

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
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**Creating Supplementary Learning Activities for the Development of  
Pluricultural Competence in a Culturally Diverse Year 6 EFL Classroom**

**MA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

While pluricultural competence is increasingly emphasised in language education policy documents such as the CEFR (2001) and its Companion Volume (2020), its practical implementation in EFL classrooms remains limited. This thesis addresses that gap by designing supplementary English language teaching materials to support the development of pluricultural competence among culturally diverse sixth-grade learners in Estonia.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two core chapters and a conclusion. The introduction states the motivation for the thesis and describes its structure. The first chapter provides a theoretical foundation, exploring concepts such as culture, pluricultural competence and the CEFR's role in shaping pluricultural education. The second chapter presents the methodology for and design of five CEFR-informed worksheet sets supplementing the coursebook *Academy Stars 6*. The thesis ends with a conclusion summarising the most important aspects of supporting pluricultural competence in the EFL classroom. Created materials are included in the appendices.

**Keywords:** pluricultural competence, CEFR, English language teaching, materials development, intercultural communication

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## INTRODUCTION

The present master's thesis is inspired by the author's experiences of teaching English in an Estonian school where students come from a variety of diverse cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds. A key observation from this context was the limited interaction and integration between students from different cultural backgrounds in the second school stage, especially in discussing their cultural experiences and finding common ground. Students from similar cultural backgrounds tend to stick together and interact less with their classmates from different cultures. One significant barrier to integration is language proficiency; for example, recently immigrated students often lack sufficient proficiency in Estonian to effectively communicate with local classmates. This creates an imbalance as Estonian-speaking and non-Estonian-speaking students cannot always engage on equal footing, which makes communication and forming connections rather challenging.

English language lessons, however, present a unique opportunity to bridge this gap. Immigrant students typically possess a higher level of proficiency in English compared to Estonian, allowing for more meaningful and complex conversations on various topics that may not be feasible in other lessons or languages. Therefore, English lessons can serve as a platform for facilitating communication between culturally and linguistically diverse students while simultaneously promoting their pluricultural competence – the ability to strategically draw on their knowledge of a number of cultures to understand, mediate and relate across cultures with openness, flexibility and curiosity (Council of Europe 2020; Coste et al 2009; Runnels 2021).

Despite this potential, English coursebooks used in Estonian schools often lack materials to support deeper cultural reflection and comparison opportunities, especially

following the principles of pluricultural language education (PLE), which aims to mobilise learners for communication in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts by increasing their awareness of their own linguistic and cultural repertoires and those of others (Runnels 2021). While pluricultural competence is increasingly emphasized in influential language policy documents such as the CEFR Companion Volume (2020), its integration into classroom contexts remains limited due to factors like conceptual and terminological ambiguity, a lack of teacher training, and a shortage of pedagogical materials, especially aimed at younger learners (Runnels 2021; Galante 2025). This gap is apparent in many mainstream EFL coursebooks, such as the one used in the school where I teach, *Academy Stars Level 6 Pupil's Book* (Elsworth & Rose 2017), which tend to treat culture in a somewhat superficial way. Analysing another very popular coursebook series (*I Love English*) used in Estonian EFL classrooms, Sepping (2023) also concluded that the cultural activities included do not effectively develop learners' pluricultural competence, underlining the need for teacher interest in the topic and material supplementation. There is a clear need for supplementary materials to EFL coursebooks used in Estonia that move beyond surface-level cultural references and instead promote deeper personal cultural reflection, comparison, and dialogue aligned with the principles of PLE.

The aim of this thesis is to design teaching materials and learning activities to supplement the English coursebook *Academy Stars Level 6* that allows all students – regardless of their cultural or linguistic background – to reflect on and discuss their cultural background in English, supporting the development of their pluricultural competence. The prepared materials are intended for sixth grade learners who are required to finish the second stage of basic education at A2-level proficiency in English (Riigiteataja 2023b), designed to be a stepping stone to more abstract concepts like culture in preparation for the third school stage where students are expected to recognise similarities and differences between their own

culture and other cultures and to value cultural diversity. This thesis explores how English language education in Estonia can support the development of pluricultural competence through targeted classroom activities among basic school learners. The goal is to help 6th grade learners from all backgrounds become more aware of cultural diversity and engage in meaningful intercultural communication in English. Intercultural communication describes the process of individuals of different cultural backgrounds and perceptions engaging with one another (Samovar et al. 2005).

Chapter 1 of this thesis presents a review of relevant literature, including definitions and conceptualisations of culture in foreign language education and intercultural, pluricultural, and plurilingual competence. The chapter also explores principles for designing language lessons and corresponding materials for conducting them that support these competences and reviews challenges in implementing such approaches in practice. Chapter 2 describes the design of supplementary activities for a Year 6 EFL coursebook used in Estonian schools. These activities are aligned with the CEFR CV (2020) descriptors for pluricultural competence and support inclusive classroom communication. They aim to empower students to share their own cultural knowledge and reflect on cultural similarities and differences using English.

The appendices provide the full versions of the designed activities in the form of student worksheets as well as accompanying teacher manuals.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review lays the theoretical foundation for the design of CEFR-informed supplementary materials that support the development of pluricultural competence in the EFL classroom. It is divided into three sections. The first section examines different conceptualisations of the term *culture* and explores its role in foreign language education. It also introduces cultural awareness and competence as integral components of language proficiency. The second section clarifies and compares key terms relevant to this thesis (particularly intercultural, plurilingual, and pluricultural competence) highlighting their pedagogical implications and the conceptual distinctions necessary for effective materials development. The third and final section focuses on practical approaches to designing pluricultural learning activities. Drawing on CEFR descriptors and current literature, especially Judith Runnels' model of Pluricultural Language Education (PLE), this section identifies strategies for translating pluricultural learning objectives into meaningful, classroom-ready materials.

### **1.1. The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Education**

In order to explore how English lessons can effectively support learners' pluricultural competence, it is first necessary to clarify the broad and complex notion of *culture* and the role cultural aspects play in foreign language learning. While culture is sometimes narrowly associated with "high culture" (e.g., classical art, literature, music and theatre), Moran (2001) and Holliday (1999) argue that culture also includes the everyday practices and behaviours shared by members of a social group. It influences everything from how people interpret the world and solve problems to how they communicate and form relationships with others.

According to UNESCO (2001), culture consists of the unique spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group including not only the arts, but also aspects like lifestyles, social practices, value systems and traditions. Cross et al. (1989) similarly define culture as an “integrated pattern of human behaviour”, including the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. In essence, culture underpins everything – how people think, speak, behave and learn.

Because of this, communication is always culturally influenced. People grow up with unconscious assumptions about what is considered normal, appropriate or polite based on their cultural environment which can carry over to their communication with people from different cultures. For example, Arab speakers of English may be perceived as brusque or even rude by British interlocutors due to their direct language and infrequent use of politeness strategies considered appropriate in English, which reflect norms from their native language and culture that are appropriate locally (Hamza 2007). In western cultures, it is common to accept compliments by thanking the complimenter, but in Chinese cultures where modesty is a traditional virtue this could seem inappropriate (Lu 2009). Cultural competence (the ability to interact effectively across cultural contexts) involves recognising one’s own assumptions, understanding that norms vary between societies and learning to communicate respectfully and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (Cross et al. 1989; Williams 2001). In an educational setting, cultural awareness is the key to creating supportive, inclusive learning environments that not only acknowledge classroom diversity, but use it as a resource for learning and collaboration.

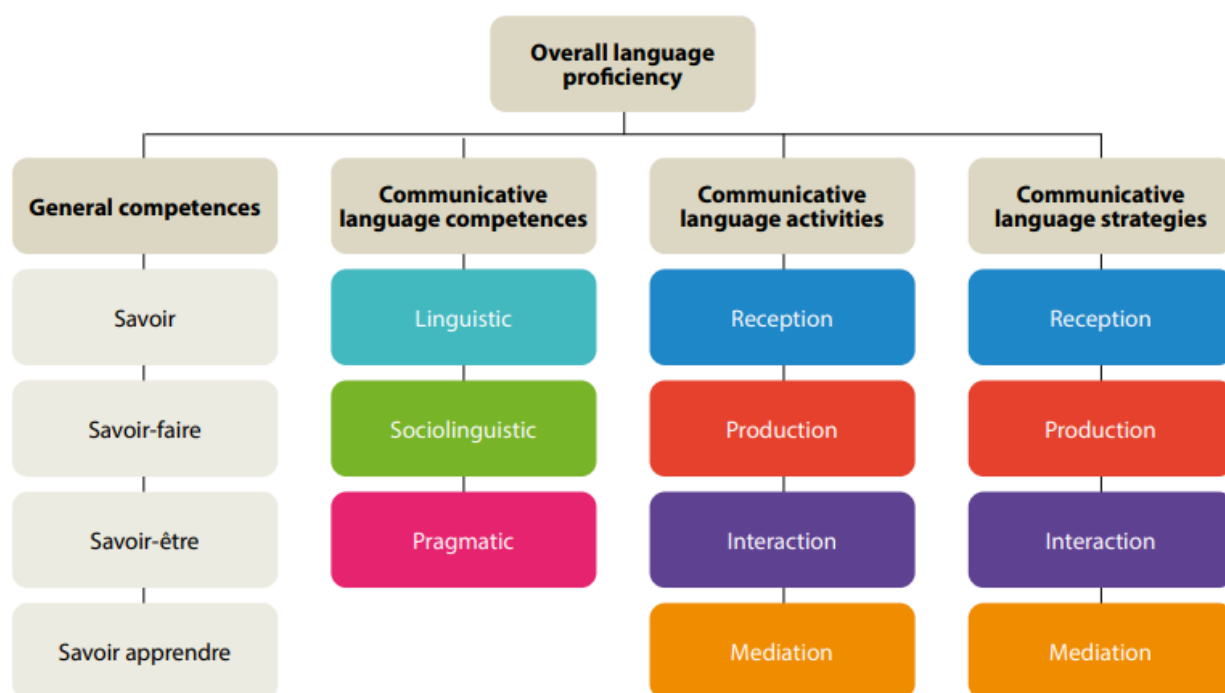
As globalisation accelerates and international mobility becomes more common in the world around us, education systems are increasingly expected to prepare learners to participate and communicate effectively in democratic, culturally diverse societies (Council

of Europe 2020; Coste et al. 2009). Schools are not only responsible for transmitting direct empirical knowledge to learners, but also for providing access to cultural knowledge, education for participative citizenship and education in otherness (Beacco et al. 2016; Coste & Cavalli 2015). This involves developing learners' awareness of different cultures and their ability to engage constructively and politely with people from different cultures and backgrounds, which requires critical and reflective lesson planning from teachers in regards to learning objectives and content. In Estonia, however, research has shown that teachers often work with culturally diverse learners relying mostly on intuition and both their own and their colleagues' subjective experiences rather than any kind of formal training or pedagogical resources (Muldma & Nõmm 2011; Tuulik & Muldma 2008). This highlights the need for evidence-based approaches and accessible materials for teachers in Estonia to support cultural discussions, communication skills and inclusion in the classroom to keep up with the requirements of the modern education system.

Foreign language lessons are a natural space for cultural discussion since learning a new language also means exploring different ways of thinking, living and interacting. The relationship between language teaching and culture has been widely discussed in language education research. Claire Kramsch (1993) critiques the traditional divide between language and culture in language teaching, seeing language and cultural context as inseparable and arguing that cultural awareness is both a prerequisite for and a result of meaningful language use and reflection. Michael Byram (1997) asserts that foreign language education is inherently cultural and must be approached as a social, not only linguistic, phenomenon. Critical of the narrow interpretation of communicative competence as merely linguistic accuracy, he emphasises that successful language learning should prepare learners to become "intercultural speakers" – individuals who can navigate between cultural perspectives and communicate meaningfully in diverse communicative situations.

This broader understanding of communicative competence is also represented in the CEFR Companion Volume (2020), in which communicative language competence is divided into three interrelated components: linguistic competence (knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, phonology and orthography), sociolinguistic competence (understanding social conventions and cultural norms), and pragmatic competence (understanding how messages are structured and organised, how language is used to carry out communicative functions) (see Figure 1). Among these, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences are particularly relevant to cultural communication, as they require learners to engage with culturally shaped aspects of language use, such as politeness strategies, register, discourse organisation, and communicative intent (Council of Europe 2020). In other words, linguistic accuracy alone is not sufficient for language proficiency. To communicate respectfully and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, learners must also develop an awareness of how social norms and expectations vary across cultures.

*Figure 1. The structure of the CEFR descriptive scheme (Council of Europe 2020:32)*



Cultural awareness and competence are also important facets of the national curriculum for basic schools in Estonia (Riigiteataja 2023a). Cultural and value competence (e.g., the ability to sense and value one's ties with people, nature, the cultural heritage of their country and those of others and to value cultural diversity) and social and citizen competence (e.g., the ability to respect societal diversity, the particularities of religions and nations and to accept differences in people and their values and to take them into account in interaction) are outlined as cross-curricular general competences to be addressed in each subject. In addition, the foreign language curriculum for basic schools includes cultural knowledge and competence as learning outcomes throughout all stages of basic education. Students are expected to develop the ability to compare cultural perspectives and adopt an open, tolerant attitude toward cultural difference and demonstrate appropriate behaviour in various cultural contexts (Riigiteataja 2023b). These objectives underscore the role of education and, more specifically, foreign language education in supporting learners' cultural awareness.

These perspectives by language education scholars, international frameworks like the CEFR and local documents such as the national curriculum of Estonia all highlight that culture is not an optional or peripheral aspect of foreign language education, but a central element that shapes both language use and learning. Cultural awareness and competence enable learners to navigate communication situations with sensitivity in culturally diverse contexts. To meet the demands of globalised societies and increasingly diverse learning environments, foreign language education must be grounded in an understanding of how culture, identity and interaction intersect. The development of cultural awareness leads us to the need of more targeted competences to offer structured goals for helping learners engage across cultural boundaries and use their own cultural experiences as communicative resources.

## 1.2. Intercultural, Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence

Over the past few decades, there have been many frameworks, theoretical constructs and models developed by linguists to support the integration of culture into foreign language curricula. One of the most influential was Byram's (1997) model, which identified five key components or "savoirs" of intercultural communicative competence, in other words, the qualities of a competent "intercultural speaker":

- 1) Knowledge (*savoirs*): knowledge of social groups, their products, practices and interaction processes in both one's own and the interlocutor's culture.
- 2) Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): the ability to interpret and explain documents/events from another culture and relate it to one's own culture.
- 3) Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): the ability to acquire and use new cultural knowledge in real-time communication.
- 4) Attitudes (*savoir être*): demonstration of curiosity, openness and readiness to reconsider one's own and others' cultural beliefs.
- 5) Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): the ability to evaluate cultural perspectives, practices and products on the basis of explicit criteria

This model has inspired the category of general competences of CEFR model of overall language proficiency, listing four out of the five suggested *savoirs* as cognitive prerequisites for communication in the target language. However, some criticism towards this model such as its rather static and nationalistic concept of culture, the promotion of classroom interaction between language learners and native English speakers, and the prefix "inter-" carrying the inherent implication of separation between cultures led to the development of more integrative and holistic approaches to culture in language learning (Hoff 2020; Galante 2025; Runnels 2021). One of these is the concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC).

The contemporary preference for the terms plurilingual and pluricultural over terms including prefixes “inter” and “bi”, especially bilingual, is a matter of significance. It represents a paradigm shift in language education wherein knowledge of languages and cultures are seen as part of an individual’s unique, holistic repertoire, dynamic and interrelated rather than static and compartmentalised (Galante 2025). The prefix “pluri” more accurately captures the plurality, complexity and hybridity of the constructs of culture and language in language education and real-world communicative situations (Coste et al 1997; Runnels 2021). This is not to be confused with multilingual and multicultural which also refer to the plurality of languages and cultures, but simply entail the coexistence of different languages or cultures in an environment (Council of Europe 2020). While environments may be multicultural, individuals can be described as pluricultural.

According to the Council of Europe (2001:168), PPC is defined as the ability to “use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures”. Importantly, it is not considered a sum of separate competences, but a single composite competence interconnecting all linguistic and cultural knowledge that individuals draw upon strategically. It is a lifelong, evolving competence which begins before and continues to develop outside of formal schooling (through family interaction, generational knowledge, travel, migration, etc.). It is the view of the CEFR (2001) that the role of schools in developing learners’ PPC is to help them build an initial, varied plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire and develop greater awareness of and confidence in their competence. Repertoire refers to the collection of linguistic and cultural resources a person has; competence is the ability to mobilise that repertoire in communication (Beacco et al. 2016).

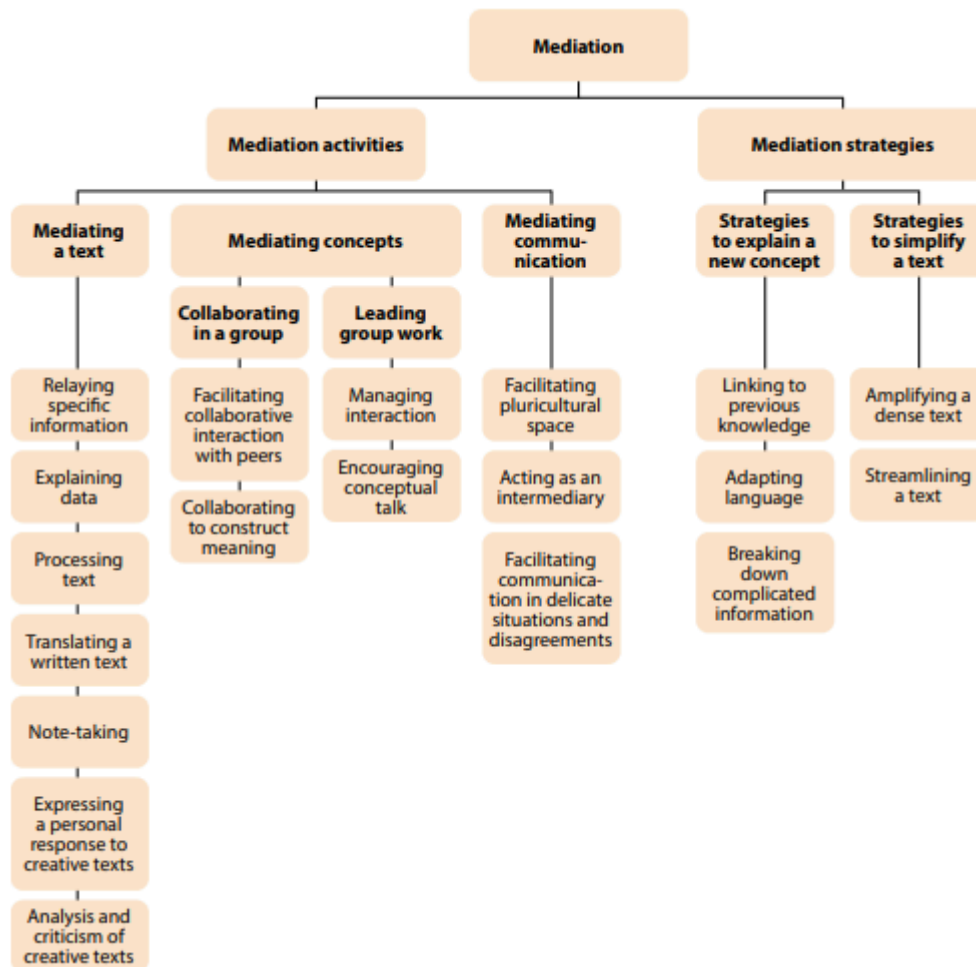
A notable challenge when attempting to examine pluricultural competence in isolation in the CEFR and the CV is that pluricultural competence is always dealt with alongside plurilingual competence and the relationship between them is kept vague. The CEFR describes PPC as a linked competence, yet acknowledges that the pluricultural and plurilingual profiles are separate. Separate descriptors also exist for the constructs of plurilingualism (Building on plurilingual repertoire and Plurilingual comprehension) and pluriculturalism (Building on pluricultural repertoire and Facilitating Pluricultural space) in the CV. Runnels (2021) theorises this lack of specificity is deliberate, reflecting the CEFR's descriptive (not prescriptive) nature, and is intended to give educators and institutions the flexibility to interpret and apply the framework according to their contexts. Nevertheless, the ambiguity on how pluricultural competence is defined and how it connects to other competences (for example, to general competences or to the similarly named intercultural competence) within the CEFR framework makes practical implementation challenging.

In their *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education*, Beacco et al. (2016) clarify pluriculturality as the ability to participate in different cultures and interculturality as the ability to experience, analyse and benefit from otherness and diversity, thereby developing intercultural competence which helps individuals to understand otherness. Similarly, in Runnels' (2021) interpretation of the CEFR, the notion of intercultural competence is included in the higher-order construct of pluriculturalism with interculturality representing an aspect of an overall pluricultural repertoire. Therefore, it can be said that interculturality and intercultural competence are aspects included in the broader, overarching notion of pluriculturalism.

Pluriculturalism is explicitly addressed through two main descriptor scales in the CV (2020). The first is the scale "facilitating pluricultural space" (see Figure 2), which is classified under mediation activities along with "acting as an intermediary" and "facilitating

communication in delicate situations and disagreements. Mediation refers to the learner's role as a social agent who helps build understanding and convey meaning (Council of Europe, 2020).

Figure 2. Mediation activities and strategies (Council of Europe 2020:90)



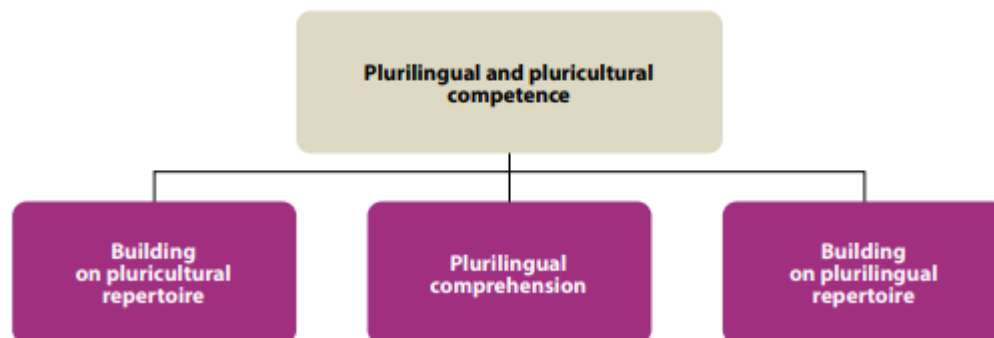
The ability to facilitate pluricultural space focuses on the user as an intercultural mediator – someone who can help create an inclusive, shared environment between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate and collaborate effectively (Council of Europe 2020). Activities aligned with this scale include asking questions to express and promote interest in other cultures, showing sensitivity and respect towards individuals from other cultures, and anticipating and addressing misunderstandings that may

arise from cultural differences (European Centre for Modern Languages 2024). Detailed descriptors of this scale for all levels are provided in Appendix 1.

The A1 and A2 levels of facilitating pluricultural space include using simple words and non-verbal signals to show a welcoming attitude and facilitate basic interactions like thanking, inviting and asking for clarification in an intercultural exchange. At the B1 level, the user can engage more actively in intercultural exchanges, beginning to recognise and respond to different values and worldviews using a limited repertoire. At the B2 level, users can manage intercultural communication more independently by clarifying misunderstandings, working collaboratively with people from different cultures and demonstrating appreciation for different perspectives. At the C1 level, users can mediate intercultural interaction by managing ambiguity, preventing misunderstandings and interpreting cultural perspectives with increasing sensitivity. At the highest level of C2, the user can fully integrate and guide intercultural communication, identifying subtle nuances and effectively bridging sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences (Council of Europe, 2020).

The second instance of pluriculturalism distinct from plurilingualism in the Companion Volume is on the descriptor scale “building on pluricultural repertoire” (see Figure 3), which is classified as one of three scales of overall plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC). This scale focuses on learners’ ability to use their cultural experiences and strategies in real communication. Thus, it emphasises skills rather than knowledge or attitudes and includes activities such as respecting personal space according to different cultures’ customs, understanding culturally bound gestural language or identifying and understanding misunderstandings caused by cultural differences (Council of Europe 2020; European Centre for Modern Languages 2024). Detailed descriptors of this scale for all levels can be seen in Appendix 2.

Figure 3. *Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (Council of Europe 2020:123)*



At the A-levels of building on pluricultural repertoire, users can recognise basic cultural differences in routine contexts (greetings, measurements) and act appropriately in simple interactions with limited flexibility and understanding. At the B1 level, the user can explain their own and others' cultural behaviours in simple terms, respond to common cultural cues and begin reflecting on how cultural perspectives shape interactions and perceptions. By the B2 level, the user can interpret and critically compare cultural values, behaviours and stereotypes. At the C1 level, the user can demonstrate nuanced understandings of sociolinguistic and pragmatic norms, reflect critically on cultural differences and adapt their communication style accordingly. They can explain cultural practices and values in depth using varied sources. At the highest level of C2, the user can take full control of their culturally responsive actions and communication, making subtle adjustments to prevent or repair cultural misunderstandings with precision.

Despite only the scale of “Building on pluricultural repertoire” being explicitly categorised as part of PPC, the descriptors for “Facilitating pluricultural space” align well with the notion of pluricultural competence and the CEFR acknowledges that it was categorised under mediation only due to the focus on the user’s more proactive role as an intercultural mediator. This interpretation is also supported by the CEFR Companion Volume

Implementation Toolbox (2024), which treats both scales as part of pluricultural competence. The Implementation Toolbox further clarifies the relationship between pluricultural and intercultural competence, noting that while pluricultural competence places emphasis on the individual's ability to draw on their own diverse cultural experiences, intercultural competence centers more on the interactional and communicative aspects of the situation, and defines pluricultural competence by simply omitting the plurilingual aspects from the definition of PPC by Coste et al.

While the CEFR and its CV provide valuable reference points for defining and assessing pluricultural competence, it is pertinent to note here that these descriptors have been developed with adult learners in mind. The levels of cognitive, emotional and social development of children and adolescents differs significantly from that of adults, which can affect how learners understand and demonstrate pluricultural skills in practice. Consequently, applying CEFR descriptors directly to younger learners without adaptation may not be appropriate. Instead, teachers working with children or early adolescents must carefully interpret and adapt the descriptors to suit their learners' developmental stage. This may include simplifying the language of descriptors, narrowing the expected scope of skills, or focusing more on foundational awareness and respectful behaviour rather than critical reflection. Nonetheless, the CEFR descriptors remain a useful starting point for planning and assessing pluricultural learning, as they offer clear, structured guidance on the kinds of competences learners may gradually develop.

For the purposes of the present thesis, pluricultural competence is defined as the ability of the language user to facilitate and take part in communication with people from different cultural backgrounds by drawing on their knowledge and experience of several cultures, best operationalised and assessed by the descriptors for the scales "Facilitating pluricultural space" and "Building on pluricultural repertoire". With a working definition and

descriptors established, the next challenge is determining how to design practical, pedagogically sound materials that can support the development of this competence in the foreign language classroom.

### **1.3. Designing CEFR-informed Pluricultural Language Teaching Materials**

The preceding sections explored the centrality of culture in foreign language education and clarified the concept of pluricultural competence as a key competence in equipping learners for communication in culturally diverse contexts. The next challenge lies in understanding how to intentionally and meaningfully support the development of learners' pluricultural competence in foreign language lessons. Despite its increasing prominence in policy documents, pluricultural competence remains underrepresented in classroom practice. In much of the existing literature, plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) are treated as a combined construct with greater emphasis typically placed on the plurilingual dimension. As a result, practical materials and pedagogical models that specifically deal with the development of pluricultural competence remain limited.

One of the few scholars to offer practical pedagogical resources for realising the CEFR's pluricultural vision in schools is Judith Runnels. Her *Pluricultural Language Education and the CEFR* (2021) is a large-scale volume with recommendations and instructions for educational institutions and decision-making stakeholders to implement a CEFR-informed Pluricultural Language Education (PLE) curriculum. The PLE approach aims to develop language learners' awareness of diversity, understanding of the role perspective plays in communication and the ability to navigate and mediate cultural differences effectively (Runnels 2021). While reforming and designing an institution-wide pluricultural curriculum is too ambitious for a single practitioner, the volume also contains practical insights into creating smaller-scale learning materials aligned with the aims of PLE.

In her review of existing language learning resources, Runnels (2021) notes that very few materials explicitly target pluricultural competence, and those that do are often aimed at teacher training rather than immediate classroom use. Nevertheless, she defined three essential components for effective pluricultural learning activities in her analysis: knowledge of diversity, awareness of perspective and reflective activities. She stresses the importance of implementing activities in the classroom that explore both the universality and diversity of cultural behaviours and perspectives, promote bi-directional reflection (wherein learners consider how they perceive others and how they might be perceived in return) and integrate elements of autonomous learning, such as self-assessment, portfolios, learning cycles, and learning-oriented assessment.

To support practical implementation of pluricultural activities, Runnels (2021) used a model that supplements existing coursebooks with additional pluricultural activities by utilising CEFR descriptors (Council of Europe 2020) as learning objectives and CEFR (2001) sociocultural topics as a guide for subject matter. In a case study conducted in an Australian adult language programme, she designed supplementary pluricultural activities for a grammar-based textbook with a task-based, culturally focused and reflective approach which included self assessment. The resulting material consisted of:

- Clearly defined CEFR-aligned learning aims for the course and each lesson.
- A contextualised self-assessment battery the course and each lesson.
- A culturally focused activity to be completed in class, linked to the lesson content and, if possible, the textbook
- A culturally focused reflective activity.
- (Optionally) links to self-access materials for independent exploration.

Runnels (2021) emphasises that the scope of CEFR-informed pluricultural initiatives must be aligned with context-specific conditions. While system-wide reform may be

unrealistic for individual educators, meaningful change is still possible through targeted material development. She encourages teachers to start small, by creating or adapting materials that reflect the values of PLE, engage learners in culturally meaningful communication, and use CEFR descriptors as flexible, adaptable tools. Crucially, she argues that collaboration, reflection, and feedback are key to successful and sustainable innovation in pluricultural teaching. Runnels' planning model is reinforced by Galante (2025), who similarly advocates for the integration of CEFR descriptors into activities involving mediation and intercultural communication, suggesting to use CEFR descriptors to define learning outcomes first, followed by the design of appropriate materials and activities. Like Runnels, Galante highlights the need to adapt descriptors to local classroom realities.

Building on the theoretical foundations discussed in the first chapter, the following chapter will outline the practical application of these concepts to design supplementary pluricultural teaching materials. Drawing on CEFR-aligned descriptors and sociocultural topics, and guided by the principles of Runnels' CEFR-informed Pluricultural Language Education model, Chapter 2 describes the process of creating classroom-ready activities that aim to develop pluricultural competence in sixth-grade EFL learners.

## **2. CREATING TEACHING MATERIALS**

The aim of this thesis is to design teaching materials and learning activities to supplement the English coursebook *Academy Stars Level 6* that allows all students – regardless of their cultural or linguistic background – to reflect on and discuss their cultural background in English, supporting the development of their pluricultural competence. The prepared materials are intended for sixth grade learners, designed to be a stepping stone to more abstract concepts like culture in preparation for the next stage of their education. The second chapter includes sections that describe the target group for the created learning activities, provide a brief overview of created materials, clarify the method used for creating the activities, analyse the process and principles of creating the activities and a discussion of the key points and limitations of the thesis. The finalised version of the supplementary material sets are provided in the appendices. Each supplementary set includes student worksheets and an accompanying teacher’s manual, as well as any other necessary material for completion of the activities.

### **2.1. Target group**

The supplementary learning activities developed in this thesis are intended for 6th grade learners (aged 11-12) of English as a foreign language from culturally diverse backgrounds in an Estonian school. The learner group is culturally diverse and comprises 14 students from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. According to the national foreign language curriculum of Estonia, students completing the second stage of basic education (grade 6) are expected to achieve A2-level proficiency in their A foreign language, in this case, English (Riigiteataja 2023b). This informed the selection of linguistic input,

activity complexity, and cognitive demands of the materials. While no formal diagnostic tools were used to assess the learners' pluricultural competence, I estimated their approximate level to be at the A2 level based on my classroom observation and informal assessment of students' intercultural awareness and communicative behaviours. Finally, the selection of *Academy Stars Level 6* (Elsworth & Rose 2017) as the base for supplementary activities was determined due to its current use in the target learning environment as required by the school's curriculum.

## **2.2. Method**

The two most influential frameworks in guiding the development of supplementary materials were the Companion Volume's (2020) conceptualisation of pluricultural competences and Judith Runnel's

The development of the student worksheets and teacher manuals began with consulting the CEFR's (2001) list of sociocultural topics (see Appendix 4) for idea-generation to identify connections to the topics in the coursebook *Academy Stars 6*. The CV's (2020) scales of facilitating pluricultural space and building on pluricultural repertoire provided input both for the pluricultural learning objectives and student self-assessment statements.

As the learners' current pluricultural competence level is estimated to be A2, the B1 level of descriptors from both pluricultural competence scales were chosen as learning objectives (see Table 1). These descriptors were chosen to offer an appropriate level of challenge to learners. However, as no formal diagnostic tools were used to assess the learners' pluricultural competence, the selection of descriptors was based on the teacher's general impressions and observations of the learners' behaviour and communication in class. To address this limitation, descriptors were considered individually, and careful judgment was applied to ensure that each one was realistic and appropriate for the target group's age,

language level, and experience. It was also acknowledged that pluricultural competence develops unevenly, and learners cannot be expected to meet all B1 descriptors at the same time or to the same extent. This is mitigated by the incorporation of simple self-assessment instead of teacher-assessment, but still important to consider when carrying out the activities with a real class.

*Table 1. B1-level Pluricultural Competence Descriptors (adapted from Council of Europe 2020)*

<b>B1 Pluricultural Competence Descriptors</b>	
Facilitating pluricultural space	Can initiate conversation and show empathy with simple questions, expressing agreement and understanding.
	Can act supportively in intercultural encounters, recognising feelings and different worldviews.
	Can support exchanges with a limited repertoire, showing awareness of cultural differences.
	Can exchange simple information about values and attitudes to language and culture.
Building on pluricultural repertoire	Can generally act according to conventions regarding posture, eye contact and distance from others.
	Can generally respond appropriately to the most commonly used cultural cues.
	Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture.
	Can explain in simple terms how their own values and behaviours influence their views of other people's values and behaviours.
	Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look "strange" to them in another sociocultural context may well be "normal" for the other people concerned.

	Can discuss in simple terms the way their own culturally determined actions may be perceived differently by people from other cultures.
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Analysis of different combinations of sociocultural topics in the CEFR (2001) and the multitude of potential descriptors informed subject matter of the materials. This process is described in more detail in section 2.4. *Analysis*. The structure and overall content of the material set was based on the suggestions of Runnels (2021), which were adapted to fit this learning context. Each student worksheet consists of 1) a self-assessment section to be completed both pre- and post-activities, 2) 1-2 culturally focused activities, 3) a culturally reflective activity. Learning objectives for the activities are included in corresponding teacher manuals, as well as the estimated time to complete each activity and how to carry them out in the classroom. In the scope of designing the materials, the decision to focus on learning objectives rather than learning outcomes was based on the practical consideration that learning objectives can be more directly aligned with the Companion Volume's (2020) "can do" descriptors which serve as a guiding framework for activity design and learner self-assessment throughout the materials.

### 2.3. Framework for material development

The teaching materials created as part of this project intend to supplement the coursebook *Academy Stars 6* (Elsworth & Rose 2017), which is part of a comprehensive seven-level British English course designed for learners from CEFR level Pre-A1 to A2+. Level 6 is the final coursebook of the series. The content of the coursebook is presented in only the target language of English, not relying on the use of a learner's first language, which makes it a useful resource for teaching students who may not have a common first language.

The aim of the materials is to supplement this specific coursebook, but the topics remain flexible and adaptable enough to use them with other coursebooks as well. The coursebook consists of 10 different units: Unit 1: Life in the wild, Unit 2: Inspiring ideas, Unit 3: Senses, Unit 4: Get involved!, Unit 5: Travel adventures, Unit 6: Sell, sell, sell!, Unit 7: Winning ways, Unit 8: In cyberspace, Unit 9: Fun with films and Unit 10: A brighter future. Each unit includes an associated section of vocabulary, grammar points (see Appendix 3 for details), as well as activities related to language in use, reading, listening, writing, speaking and learning skills. These are intended to be focused on in the scope of “core lessons” preceding the use of each activity set supplementing the unit and are not focused on in this thesis. However, the vocabulary and grammar skills covered in the units support students in their completion of activities in the supplementary materials.

The selection of units for supplementation was guided by their thematic compatibility with the CEFR’s (2001) list of sociocultural topics (see Appendix 4). In total, five supplementary material sets were developed: one introductory worksheet to introduce the concept of culture, and four additional worksheets linked to the themes of Units 1, 3, 5, and 7. These were selected based on their potential to support meaningful intercultural engagement and learner reflection on cultural diversity. The development process was guided by the principles laid out in Runnels (2021), with particular focus on applying the *facilitating pluricultural space* and *building on pluricultural repertoire* scales from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020). This thesis represents an initial step in applying these pluricultural competence descriptors to supplement mainstream EFL materials in Estonian classrooms. In the future, once the materials have been piloted and evaluated in classroom settings, the same development principles could be applied to create additional worksheets for the remaining units in the coursebook.

The materials students engage with (such as videos, short texts and images) were intentionally kept linguistically and conceptually accessible to ensure they are suitable to be used with as many different student groups as possible whose linguistic and cognitive levels may vary. The activities themselves are designed to allow flexible language production: learners are encouraged to express their thoughts using the language they are comfortable with. There are no fixed expectations regarding text length or language forms, for example, as the focus of the activities is strictly on developing learners' pluricultural competence. Vocabulary and grammar practice should continue to take place in the core coursebook lessons, allowing the following supplementary activities to focus on cultural reflection.

Self-assessment sections are included in each worksheet, the first one to be completed by learners before completing any activities and the second to be completed after all activities have been completed. The self-assessment statements are simplified and personalised, student-friendly statements derived from the relevant CEFR descriptors.

#### **2.4. Overview of developed materials**

Five sets of supplementary materials have been created to support the development of 6th-grade learners' pluricultural competence through age-appropriate, CEFR-informed, and reflective classroom activities. Each set consists of a student worksheet and accompanying teacher manual. The student worksheets include pre- and post-activity self-assessment sections, a culturally focused activity and a culturally reflective activity designed to deepen learners' understanding of their own and others' cultural backgrounds. The teacher manuals outline clear learning objectives, provide estimated timings for each activity, describe the target group, and include information on accessing any additional materials required. In addition, Material Set 5 includes a reading text with comprehension questions for students' to work through as homework.

**Supplementary material set 1: What is Culture?** (See Appendix 5). The first supplementary material set is stand-alone from the units of the book. This worksheet should be completed before moving on to any following worksheet as it is intended to introduce students to the concept of culture before engaging in any kind of unit-linked pluricultural activities. Learners explore how culture includes not only nationality or language but also values, traditions, and behaviours. By reflecting on their own cultural backgrounds and discussing them with peers, students are encouraged to develop curiosity, empathy, and a more nuanced understanding of cultural identity. Activities include a video-based gap-fill task, a video-based list-writing exercise on elements of culture, personal sentence completions to explore cultural identity, and partner discussion followed by reflection questions.

**Supplementary material set 2: Nature in my Culture** (See Appendix 6). The second supplementary material set (see Appendix 5) intends to supplement the first unit of the course book, *Life in the Wild*. The unit and the supplementary material focuses on the topic of natural wildlife and nature conservation. The activities in the supplementary material set guide students to self-assess their skills in intercultural communication on the topic of animals and nature, introduce the role of nature in their culture to classmates and discuss it, encouraging learners to reflect on the meaning of animals and nature in different cultures. Activities include a personal writing task where students describe the role of nature or animals in their culture, followed by peer interviews and class discussion.

**Supplementary material set 3: A Special Dish.** (See Appendix 7) This set encourages learners to reflect on the cultural meaning of food. Students complete a guided writing activity about a culturally significant dish, including where it is from, when it is eaten, and why it is important. They then interact with classmates to learn about different dishes, ask questions, and reflect on cultural similarities and differences. The activity

promotes intercultural curiosity and comparison, helping students understand how values and traditions can be expressed through food practices around the world.

**Supplementary material set 4: Body Language Around the World.** (See Appendix 8) This worksheet explores the concept of body language (such as gestures and facial expressions) in different parts of the world. Students learn that non-verbal communication can be interpreted differently depending on cultural context. The worksheet includes a listening activity and a creative pair activity in which students use culturally specific gestures in a roleplay, fostering awareness and respect for non-verbal intercultural differences.

**Supplementary material set 5: Sports Around the Globe.** (See Appendix 9) This final material set includes a short reading text and comprehension questions assigned as homework to introduce the topic. In class, students engage in small group discussions about sports that are culturally important to them and collaboratively complete a table comparing sports across cultures. They then share their findings and reflect on how sports can express cultural values such as teamwork, discipline, and celebration. The activities highlight how sports can both reflect and bridge cultural identities.

Taken together, these five sets of materials share common design principles: they are all informed by CEFR descriptors, structured to promote deeper cultural reflection, and grounded in real-world sociocultural themes that are both accessible, relatable and meaningful to 6th-grade learners. The activities involved encourage learners to draw on their own cultural experiences while developing awareness of others, increasing inclusive dialogue and intercultural sensitivity in the language classroom. Through a combination of self-assessment, cultural comparison and collaborative activities, these materials aim to support the development of pluricultural competence as an integral component of English language learning.

## 2.5. Analysis of material development

In determining subject matter and focus for the supplementary materials for the coursebook, I first followed Runnels' (2021) suggestion for designing pluricultural education materials and began by consulting the CEFR's (2001) list of sociocultural topics for idea-generation. All sociocultural topics listed in the CEFR can be seen in Appendix 4. My main goal was to find themes that were both culturally meaningful and age-appropriate for sixth-grade learners – topics they could relate to and find engaging, but that also had enough depth to encourage reflection. The aim was to find topics to connect naturally with the existing content in the coursebook *Academy Stars Level 6*, so that the materials would feel like a logical extension of what was already being taught.

The first such connection emerged between *Unit 1: Life in the Wild*, which focuses on wildlife and conservation topics and the sociocultural topic of *Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes*. At first glance, this unit might seem mostly scientific, but attitudes toward nature and conservation differ across cultures and are often shaped by deeply held beliefs, traditions, or religious values. Moreover, the topic resonates with the cross-curricular theme of environmental and sustainable development in the national curriculum of Estonia (Riigiteataja 2023a), strengthening its pedagogical and curricular relevance. This unit thus provides a meaningful opportunity to encourage learners to reflect on both personal and cultural perspectives regarding the natural world.

*Unit 3: Senses* focuses on human senses and involves descriptive language structures such as “tastes like”, “smells like” and “looks like”, which naturally invite discussion of culturally significant sensory experiences. To build on this, the topic *Food and Drink of Everyday Living* was selected. This topic offers a tangible and age-appropriate context through which learners can use the target language while reflecting on their own and others' culinary traditions. Food is a universally shared yet culturally distinctive practice that lends

itself well to intercultural comparison. Through the sharing of food-related customs and meanings, students are invited to explore how cultural identity is expressed through everyday practices, thereby deepening their awareness of both self and others.

*Unit 5: Travel Adventures* is thematically closely linked to cultural exploration, yet the vocabulary focus on adventurous activities initially offered few direct connections to the CEFR's sociocultural topics or to pluricultural competence. However, because the unit includes content related to international travel, the topic of *Body Language* emerged as a productive angle for intercultural learning. Non-verbal communication varies significantly across cultures and plays a critical role in how messages are conveyed and interpreted. Gestures, eye contact and spatial norms are often culturally specific, and misunderstandings in these areas are common in intercultural encounters. This makes body language a meaningful and practical focus for developing pluricultural awareness within the context of this unit.

The theme of sports, featured in *Unit 7: Winning Ways*, naturally aligns with the CEFR's *Everyday Living* sub-topic of Leisure Activities. Sports are a widespread social practice that often carry cultural significance and reflect shared cultural values such as teamwork, competition, discipline and celebration. This enables discussion around the ways national or regional identity may be expressed through sporting practices. The topic also presents an accessible platform for learners to articulate their own experiences while engaging with alternative perspectives, a process that supports the development of both cultural self-awareness and intercultural openness.

During the development process, it also became clear that a vital prerequisite for all subsequent worksheets had been overlooked: a shared understanding of the concept of *culture* itself. While later materials invited learners to reflect on specific cultural features and topics (such as food, role of nature, body language, and sport), none of these can be meaningfully

explored without first equipping learners with the conceptual tools to identify, articulate and examine their own cultural identities. This insight led to the development of a stand-alone introductory worksheet, designed to precede the unit-specific materials. This worksheet introduces the broader and more inclusive definition of culture adopted in this thesis – one that moves beyond national and linguistic identity to include shared practices, values, beliefs, and behaviours. Overall, the process of topic selection was informed by both theoretical models and practical classroom realities and aimed to balance alignment of sociocultural topics, curricular relevance and learner interest.

Once the topics of the supplementary materials were decided upon, descriptors were chosen from the Companion Volume’s (2020) scales of facilitating pluricultural space and building on pluricultural repertoire (both seen as scales of pluricultural competence in this thesis) that could be suitable to the topics. These descriptors provided both the learning objectives and the communicative functions that each activity was designed to support. The connections between coursebook units, sociocultural topics, pluricultural competence descriptors and CEFR-informed contextualised, simplified learning objectives can be seen in Table 2.

*Table 2. Connections between coursebook units, sociocultural topics, pluricultural competence descriptors and learning objectives for supplementary activities*

Academy Stars 6 Unit Titles	Sociocultural topics (CEFR 2001)	Applicable B1 pluricultural competence descriptors	Contextualised learning objectives
<i>None (Stand-alone introductory activity set)</i>	Everyday living Values, beliefs and attitudes (tradition) Social conventions	- Can exchange simple information about values and attitudes to language and culture - Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the	What is Culture? - Can name simple elements that make up a person’s culture and give examples from their own. - Can understand that

		<p>other culture to members of their own culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can support exchanges with a limited repertoire, showing awareness of cultural differences.</li> </ul>	<p>people can belong to more than one culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can share basic personal information about language(s) spoken at home, family origins, or cultural preferences, and ask classmates about theirs.</li> <li>- Can describe their own cultural background (e.g., where they were born, what culture they feel connected to, what language they speak at home) to classmates from different backgrounds.</li> <li>- Can ask questions and listen respectfully when classmates talk about their cultures.</li> </ul>
<p>Unit 1: Life in the wild (broad topic: wildlife and conservation)</p>	<p>Values, beliefs and attitudes (tradition, symbols)</p> <p>Social conventions (behavioural conventions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can act supportively in intercultural encounters, recognising feelings and different worldviews.</li> <li>- Can exchange simple information about values and attitudes to language and culture.</li> <li>- Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture.</li> </ul>	<p>Nature in My Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can describe an animal, place, or nature-related tradition that is important in their culture in English.</li> <li>- Can listen respectfully to classmates from different backgrounds and show understanding of their views about nature and animals.</li> <li>- Can share simple ideas about how their culture or community values and cares for nature.</li> </ul>
<p>Unit 3: Senses (broad topic: describing things)</p>	<p>Everyday living (Food and drink)</p> <p>Social conventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture.</li> </ul>	<p>A Special Dish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can describe a dish that is important in their culture and explain its meaning and connection</li> </ul>

through senses)	Ritual behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can support communication across cultures by initiating conversation, showing interest and empathy by asking and answering simple questions, and expressing agreement and understanding.</li> <li>- Can help develop a shared communication culture, by exchanging information in a simple way about values and attitudes to language and culture.</li> </ul>	<p>to traditions, celebrations, or values to classmates from other backgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can ask classmates simple questions about their cultural dish and show interest or agreement during the conversation.</li> <li>- Can take part in short conversations about food traditions using familiar language, while showing awareness that dishes may have different meanings in different cultures</li> </ul>
Unit 5: Travel adventures (broad topic: adventurous activities)	Body language Social conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture.</li> <li>- Can generally respond appropriately to the most commonly used cultural cues.</li> <li>- Can support exchanges with a limited repertoire, showing awareness of cultural differences.</li> <li>- Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look “strange” to them in another sociocultural context may well be “normal” for the other people concerned</li> </ul>	<p>Body Language Around the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can describe how people in different cultures express respect, agreement, or emotion through body language.</li> <li>- Can participate in short exchanges using culturally specific non-verbal communication.</li> <li>- Can talk about how gestures that seem unusual or confusing at first may be completely normal in another culture, and reflect on why this matters.</li> </ul>
Unit 7: Winning ways (broad topic: sports)	Everyday living (leisure activities) Interpersonal relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can initiate conversation and show empathy with simple questions, expressing agreement and understanding.</li> <li>- Can support exchanges</li> </ul>	<p>Sports Around the Globe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can describe a sport that is important in their culture and explain why</li> </ul>

	<p>Values, beliefs and attitudes</p> <p>Ritual behaviour (audience/spectator or behaviour)</p>	<p>with a limited repertoire, showing awareness of cultural differences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can exchange simple information about values and attitudes to language and culture.</li> <li>- Can discuss in simple terms the way their own culturally determined actions may be perceived differently by people from other cultures.</li> </ul>	<p>people enjoy it or how it is celebrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can explain how a sport in their culture shows values like teamwork, discipline, or celebration and compare this with others.</li> <li>- Can ask classmates polite questions about sports in their cultures and respond with interest and understanding.</li> <li>- Can reflect on how people from other countries might see their sport or sporting traditions differently.</li> </ul>
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The structure of the content of the worksheets was inspired by Runnells' (2021) reform for supplementing textbook-based curricula with pluricultural objectives. However, certain modifications were made.

Due to the age of the target group of learners (aged 11-12), CEFR-aligned learning objectives were not included in the student worksheet as this offers little to no practical value to them. Instead, the contextualised learning objectives were simplified further into straight-forward personal can-do statements. For example, in the worksheet A Special Dish, the learning objective "Can describe a dish that is important in their culture and explain its meaning and connection to traditions, celebrations, or values to classmates from other backgrounds" is converted into the self-assessment statement: "I can describe a dish from my culture and say why it is special." The statements are assessed on a simple 3-point scale: 1 = I need a lot more practice. 2 = I can do this a little. 3 = I can do this well.

Once the learning objectives of each supplementary set were established, the cultural and reflective activities of the worksheets were planned according to the topic and learning objectives. Each worksheet includes one or more culturally focused activities and a follow-up reflection activity. The reflection questions encourage learners to reflect on their cultural background, their knowledge of others' cultural background and encourages intercultural dialogue. After completing both the culturally focused activity (or activities) and reflective activity, students should complete the post-activity self-assessment section as well.

## **2.6. Discussion**

This thesis set out to design five sets of supplementary materials to support the development of pluricultural competence among sixth-grade EFL learners. Each set includes a student worksheet and a corresponding teacher manual, designed to be used in connection with specific units in the *Academy Stars 6* coursebook. However, the universal nature of the selected topics (such as culture, food, body language, and sport) means that the materials can be readily adapted to suit other coursebooks and instructional contexts. This flexibility enhances their potential usability beyond the immediate classroom in which they were designed.

The nature of these activities as supplementary carries the implication that they are optional, which presents both advantages and limitations. While this format allows teachers to integrate them flexibly depending on the learning context, it also raises the risk that pluricultural education may remain peripheral rather than central to the curriculum. In order to fully realise the CEFR's pluricultural vision (Council of Europe 2020), broader systemic support would be necessary. This would include curriculum reform and collaboration across subject areas, ensuring that pluricultural learning is embedded throughout the school

experience. Such institutional changes, however, fall outside the scope of what a single practitioner can achieve within one classroom context.

A key feature of the designed materials is the inclusion of pre- and post-activity self-assessment sections based on adapted CEFR descriptors. These are intended to support both learner reflection and teacher insight into students' developing pluricultural competence. However, for this component to be truly effective, learners need a certain level of metacognitive awareness and confidence in self-evaluation. As this thesis did not involve pre-assessment of learners' existing pluricultural repertoires, the activities assume a foundational level of intercultural awareness that may not yet be fully established. In future applications, it would be beneficial to introduce structured tasks to help learners identify and articulate their pluricultural experiences from the outset.

While assigning formal grades to pluricultural activities is not recommended as they are meant to supplement rather than replace the coursebook's core language-learning goals, teachers can analyse self-assessment responses to monitor learners' progress. These reflections can be used for both informing future material design and for helping learners become more aware of their own development. Over time, as learners feel more comfortable with assessing their own progress, the self-assessment statements could be expanded to include prompts that help students draw conclusions about their progress and set their own goals for further development.

As the present thesis involves the initial design and creation of supplementary activities, the materials should be piloted in a real classroom environment to evaluate their practicality and impact. Feedback from both learners and teachers would be essential for refining the content, improving scaffolding, and ensuring that activities are developmentally appropriate and engaging. Additionally, observing how students interact with the materials

and how effectively they use the self-assessment tools would help determine whether further support or training is required for successful implementation.

## CONCLUSION

The present thesis set out to address the practical challenge of integrating aspects of pluricultural competence into English language lessons. Despite increasing emphasis on pluricultural competence in policy frameworks such as the CEFR and its Companion Volume (2020), classroom implementation remains rather limited. Recognising a lack of classroom-ready materials that meaningfully support cultural reflection and intercultural dialogue, particularly for younger learners, the thesis aimed to design a set of supplementary activities aligned with CEFR Companion Volume (2020) descriptors for pluricultural competence.

The first chapter examined the theoretical foundations of pluricultural competence, clarifying its distinction from related concepts such as intercultural and plurilingual competence. Drawing on frameworks from Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993), and the CEFR/CV, the literature review established the importance of viewing language education as inherently cultural and the need to prepare learners for real-life communication in culturally diverse settings. The CEFR's pluricultural descriptors were analysed in detail, with particular attention to the scales "Facilitating pluricultural space" and "Building on pluricultural repertoire."

The second chapter described the process of designing five supplementary material sets to accompany selected units of the coursebook *Academy Stars 6*. The materials were tailored for a culturally diverse sixth-grade EFL class in Estonia and were based on sociocultural topics from the CEFR and relevant descriptors for pluricultural competence at the B1 level. Each worksheet included pre- and post-activity self-assessment sections,

culturally focused activities, and a reflective activity, all aimed at encouraging learners to explore their own cultural background and learn about those of their peers.

The analysis demonstrated how coursebook topics were linked to meaningful sociocultural themes such as food, body language, nature, and sport. These connections were used to design activities that were developmentally appropriate, linguistically accessible and culturally engaging. The discussion acknowledged both the potential and the limitations of the materials: while they provide a useful tool for promoting pluricultural awareness, broader curricular changes and teacher training would be needed to fully embed pluricultural competence into mainstream EFL education.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the emerging field of pluricultural language education by offering practical materials grounded in theory and responsive to a real classroom context. It shows that even small, targeted interventions can promote reflection, empathy, and dialogue in culturally diverse classrooms. Future work should focus on piloting the materials, collecting feedback, and expanding the approach to additional coursebook units and classroom contexts.

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## APPENDIX 1: Descriptors of the scale “Facilitating Pluricultural Space”

*Descriptors of the scale “Facilitating Pluricultural Space” (Council of Europe, 2020:114-115)*

Facilitating Pluricultural Space	
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can mediate effectively and naturally between members of their own and other communities, taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.</li> <li>- Can guide a sensitive discussion effectively, identifying nuances and undercurrents.</li> </ul>
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can act as a mediator in intercultural encounters, contributing to a shared communication culture by managing ambiguity, offering advice and support, and heading off misunderstandings.</li> <li>- Can anticipate how people might misunderstand what has been said or written and can help maintain positive interaction by commenting on and interpreting different cultural perspectives on the issue concerned.</li> </ul>
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can exploit knowledge of sociocultural conventions to establish a consensus in unfamiliar situations.</li> <li>- Can demonstrate appreciation of different perspectives and express themselves appropriately.</li> <li>- Can clarify misunderstandings during intercultural encounters.</li> <li>- Can encourage shared communication culture by expressing understanding and inviting contributions.</li> <li>- Can work collaboratively across cultures, discussing differences.</li> <li>- Can adapt working methods to create shared procedures.</li> </ul>
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can initiate conversation and show empathy with simple questions, expressing agreement and understanding.</li> <li>- Can act supportively in intercultural encounters, recognising feelings and different worldviews.</li> <li>- Can support exchanges with a limited repertoire, showing awareness of cultural differences.</li> <li>- Can exchange simple information about values and attitudes to language and culture.</li> </ul>
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can use simple words/signs to ask for clarification, express agreement, invite, thank, etc., during intercultural exchanges.</li> </ul>

A1	- Can facilitate exchange using simple words/signs and non-verbal signals, show welcoming attitude, invite contributions, and indicate understanding.
Pre-A1	- No descriptors available.

## APPENDIX 2: Descriptors of the scale “Building on Pluricultural Repertoire”

*Descriptors of the scale “Building on Pluricultural Repertoire” (Council of Europe, 2020:125)*

Building on Pluricultural Repertoire	
C2	- Can initiate and control their actions and forms of expression according to context, showing awareness of cultural differences and making subtle adjustments in order to prevent and/or repair misunderstandings and cultural incidents,
C1	- Can identify differences in sociolinguistic/-pragmatic conventions, critically reflect on them and adjust their communication accordingly. - Can sensitively explain the background to and interpret and discuss aspects of cultural values and practices drawing on intercultural encounters, reading, film, etc. - Can deal with ambiguity in cross-cultural communication and express their reactions constructively and culturally appropriately in order to bring clarity.
B2	- Can describe and evaluate the viewpoints and practices of their own and other social groups, showing awareness of the implicit values on which judgments and prejudices are frequently based. - Can explain their interpretation of the cultural assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices of their own community and of other communities that they are familiar with. - Can interpret and explain a document or event from another culture and relate it to documents or events from their own culture(s) and/or from cultures with which they are familiar. - Can discuss the objectivity and balance of information and opinions expressed in the media about their own and other communities. - Can identify and reflect on similarities and differences in culturally determined behavioural patterns (e.g. gestures and speech volume or, for sign languages, sign size) and discuss their significance in order to negotiate mutual understanding. - Can, in an intercultural encounter, recognise that what one normally takes for granted in a particular situation is not necessarily shared by others, and can react and express themselves appropriately. - Can generally interpret cultural cues appropriately in the culture concerned. - Can reflect on and explain particular ways of communicating in their own and other cultures, and the risks of misunderstanding they generate.

B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can generally act according to conventions regarding posture, eye contact and distance from others.</li> <li>- Can generally respond appropriately to the most commonly used cultural cues.</li> <li>- Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture.</li> <li>- Can explain in simple terms how their own values and behaviours influence their views of other people's values and behaviours.</li> <li>- Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look "strange" to them in another sociocultural context may well be "normal" for the other people concerned.</li> <li>- Can discuss in simple terms the way their own culturally determined actions may be perceived differently by people from other cultures.</li> </ul>
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can recognise and apply basic cultural conventions associated with everyday social exchanges (e.g. different greetings, rituals).</li> <li>- Can act appropriately in everyday greetings, farewells and expressions of thanks and apology, although they have difficulty coping with any departure from the routine.</li> <li>- Can recognise that their behaviour in an everyday transaction may convey a message different from the one they intend, and can try to explain this simply.</li> <li>- Can recognise when difficulties occur in interaction with members of other cultures, even though they may not be sure how to behave in the situation.</li> </ul>
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can recognise differing ways of numbering, measuring distance, telling the time, etc. even though they may have difficulty applying this in even simple everyday transactions of a concrete type.</li> </ul>
Pre-A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No descriptors available.</li> </ul>

### APPENDIX 3: Coursebook *Academy Stars 6 units*

*Academy Stars 6 units with accompanying vocabulary and grammar points (Elsworth & Jim Rose 2017)*

Unit	Vocabulary	Grammar
Welcome	Buildings, camping items, emergency items/events, outdoor activities, jobs	I've already written a poem. I haven't visited Egypt yet. Have you ever swum in the sea? Yes, I have.
Unit 1: Life in the wild	Wildlife and conservation; Working with words: compound nouns	Present perfect and past simple: She's taken photos since June. She took this photo last winter.
Unit 2: Inspiring ideas	Exploration; Working with words: suffixes (-ous)	Past perfect: When his mum arrived, Peter had invented a new drink.
Unit 3: Senses	Describing things; Working with words: antonyms	Modals of deduction: It can't be a banana. It may/might/could be a leaf. It may not/might not be a leaf. It must be a flower.
Unit 4: Get involved!	The environment; Working with words: synonyms	Present perfect continuous: They've been planting trees. He's been lying here since 10 o'clock.
Unit 5: Travel adventures	Adventurous activities; Working with words: prefixes (un- and in-)	Reported requests and commands: I asked you to tell me a story. I told you not to sing.
Unit 6: Sell, sell, sell!	Advertising; Working with words: alliteration	Reported speech: They said they had developed a great product. They said I could fly over the city.
Unit 7: Winning ways	Sport; Working with words: suffixes (-ness)	Reported Wh- questions: She asked me how long the race was. She asked me where I trained.
Unit 8: In cyberspace	Internet safety; Working with words: homonyms	Passive voice (past simple): My computer was hacked last night. All my exercises were stolen.
Unit 9: Fun with films	Films; Working with words: suffix (-ation)	Passive voice (present perfect): The cinema hasn't been painted. The seats haven't been delivered.

Unit 10: A brighter future	Improving the world; Working with words: similes	Second conditional: If I had my phone, I'd take a photo. If you took a photo, I wouldn't forgive you.
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## APPENDIX 4: Sociocultural topics in the CEFR

*List of sociocultural topics and features in the CEFR (adapted from CEFR 2001:102-112)*

Sociocultural topic	Examples
Everyday Living	Food and drink, meal times, table manners; public holidays; working hours and practices; leisure activities (hobbies, sports, reading habits, media)
Living Conditions	Living standards (with regional, class and ethnic variations); housing conditions; welfare arrangements
Interpersonal Relations	Class structure and relations between classes; gender and intimacy; family structures; intergenerational relations; work relations; public and official relations; race and community relations; political and religious group relations
Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes	Social class; occupational groups; wealth; regional cultures; security; institutions; tradition and change; history and iconic events; minorities; national identity; foreign peoples; politics; the arts; religion; humour
Body Language	Conventions governing body language and gestures
Social Conventions	Punctuality; presents; dress; refreshments; behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos; length of stay; leave-taking
Ritual Behaviour	Religious rites; birth, marriage, death; public audience behaviour; celebrations, festivals, dances, discos

## APPENDIX 5: Supplementary material set 1: What is Culture?

### 1. Student worksheet

#### What Is Culture?

In these activities, you will learn what “culture” means and think about what makes up your culture. You will also listen to your classmates share things about their cultures. This will help you understand yourself better and learn to appreciate the experiences of others.

#### Self-Assessment (1)

Before we begin, read each sentence and choose the number that shows how well you can do it right now:

- 1 = I need a lot more practice.
- 2 = I can do this a little.
- 3 = I can do this well.

- I can name some elements that make up culture.
- I can talk about my own cultural background in English.
- I can understand that people can belong to more than one culture.
- I can listen to my classmates and ask questions about their culture.

#### 1. Gap-Fill: What is culture?

Watch the video. Fill in the gaps with words from the video.

1. Culture is a way of \_\_\_\_\_ for a group of people.
2. Culture is made up of a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ which are pieces or parts.
3. It's kind of a collection of things that a group passes down from one \_\_\_\_\_ to the next.
4. First, we learn \_\_\_\_\_ from our parents and other grown-ups.
5. Using that language, we might hear classic stories and sing \_\_\_\_\_ songs.
6. We might also \_\_\_\_\_ the way we dress in certain clothes, eat certain foods, practice religious traditions and celebrate holidays.

7. Once you know what the elements of culture are, you'll start seeing \_\_\_\_\_ of them all over the place.

 **2. Writing activity: Elements of Culture.**

Watch the video. Write 6 elements of culture.

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____

 **3. Writing activity: Which culture(s) do I belong to?**

Your culture doesn't have to mean only the country you were born in or only the country you live in now. It matters which culture you feel the most connected to. In fact, many people belong to more than one culture! Complete the sentences below about yourself. Share with a partner.

I was born in: \_\_\_\_\_

I live in: \_\_\_\_\_

My family comes from: \_\_\_\_\_

At home, we speak: \_\_\_\_\_

I feel most connected to \_\_\_\_\_ culture.

One culture I would like to learn more about is: \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_ .

 **4. Reflection activity**

- Is it easy or hard for you to choose “your” culture? Why?
- Can people from the same country have different cultures?
- How many examples of the six elements of culture can you give from your own culture (important beliefs and values, traditions, food, and so on)?

### Self-Assessment (2)

Read each sentence again and choose how well you can do it now. This helps you see what you’ve learned and what you want to practise more.

1 = I need a lot more practice.

2 = I can do this a little.

3 = I can do this well.

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can name some elements that make up culture.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can talk about my own cultural background in English.              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand that people can belong to more than one culture.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can listen to my classmates and ask questions about their culture. |

## 2. Teacher manual

### Worksheet: What is Culture?

#### Learning objectives:

By the end of these activities, students can...

- name simple elements that make up a person's culture and give examples from their own;
- understand that people can belong to more than one culture;
- share basic personal information about language(s) spoken at home, family origins, or cultural preferences, and ask classmates about theirs;
- describe their own cultural background (e.g., where they were born, what culture they feel connected to, what language they speak at home) to classmates from different backgrounds;
- ask questions and listen respectfully when classmates talk about their cultures.

**Estimated total time:** 45 minutes

**Target group:** a culturally diverse 6th grade EFL class of 14 students at A2 level of English proficiency

**Note:** This activity set should be completed before all following activity sets.

#### Pre-activity instructions (estimated time: 5 min)

Write the word *Culture* on the board. Ask students to discuss in pairs for two minutes about what they think this term means and what kind of things are part of a person's culture to activate their previous knowledge. Write their answers on the board.

Distribute the worksheets. Read the introductory paragraph from the worksheet out loud to set the context.

#### Self-assessment (1) (estimated time: 5 min)

Guide students through the pre-activity self-assessment. Keep in mind that this might be some students' first contact with a self-assessment section. Ask them to read each sentence and choose how well they think they can do it (1 = I need a lot more practice; 2 = I can do this a little; 3 = I can do this well). Explain that the purpose of self-assessment sections is for them to track their own learning and that they will complete two of these sections in this worksheet: before completing the activities and after. Encourage them to be honest and objective in assessing themselves as this is not graded in any way.

#### 1. Gap-Fill: What is culture? (estimated time: 8 min)

Show the students the video on [this link](#) from 4:00-5:07 (relevant segment length: 1 minute and 7 seconds)

As students watch, they fill in the missing words in the gap-fill section. It may be necessary to watch twice. Go over the answers as a class. Clarify any difficult words as needed.

*Answer key:*

1. Life. 2. Elements. 3. Generation. 4. Languages. 5. Traditional. 6. Inherit. 7. examples.

#### 2. Writing activity: Elements of Culture. (estimated time: 7 min)

Show the students the same video ([timed link](#)) from 5:40-5:54. (relevant segment length: 14 seconds)

As students watch, they fill in the basic elements of culture. It may be necessary to listen twice. Go through answers as a class.

*Answer key:*

*1. Language. 2. Belief and values. 3. Traditions and celebrations. 4. Art and music. 5. Food. 6. Clothing*

**3. Writing activity: Which culture(s) do I belong to? (estimated time: 10 min)**

Guide students to read the instructions of the writing activity. Emphasize that culture is not only about the country you were born in or live in and that people can belong to more than one culture. Students complete the sentences individually. Monitor their progress and help students who seem to be struggling to “define” the culture they identify with the most. When finished, ask them to share their answers with a partner.

**4. Reflection activity (estimated time: 5 min)**

Ask students to discuss the reflection questions on the worksheet in pairs and make sure that both partners answer all three questions:

- Is it easy or hard for you to choose “your” culture? Why?
- Can people from the same country have different cultures?
- How many examples of the six elements of culture can you give from your own culture (important beliefs and values, traditions, food, and so on)?

Elicit ideas from each pair.

**Self-assessment (2) (estimated time: 5 min)**

Instruct students to read the post-activity self-assessment sentences at the end of the worksheet and write numbers reflecting their skills after completing the activities. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that it is OK if the number does not change – the goal is awareness and reflection.

## APPENDIX 6 Supplementary material set 2: Nature in My Culture

### 1. student worksheet

#### Nature in My Culture

In these activities, you will explore how people in your culture, country or community think about nature and animals. You will also learn how classmates from different backgrounds experience and protect nature. This is a chance to share your experiences and learn from others.

#### Self-Assessment (1)

Before we begin, read each sentence and choose the number that shows how well you can do it right now:

- 1 = I need a lot more practice.
- 2 = I can do this a little.
- 3 = I can do this well.

- I can talk about how people in my culture think about nature or wild animals.
- I can explain why an animal or natural place is important in my culture.
- I can understand how different cultures might treat nature in different ways.
- I can listen to others respectfully and ask questions about their culture.

#### 1. Writing activity: Nature in My Culture

Choose a prompt below. Write a paragraph to share your ideas. Share with your classmates.

1. Pick an animal that is special or symbolic in your culture. Why is it important? Is there a story or belief connected to it?
2. Is there a special place in nature (for example, a forest, river, mountain) that is important in your culture? Why?
3. What do people in your family, community or culture do to take care of nature?
4. What rules or traditions do people follow when they go into nature (like parks or forests)?

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## 2. Teacher manual

### Worksheet: Nature in My Culture

#### Learning objectives:

By the end of these activities, students can...

- describe an animal, place, or nature-related tradition that is important in their culture in English;
- listen respectfully to classmates from different backgrounds and show understanding of their views about nature and animals;
- share simple ideas about how their culture or community values and cares for nature.

**Estimated total time:** 50-55 minutes (excluding at-home writing activity; split over two lessons)

**Target group:** a culturally diverse 6th grade EFL class of 14 students at A2 level of English proficiency

(Lesson 1)

#### Pre-activity instructions (estimated time: 10 min)

This activity set should be started at the end of the Unit 1 “Life in the Wild” in *Academy Stars 6*. Read the introductory paragraph from the worksheet out loud to set the context. Emphasize that students will explore how nature is viewed in different cultures, including their own.

#### Self-assessment (1)

Guide students through the pre-activity self-assessment. Ask them to read each sentence and choose how well they think they can do it (1 = I need a lot more practice; 2 = I can do this a little; 3 = I can do this well).

#### 1. Writing activity: Nature in My Culture

Explain the writing activity.

Students should choose one of the four writing prompts. Encourage them to select one that is both interesting to them and culturally meaningful. Explain that this writing activity is to be completed at home as a short paragraph (5-8 sentences). Remind students to use full sentences.

Depending on students’ language proficiency level and writing abilities, it may be helpful to provide sentence starters. You can write a few on the board to help get them started, e.g.:

“In my culture, we believe that (animal) is important because...”

“A special place in nature is (place) because...”

“My family takes care of nature by...”

Offer additional guidance to students who need help selecting a topic or organizing their ideas.

(Lesson 2)

#### Presentation (estimated time: 25-30 min)

Invite students to present their paragraphs orally at the beginning of the next lesson.

Set expectations to the audience about listening quietly and actively and asking respectful questions at the end of the student’s presentation. Provide examples of questions on the board and encourage students to come up with their own to ask classmates:

- Why did you choose this prompt?
- Who taught you this belief/tradition/values?
- What makes this tradition or belief important to your culture?

**2. Reflection activity (estimated time: 10 min)**

Pair students to discuss the reflection questions provided on the worksheet:

- What did you learn from a classmate's presentation that surprised or interested you?
- Which ideas were similar? Which were different?
- Do you think animals or nature have the same meaning in all cultures? Why or why not?

Encourage them to explore both similarities and differences in their thoughts.

Elicit ideas from each pair. Highlight shared values (e.g. respecting animals or taking care of nature across different cultures).

**Self-assessment (2) (estimated time: 5 min)**

Instruct students to read the post-activity self-assessment sentences at the end of the worksheet and write numbers reflecting their skills after completing the activities. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that it is OK if the number does not change – the goal is awareness and reflection.

## APPENDIX 7 Supplementary material set 3: A Special Dish

### 1. Student worksheet

#### A Special Dish

In these activities, you will choose a special dish from your culture to describe. You will describe how it looks, smells, and tastes. You will also learn about dishes from your classmates and ask questions to learn more about their cultures.

#### Self-Assessment (1)

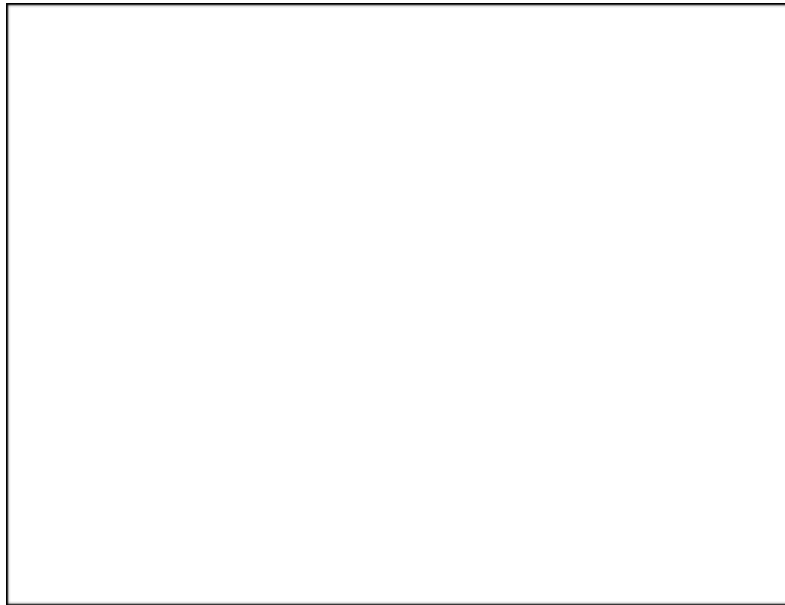
Before we begin, read each sentence and choose the number that shows how well you can do it:

- 1 = I need a lot more practice.
- 2 = I can do this a little.
- 3 = I can do this well.

- I can describe a dish from my culture and say why it is special.
- I can ask questions about food from other cultures and show interest.
- I can share my cultural values through talking about food.
- I can understand why different dishes are important in other cultures.

#### 1. Writing activity: My Special Dish (2)

Draw a picture of your dish in the box below. Answer the questions about your dish below the box.



1. Where is it from?

---

2. When do people eat it? (e.g. a certain holiday, everyday, celebration):

---

3. What does it look like?

---

4. What does it smell like?

---

5. What does it taste like?

---

6. Why is this dish special in your culture?

---

 **2. Sharing activity:**

Talk to at least 2 classmates and ask questions about their dish. Then choose one dish you would like to taste and explain why.

Classmate: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the dish: \_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn or find interesting?

---

Classmate: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the dish: \_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn or find interesting?

---

 The dish I would like to try the most is: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to taste it?

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### 3. Reflection activity

- What surprised you about someone else's dish? Was there anything that seemed unusual at first, but made sense after they explained it?
- What do you think people from different cultures would think about your special dish?
- Is there a dish in your culture that is similar to one you learned about today?
- Why is it important to listen carefully when someone talks about their food and culture?

### Self-Assessment (2)

Read each sentence again and choose how well you can do it now. This helps you see what you've learned and what you want to practise more.

1 = I need a lot more practice.

2 = I can do this a little.

3 = I can do this well.

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can describe a dish from my culture and say why it is special.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can ask questions about food from other cultures and show interest.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can share my cultural values through talking about food.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can understand why different dishes are important in other cultures. |

## 2. Teacher manual

### Worksheet: A Special Dish

#### Learning objectives:

By the end of these activities, students can...

- describe a dish that is important in their culture and explain its meaning and connection to traditions, celebrations, or values to classmates from other backgrounds;
- ask classmates simple questions about their cultural dish and show interest or agreement during the conversation;
- take part in short conversations about food traditions using familiar language, while showing awareness that dishes may have different meanings in different cultures.

**Estimated total time:** 45 minutes

**Target group:** a culturally diverse 6th grade EFL class of 14 students at A2 level of English proficiency

#### Pre-activity instructions (estimated time: 10 min)

This activity set should be started at the end of the Unit 3 “Senses” in *Academy Stars 6*. Begin the lesson by introducing the topic of food and its cultural meaning. Highlight how certain foods are connected to specific holidays, celebrations or family traditions in certain cultures. Present an example dish from your own culture (for example, an Estonian teacher could present black pudding). Show a picture and describe what it looks like, smells and tastes like, when it is eaten (season, holiday, celebration, everyday etc.) and why it is meaningful. Distribute the worksheet and read the introductory paragraph out loud.

#### Self-assessment (1)

Guide students through the pre-activity self-assessment. Check for understanding and clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary. Ask them to read each sentence and choose how well they think they can do it (1 = I need a lot more practice; 2 = I can do this a little; 3 = I can do this well).

#### 1. Writing activity: My Special Dish (estimated time: 10 min)

Students complete the drawing and writing section independently in class.

Instruct them to choose a dish that is meaningful in their culture – this may be a traditional food, a holiday dish, or a family favourite.

Circulate and support students as needed.

#### 2. Sharing activity: Share and choose (estimated time: 10 min)

Ask students to move around the classroom and ask at least two classmates questions about their dish. They should write down key information on their worksheets (classmate’s name, name of the dish, one interesting thing they learned). Then, they choose one dish

they would most like to try, explaining their reasons. Encourage them to ask polite questions and to listen actively and respectfully.

### **3. Reflecting activity (estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Pair students to discuss the reflection questions:

- What surprised you about someone else's dish? Was there anything that seemed unusual at first, but made sense after they explained it?
- What do you think people from different cultures would think about your special dish?
- Is there a dish in your culture that is similar to one you learned about today?
- Why is it important to listen carefully when someone talks about their food and culture?

Lead a brief whole-class discussion to highlight similarities in food traditions and the important role food plays in different cultures.

### **Self-assessment (2) (estimated time: 5 minutes)**

Instruct students to read the post-activity self-assessment sentences at the end of the worksheet and write numbers reflecting their skills after completing the activities. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that it is OK if the number does not change – the goal is awareness and reflection.

## APPENDIX 8 Supplementary material set 4: Body Language Around the World

### 1. Student worksheet

#### Body Language Around the World

In these activities, you will learn how people in different countries use “silent language” – body language! You will see that gestures and facial expressions can mean different things in different places. You will listen to a conversation and create a short scene using what you have learnt about body language. This activity will help you understand other cultures and be respectful when you travel or meet new people.

#### Self-Assessment (1)

Before the activities, read each sentence and choose a number that shows how well you can do it:

- 1 = I need a lot more practice.
- 2 = I can do this a little.
- 3 = I can do this well.

- I can understand that body language can mean different things in other cultures.
- I can use and explain the meaning of a gesture or expression in my culture.
- I can name and use gestures and expressions from other cultures than my own.
- I can talk about how people might misunderstand gestures across cultures.

 **1. Listening activity: Body Language in Different Places.** Listen to the conversation. Fill in the gaps in the following sentences.

1. Using \_\_\_\_\_ (or movements you make with your hands or your head to express what you are thinking of feeling) is common in some countries but not in others.

2. If you make a *faux pas*, it means you say or do something \_\_\_\_\_ in a social situation. For example, our everyday use of the thumbs-up signal might offend people from the Middle East.
3. And to offend means to make somebody \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Erin Meyer was worried because her student and the man on the street were shouting and gesticulating at each other. She thought they were \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In some Southeastern European areas such as \_\_\_\_\_ and southern \_\_\_\_\_, shaking your head is used to indicate "yes". In those regions, nodding in fact means "no" as well.

## 2. Pairwork: Body Language Dialogue

Pick a country from the illustration shown by the teacher.

Student A is from this country and can speak only in body language. Student B can only speak English, but can understand the body language.

Create a dialogue where all three gestures are used in a way that makes sense. Perform the dialogue in front of the classroom.

### Example:

The pair has picked the USA.

Student B: "Hey, Mike!"

Student A: *\*reaches their fist out to touch Student B's fist\**

Student B: "How was the test? Did you do well?"

Student A: *\*makes a circle with their finger and thumb, other fingers raised up\**

Student B: "That's good to hear! I'm going to take the test in half an hour! Wish me luck, buddy!"

Student A: *\*shows crossed index and middle finger\**

Student B: "Thanks!"

## 3. Reflection activity

- Did you learn anything surprising about body language in another culture?
- Why is it important to know that the same gesture can mean different things in different countries?
- How can we avoid misunderstandings when we talk to people from other cultures?

## Self-Assessment (2)

Read each sentence again and choose how well you can do it now. This helps you see what you've learned and what you want to practise more.

1 = I need a lot more practice.

2 = I can do this a little.

3 = I can do this well.

I can understand that body language can mean different things in other cultures.

I can use and explain the meaning of a gesture or expression in my culture.

I can name and use gestures and expressions from other cultures than my own.

I can talk about how people might misunderstand gestures across cultures.

## 2. Teacher manual

### Worksheet: Body Language Around the World

#### Learning objectives:

By the end of these activities, students can...

- describe how people in different cultures express respect, agreement, or emotion through body language;
- participate in short exchanges using culturally specific non-verbal communication;
- talk about how gestures that seem unusual or confusing at first may be completely normal in another culture, and reflect on why this matters.

**Estimated total time:** 45 minutes

**Target group:** a culturally diverse 6th grade EFL class of 14 students at A2 level of English proficiency

#### Pre-activity preparation (Homework)

Assign the following two short videos to introduce the topic:

- Video 1: [How body language differs around the world](#)
- Video 2: [Gestures that mean different things in different countries](#)

Ask students to watch the videos at home prior to the lesson and think about the following questions:

- 1) What kind of gestures do you use that might seem unusual to someone from another culture?
- 2) Why is it important to understand these differences?

#### Pre-activity instructions (estimated time: 7 min)

Begin class with a silent greeting – stand, smile and wave without speaking. Ask students what you just said. When they answer “Hello!”, ask them to consider how they knew that without you saying anything.

Explain that gestures and body language are like a “silent language” that people use and that this silent language may be different in different places. Briefly review the two assigned videos as a class. Encourage a few students to share surprising or interesting points. Distribute the worksheets and read the worksheet’s introduction aloud.

#### Self-assessment (1)

Guide students through the pre-activity self-assessment. Check for understanding and clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary. Ask them to read each sentence and choose how well they think they can do it (1 = I need a lot more practice; 2 = I can do this a little; 3 = I can do this well).

#### 1. Listening activity: Listening activity: Body Language in Different Places. (estimated time: 10 minutes)

Play this audio clip: [BBC Learning English – Having a row or asking for directions?](#) (0:00-4:09) Students complete the gap-fill activity on their worksheet. Replay if needed.

Review answers together. Discuss any expressions, terms or examples that surprised students.

### **2. Pair work: Body Language Dialogue (estimated time: 20 minutes)**

Display the illustration found on this [link](#) on the screen (or have enough copies printed out for each possible pair in the classroom) and review it together. Divide students into pairs and have each pair pick a different country from the illustration. If students have access to smart devices and no physical copies of the illustration are in the classroom, it is useful to share the link with them.

Have a pair of students read the example dialogue on the worksheet out loud and demonstrate the body language examples for clarity.

Instruct pairs to create a short dialogue where all three gestures or examples of body language characteristic of a country are used in a way that makes sense to the dialogue. Each pair performs their scene for the class. After each performance, involve the class by asking:

- Can you guess which country they chose?
- Did you understand the meaning of all the gestures? Which ones were tricky?
- Do any of these gestures exist in your culture? Which ones do you use yourself?

### **3. Reflective activity (estimated time: 5 minutes)**

In pairs, students discuss the reflection questions on the worksheet. Then elicit ideas from each pair during the class discussion. Emphasize points like shared gestures across cultures, surprising differences and the importance of understanding non-verbal, “silent” language in communication with people from different cultures.

### **Self-assessment (2) (estimated time: 3 minutes)**

Instruct students to read the post-activity self-assessment sentences at the end of the worksheet and write numbers reflecting their skills after completing the activities. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that it is OK if the number does not change – the goal is awareness and reflection.

## APPENDIX 9 Supplementary material set 5: Sports Around the Globe

### 1. Student worksheet

#### Sports Around the Globe

In these activities, you will talk about sports from your culture. You will also learn about sports that are popular or important in other cultures. You will work in groups to understand how sports can be different or similar in different places and how they can help people from different cultures become friends.

#### Self-Assessment (1)

Before the activities, read each sentence and choose a number that shows how well you can do it:

1 = I need a lot more practice.

2 = I can do this a little.

3 = I can do this well.

- I can talk about a sport that is important in my culture.
- I can ask my classmates polite questions about sports in their cultures.
- I can understand that people enjoy and celebrate sports differently in different countries.
- I can explain how sports show different values or traditions around the world.
- I can listen to my classmates' ideas and show interest and respect.

#### 1. Group discussion: Sports and Culture

Discuss these questions in your group. Then share your answers with the class.

1. What sport is popular or important in your country or culture? Why do people enjoy it?
2. Do people from other places know or play this sport? What do they think about it?
3. Do you think sports can help people from different cultures become friends? How?

#### 2. Group work: Sports in our Culture

Discuss with your group mates. Make sure every group member gets the chance to speak. Fill the table.

Name	Country/culture	A popular sport	What kind of skills and values are important in the sport?	How do you think people from another culture might see it?

### 3. Reflection activity

- How are sports in other cultures similar to or different from sports in yours?
- How do sports help people from different cultures become friends or understand each other better?
- What is one new idea or feeling you had during today's activities?

### Self-Assessment (2)

Read each sentence again and choose how well you can do it now. This helps you see what you've learned and what you want to practise more.

1 = I need a lot more practice.

2 = I can do this a little.

3 = I can do this well

- I can talk about a sport that is important in my culture.
- I can ask my classmates polite questions about sports in their cultures.
- I can understand that people enjoy and celebrate sports differently in different countries.
- I can explain how sports show different values or traditions around the world.

## 2. Teacher manual

### Worksheet: Sports Around the Globe

#### Learning objectives:

By the end of these activities, students can...

- describe a sport that is important in their culture and explain why people enjoy it or how it is celebrated;
- explain how a sport in their culture shows values like teamwork, discipline, or celebration and compare this with others;
- ask classmates polite questions about sports in their cultures and respond with interest and understanding;
- reflect on how people from other countries might see their sport or sporting traditions differently.

**Estimated total time:** 45 minutes

**Target group:** a culturally diverse 6th grade EFL class of 14 students at A2 level of English proficiency

#### Pre-activity preparation (Homework)

Assign the reading text *How Different Cultures Shape Popular Sports* along with the accompanying comprehension questions as homework.

#### Pre-activity instructions (estimated time: 10 min)

Ask students what they found interesting or surprising in the text. Review the comprehension question, focusing especially on the final open-ended question, inviting responses from different students and allowing time for a short discussion.

#### Self-assessment (1)

Guide students through the pre-activity self-assessment. Check for understanding and clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary. Ask them to read each sentence and choose how well they think they can do it (1 = I need a lot more practice; 2 = I can do this a little; 3 = I can do this well).

#### 1. Group discussion: Sports and Culture (Estimated time: 10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 3-4. Ask them to begin by discussing the three questions on the worksheet:

- 1) What sport is popular or important in your country or culture? Why do people enjoy it?
- 2) Do people from other places know or play this sport? What do they think about it?
- 3) Do you think sports can help people from different countries become friends? How?

Encourage them to share different perspectives, ask polite follow-up questions and make comparisons between cultures when possible. After small group discussions, bring the class together for a brief whole-class debrief. Ask:

“Which sports were discussed in your groups? What did you learn? Did anyone’s answer surprise you?”

#### 2. Group work: Sports in our Culture (Estimated time: 12 minutes)

Students now complete the table on the worksheet in their groups. Each student shares one sport from their culture or background. Make sure students understand how to fill in the final two columns and give examples if necessary, e.g. teamwork or respect for values and “Some people may think it’s too violent/It’s seen as very traditional” for perceptions by others.

Circulate the classroom to offer groups language support, sentence starters and vocabulary as needed.

### **3. Reflective activity (Estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Students remain in groups to discuss the reflection questions at the end of the worksheet.

Then lead a brief class discussion, eliciting from students:

- What values seem to be shared across cultures?
- What was something unexpected you learned today?
- How can sports bring people from different cultures together?

### **Self-assessment (2) (estimated time: 3 minutes)**

Instruct students to read the post-activity self-assessment sentences at the end of the worksheet and write numbers reflecting their skills after completing the activities. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that it is OK if the number does not change – the goal is awareness and reflection..

### 3. Text to be read at home by students with reading comprehension exercises

#### 1. Read the text.

#### How Different Cultures Shape Popular Sports

Sports are enjoyed by people all over the world. They help bring people together, even if they speak different languages or come from different cultures. As sports become popular in more countries, they are influenced by local traditions and values. In this article, we look at how different cultures have shaped popular sports and helped them grow around the world.

##### **Football: A Global Passion**

Football (also called soccer in some countries) is the most popular sport in the world. The game has a long history, but the version we know today started in England in the 1800s. During this time, the British Empire helped spread football to many countries, where it became part of local culture.

Today, football is much more than a sport in places like Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Germany, and Italy. In South America, fans sing, dance, and celebrate football with great energy and famous players like Pelé and Maradona became national heroes. In Europe, countries like Spain and Germany are known for their smart and organized way of playing. These teams have influenced how football is played in many other countries.

##### **Basketball: From the USA to the World**

Basketball was invented in the United States in 1891 by Dr. James Naismith. At first, it was played indoors in YMCA gyms. Later, it became popular in American cities, especially in African American communities. The fast and exciting style of basketball made it popular with young people. The NBA (National Basketball Association) helped bring basketball to the world. Stars like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James became famous in many countries. People around the world started watching the NBA, and countries like China, the Philippines, and Spain began developing their own strong teams and players.

##### **Cricket: A British Sport Around the World**

Cricket began in Britain and was introduced to many other countries during the time of the British Empire. Today, it is especially popular in India, Pakistan, Australia, and the West Indies. These countries have made cricket a big part of their national identity.

In India, the Indian Premier League (IPL) changed how people watch and play cricket. It combines sport and entertainment and attracts millions of fans. In Pakistan, people strongly support their national team, and in Australia, the country's success has helped develop new playing styles and techniques.

##### **Martial Arts: Tradition and Discipline**

Martial arts like karate, judo, taekwondo, and kung fu come from Asia. These sports are not only about physical strength but also about discipline, respect, and tradition. Today, martial arts are practiced in many countries around the world.

Japan is the home of judo and karate. China is known for kung fu and tai chi, which have become popular through movies and international events. Korea's taekwondo is now an Olympic sport, showing the beauty and strength of martial arts on an international stage.

### **The Olympic Spirit: Unity in Diversity**

The Olympic Games are the most famous international sports event. They bring athletes from almost every country in the world to compete. The Olympics began in Ancient Greece as a way to celebrate physical skill, bring people together.

Today, the Olympic Games show the variety of sports and cultures. Athletes from different countries, even those with political conflicts, live together in the Olympic Village. They often make friends and share experiences. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games show music, dance, and traditions from around the world, reminding us of what we all share.

### **Conclusion: Sports Bring People Together**

Sports have become a global part of life, shaped by many cultures. They reflect traditions, technology, and new ideas. As we celebrate sports, we also celebrate diversity, friendship, and the way people come together. Whether played in a stadium, on a street, or online, sports continue to connect people around the world.

*(Adapted from Sports Venue Technology. n.d.)*

## **2. Complete the exercises based on the text.**

1) True or False. Write **T** (true) or **F** (false) after each sentence. Correct the false sentences. More than one version may be correct.

- a) Football became popular around the world because of the British Empire. \_\_\_
- b) Basketball was invented by a famous player named Michael Jordan. \_\_\_
- c) Cricket is a popular sport in India, Pakistan, and Australia. \_\_\_
- d) Martial arts are popular only in Asia. \_\_\_
- e) The Olympics are only about winning medals. \_\_\_

2) Match the sport to the region or country it is most connected with.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Place</b>
Taekwondo	India
Cricket	China
Kung Fu	Korea

Football

South America

Judo

Japan

**3. Explain in your own words why sports are important in so many different cultures.**

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## APPENDIX 10 References for the content of learning activities

### List of references used for the content of the learning activities

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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Johanna Sandra Tippo**

### **Creating Supplementary Learning Activities for the Development of Pluricultural Competence in a Culturally Diverse Year 6 EFL Classroom**

**Lisategevused mitmekultuurilise pädevuse arendamiseks kultuuriliselt mitmekesise 6. klassi inglise keele tunnis**

Magistritöö

2025

Lehekülgede arv:79

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärk on kujundada inglise keele tunniks täiendavaid õppematerjale, mis toetavad kultuuriteadlikkuse ja -pädevuse, eriti mitmekultuurilise pädevuse (ingl. *pluricultural competence*), arendamist Eestis õppivate kultuuriliselt mitmekesiste kuuenda klassi õpilaste seas. Töös lähtutakse Euroopa keeleõppe raamdokumendis (*CEFR*) ja selle sõsarväljaandes (*CEFR Companion Volume*) toodud mitmekultuurilise pädevuse kirjeldustest.

Metoodiliselt kasutati materjalide loomiseks raamdokumendi skaalasiid ja sotsiokultuurilisi teemasid, samuti Runneli (2021) välja pakutud pluralistliku keeleõppe (*PLE*) raamistikku. Töö teises peatükis kujundati viis materjalikomplekti täiendamaks õpikut "Academy Stars 6", mis sisaldavad nii õpilastele mõeldud töölehti kui ka õpetaja juhendit. Arutelus käsitletakse loodud materjalide sobivust inglise keele tundides, nende potentsiaali mitmekultuurilise pädevuse arendamisel ja vajadust materjalide piloteerimise ning edasise arendamise järele.

Märksõnad:

Inglise keele võõrkeelena õpetamine, kultuuriline pädevus, mitmekultuuriline pädevus

## **Lihtlitsents**

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Mina, Johanna Sandra Tippo,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

*Creating Supplementary Learning Activities for the Development of Pluricultural Competence in a Culturally Diverse Year 6 EFL Classroom,*

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Johanna Sandra Tippo

Tartus, 19.05.2025

**Autorsuse kinnitus**

Kinnitan, et olen koostanud käesoleva magistritöö ise ning toonud korrekselt välja teiste autorite panuse. Töö on koostatud lähtudes Tartu Ülikooli maailma keelte ja kultuuride instituudi anglistika osakonna oma õppekava magistritöö juhendist ning on kooskõlas heade akadeemiliste tavadega.

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Johanna Sandra Tippo

Tartus, 19.05.2025

Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.

Natalja Zagura

Tartus, 19.05.2025