

# Teaching Foreign Language and Culture: An Analysis of Croatian Primary School Curricula

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**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU  
UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**

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DIPLOMSKI RAD**

**TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: AN  
ANALYSIS OF CROATIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL  
CURRICULA**

**Zagreb, rujan 2020.**

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**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

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## SAŽETAK

Za život u višekulturnom svijetu, vrlo je važno za osobu da razumije što je kultura i kako se odnositi prema kulturama koje nisu njezine. Ponekad ljudi imaju manjak znanja o kulturi te su skloni diskriminaciji što u konačnici ne donosi pozitivne rezultate u unapređenju svijeta.

Cilj ovoga diplomskog rada jest naglasiti važnost učenja i poučavanja kulture u osnovnim školama u Hrvatskoj. Ovaj rad je podijeljen na dva dijela: prvi je teorijski dio u kojem je objašnjena važnost poučavanja kulture pomoću tema *Hrvatskog nacionalnog kurikulumu* (jedan je iz 2006. godine, a drugi iz 2019). Drugi dio je analiza triju udžbenika engleskog jezika u drugom razredu osnovne škole. Analiza pokazuje u kojoj mjeri se ovi udžbenici poklapaju sa predlošcima i temama iz kurikulumu te koliko kulturnih aspekata uključuju. Vrlo je važno naglasiti povezanost kulture i jezika jer je jezik uvjetovan kulturom i obrnuto. Uzevši u obzir rezultate ove analize, može se reći da su udžbenici u većoj mjeri u skladu s propisanim zahtjevima važećih kurikulumu.

Ključne riječi: kurikulum, osnovna škola, kultura

## ABSTRACT

Living in a multicultural world, it is very important for a person to understand what culture is and how to treat cultures that are not their own. Sometimes people have inadequate knowledge about culture and are prone to discrimination, which ultimately does not bring positive results in the advancement of the world.

The aim of this thesis is to underline the importance of teaching culture in Croatian primary schools. The main objective is to explore the presence of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom with a particular focus on teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Croatian primary schools. The paper is divided into two parts: first is the theoretical part where the importance of teaching culture is explained and topics prescribed in both *Croatian National Curricula* (one is from 2006, and the other is from 2019). The second part contains an analysis of three second grade coursebooks for teaching the English language in Croatia. The analysis shows how much these coursebooks follow the curricula and which cultural aspects they include. It is very important to emphasize the importance of interconnection between culture and language because a language does not exist without culture and vice versa. Taking into consideration the results of this analysis, it can be said that

the analyzed coursebooks are mostly written in compliance with relevant Croatian National Curricula.

Key words: curricula, primary school, culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching culture should be an essential part of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) because we live in a multilingual and multicultural world. Cultural awareness facilitates communication and better understanding of different English speakers coming from different countries. People are able to recognize and acknowledge similarities and differences between cultures, develop empathy and become open to understanding and accepting them. Foreign culture learning can contribute to personal development which then leads to successful foreign language (FL) learning, as Tseng (2002, p.12) puts it: “culture effects changes in individual perception and is vital for expanding an individual’s perspective of the world.” Learning about culture broadens points of view, which makes communication with individuals with different cultural backgrounds easier. “Success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language” (ibid.). The development of cross-cultural competence teaches FL learners not to have prejudice, prevents possible discrimination towards other cultures and encourages non-violent conflict resolutions.

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the presence of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom with a particular focus on teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Croatian primary schools. The first chapter of the paper introduces the concept of culture and its role in the FL classroom. The second chapter is the analysis of Croatian primary school curricula in the FL classroom that will primarily focus on the differences between *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (MZOS, 2006) and *Nacionalni Kurikulum* (MZO, 2019). In the third chapter, I will analyze three Croatian primary school coursebooks for teaching English in second grade. One is *Dip in 2* (2013), another one is *Dip in 2* (2020), and the third one is *Tiptoes 2* (2020). The analysis of these three coursebooks will show how the concept of culture used to be included in the school curriculum and how it is included now. It will also show if there are any considerable differences in teaching culture between the two latest editions of coursebooks used in the FL classroom in Croatia.

## 2. CULTURE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

### 2.1. *Defining language and culture*

Culture can be defined in various ways and can be looked at from different perspectives. *Cambridge Dictionary* defines culture as “the way of life of a particular group of people at a particular time.” *Merriam – Webster* defines culture as “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.” However, there are more “classroom - oriented” definitions of culture with some characteristics which synthesize FL education. Paige (2003, p. 177) defines culture learning as “the process of acquiring the culture specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively.” Culture learning is not just factual information but rather an ongoing process that has cognitive and behavioral dimensions. “Cultures are structured systems of patterned behavior”- (Lado, 1957, p.111). Two categories are important in the concept of culture: structure and pattern. Kramsch (1993, p.205) says that “culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions”. In other words, culture starts from an individual, not from a collective. Cultural competence is the ability to interact effectively with people of different backgrounds by being sensitive, appreciative, respectful and responsive to beliefs, practices, and cultural need that are different from your own.

Jiang (2000, p. 328) uses the transportation metaphor to describe the connection between language and culture – “Communication is like transportation: language is the vehicle and culture is the traffic light. Language makes communication easier and faster; culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication.” Language and culture form a whole and would not exist without each other. Language is needed in order to communicate something. Same words in different cultures have different meaning. For example, if someone says they are having *lunch*, an American would think of a burger, a British person would think of ham and cheese sandwich, an Australian would think of a simple avocado salad, a Chinese would think of rice and an Italian would think of some kind of pasta. Another, more specific example, could be the words *sibling* and *uncle*. In the Croatian language, the word *sibling* does not exist and it is not translatable. The word *sibling* in English means brother or sister but this word does not specify to which one it refers. On the contrary, in Croatian there is not an equivalent word when talking about siblings, so people have to specify if they are referring to a brother or a sister. The word *uncle* in the English



language can refer to both mother's brother and father's brother. In the Croatian language there is a clear distinction between the two – mother's brother is called *ujak* and father's brother is called *stric*.

With these examples in mind, it can be concluded that language is part of a culture as much as a culture is part of a language.

## **2.2. *The relationship of language and culture***

It is almost impossible to learn a foreign language and not learn about the culture of the target language at the same time. There are many ways to teach language and bring culture closer to students. For example interviewing people of different cultures and investigating about their culture, exploring various school routines, rituals and traditions, and through games such as “The True, The False, The Truly Amazing.”<sup>1</sup> This activity was created by the non-profit organization *American Field Service* (AFS), which is an exchange program for students around the world. Students from one country go to another country and spend ten months studying and living there with a host family. Those students are challenged because of language barriers and differences between their culture and the culture of their new host country. The activity “The True, The False, The Truly Amazing” helps them break stereotypes they potentially had and encourages them to learn about the new culture in which they have been immersed. When students have an opportunity to interact with another language, their experience becomes meaningful, and when it comes to teaching culture in EFL, students are highly motivated. Some examples of interacting with the English language can be talking to a native speaker, learn about the most famous buildings (for example Buckingham Palace in the UK), learning about restaurants, table manners and food (for example, fish and chips), and learn about differences between schools (for example, in Australia students are required to wear uniforms). School uniforms teach students to dress smartly and take pride in their own appearance. Most of the UK and Australian students are required to wear school uniforms in both primary and secondary schools. They have winter and summer outfits which are usually pants for boys and skirts for girls. Each school uniform is unique and represents the school. There are no school uniforms in Croatia, but it is useful to know that they exist in some English speaking countries and learn about their importance. One way to make school uniforms in the FL classroom an appealing topic could be that the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://afsusa.padlet.org/afsusa/truefalse>

teacher, along with the students thinks of their own unique school uniform for their classroom. This will bring the sense of unity and companionship in the classroom and motivate students to learn more about other cultures. If students feel, taste, smell and see English speakers, typical food or what students typically wear to school, the experience of learning language and culture becomes complete. Language “is used to participate in the culture, describe the culture, interpret the culture, and respond to the culture” (Moran, 2001).

The main aim of learning a foreign language should be to achieve communicative competence. According to Ovando (2001), there are five domains students have to master in order to achieve communicative competence. These domains are discourse, pragmatics, paralinguistics, appropriateness, and cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP). Discourse is a written or spoken organization of language beyond the sentence level which is crucial for intercultural understanding. Pragmatics deals with language in use and the contexts in which it is used including implicit and explicit cultural norms such as turn-taking or pace of speech. Paralinguistics is non-verbal communication which is different in every culture, for example, intonation or body language. Appropriateness defines how social situations influence language (formal vs. informal aspects). CALP is used to discuss formal language which is often decontextualized.

Communicative competence (CC) refers to a learner's ability to use language to communicate successfully. It has linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (CEFR<sup>2</sup>, 2001). Formats teachers can use to evaluate their learners' competence include information gap and role-play, activities for speaking, letters for writing, note-taking and summarizing, which combines listening and writing competences. “Intercultural competence (IC) is the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Deardorff, 2006). In 2014, Olinka Breka and Ana Petravić conducted a research in which 105 Croatian primary school FL teachers participated. The aim of that research was to determine whether Croatian primary school FL teachers comply with the anticipated FL and intercultural competence teacher profile. There were four questionnaires asking teachers to rank objectives of FL teaching on a scale of 1-9, what is the objective of culture teaching in primary school FL classroom, teachers' beliefs about the development of learner IC, and teachers' practice teaching culture. The results showed that teachers have a positive attitude

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<sup>2</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (in Croatian, Zajednički referentni okvir za jezike: učenje, poučavanje, vrednovanje Vijeća Europe)

towards culture teaching and acquiring cultural knowledge, but are rather focused on the linguistic competence in FL teaching (Breka, Petravić, 2015). It can be concluded that Croatian primary school FL teachers have a positive attitude toward teaching about other cultures, but still need some more practice and motivation (through seminars or workshops) to become more comfortable teaching culture in FL classrooms. In her paper Bilić-Štefan (2001) proposes a few intercultural communication activities that could be done on seminars for FL teachers in order to elevate successful intercultural communication:

- Activity 1: Participants get portraits of people from different cultures. They go around the room and ask each other questions such as *Where do they live? What kind of music do they listen to? Where do they work? What did they eat for breakfast?* etc. After “painting the picture” of the people from the portraits, they compare their real lives with what they thought their lives looked like. The final step is talking about stereotypes.
- Activity 2: Think of a negative stereotype and find the pros of being a part of this stereotype.

Stereotypes are general beliefs about a particular group or culture. They are often negative and not true. In order to teach about other cultures, teachers need to become aware of stereotypes and break them so students become open-minded. It is important to shape a young mind into communicative and intercultural competent people in order to build a better society. Communicative competence is learned, but intercultural competence is a lifelong process.

According to Britannica “language is transmitted culturally, it is learned” and “culture as a whole is transmitted very largely through language.” Culture explains how to interact with others and helps students to shape values and ethics, and language is a means of communication used to express culture. Thus it can be concluded that language and culture are vastly interrelated.

### **2.3. *The role of culture in FL – in the past and today***

Language learning in the past was mostly based on learning the grammatical system of the language, but since the 1990s, an emphasis was put on culture (Thanasoulas, 2001). To become truly fluent in a language, it is important to understand its culture and to be able to adapt to it. In the past, culture was taught through literature. (Lessard-Clouston, 1997) Reading about the civilization associated with the target language, students learned about that culture. This can be a very efficient way of learning about different cultures, but it must constantly be updated because culture is developing every day. Books and literature teach us today what something looked like in the past and help us understand better why something is the way it is. For example, history books teach us what happened in the past that brought us where we are now, made countries as they are today, how different nations live, or why each nation speaks a certain language

To properly teach culture, one must know what culture is.

“Culture can be seen as an iceberg with the tip sticking above the water level of conscious awareness. The most significant part, however, is unconscious or below the water level of awareness and includes values and thought patterns” (Weaver, 1993). It is known that 90% of the iceberg is below the water surface. The author uses this analogy to illustrate that most of the culture is defined by unconscious patterns and values, while only 10% is visible to people that are not part of some culture. For example, in Muslim cultures women often cover their heads and faces with a hijab<sup>3</sup>. Although this cover is visible, the cultural reason is not, which means that people who are not familiar with Muslim culture know that women are required to wear a hijab, but they do not know why.

In order to teach about culture, one needs to experience it through talking to the natives, eating their cuisine, visiting their country and learning about their values without prejudice.

It is also important to note that in language teaching there are two types of culture often spoken of: culture with a capital C and culture with a small c. The small c culture encompasses the aspects of everyday life; what people wear, how they greet each other, what they eat, etc. Big C culture is wider, it consists of music, art, architecture, literature, etc. (Heidari, Ketabi & Zonoobi, 2014)

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<sup>3</sup> A head covering worn in public by some Muslim women.

There are two main approaches to teaching culture. The first one focuses on the factual cultural information, that is learning about the literature, art, sometimes customs and folklore. This big C culture-approach was mentioned earlier in this chapter and was typical of methods of foreign language teaching used in the past (such as the grammar-translation method). The focus is on facts and not the meaning behind them (Thanasoulas, 2001). The second approach tries to establish links between the cultures of the learner's country and the target country. The drawback of this approach is that the learners need to have cultural knowledge prior to learning (ibid.). That means that these two approaches can and should be used in combination in order for the learners to develop intercultural competence.

### **3. THE CROATIAN NATIONAL CURRICULA**

#### **3.1. *Defining curriculum***

According to the *Glossary of Education reform* (n. d.), curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or a specific course or program. "Curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning." The *Croatian National Curriculum* refers to all participants of the educational process to what is learned and why, how to learn, when to learn, and where to learn. It includes precise goals, tasks, contents, organizations, methods, media and strategies on upbringing and education. It helps teachers to teach accurately and is student-oriented. Each subject is "tailor-made" for every age group from preschool to secondary school. The *Croatian National Curricula* focus on listening, speaking, writing, reading and intercultural activity. Intercultural activity is a very important aspect of the *Croatian National Curriculum*. Students need to learn and take care of their own culture in order to keep their national identity alive. Schools need to encourage students to learn about their country and culture in order to be able to use known information about their own and other cultures and to relate them to new situations and context. It also helps students to think critically and apply appropriate behavior in familiar situations and to try new behavior patterns in unfamiliar situations. Students should use the acquired knowledge of cultural characteristics and intercultural communication to interpret the target culture without

prejudices. While learning about culture, learners will be able to respect their own and target culture, recognize universal human values such as friendship and tolerance and actively participate in the issues relevant to the community. In the next two chapters I will compare the topics related to teaching culture from two contemporary *Croatian National Curricula – Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (MZOS, 2006) and *Nacionalni kurikulum nastavnoga predmeta Engleski jezik* (MZO, 2019).

### **3.2. Topics from *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu***

*Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu (NPiP)* is the Croatian curriculum from 2006. It is focused on the modernization of education and educational facilities, the subject matter and the inter-subject connection, balanced division in grades and a more precise design of educational goals and tasks according to the development levels of students. A new approach to teaching in primary school is aimed at students rather than content, more appropriate teaching skills were achieved, and at the same time a targeted uniformity with the pre-school, secondary and higher education level of the Croatian educational system was achieved as well. The Croatian Ministry of Education, Science and Sports introduced the experimental national curriculum in the academic year 2005/2006. The effects of this experimental curriculum were meant to be used to (re)define educational guidelines in all segments of compulsory primary education. *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006) contains three sections from which we can deduce which topics can be related to culture:

- Units and Topics (Cjeline i teme)
- Culture and Civilization (Kultura i civilizacija)
- Intercultural Competence (Interkulturalne kompetencije).

The section *Culture and Civilization* includes a section with children's literature – students learn traditional songs and read traditional stories. This can be found within a topic from *Units and Topics*, for example when learning about holidays students also learn the typical Christmas song *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. *Intercultural Competence* is the ability to sympathize with other cultures and become aware of differences and similarities between two cultures. *Units and Topics* are compulsory, *Culture and Civilization* are found with the topics and can also be found in extra topics (which are not compulsory) and *Intercultural competence* is something that is happening all along while learning another language.

In *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006), there are already prescribed culture-related topics for each grade.

First-grade topics:

- typical first and last names in English;
- greetings;
- proper behavior;
- learning about costumes and traditions (students should be able to know the first verse of *We wish you a Merry Christmas*).

They are expected to learn some nursery rhymes and songs (such as *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*) followed by TPR (*Total Physical Response*). It is recommended to read at least 2 picture books where the text is short and repetitive (such as *Goodnight Moon* by M. W. Brown, or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by E. Carle).

Second-grade topics:

- introducing themselves;
- typical first and last names in English;
- how to greet someone (*hello, goodbye*);
- how to address grown-ups (*Mr. David, Miss Suzanne*);
- what to say for certain holidays (*Happy Thanksgiving! Merry Christmas!*);
- learn about the holidays and the food they prepare.

Students should learn how to read counting nursery rhymes (such as *Five Little Ducks*). It is recommended to read students some traditional picture books with appealing design and not a lot of text or text that's repeating. The teacher should also read at least one traditional fairy tale (such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by R. Southey).

### Third-grade topics:

- greetings;
- proper behavior;
- the names and typical surnames of peers from the countries of the target language;
- food and food habits (*a cake, a sandwich*);
- dressing/clothes (such as *T- shirt, jeans*);
- sports (*football, basketball*);
- games (*computer games, hide and seek*);
- days of the week;
- the alphabet;
- numbers 10 – 100;
- basic knowledge about the countries where English is spoken (the name of the country, the capital, to be able to name one region / mountain / river).

Students should learn how to sing/recite at least two traditional songs using TPR. They should read one or two picture books with appealing design and not a lot of text or text that is repetitive. The same as in second grade, they should read at least one traditional fairy tale.

### Fourth-grade topics:

- greetings;
- proper behavior;
- the names and typical surnames of peers from the countries of the target language;
- holiday activities;
- typical first names and last names;
- names of streets and squares;
- writing addresses in Croatia, the UK and the USA;
- writing time table;
- table of daily and weekly activities;
- free time and holidays;
- ways of living (house, flat, building, in the city, on the farm...);
- buying groceries;
- important buildings;
- basic information about the country (geographical position).



Students should learn some songs and nursery rhymes. They are introduced to riddles, tongue twisters, rap and jazz chants. They have to read at least two picture books where pictures and text are equally presented. Students should be familiar with one of the picture books, while the other should be new to them.

The topics should be relevant for the target language. They should include behavior, values, family, etc. As written above, we can clearly see that *Nastavni plan i program* included valuable topics and contents for teaching culture in lower primary school.

Since this thesis will later focus on three editions of second-grade coursebooks, Table 1 shows selected cultural aspects intended for the second-grade listed in the *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (MZOS, 2006).

Table 1. Second-grade cultural aspects listed in the 2006 curriculum (NPiP, 2006)

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Representation in the curriculum</b>
Holidays	<i>Christmas tree/presents/cards; Easter bunny/eggs; Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Happy Easter! Songs – We Wish You a Merry Christmas! Happy Halloween!</i>
Food	<i>Main dishes, basic foods and beverages (coffee, sandwich)</i>
Countries	<i>Croatia, English speaking countries</i>
Typical names	<i>Mr/Mrs/Miss White</i>
Culturally specific elements	<i>English poetry</i>
National symbols	<i>Not included</i>

### 3.3. Topics from the new curriculum (*Nacionalni Kurikulum, 2019*)

In 2018, the Croatian *Ministry of Science and Education* introduced an experimental project called *Škola za život*. It included 48 primary schools (first-grade and fifth grade) and 26 high schools (first-grade) in Croatia. The goal of that one-year experiment was to see how new teaching aids and methods can improve students' competence in problem solving and increase motivation for learning. In 2019 all schools in Croatia started to teach according to the new and improved curriculum that is more focused on structural and holistic learning. In this thesis the focus is on culture learning so the following topics will be focused on the domain of *Intercultural communication competence*. The outcomes of this domain are leading toward helping students to enable the interpretation of similarities and differences between cultures and appropriate communication with native speakers of English with the result of building good intercultural relations.

### First-grade topics:

- the names and typical surnames of peers from the countries of the target language;
- family celebrations and marking holidays;
- names of countries;
- traditional rhymes in the target language;
- the expressions for welcoming and addressing people in a familiar context at an informal level;
- expressing gratitude and plea.

Students should start to react accordingly and positively in simple situations. They should be able to ask simple questions in English.

### Second-grade topics:

- basic culturally specific elements and they can name and recognize them;
- examples of words from native and target languages that are culturally conditioned;
- the most famous characteristics of the countries of the target language and national symbols;
- similarities and differences in customs and traditions of the target language and other cultures;
- expressing an apology.

Students use appropriate terms to greet, address and represent people in a familiar context at a formal level. They can list and appoint participants of the intercultural encounter. The students show interest and openness in the foreign language. They ask questions about the contents and customs in the foreign language and they are also interested in the daily life of peers in the countries of the target language. They recognize the need to accept differences between themselves and other cultures.

### Third-grade topics:

- similarities between culturally specific elements;
- the distinctive characteristics of the countries of the target language and they find analogies in their own culture;
- some activities from the daily lives of children and young people in the countries of the target language and they can describe and compare them to those in their own country;
- facts about other cultures;
- expressing their impressions of the cultures they learn about;
- expressing their emotions about intercultural encounters.

Students are able to notice and apply common social conventions of public behavior following examples of how others are treated. They can verbally or nonverbally respond to polite and acceptable behavior in a familiar context and highlight the importance of accepting others and different people. Students are able to explain ways to involve others in different activities and also apply desirable forms of behavior in their own class and school.

### Fourth-grade topics:

- specific habits and activities from everyday life cultures of the countries of the target language in a familiar context;
- characteristics of the countries of the target language that are similar or identical to those in their own culture;
- facts about the countries of the target language from various multimodal sources.

Students in the fourth grade are able to briefly speak about what they learned about their own culture from another person using very simple language. They are continuously expanding their knowledge of facts about other cultures. Students can apply common social conventions of public behavior and adjust their behavior in accordance with established social conventions. They ask questions about contents they do not understand and independently inquire about the contents that they are interested in. They can recognize culturally specific differences in behavior and notice different understandings of individual customs. One of the most important aspects is that the students avoid negative categorization of members of different cultures and recognize the need to learn more foreign languages.

By achieving educational outcomes within this domain, learners become interculturally competent, which means that they are able to spot and interpret similarities and differences between cultures. They are empathic, adaptable and open to understanding, accepting and respecting English speakers and their cultures and they are capable of communicating efficiently and in context with native and non-native English speakers. The development of intercultural competence helps the students to reject prejudice and empowers them to prevent discrimination and non-violent conflict resolution, and contributes to understanding, expanding and deepening the student's view of the world enabling them to participate successfully in the narrower and wider community. In *Nacionalni Kurikulum* there are certain outcomes and expectations of what students need to learn. For example, in the first grade, students need to become aware of other cultures and treat them in a positive manner. Students are graded according to how well they accomplish this outcome. The best students know how to include different cultures in their own culture, and they recognize the importance of accepting something different between cultures. This curriculum does not provide the teachers with concrete examples like *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006) did. It is clear that learning about customs and tradition is compulsory, but it is up to the coursebook publishers and teachers themselves, to decide what, when and how it is going to be learned.

Table 2 shows the selected cultural aspects listed in the new curriculum (*Nacionalni Kurikulum, 2019*) for the second grade.

*Table 2. Second-grade cultural aspects listed in the 2019 curriculum*

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Representation in the Curriculum</b>
Holidays	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>
Food	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>
Countries	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>
Typical names	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>
Culture-specific elements and children's literature	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>
National symbols	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>

### 3.4. *Comparison of the two curricula*

Comparing the two documents *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006) and *Nacionalni kurikulum* (2019) it is evident that they both provide students with very valuable insight into different cultures. The topics included in the curriculum should help students develop appreciation and respect for their own culture and subsequently for other cultures. School curricula develop hand in hand with other major aspects of everyday life (such as technology, medicine, music, art, science) so it is expected that students get access to more extensive knowledge of the culture with the latest curriculum. Some of the required topics from both *Nastavni plan i program* and *Nacionalni kurikulum* are awareness of typical names in the English language, proper addressing of people and greetings, some well-known characteristics of the target language (for example, the flag or where is the country situated on the map) and similarities and differences between Croatian culture and other cultures. *The National Curriculum for the English language* is a contemporary and improved version of the previous curriculum. The main difference between the new curriculum and previous ones is the concept of it – instead of naming every topic that has to be learned in a certain year of study, it is divided into three domains - *Komunikacijska jezična kompetencija* (*Communicative Linguistic Competence*), *Međukulturna komunikacijska kompetencija* (*Intercultural Communicative Competence*) and *Samostalnost u ovladavanju jezikom* (*Independence in mastering a language*). All three domains are primarily focused on students and their cognitive and emotional development, which ensures continuity in progression and a balanced transition to the next cycle and next grade. The level of acquisition is clearly defined by the outcomes for teachers to be able to keep track of each student's improvement. Nurturing other cultures is important to develop a sense of tolerance and respect for people of different cultural backgrounds. Most communication is non-verbal, therefore, understanding subtle social cues such as greetings, dining etiquette or respectful clothing is necessary for effective communication with people from other cultures.

In the next chapter, three coursebooks will be analyzed, with special focus on teaching and learning about culture in the second grade of primary school.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF CULTURE IN PRIMARY COURSEBOOKS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN CROATIA**

The two most relevant investigations of cultural content and intercultural competence in primary school FL coursebooks in Croatia have been conducted by Ana Petravić (2010) for German language coursebooks and by Marija Andraka (2014) for coursebooks of English. Both investigations analyze Croatian-authored coursebooks used in Croatian primary FL teaching over a period of more than 60 years. This research will also investigate coursebooks by Croatian authors.

In her research, Petravić says that it is important to develop awareness about the image of student's own culture opposed to the image of another culture in foreign language coursebooks. Therefore, authors of FL coursebooks should include both culture of the target language and the student's own culture. The main objective of intercultural competence and teaching about culture is not to learn everything about a certain culture, but that students develop openness and understanding of a culture different than theirs. Some ideas on how to improve foreign language coursebooks are: working on various texts, using new media (such as the Internet), or implicit transfer of cultural content (the appeal of characters in coursebooks, where they come from, how old they are, their interests, where they live, etc.) (Petravić, 2010).

Many teachers teach culture using the so called "4F" approach (*folk dances, festivals, fairs and food*), the tourist guide approach (descriptions of historical and geographical monuments), and teaching from their own experience in order to emphasize some cultural differences between two cultures. All these approaches encourage students to talk about cultures, but do not give them a whole image of a culture. Students need to "be aware of the fact that they themselves are part of a culture, which serves as a reference framework for their whole perspective, and they need to understand that different cultures can interpret the same event differently" (Andraka, 2014: 63).

#### 4.1. Methodology

This analysis will be based on three coursebooks for teaching English in Croatian primary school for the second grade: *Dip in 2* (ŠK, 2013), *Dip in 2* (ŠK, 2020), and *Tiptoes 2* (ŠK, 2020). The main objective is to determine how much each course book includes different cultural aspects and what differences exist amongst the three of them. Two of the coursebooks are completely new and were published in 2020 according to the newest school curriculum. The third one was written according to *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu (MZOS, 2006)* and it was published in 2013.

English coursebooks often include holidays, tourist sites and food from different cultures but this does not mean that they teach children about various backgrounds because these topics belong to *surface culture*. This thesis also aims to explore the existence of *deep culture* which “embraces invisible meanings associated with a region, a group of people, or subcultures that reflect their own particular sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values”, as Gomez Rodriguez (2015, p. 168) wrote. The aspects considered in this thesis are holidays, food, countries, typical names of the target language, children’s literature and national symbols. These aspects are included in both second-grade curricula and a comparative analysis will reveal how many are present in the analyzed coursebooks.

The analysis of the selected second-grade textbooks and two curricula will be conducted in order to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the analyzed coursebooks include different cultural aspects?
2. What are the differences between the 2013 and 2020 editions?
3. What are the differences between the two 2020 editions?
4. What are the differences between the two curricula (old and new)?

Table 3 shows how the six cultural aspects are represented in each of the coursebooks, as well as in the two curricula.

*Table 3. Comparative analysis (coursebooks and curricula)*



<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b><i>Dip in 2 (2013)</i></b>	<b><i>Dip in 2 (2020)</i></b>	<b><i>Tiptoes 2 (2020)</i></b>	<b>Curriculum 1 (2006)</b>	<b>Curriculum 2 (2019)</b>
Holidays	<p><b><u>Lesson: Merry Christmas:</u></b> Santa Claus; Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! ; song Jingle Bells</p> <p><b><u>Lesson: Happy Easter:</u></b> the Easter Bunny; Easter eggs; Happy Easter!</p>	<p><b><u>Lesson: Merry Christmas:</u></b> Santa Claus; Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! ; song Jingle bells; Christmas tree/cards/presents/carols</p> <p><b><u>Lesson: Happy Easter:</u></b> the Easter Bunny; Easter eggs; Happy Easter!</p>	<p><b><u>Lesson: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!:</u></b> Santa Claus; Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! ; song Jingle bells; a stocking; a sleigh; a Christmas tree; a bauble</p> <p><b><u>Lesson: Happy Easter:</u></b> the Easter Bunny; Easter eggs; Happy Easter!</p>	<p>Christmas tree/presents/cards; Easter bunny/eggs; Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Happy Easter!</p> <p>Songs – We Wish You a Merry Christmas! Happy Halloween!</p>	Included but no specific examples
Food	<p><b><u>Unit 2, Lesson 2: Monkey and coconuts:</u></b> coconuts</p> <p><b><u>Unit 3, Lesson 2: Where’s the ice cream?:</u></b> a mango, bananas, oranges, lemons, vanilla ice cream</p> <p>Breakfast: toast, cornflakes, jam, tea, milk</p> <p>Lunch: chicken, rice, spaghetti, a sandwich, an orange</p> <p>Dinner: pizza, a salad, fish, chips</p>	<p><b><u>Unit 2, Lesson 2: Monkey and coconuts:</u></b> coconuts</p> <p><b><u>Unit 4, Lesson 2: Where’s the ice cream?:</u></b> a mango, bananas, oranges, lemons, vanilla ice cream</p> <p>Breakfast: toast, butter, cornflakes, a sandwich, porridge with fruit, tea, cocoa, jam</p> <p>Lunch: spaghetti, chicken and rice, eggs and spinach, pizza, fish and chips</p>	No cultural specific food	Main dishes, basic foods and beverages (coffee, a sandwich)	Included but no specific examples
Countries	<p><b><u>Unit 1: Lesson 6: A new job:</u></b> This is Africa. It is a continent. Mick’s new job is in America.</p>	<p><b><u>Starting up: Lesson 3:</u></b> Croatia is a country. The UK is a country, too. (flags and geographic position)</p> <p><b><u>The alphabet: Lesson 4:</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Unit 1: Lesson 5: I love my family:</u></b> Ella from the USA. Molly from England. Jack from Australia.</p>	Croatia, English speaking countries	Included but no specific examples

	<p><b><u>Unit 2: Lesson 3: African animals:</u></b> Parrots, crocodiles, zebras, elephants, lions, giraffes, snakes</p> <p><b><u>Unit 3: Lesson 3: At the seaside:</u></b> <i>The Clicks and the Whites are on holiday in Croatia.</i></p>	<p><i>English vs Croatian alphabet (differences)</i></p> <p><b><u>Unit 1: Lesson 6: A new job:</u></b> <i>This is Africa. It is a continent. Europe is a continent, too. The UK is a country in Europe. Croatia is a country in Europe, too.</i></p> <p><b><u>Unit 2: Lesson 3: African animals:</u></b> <i>Parrots, crocodiles, zebras, elephants, lions, giraffes, snakes</i></p> <p><b><u>Lesson 7: Goodbye to Africa:</u></b> <i>A river, a lake, the sea in Croatia; many different places in Africa (the ocean, the desert, the jungle...)</i></p> <p><b><u>Unit 4: Lesson 5: At the seaside:</u></b> <i>The Clicks and the Whites are on holiday in Croatia (Croatian flag, Croatian post stamp)</i></p>			
Typical names	<p>English names: <i>Tracy, Luke, Greta and Mick Click; Suzy, Pete, Jenny, Colin, Molly and John White; Monica, David; Mike</i></p> <p>African names: <i>Boobah and Boobo, Toby, Lulu</i></p>	<p>English names: <i>Tracy, Luke, Greta and Mick Click; Suzy, Pete, Jenny, Colin, Molly and John</i></p> <p>Croatian names: <i>Marko, Tanja</i></p> <p>African names: <i>Boobah and Boobo, Toby, Lulu</i></p>	<p>English names: <i>Marge, Mason, Max and Millie Moon; ; Mia Green; Pete Black; Ella from the USA; Molly from England; Jack from Australia; Mary, Henry; Ms Cooper</i></p>	<i>Mr/Mrs/Miss White</i>	<i>Included but no specific examples</i>

<p>Culture-specific elements and children's literature</p>	<p><b><u>Unit 1:</u></b> Lesson 6: A new job: <i>Africa is hot. Africa is a continent.</i> <b><u>Unit 2 (Africa):</u></b> Lesson 1: <u>Tracy is sad:</u> <i>jungle in Africa</i> Lesson 2: <u>African animals:</u> <i>Parrots, crocodiles, zebras, elephants, lions, giraffes, snakes</i> <b><u>Unit 4:</u></b> Lesson 2: Blast – off: English song: <i>Twinkle, twinkle, little star</i></p>	<p><b><u>Starting up:</u></b> English story: Goldilocks and the Three Bears: <b><u>Unit 1:</u></b> Lesson 6: A new job: <i>Africa is hot. Africa is a continent.</i> <b><u>Unit 2 (Africa):</u></b> Lesson 1: <u>Tracy is sad:</u> <i>jungle in Africa</i> Lesson 3: <u>African animals:</u> <i>Parrots, crocodiles, zebras, elephants, lions, giraffes, snakes</i> Lesson 7: <u>Goodbye to Africa:</u> <i>Cultural diversity-task 5, p. 6; photos of various places in Africa – task 7, p. 64</i> <b><u>Unit 4:</u></b> Lesson 2: Blast – off: English song: <i>Twinkle, twinkle, little star</i></p>	<p><b><u>Unit 2:</u></b> Lesson 5: English story: <i>Three Little Pigs</i> <b><u>Unit 6:</u></b> Lesson 5: <u>School uniforms:</u> <i>Learning about uniforms which are not typical for Croatia but for English speaking countries</i> <b><u>Unit 8:</u></b> Lesson 5: English story: <i>Peter Pan's Adventure</i></p>	<p><i>English poetry</i></p>	<p><i>Included but no specific examples</i></p>
<p>National symbols</p>	<p><b><u>Unit 3:</u></b> Lesson 3: <u>At the seaside:</u> <i>Croatian and English flag – task 3, p 68</i></p>	<p><b><u>Starting up:</u></b> Lesson 3: <i>Croatia is a country. The UK is a country, too. (flags and geographic position)</i> <b><u>Unit 3:</u></b> Lesson 3: <u>At the seaside:</u> <i>Croatian flag – task 4, p. 101</i></p>	<p><b><u>Unit 3:</u></b> Lesson 5: <u>Do the maths:</u> <i>Pounds (British currency) – task 1, p.50</i></p>	<p><i>Not included</i></p>	<p><i>Included but no specific examples</i></p>

#### 4.2. *Dip in 2 (2013)*

The authors of this coursebook are Biserka Džeba and Maja Mardešić. It was published in Zagreb in 2013 by *Školska knjiga*. *Dip in 2* contains four units, one pre-unit with first-grade revision and the alphabet, and two extra lessons about Christmas and Easter. Each unit has “super me pages”, which are the revision of units. Students can evaluate how much they learned and what they have to work on more. At the end of the coursebook there is a page of audio scripts that include lyrics of songs and texts of stories students listen to in class (e.g. Tracy is sad). The last five pages contain words and phrases from each lesson and are written in English and translated into Croatian (e.g. basket – košara) – it is called *word list*.

Cultural aspects are mostly divided into separate units – Christmas is mentioned only in a lesson called “Merry Christmas!” Some aspects are integrated into other topics, such as the Croatian flag in the unit about pirates. This book follows *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006) but not everything is included. This coursebook lacks national symbols (it only has two flags which some might not even notice), food, and mentioning of Halloween. However, food, wild animals and African culture are well explained, integrated and spread out through the coursebook equally.

The following table (Table 4) shows examples of various cultural aspects and how they are represented in this coursebook.

Table 4. Cultural aspects in *Dip in 2* (2013)

Cultural aspects	<i>Dip in 2</i> (2013)	
Holidays	Christmas	It is represented by a short story about Santa Claus. There is a drawing of Santa Clause, a bag of presents and sleighs. At the end, there is the text for the <i>Jingle Bells</i> song.
	Easter	This page in the book shows the Easter Bunny hiding Easter eggs around the forest.
Food	Fish and chips	It is represented as dinner (not specific in which culture but the teacher could connect it to England).
	Sundae	There is an African boy eating sundae (made with fruit and vanilla ice – cream) with a lion and a zebra underneath the palm tree.
Countries	Croatia	It is only mentioned once integrated into a topic about pirates. <i>The Clicks and the Whites are on holiday in Croatia.</i>
	Africa	A whole unit is devoted to Africa. Students learn about food, animals and the human body.
	America	Only mentioned in one sentence as part of a yes/no task. <i>Mick's new job is in America.</i>
Typical names	The Clicks	The Clicks are a family of four and are the main characters in this coursebook. Their names are typical of English-speaking countries.
Culture-specific elements – Children's literature	African animals	Mr. Click takes pictures of each animal and the animals tell him about themselves – <i>Gira the Giraffe is yellow and brown, has four legs, a long neck and is tall.</i>
	Nursery rhyme: <i>Twinkle Twinkle Little Star</i>	It is integrated into a unit about astronauts.
National symbols	Croatian and English flags	There is a picture of people sitting at the beach in Croatia (the flag stands behind the lifeguard). There is also the English flag that floats in the water together with Luke Click.

#### 4.3. *Dip in 2* (2020)

The authors of this coursebook are Biserka Džeba and Maja Mardešić. It was published in Zagreb in 2020 by *Školska knjiga*. This edition of *Dip in 2* also contains four units, one pre-unit and lessons about Christmas and Easter. Each unit has a “self-check” section at the end. Students evaluate everything they have learned in that unit and see what they have to work on more. This coursebook, unlike its previous edition, contains a board game which is a revision of everything learned in the second-grade. It also contains two pages of audio script (e.g. The

alphabet song) and seven pages of the word list (e.g. *Take a break – Odmori se*). At the end of the coursebook there are educational outcomes and educational expectations of cross-curricular topics (e.g. Unit 2 – Children’s literature (includes *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*) – personal and social development).

The newest version of *Dip in 2* has a larger quantity of culture-related aspects. Croatia is mentioned more but it is always compared to the UK which was the main goal according to the curriculum. This coursebook follows *Nacionalni Kurikulum (2019)* and includes everything that is required. The textbook is accompanied by extra digital content<sup>4</sup> (*e-sfera*) which is interactive, easy to use and it brings teaching and learning English to the next level. It contains various games students can play on their school gadget (tablets, computers, phones) and every story or song is available for listening.

The following table (Table 5) shows examples of various cultural aspects and how they are represented in this coursebook.

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<sup>4</sup> A digital platform for learning and teaching provided by the publisher, and it is available at <https://www.e-sfera.hr/>

Table 5. Cultural aspects in *Dip in 2* (2020)

Cultural aspects	<i>Dip in 2</i> (2020)	
Holidays	Christmas	It is represented by a short story about Santa Claus. There is a drawing of Santa Clause, a bag of presents and sleighs. At the end there is the text for the <i>Jingle Bells</i> song. There is also a task where you can wish someone Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
	Easter	This page in the book shows the Easter Bunny hiding Easter eggs around the forest.
Food	Fish and chips	It is represented as a school lunch (not specific in which culture but the teacher could connect it to England).
	Sundae	There is an African boy eating sundae (made with fruit and vanilla ice – cream) with a lion and a zebra underneath the palm tree.
Countries	Croatia	A whole page (“Super me”) is devoted to Croatia – it says that it is a country we live in, we speak the Croatian language, a picture of the Croatian flag and its place in Europe.
	Africa	A whole unit is devoted to Africa. Students learn about food, animals and the human body. There are also pictures of African nature (deserts, waterfalls, jungles).
	United Kingdom	On the same page where everything about Croatia is, there are also the same things for the UK (the flag, geographic position, the language they speak) .
Typical names	The alphabets	The students have both Croatian and English alphabet in order to compare them. There are typical English names – Dave, Suzy, Tracy. There are also Croatian names – Tanja, Marko.
Culture-specific element: Children’s literature	African animals	Mr. Click takes pictures of each animal and the animals tell him about themselves – <i>Gira the Giraffe is yellow and brown, has four legs, a long neck and is tall.</i>
	Nursery rhyme: <i>Twinkle Twinkle Little Star</i>	It is integrated into a unit about astronauts.
	Story: <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i>	The whole story is formed as a picture book and it is much shorter than the original which we can find on the next page. In the first text the students notice opposites (hot-cold; high-low).
National symbols	Croatian and English flags	There is a picture of people sitting at the beach in Croatia (the flag stands behind the lifeguard). There is also the English flag that floats in the water together with Luke Click. There is also a Croatian post stamp with a Croatian football player on it.

#### 4.4. *Tiptoes 2 (2020)*

The authors of this coursebook are Daniela Reić Šućur, Haidi Mimica Tudor, Suzana Ban and Anita Žepina. It was published in Zagreb in 2020 by *Školska knjiga*. Before the list of contents there is a page with explanations of certain symbols which are found in tasks (e.g. the eye symbol means “look” and in Croatian it means *gledaj*). The same as the previously analyzed *Dip in 2* coursebooks, it also contains a pre-unit that includes a revision of the first-grade and a story about colors. It is divided into eight units plus extra lessons about Christmas and Easter. This coursebook does not contain audio scripts or word lists. At the end of the coursebook there are stickers that are used in various lessons (e.g. missing school supplies in unit 3, lesson 1, task 3, p. 43). There are also educational outcomes and educational expectations of cross-curricular topics.

*Tiptoes 2* does not include many culture-related aspects. Many topics are culturally neutral (for example, food and names: *Max, Marge, a potato, a lemon, an orange, bread, cheese, popcorn*). There is a traditional English story (*The Three Little Pigs*) that is very well adjusted for this age group – it is divided into three scenes, it does not have a lot of text, and it has repetition. Like the previous coursebook *Dip in 2 (2020)*, it also includes the *e-sfera* platform providing extra digital content. This coursebook follows *Nacionalni kurikulum* (MZO, 2019). One excellent feature of this coursebook is that it contains Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)<sup>5</sup>. *Tiptoes 2* contains information about student’s families, traffic, mathematics, musical instruments, pets, school uniforms, food and free time. All of these topics are important in order to be able to interact with English speakers.

The following table (Table 6) shows examples of various cultural aspects and how they are represented in this coursebook.

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<sup>5</sup> Learning a second language and another school subject at the same time (Marsh, 1994).



Table 6. Cultural aspects in *Tiptoes 2* (2020)

Cultural aspects	<i>Tiptoes 2</i> (2020)	
Holidays	Christmas	There is a picture of Santa Claus and students have to guess who it is. There are instructions on how to make a Christmas card and lyrics to <i>Jingle Bells</i> . Students can write a letter to Santa.
	Easter	There is a chant about Easter and instructions on how to make an Easter card.
Food	Fruit and vegetables	Not specific for any culture.
	Meat	Not specific for any culture.
Countries	Croatia	Is not mentioned in this coursebook.
	UK, Australia	Lesson about school uniforms which are typical for the UK and Australia.
Typical names	Ms Cooper	A story about a student talking to Ms Cooper.
Children's literature	Story: <i>Three Little Pigs</i>	This story is divided into three scenes and there are pictures with a small amount of text. There are post-reading tasks (match, yes/no, act out the story).
	Story: <i>Peter Pan's Adventure</i>	A story about Peter Pan with pictures and not much text. There are post-reading tasks (match, draw the funniest moment, act out the story).
National symbols	English currency	Through doing math in English, students also learn the currency – pound (£) which is British.

#### 4.5. The presence of Croatian culture in the three analyzed coursebooks

The presence of Croatian culture in these three coursebooks is almost unnoticeable. There are no particular indications of Croatian culture. In both *Dip in 2* editions, there is a picture of the Croatian flag. In the newer version of *Dip in 2*, there are Croatian names (Marko and Tanja), there is a picture of a beach in Croatia (Zlatni rat, the island of Brač), and there is a picture of a famous Croatian football player (Luka Modrić). These coursebooks are not meant to teach students about the Croatian culture, but other cultures, such as African, American, Australian and British culture. In *Tiptoes 2* there is a lesson about school uniforms which are not present in the Croatian culture, but can be found in Australia and Great Britain. There is also a picture of the yellow school bus, which is very typical of American culture.

The presence of Croatian culture	
<i>Dip in 2</i> (2013)	Unit 3, Lesson 5: At the seaside; p. 68: the only presence of Croatian culture is in the illustration at the beach – there is the Croatian flag
<i>Dip in 2</i> (2020)	Starting up, Lesson 3: Super me, page 13 has the Croatian flag, and the map of Europe with Croatia marked on it with red color. Starting up, Lesson 4: The Alphabet, page 15, task 9: song about friends (Tanja and Marko). Task 10: Croatian vs English alphabet. Unit 4, Lesson 5: At the seaside, page 101, task 4: the protagonists are on holiday in Croatia. There is a picture of Zlatni Rat which is a beach on the island of Brač. The post stamp has a picture of a famous Croatian football player – Luka Modrić.
<i>Tiptoes 2</i> (2020)	No evident presence of Croatian culture.

#### 4.6. Discussion

The analyzed coursebooks include a fair amount of cultural aspects for this age group. In second-grade, the emphasis is on linguistic competence and not intercultural. “In early language learning in primary school (the first four grades), the main goal is to develop awareness of the language and sensitivity of students to other language systems or the knowledge that there are many languages and cultures other than the mother tongue” (Bilić Štefan, 2008, p. 233). That is why it is important to highly motivate students. The cultures available in the analyzed coursebooks are African, Croatian and British culture. Both versions of *Dip in 2* contain a lot of information about Africa in one whole unit. The topics in this unit are nature, food and animals and it makes a lot of sense to include African culture in these topics. For example, Africa is a natural habitat for many wild animals, and it is natural to learn it in a lesson dedicated to Africa rather than the UK (*Dip in 2*, 2020; p. 48 – 50)

There are no major differences between the 2013 and 2020 *Dip in 2* editions. They both have the same units, but the newer edition is extended. It includes more games, stories and comparing cultures (such as comparing the Croatian and English alphabet). At the end of each unit in both editions there is a “self-check” page where students do various tasks from the previous lessons in order to see how much they progressed. This can be useful for teachers as well because they can quickly and easily check how much their students know and what has to be explained again.

The main difference between the two 2020 editions is that *Tiptoes 2* includes CLIL. It enables students to take advantage of the connections between language and specific subject-related content. CLIL also develops cultural awareness, knowledge learning, and communication strategies. *Tiptoes 2* is more colorful and closer to children (uses Batman characters and dinosaurs), but there are not many culture-related aspects and no evident presence of Croatian culture. Both 2020 editions use the *e-sfera* platform with various digital

content. *E-sfera* helps teachers to prepare for their lessons with more ease and more efficiently and is accessible with one click on the phone, tablet or computer.

The most significant difference between the old and new curricula is the amount of content. Although both the curricula include intercultural competence, *Nacionalni Kurikulum* (2019) is more focused on students. It is designed to encourage students to think outside the box and to react positively toward unfamiliar cultural encounters. The newer edition of *Dip in 2* and *Tiptoes 2* are expanded versions of older books, meaning that the content is the same, but there is more practice. The best feature in the 2020 editions is “My School Project”. Students have their own portfolio, and at the end of each lesson they get a project to do. For example, do a poster (*Tiptoes 2*, p. 23) or an animal mobile (*Tiptoes 2*, p. 79). These are concrete examples of the usage of CLIL because students have both English and art class.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Teaching culture is an essential part of teaching English as a foreign language if we want to promote intercultural communicative competence which is one of the domains included in the *Nacionalni Kurikulum* (2019) and one of the three main sections in *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006). Although both *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* (2006) and *Nacionalni Kurikulum* (2019) have intercultural competence as one of their obligatory sections, it only exists in terms of “starting up” and slowly educating students about different cultures. In the first four grades of primary school<sup>6</sup>, students primarily focus on learning the basics of a foreign language, and from the fifth grade, they start learning more about culture. It is understandable that when they are more mature, students can better understand the cultural input, and they can express themselves better because they have better linguistic and cognitive competence. English is a school subject that provides Croatian students with the majority of their cultural knowledge regarding the English-speaking parts of the world, and that is why its cultural content needs to keep developing.

All three analyzed coursebooks follow the cultural demands prescribed by both analyzed curricula and thus contain the required cultural topics (e.g., holidays, food, typical names, etc.). There is no evidence showing a particular focus on British or American culture. Croatian culture is incorporated into two out of three coursebooks, which needs to change. In

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<sup>6</sup> Croatian primary school consists of 8 grades. The lower primary is 1-4, and the upper primary is 5-8.

order for students to understand other cultures, they need to understand their own. Pictures of Croatia, or a lesson about animals in the “Maksimir” Zoo could be some examples of how simple it is to include Croatian culture in second-grade coursebooks. The coursebooks cover English-speaking cultures as well as non-native English-speaking countries and continents, such as Africa. While learning about African animals, students also learn sentence structure “*I have got/ I’ve got*” and body parts (*head, neck, body, back, tail, etc.*), which is a perfect example of incorporating culture and grammar. Based on the analysis described in this thesis, it can be concluded that language and culture are inseparable. Exposing language learners to the target culture appears to be essential for successful foreign language teaching. However, since the analyzed coursebooks still do not fully meet the criteria for intercultural language education, intercultural communicative competence will depend on the teacher, who needs to be aware of the cultural aims and outcomes stated in the National Curriculum and should know how to implement them in the classroom. The Croatian school system will keep modernizing and improving until it provides sufficient resources for teaching culture and incorporating it in other subjects as well.

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