textbooks represent the quite painful experiences of World War II and the Soviet period. In addition, the textbook talks about Estonians who appreciate nuclear families and celebrate Christmas as their biggest holiday. They do not have many famous writers, musicians, artists, and sportsmen. This picture of Estonian culture might be described as a possible facilitator of a stereotypical view of the

country and its image. In this case, the learners may not communicate their own culture abroad effectively because they will not have enough vocabulary and images to present. However, the textbook series follows the previous and current national curricula for basic schools because the latter provide just lists of topics to be discussed in class, nor their detailed descriptions.

Support for the development of intercultural competence is provided in the series in a number of mostly speaking exercises (lists of questions) on comparing Estonian culture with those of English-speaking cultures. These tasks require some prior knowledge from the students or additional input or preparation from the teachers.

In the broader framework, my analysis of the series *I Love English* provides some support to the ideas of Siddiqie (2011), Jia (2015), Arifani (2016) and Parsaiyan et al. (2014) that locally printed FL textbooks are based on national curricula and could facilitate the development of intercultural competence. However, this requires a substantial input of native cultural elements and appropriate tasks for comparing native and other cultures. Additionally, my findings show that the cultural image presented by a textbook might be easily transformed into the stereotyping tendency which is also discussed by Latorre (1985:673), Kramsch (2013:59), and Drewelow (2011), and can provide information on an officially accepted discourse (Canale 2016) about history and national values.

For further discussion, the results of this thesis could be used for empirical research on the practical use of the textbook series analysed in a EFL class in Estonia and possible recommendations to improve its content and ability to discuss native culture and to develop intercultural competence.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Valentyna Afanasyeva

The representation of Estonian culture in the *I Love English* textbook series

Eesti kultuuri esindamine inglise keele õpikute seerias „I Love English”

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Annotatsioon:

Selle magistritöö eesmärgiks on analüüsida eesti kultuuri elemente „I Love English” õpikuteseerias ning samuti ka kultuuridevahelise keeleoskuse arendamise võimalusi mainitud õpikute abil.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatausest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatuses kirjeldatakse uurimistöö teema olulisust, autori isiklikku motivatsiooni ja lõputöö struktuuri. Esimeses peatükis analüüsitakse varasemaid uuringuid, mis puudutavad kultuuri õpetamist võõrkeeletundides. Lisaks määrataletakse ja klassifitseeritakse kultuurielemendid, antakse kultuuridevahelise suhtluse pädevuse definitsioon, analüüsitakse õppevahendite (sealhulgas ka Eestis ilmunud inglise keele õpikute) võimalusi kultuuri esitamiseks. Teine peatükk tutvustab „I Love English“ õpikuteseeria analüüsi ja esitab saadud tulemusi: identifitseeritakse ja klassifitseeritakse õppematerjalis esinevad olulisimad eesti kultuuri elemendid, sealhulgas kultuuriväärtused, analüüsitakse ülesandeid, millel on kultuuridevahelise pädevuse arendamise potentsiaali. Kokkuvõttes esitatakse uurimuse tulemusi kultuuriõpetuse laiemas kontekstis ning pakutakse võimalusi nende edasiseks kasutamiseks.

Tehtud uurimistöö põhjal võib järeldada, et „I Love English“ õpikuseeria tutvustab Eestit ja Eesti kultuuri suhteliselt lihtsustatud kujul. Õpikutes keskendutakse põhiliselt Eesti geograafiale ja turistide meelitamisele. Kõrgkultuur, ajalugu, kultuuriväärtused ja riigi etniline mitmekesisus ei ole õpikutes praktiliselt üldse esindatud. Kõik see aitab kaasa Eesti stereotüüpse kuvandi loomisele ning võib põhjustada raskusi oma kultuuri tutvustamisel võõrkeeles. Õpikutes on ülesandeid, mis toetavad kultuuridevahelist suhtlust ja rääkimispädevuse arendamist – näiteks palutakse õppijatel võrrelda Eesti ja inglise keelt kõnelevate maade kultuuri. Samas ei anta õpikus piisavalt teavet, mis oleks vajalik sellise võrdluse tegemiseks. See võib valmistada õpetajale ja õppijatele teatud raskusi, kuna nad peavad vajaliku info ise välja otsima ning seejärel seda mõtestama ja analüüsima.

Märksõnad: eesti kultuur, kultuuridevaheline kommunikatsioon, inglise keele didaktika.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Valentyna Afanasyeva,
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1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

The representation of Estonian culture in the I Love English textbook series,
(*lõputöö pealkiri*)

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Valentyna Afanasyeva