

Faculty of Education

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**Master's Thesis**

**Texts to inspire learning about diversity in  
the Norwegian EFL classroom:**

**An analysis of *Citizens YF*'s promotion of  
intercultural competence**

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2LUOPP3

**Spring 2024**

## **Acknowledgements**

The last day of my 5-year-long education has alarmingly arrived. This process of writing a master's thesis has felt never-ending and tedious, yet fulfilling and rewarding.

I chose to write about intercultural competence because I wanted to better comprehend this vital concept in today's society, where distances are diminishing. Learners of today and the future need to know how to communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds in a curious, but respectful manner in order to prevent prejudice and discrimination.

Thank you to my supervisors Sverre Arve Myklebost and Knut Øystein Høvik for giving me plenty of help along the way, this would have been impossible without you. I also want to say thank you to all my co-students who graduate alongside me, and good luck with life as teachers.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for the moral support along the way and for having faith in me.

Additionally, I need to thank my roommate Juliane for being there for me these five years. Your support has meant more than you know, and I will always appreciate our friendship.

And lastly, a special thank you to Jakob, for being there for me throughout this process, and for dealing with my ups and downs. Thank you for the necessary distractions at crucial times.

Ingrid Dyrud Støre

Hamar, May 2024

## Abstract

According to the current curriculum, LK20, education should promote knowledge of culture and intercultural competence. Additionally, previous research shows that many Norwegian EFL teachers rely heavily on textbooks for their lessons, and that they may find culture to be a perplexing concept. On account of this, I chose to analyze and discuss, through the methods of textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics, how the textbook *Citizens YF* promotes and emphasizes intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in light of Michael Byram's theory. The findings indicated a focus on texts which highlighted cultural diversity and specific aspects of different cultures, as well as attitudes towards them, knowledge about them, and skills promoted through them. Furthermore, the findings showed an emphasis on authentic language use in different contexts, knowledge which may be taken for granted by people of other cultural backgrounds, and conventional standards as well as nuances of various cultures. However, there were also findings indicating instances where the attainment of intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence can potentially be impeded. This includes examples where prejudice, stereotyping, and ill-informed opinions may be furthered.

## Norsk sammendrag

Etter gjeldende læreplan, LK20, skal utdanning fremme kunnskap om kultur og interkulturell kompetanse. I tillegg viser tidligere forskning at mange norske engelsklærere kan være avhengige av lærebøker i undervisningstimene sine, og at de kan synes at kultur er et komplekst konsept. På bakgrunn av dette valgte jeg å analysere og diskutere, ved bruk av metodene lærebokanalyse og multimodal sosial semiotikk, hvordan læreboken *Citizens YF* fremmer og vektlegger interkulturell kompetanse og interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse i lys av Michael Byrams teori. Funnene indikerte et fokus på tekster som fremhevet kulturelt mangfold og spesifikke aspekter ved ulike kulturer, samt holdninger til dem, kunnskap om dem og ferdigheter fremmet gjennom dem. Videre viser funnene en vektlegging på autentisk språkbruk i ulike kontekster, kunnskap som kan tas for gitt av mennesker med annen kulturell bakgrunn, og konvensjonelle standarder samt nyanser hos ulike kulturer. Det var imidlertid også funn som indikerer tilfeller hvor oppnåelse av interkulturell kompetanse og interkulturell kommunikativ kompetanse kan potensielt hindres. Dette inkluderer eksempler der fordommer, stereotyper og lite informerte meninger mulig fremmes.

## Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 Relevance of thesis .....	3
1.2 Thesis aim and research question .....	4
1.3 Scope of the study .....	4
1.4 Structure .....	6
<b>2. Background</b> .....	6
2.1 Council of Europe: .....	6
2.1.2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages .....	7
2.2 LK20 .....	8
2.2.1 Core Curriculum .....	9
2.2.2 Curriculum in the English subject .....	10
<b>3. Previous research</b> .....	11
3.1 Lund (2012) .....	11
3.2 Risager (2018) .....	14
<b>4. Theory</b> .....	16
4.1 What is culture? .....	16
4.2 Intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence .....	16
4.2.1 Attitudes and critical cultural awareness .....	20
4.2.2 Knowledge .....	22
4.2.3 Skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction .....	23
4.2.4 Competences .....	25
4.3 Summary of theory .....	26
<b>5. Method</b> .....	27
5.1 Textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics .....	28
5.2 Quality criteria of good teaching materials in the English subject .....	29
<b>6. Analysis and discussion</b> .....	30

6.1 <i>Citizens YF</i> .....	30
6.1.1 Attitudes and critical cultural awareness .....	31
6.1.2 Knowledge .....	42
6.1.3 Skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction.....	55
<b>7. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>67</b>
7.1 Summary of findings .....	68
7.2 Limitations of findings and suggestions for further research.....	70
<b>Reference list</b> .....	<b>72</b>

## Table of figures

Figure 1. Cover of Citizens YF. (Cover design by Erlend Askhov. Cover illustration by ©ShotPrime Studio/stock.adobe.com, Getty Images. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, Cappelen Damm) .....	5
Figure 2. “White nationalists and neo-Nazis during a rally in Charlottesville, USA.” (Photo by NTBscanpix. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175, Cappelen Damm) .....	35
Figure 3. "Calais, France. A migrant in the refugee camp called “the Jungle” in October, 2016." (Photo by NTBscanpix. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140, Cappelen Damm) .....	39
Figure 4. Three different occupations. (Photo by iStock/Getty Images. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 20-21, Cappelen Damm).....	46
Figure 5. "A girl is playing in Dharavi, Mumbai - one of the largest slums in the world". (Photo by NTBscanpix. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33, Cappelen Damm).....	52
Figure 6. "Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer in a scene from The Help". (Photo by NTBscanpix. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70, Cappelen Damm) .....	58
Figure 7. Body language: Folded arms. (Photo by iStock/Getty Images. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 78, Cappelen Damm).....	63

# 1. Introduction

Education should provide learners with cultural knowledge and local, national and international perspectives. This is made clear throughout the curriculum of LK20, with its many references to ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural competence’ (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 3, 5). Despite this strong focus however, there is little explicit emphasis on culture in the competence aims for Vg1 vocational learners. The only competence aim after Vg1 vocational studies that specifically mentions culture is this: “discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in cultural forms of expression in English from different media in the English-speaking world, including music, film and gaming” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 11). This is sweeping and strikingly open-ended, which leaves some questions unanswered and provides some challenges for the production and use of teaching materials in vocational studies. Due to this, I have chosen to analyze and discuss how a vocational studies textbook (*Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1* (Andersen et al., 2020)) promotes intercultural competence, based on the English subject curriculum’s emphasis on this matter. I will also use some of the suggestions from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training’s (2021) *Kunnskapsgrunnlag i engelsk (Knowledge basis in the English subject)*. Specifically, I will be using some suggestions from the chapter titled *Kva kjenneteiknar eit godt læremiddel for engelskfaget?* (What characterizes good teaching material in the English subject?) which proposes suitable qualities that should be found in teaching materials in the English subject based on the quality criteria that the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has developed for teachers. This section will be further highlighted in chapter 5 where I explain my method in this thesis.

English plays an important role in the teaching of intercultural competence. This can be seen in the various times the word *culture* is used throughout the English subject curriculum, such as in the first sentence in the section ‘About the subject’: “English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding, communication, all-round education and identity development” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 5). This shows that the purpose of the English subject is to teach the learners about culture and its importance. This can be connected to the interdisciplinary topic ‘Health and life skills’, which states the following: “The ability to handle situations that require linguistic and cultural competence can give pupils a sense of achievement and help them develop a positive self-image and a secure identity.” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). Here, the phrase *cultural*



*competence* is used, which in combination with the Core Curriculum's emphasis on *international* cultural knowledge is one of the leads to this thesis' focus, which is on *intercultural competence*. According to the core elements of the English subject curriculum, intercultural competence is based on knowledge of, and experience with, cultural diversity, which will help learners manage "different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). This means that learners must acquire knowledge of other cultures, and be able to understand others' way of thinking, living and being, in addition to their own culture.

As mentioned, the curriculum focuses strongly on culture, yet there is only one competence aim after Vg1 vocational studies that uses the word, and it is far-reaching and ambitious. Not only does it expect the teacher to create a lesson where the learners should discuss and reflect on form, content, language features *and* literary devices, it also does not specify which kinds of cultural forms they should be focusing on (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 11). Additionally, it does not explain what cultural forms are or how they should be discussed. This is in contrast to a similar competence aim after Year 7 which has a more precise phrasing: "investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 8). Here, the learners are expected to explore different ways of living both in different countries outside of Norway, as well as within the country. Additionally, they are expected to be able to reflect on cultural belonging as well as identity, which indicates that the learners should see a connection between culture and identity. This competence aim is more specific than the one after Vg1, but that could be due to the learners being of a much younger age at this stage, with a lower expectation of competence level than those after Vg1. Taking this into account, the competence aim after Year 10 is perhaps a better comparison in accordance with Vg1 learners' expected levels of comprehension: "explore and present the content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interests" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 9). Here, cultural forms are still not explained or specified, but at least the approach is specified to be based on the learners' personal interests. By making the competence aim after Vg1 as open-ended as it is can be somewhat problematic because it reduces the requirements of what needs to be taught. Considering this, textbooks can be a useful guide for teachers in their pursuit of achieving these competence aims. This is one of the reasons why I have chosen to analyze how *Citizens YF* emphasizes intercultural competence.

## 1.1 Relevance of thesis

Norwegian teachers of EFL (English as a foreign language) have a long tradition of relying on textbooks in their lessons (Bakken, 2018, p. 2; Charboneau, 2016, p. 327). This reliance on textbooks is somewhat surprising given that the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2023a) does not specify which approaches, methods or materials should be used to attain the various competence goals after each year (p. 1). Additionally, since the repeal of the approval system for teaching materials in 2000 (Bratholm, 2001), teachers are not required to use textbooks in their teaching. This would potentially create a high degree of autonomy among teachers, but in fact many EFL teachers still choose to strictly follow a textbook-based approach (Charboneau, 2016, p. 430). While there has been little research done on the usage of textbooks among upper secondary teachers in Norway, Bakken (2018), Drew et al. (2007) and Charboneau (2016) have studied how reliant primary school teachers are on textbooks (p. iii; p. 327; p. 236). It is likely that their findings are applicable to secondary education as well.

Charboneau's doctoral thesis from 2016 studies how teachers in four schools use different approaches to reading instruction in EFL classrooms in Norway (pp. i, 181). In this study, she discovers that "the majority of Norwegian EFL teachers primarily use a textbook-based approach" (Charboneau, 2016, p. 430). Bakken's (2018) doctoral thesis also contains similar results (p. 2). Bakken's (2018) study is based on 18 interviews with different primary school teachers on the topic of their chosen text-selection approaches in EFL classrooms (pp. iii, 4, 19). Here, it is stated Norwegian EFL teachers "rely heavily" (Bakken, 2018, p. 2) and almost exclusively on textbooks as their tool for planning lessons. Additionally, both Bakken (2018) and Charboneau (2016) mention that the use of a textbook-based approach by EFL teachers have a long tradition in Norway (p. 2; p. 327). This can be seen in an earlier study by Drew et al. (2007) which found similar results: "In Norway there is a heavy dependence on the use of a course-book. Seven out of ten of the teachers in the sample use a course-book exclusively" (Drew et al., 2007, p. 327). These studies then demonstrate how textbooks are and have been widely used by many Norwegian teachers of English. Teaching based solely on the interpretative monopoly of the textbooks will thus have implications for how the subject is taught in Norwegian EFL classrooms.

An additional issue beyond the adherence to textbooks is that teachers can find culture to be a perplexing concept that is hard to define. This was stated in an article by Larzén-Östermark in 2008, after she interviewed 13 Finnish-Swedish teachers: "The majority of the interviewed teachers perceive culture as something highly complex that cannot be defined with one or two

words only” (p. 534). Considering that these teachers were of a Nordic background, a similar sentiment can likely be found among Norwegian teachers. This further amplifies the responsibility of textbooks to portray culture in various forms, as teachers may need assistance in understanding and teaching the concept of culture.

Considering this, the relevance of this thesis lies in its combined investigation of these two issues: if teachers have problems defining or understanding culture, and if they find their answers and way forward in textbooks, studying these textbooks is clearly of value and interest.

## 1.2 Thesis aim and research question

The curriculum emphasizes cultural insight in education, in accordance with the Education Act (the Education Act, 1998, §1-1; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 3).

Similarly, the English subject curriculum also emphasizes cultural insight, but specified as *intercultural competence* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyze and discuss how intercultural competence is expressed in six texts in *Citizens YF* on account of teaching and learning intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. The focus will be on how these competences are emphasized and promoted, as well as how certain portrayals of cultures can be problematized as disadvantageous. The analysis and discussion will be based on Michael Byram’s theory of intercultural (and communicative) competence, as well as the curriculum’s focus on intercultural competence and previous research in this field. Considering this, the aim of this thesis is to answer the following research question:

“How does *Citizens YF* promote intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in light of Michael Byram’s theory?”

## 1.3 Scope of the study

The data gathered for this is based on a case study of a textbook that covers the vocational side of the English subject in Norwegian upper secondary education: *Citizens YF*. While the study may not provide a representative overview of the potential variables of the topic in other textbooks, focusing on only one textbook allows for a greater and more detailed focus of how intercultural competence is emphasized in *Citizens YF*. Considering the widespread use of this textbook, based on personal experience, and given that most learners typically use just one textbook at a time, focusing solely on this textbook is both realistic and relevant. Additionally,

the reason for choosing this specific textbook is based on its emphasis on intercultural competence, which is already indicated on the cover (see figure 1).



Figure 1. Cover of *Citizens YF*. (Cover design by Erlend Askhov. Cover illustration by ©ShotPrime Studio/stock.adobe.com, Getty Images. From “*Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1*” by Andersen et al., 2020, Cappelen Damm)

The cover of *Citizens YF* indicates a focus on work which is consistent with the aim of being relevant to learners of vocational studies. Additionally, this cover indicates a focus on cultural diversity, by portraying different people of various appearances and genders. This is in line with the English subject curriculum’s emphasis on intercultural competence (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3) and the focus of this thesis.

Considering that the current curriculum is newly implemented (from 2020), this field of research is insufficiently studied. This explains the lack of previous research done in connection with LK20 curriculum. My hope with this thesis is therefore to build upon and expand knowledge within this field.

## 1.4 Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, which explains the rationale and aim of this thesis. After the introduction, the background for my project is addressed, which explores how modern ideas about culture at work in LK20 are rooted in work performed within the Council of Europe. Subsequently, I outline findings in previous research on similar textbooks before I describe Michael Byram's theory of intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. After this my chosen method is explained, which is a combination of textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics, before I give an overview of the *Knowledge basis*' quality criteria of teaching materials in the English subject. Chapter 6 consists of my analysis and discussion of the findings which demonstrate how intercultural competence is emphasized in *Citizens YF*, based on previously mentioned theory, research, and the curriculum. Lastly, I will conclude this thesis by drawing together, synthesizing and summarizing the findings of the data gathered.

## 2. Background

This chapter will outline the background for this thesis, which is firstly based on the Council of Europe and one of its works, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Secondly, the background for this thesis is the curriculum LK20, where I explain how it emphasizes culture in various places throughout both the Core Curriculum as well as the English subject curriculum. The reason for this, is because there is a connection between the framework and LK20 in how it emphasizes intercultural competence.

### 2.1 Council of Europe:

The Council of Europe and its works has been an inspiration and a significant influence on the curriculum in Norway since the 1980s (Simensen, 2020, p. 31). The Council aspires to establish harmony between its member states and assist in their progress, both economically and socially, by creating a common basis for foreign language teaching in all European countries (Council of Europe, 1949, p. 1; Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). The organization has published various significant works on topics such as democracy, quality education and intercultural understanding (Speitz, 2020, p. 46). Among these works are: the self-assessment tool for learners, the European Language Portfolio (*ELP*) (Council of Europe, n.d.b), the reflection tool for language teacher education (*EPOSTL*) (European Centre for Modern Languages, n.d.), and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*CEFR*)

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Taking the scope of the thesis into consideration, the focus will be on the latter work, the CEFR.

### 2.1.2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The CEFR was first published in 2001. By this time the CEFR had already gained impact on curriculum design in member states of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, n.d.a). The CEFR had been translated into 40 languages and was referenced by most European countries (Council of Europe, n.d.a). Additionally, the CEFR “had already become possibly the most influential publication in language education, being used worldwide to inform innovation in curriculum, teaching, and assessment” (Council of Europe, n.d.a). The way the CEFR influenced language education was through its guidelines and aspirations of creating “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Moreover, the CEFR states that “education policy makers” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 11) should reflect on the outcomes of their learning objectives, and how these learning objectives should be “coherent and transparent” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 11). This means that the CEFR has clear guidelines for creating curricula which establish a common basis for language teaching in all of Europe, including a common basis for textbooks.

The most recent version of the CEFR is the 2020 version. This version continues the original aim of the 2001 version, by stating that the CEFR “aims to help language professionals further improve the quality and effectiveness of language learning and teaching” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28). The way the CEFR aims to do this is by teaching languages as processes of communication, and by focusing on teaching and learning above assessing (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28). Additionally, the CEFR brings forward a new concept of the learner, as a “social agent” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28). This means that the CEFR promotes a learner who engages with the learning and its material, and who is allowed to make decisions for him- or herself where it is needed. This “action-oriented approach” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28) creates a shift from curricula based on an undeviating progression through fixed notions of accomplishments, to curricula based on “needs analysis” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28). The CEFR goes on to explain that this shift goes from a focus on what the learners ‘cannot do’ to a focus on what the learners ‘can do’; ‘proficiency’ over ‘deficiency’. The idea of this design for future curricula is that the curricula should be based on “real-world communicative needs” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28), which will help the learners learn what they need to know in a language in order to function outside of school.

One of the ideals that the CEFR wishes to establish in curricula is an ideal of an education which promotes plurilingualism and intercultural competence (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 11, 27). Plurilingualism is explained as the shifting competence of a dynamic linguistic repertoire of a learner (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). Intercultural competence is not “highly developed” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 31) in the CEFR, but the 2020 version refers to the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* by Beacco et al. (2016) for more information on this ability. This guide explains intercultural competence as such:

Intercultural competence, ... is the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, to analyse that experience and to derive benefit from it. Once acquired, intercultural competence makes it easier to understand otherness, establish cognitive and affective links between past and new experiences of otherness, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of one’s own cultural group and environment. (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 10)

Otherness is based on the notion of racism as an irrational development where communities differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘self’ and ‘other’ (Balibar, 2005, p. 20). The Council of Europe (2018) clarifies that in order for the learners to deal with otherness, they need to be able to recognize similarities and differences between cultures and use known and unknown cultural aspects to communicate and collaborate successfully (p. 122). Considering this, the goals of the Council of Europe (which influenced the goals of LK20) in regard to the educational ideal is therefore to create an education which emphasizes intercultural competence. Considering this, LK20 should also emphasize intercultural competence in a similar manner.

## 2.2 LK20

The textbook used in this study is based on LK20, which in turn is inspired by the CEFR and intercultural theory. Due to LK20 being inspired by the CEFR, the LK20’s relevance will be further explained here. Specifically I will focus on LK20’s Core Curriculum as well as the English subject curriculum’s requirements for vocational learners in upper secondary education in Norway.

The curriculum in Norway is developed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2023b). According to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2023a), the curriculum describes the competence the students must achieve throughout different stages of their education (p. 1). This means that the curriculum is a policy document which establishes guides and sets standards for what teachers can teach, and what must be taught in order to achieve these competence aims.

For the sake of simplicity, I will use the all-encompassing term ‘learners’ in this thesis when referring to the target audience of *Citizens YF*, because the Core Curriculum refers to “pupils, apprentices, training candidates, certificate of practice candidates and adult participants” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 2), whilst the curriculum in the English subject refers to “pupils” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2).

### 2.2.1 Core Curriculum

As mentioned, in the section ‘The purpose of the education’ of the Core Curriculum it is stated that the education will give learners “cultural insight” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 3). This is further explained in the section titled ‘Identity and cultural diversity’, where it states that cultural insight “will give them a good foundation in their lives and help each pupil to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 5). This means that the Core Curriculum emphasizes cultural insight as a vital part of the learners’ lives and that cultural insight will aid in identity development, in addition to creating an inclusive and diverse space. This section of the Core Curriculum specifies Norwegian cultural heritage as important, and that it is based on Christian and humanist traditions, as well as the indigenous Sami people’s cultures and traditions (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 6). It also asserts that “language skills and cultural understanding are growing in importance” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 6-7), due to the world becoming smaller and the population more diverse. This is then connected to the need of supporting identity development among learners, in order to make them certain of who they are, and in order for them to be able to participate in society (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 6-7). This emphasis on culture is also clear in the English subject curriculum.



## 2.2.2 Curriculum in the English subject

The curriculum in the English subject reiterates the importance of intercultural understanding. This can be seen in the section ‘Relevance and central values’, where it says that the learners should attain insight into “different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 2). Additionally, the curriculum mentions that the learners need to understand that their world views are culture dependent, which can be learned through experience with cultural diversity (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 2-3). This is also stated in the section with the interdisciplinary topic ‘Democracy and citizenship’, where the focus is on promoting curiosity and preventing prejudices by helping the learners experience different cultures (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). A way the learners can experience cultural diversity is by gaining knowledge of culture and society through critically reviewing various types of texts in English. This is mentioned in the section ‘Working with texts in English’, where it also says that this knowledge of cultural diversity will result in the learners developing intercultural competence (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, the curriculum in English mentions that the learners will, through working with different texts in English, attain “the foundation for seeing their own identity and others’ identities in a [...] multicultural context” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3), which again reinforces the emphasis on culture in the English subject. The word ‘text’ is also explained in this section, as a broad term encompassing “writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3), and more, all aiming to express and present a message. This view of text will also be used in this thesis.

The focus on culture can also be seen in the other interdisciplinary topic ‘Health and life skills’, where it is stated that the learners should be able to understand different ways of living and thinking, which will require cultural competence (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, this will give the learners a “sense of achievement” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3), which will further aid them in their journey to become more culturally aware of their own as well as others’ culture. Based on this, both the Core Curriculum and the curriculum in the English subject focus on culture, and the latter specifically highlights intercultural competence in a similar manner to the CEFR. This should inspire *Citizens YF* to do the same.

### 3. Previous research

There has been little previous research done in the field of analyzing textbooks for their emphasis on intercultural competence in accordance with the current curriculum LK20, but considering how newly implemented it is, this is understandable. Nevertheless, some research exists in conjunction with previous curriculum (Lund, 2012, p. 46), as well as previous research of various textbook analyses based on textbooks for the English subject in other countries (Risager, 2018, pp. 32-33). Considering how Lund's (2012) article is based on older curricula, it may not have as much relevance to the English subject of today, but it does provide similar sentiments to the importance of intercultural competence, as well as a comparable method of analysis to my own. Bearing this in mind, I have chosen to include Lund's article from 2012 and Risager's book from 2018 in this thesis.

#### 3.1 Lund (2012)

Ragnhild Lund's (2012) article analyzes four textbooks based on the L-97 curriculum and five textbooks from the LK-06 curriculum in light of intercultural competence (p. 46). A possible weakness in terms of relevance to my thesis is that this article focuses on lower secondary textbooks (p. 42) as opposed to my chosen textbook which is meant for the upper secondary. Despite this, similar results can conceivably be found in textbooks meant for upper secondary learners, which is why I have chosen to include this article. Lund (2012) explains that there is a certain agreement in the field of intercultural competence that it consists of cognitive, affective and behavioral components which is usually described within the field of foreign language didactics as *knowledge*, *skills* and *attitudes* (Lund, 2012, p. 43). Due to this, the findings in this article are presented in accordance with these three aspects. Lund (2012) outlines how the selected texts and the accompanying tasks were chosen based on a categorization of which topic they deal with (p. 47). This was done in order to determine which kind of cultural knowledge is emphasized and how cultural challenges are brought to light and discussed (Lund, 2012, p. 47).

The findings start off with the question of which kind of *knowledge* is emphasized in the textbooks (Lund, 2012, p. 47). Here, she explains that all the textbooks attempt to broaden the learner's understanding of the world, but they primarily focus on history and heritage from the U.K. and the U.S. Lund (2012) also mentions that more recent editions of these textbooks contain more current content, offering the learners insight into these countries and how to interact with their citizens, as well as relevant terminology that can be necessary to know (p.

47). She states that this is done in order to enhance the learners' linguistic and cultural competence. Additionally, the textbooks based on LK-06 prioritize everyday language conventions and common rules of conduct (Lund, 2012, p. 48). However, these are often presented very briefly and often as a form of joke or anecdote, which is insufficient considering how vital this information can be to the learners if they were to visit these countries. In addition to this, the authors of these more recent textbooks have attempted to convey knowledge in a more interesting and motivating manner for the learners by, for example, including facts about rare animals in Australia and exotic destinations in Africa. However, this information outlines a role for the learner as a tourist, making it doubtful to contribute to authentic experiences needed in learning intercultural competence (Lund, 2012, p. 48). Furthermore, Lund (2012) states that there is a significant difference between the textbooks in how they address contemporary societal issues, with some textbooks emphasizing it, and some not. When such topics are presented, the connected tasks make it clear that the learners should form their own informed opinions on these topics (Lund, 2012, p. 48). After this, the article goes on to portray the findings of skills in the textbooks.

One of the findings under the section of *skills* is about how the textbooks demonstrate how language is used differently depending on the context (Lund, 2012, p. 48). This is both depending on the situation and the people they are talking to. The fictional texts are vital in this regard, due to them containing as close to authentic and 'natural' language in everyday situations as possible. Still, for the learners to actually benefit from these examples, the relevant tasks and commentaries need to explicitly focus on them, and this is barely done in the L-97 textbooks. Nonetheless, Lund (2012) mentions that there has been a shift in this approach in the LK-06 textbooks (pp. 48-49). One example of this is a conversation between two American boys who use sports idioms/phrases outside of sports, even when they talk about love. Additionally, multiple of the LK-06 textbooks mention slang such as 'gonna' to highlight characteristics of oral, informal language, and one of these textbooks includes a blog post where the learners are tasked with finding examples of such words and expressions. Furthermore, the learners are made aware of how relations to the people they are talking to can affect their language use. This is explained in an excerpt from one of the textbooks, where it states that how they talk to their grandparents is most likely different to how they talk to their friends. Lund (2012) ends this section by stating that even though the LK-06 textbooks include more aspects of the variations of language use in context, there are basically no tasks that encourage the learners to practice this knowledge in different situations (p. 49).

Under the section of *attitudes* in Lund's (2012) article, she states that there has been a significant development from 1997 to 2006 in recognizing the need to address the students' attitudes to questions concerning cultural background (p. 49). The LK-06 textbooks include a greater amount of cultural diversity and encourage the learners to gain an external perspective of themselves, and reflect as well as discuss their attitudes of other cultures. In the textbooks based on L-97 there are many depictions of famous people, but very few of ordinary people in everyday situations, which is in contrast to the more recent textbooks. Lund (2012) goes on to explain that the learners are more likely to be interested in foreign cultural expressions if they are presented by 'real people', for example through listening to interviews from young people from the target country (p. 50). This can be an encouraging starting point for the learners in the process of forming their own attitudes. Additionally, some of the texts in the LK-06 textbooks make the learners aware of different attitudes that people can have, which is important because they will likely encounter this outside of school. It is also stated that very few of these texts refer to a culture-neutral universe, which contrasts with several of the texts in the L-97 textbooks. These culture-neutral topics being topics such as friendship and leisure activities. Lund (2012) mentions that this view of culture as something neutral can hinder the learners in learning about cultural diversity (p. 50).

Another aspect that differs between the L-97 textbooks and the LK-06 textbooks under the section on attitudes is the amount of modern literature for young people, with the more recent textbooks having much more. The action as well as the encounters in these texts often take place in cultures that will probably be foreign to the learners, making these fiction texts a contribution to the learners encountering cultural diversity. Additionally these texts promote reflections on comparisons to their own culture. Lund (2012) also mentions that the factual texts and accompanying tasks in the LK-06 textbooks focus on cultural differences (p. 51). Examples of this are given, and they cover learning about different ways of greeting and showing friendship, as well as discussions of how different types of body language can be perceived in other cultures. She expresses this as a positive aspect, but wishes that there were more of these texts and that they were presented more systematically. Lastly, Lund (2012) points out that there are few texts that focus on the learners' own cultural background, but the ones that do encourages reflections on how irrational it is to attempt to categorize all citizens of a country collectively into one group (p. 51).

To conclude this article, Lund (2012) explains that the cultural dimension of language is essential in foreign language teaching, and that there has been a clear development in this

prioritization in more recent textbooks (pp. 51-52). Furthermore, the LK-06 textbooks promote an understanding of cultural differences, aiming to make the learners enlightened and responsible citizens. This is done by focusing on texts that contain information and experiences of people from different countries and cultures (Lund, 2012, p. 52). The wish of including aspects of other cultures can also be found in Risager's book from 2018.

### 3.2 Risager (2018)

As mentioned, Karen Risager's book from 2018 is another case of previous research in this field, and is more recent than Lund's (2012) article. Risager's book is titled *Representations of the World in Language Textbooks* (2018). In this book Risager seeks to answer the question of which images of culture, society and the world can be found in language teaching and learning (p. ix). The way she attempts to answer this question is by focusing on various analyses that have been done of language textbooks, with a distinct emphasis on their cultural representations. In chapter two of her book Risager highlights culture in textbook analyses from around the world, and one of this chapter's subchapter focuses on textbook analyses based on the teaching and learning of the English language (Risager, 2018, p. 32). This is the chapter that will be highlighted here.

English language teaching is a large research field. Risager (2018) confirms this in her subchapter on textbook analyses for English, where she states that English has a dominant role as the first or second language of many countries in the world (pp. 32-33). Additionally, she states that English is a dominant language due to its significant role in international communication (pp. 32-33). Based on this, there "have been many studies of World Englishes, exploring local varieties of English, and English as a lingua franca" (Risager, 2018, p. 33). In addition to these studies, there have been made many suggestions of "'de-Anglo-Americanising' English teaching" (Risager, 2018, p. 33), which entails focusing on countries that are not primarily English-speaking, like the U.S. and the U.K. (Risager, 2018, p. 90). This can be connected to the rising trend of speaking on "the issue of 'the ownership of English'" (Risager, 2018, p. 33), which involves the issue with presenting the world in textbooks as more critical for the English language in comparison to other languages. This can also be connected to the discussions of whether English textbooks should be more 'culture-specific' or more 'culture-general', meaning whether textbooks should focus on aspects of a specific target language/country or if they should focus on more worldwide aspects of communication and understanding. Considering this and the dominant role English has in the world, there is

no surprise that there are more textbook analyses for English than any other language (Risager, 2018, p. 33).

Risager (2018) includes a brief description of 11 different textbook studies (p. 33). I will briefly cover aspects of the most relevant analysis to the aim of this thesis. Analysis number 5 is from a monograph in 2010 by Gray, which discusses textbooks for EFL or ESL (English as a second language) “as cultural artefacts” (p. 36) in the perspectives found in Cultural studies. This analysis includes four global textbooks published at different decades, ranging from the 1970s to the 2000s and are marketed towards adult and young adult learners. ‘Global’ in this context means textbooks designed for a “global market” (Risager, 2018, p. 36), meaning textbooks aimed at general classes or learners from all over the world. It is further explained that this analysis concentrates on “constructions of reality in students’ books” (Risager, 2018, p. 36), and the role of the publishers of these textbooks. Gray includes a survey he conducted of the views of teachers, as he argues that textbook publishers assign English language teaching with different values which progressively depicted the learners as consumers. Additionally, these textbooks portrayed men and women as professional and accomplished individuals and included a few non-white characters in their portrayal of “inter-racial contact and harmony” (Risager, 2018, p. 36). Gray goes on in his analysis to state that these textbooks allocate much of their pages on the topic of ‘work’, and that interactions between characters are becoming more personalized as they talk more about their experiences and interests. Furthermore, this author comments on the extensiveness of British English as one of the few varieties of English used, and the dominance of British characters, which indicates that the textbooks largely take place in Britain. Nonetheless, Gray mentions that more modern textbooks seem to be less concentrated on Britain, and includes aspects of other countries as well. Lastly, in Gray’s concluding remark he states that the content of these textbooks have started to indicate “global multiculturalism” (Risager, 2018, p. 37) where the characters in the textbooks are considered world citizens connected through their use of English (Risager, 2018, p. 37).

In summary, both of these forms of previous research highlight the need to include aspects of other cultures outside of the U.S. and the U.K. (Lund, 2012, p. 47; Risager, 2018, p. 33). This is vital, as knowledge of other cultures increases the learning of intercultural competence if portrayed authentically (Lund, 2012, p. 48). More recent textbooks include aspects of intercultural competence such as knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will be further

explained in my theory chapter, and will be relevant to my analysis and discussion of *Citizens YF* later on.

## **4. Theory**

This chapter will first discuss how culture can be defined and which view of culture is used in this thesis. Next, the chapter gives an overview of Byram's theory on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence, and mentions its relevance to the analysis and discussion of *Citizens YF*.

### **4.1 What is culture?**

There is no clear agreement among researchers about what culture is. Some call culture 'learned behavior', whilst others say that culture lives only in the mind (White, 1959, p. 227). Culture can also vary from certain physical objects and traditions to ideas of what a people call culture (White, 1959, p. 227). Additionally, culture can be defined as a process between "right knowing and right doing" (Williams, 1960, p. 136). Giddens and Sutton (2017) have defined culture as follows: "The values, norms, habits and ways of life characteristic of a coherent social group." (p. 995). Taking this definition into account, culture is defined by the ways a certain group of people think, act and interact with others. Furthermore, culture can be viewed as "'shared beliefs values and behaviours' of a social group" (Byram, 2003, p. 50), where social group can concern different amounts of people, from families or universities to bigger social groups such as nations or civilizations like Europeans (Byram, 2003, p. 50). The view I will be using in this thesis, is a combination of these definitions. Culture, in this thesis, is an aspect of a person which influences his or her beliefs, norms and values, and affects way of thinking and actions in accordance with that person's morals and the traditions of that culture.

### **4.2 Intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence**

Intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) are a central issues for this thesis. In short, intercultural competence is focused on situations where cultural differences may occur, but the language competence is not a problem (Byram, 2021, p. x, 42). ICC is the ability to communicate efficiently with someone from another culture in a foreign language (Byram, 2021, p. 6). This is according to Michael Byram, who is central to the field of language and education. He has shaped curricula and teacher education in numerous regions of the world, and has made several contributions to the Council of Europe throughout

the years (Byram, 2021, pp. x, 9-10). I will mention several of his works from across the years, but the main focus will be on his book entitled *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence : Revisited* (Byram, 2021). This book is a revisit of the influential 1997 version, which aimed to “explore the issues which arise if we wish to evaluate and/or assess a person's ability to relate to and communicate with people who speak a different language and live in a different cultural context” (Byram, 1997, p. 1). In the 2021 version (as well as the 1997 version), Byram offers an overview of the topic of intercultural competence and ICC and makes suggestions to foreign language teachers on how to incorporate these in their teachings as language teachers (p. 4). It is stated in the foreword of the 2021 version that the core model of intercultural competence and the combination model of communicative and intercultural competence have not changed since 1997 (p. ix). However, some minor changes have been made in some of these models' definitions as well as some added reflections and explanations around them (Byram, 2021, p. ix). Due to these changes, I have chosen to focus on the newest version, in hopes of portraying the most updated perspective on the topic of intercultural competence and ICC.

Nonetheless, in order to underscore and emphasize the theory from Byram's book from 2021, I have included some of his previous works on the topic of intercultural competence and being 'intercultural'. In a book from 1999, Byram and Risager explain the concept of being an 'intercultural speaker' (p. 3). This kind of speaker has the ability “to mediate between cultures, to see differences, to perceive on in terms of the other and to establish communication which takes difference into consideration” (Byram, & Risager, 1999, p. 3). This means that an intercultural speaker is able to reflect on own culture from the perspective of an outsider, and is able to see how a relationship can be created between own culture and another culture in order to help communication between people from different cultures.

The concept of the intercultural speaker is brought up again in Byram's chapter in a book from 2003, where he also talks of the act of being intercultural (p. 50). Here, he states that 'intercultural *speaker*' should be reworded as 'intercultural *mediator*' instead (p. 60). The reason he states this, is due to the changing perspective of the aim of an intercultural speaker. The aim has previously been to imitate the native speaker through linguistic competence (such as producing a native speaker accent), making the native speaker the authority when learning cultural competence. Byram (2003) goes on to explain that this assumption of the native as authority in cultural competence is not appropriate “because it implies the abandoning of one social identity in order to acquire another” (p. 61). Social identity, according to Byram (2003),



is based on the perspective of categorizing oneself and others into group belongings which are generally created through socialization (p. 51). Social identity can influence how individuals react to others from other group belongings, and can create competition between them, which can result in increased self-esteem if your group is deemed more successful in the comparison to the other group. Considering this, Byram (2003) believes that totally abandoning your social identity in order to achieve cultural competence is “not desirable – and certainly not fully attainable” (p. 61). Additionally, Byram mentions that the native cannot be considered to be fully authoritative because they are not experts on their culture simply because they have been socialized in it. The native “cannot externalise it without help and they do not have competence in the whole of it” (Byram, 2003, p. 61). Furthermore, the native will most likely not take criticism to their culture without taking it as a personal insult. Based on this, the term intercultural *mediator* is deemed more suitable, and Byram (2003) argues that the best mediators are those who comprehend the connection between their language and culture (and their varieties), and the languages and cultures of others as they serve as mediators between them (p. 61). Taking this into consideration, Byram (2003) thinks of being intercultural as an activity, and he mentions that education has a significant role in the development of becoming intercultural (p. 61). Byram, moreover, has clear opinions of how intercultural mediators should behave and what knowledge they should have. The same can be said of language learners in an educational setting.

Byram has a nuanced view of the ideal language learner, as someone possessing three connected aspects: “a person with an open mind; [...] a person with the curiosity and courage of the ethnographer; [...] a person with the engagement and responsibility of the citizen.” (Byram, 2021, p. x). The first aspect is based on language learning promoting a chance for the learner to “develop as a person” (Byram, 2021, p. x), and become more aware of, and attempt to replace, potential stereotypes and prejudices in the target-language countries. The second aspect originates from Byram’s inspiration from ethnographic practice, which means that he wants the learner to be able to observe people from another culture’s practices, including their language, habits, their perspectives, beliefs, and for the learner to learn more about themselves in this process. The third aspect is based on the learners becoming responsible citizens in and outside the classroom, with the help of intercultural communicative competence in order to take the perspective of ‘the other’ ( Byram, 2021, p. x). This third aspect is based on emphasis on intercultural citizenship, which has been given more focus in later works since the original publication in 1997 (Byram, 2021, p. x). In short, intercultural citizenship is “not an

alternative to national or other kinds of citizenship” (Alred et al., 2006, p. 2), but is based on “becoming aware of the existence of different [...] cultures through processes of comparison and juxtaposition” (Méndez García, 2006, p. 203), which can promote open-mindedness and respect for others. Similar attitudes can be found in Byram’s model of intercultural communicative competence from 2021 (p. 44).

However, before one can accurately understand intercultural *communicative* competence, it is essential to understand what intercultural competence is. As mentioned, intercultural competence is based on situations where social identities or other forms of cultural adherences are important, but the language competence is not a problem (Byram, 2021, p. x, 42).

Additionally, Byram (2021) mentions that intercultural competence is usually necessary in situations where the participators speak the same language (p. 5). This means that intercultural competence is relevant in situations where the language is not the issue, but an understanding of the culture and all its traditions and norms can be a potential issue. An example of this can be a Norwegian doctor who talks to a Norwegian teacher about a learner who has fallen ill. Here, the language competence is not a problem, seeing as they are both Norwegian, but they will need to find a common baseline of understanding by perhaps switching out certain professional vocabulary seeing as they have different professional cultures. This requires intercultural competence, as well as some minor linguistic demands. The linguistic demands would be much greater if there were a foreign language involved, such as, for example, if a Dutch doctor was going to attempt to talk to a Norwegian teacher about their exchange student who has fallen ill in the Netherlands. This conversation would most likely happen in English, which is considered foreign to both Dutch people and Norwegian people. Here, the competence of intercultural *communicative* competence is necessary (Byram, 2021, p. 5). In addition to this, it is mentioned in the foreword of Byram’s book that intercultural communicative competence is a necessary competence needed in intercultural communication (Byram, 2021, p. ix). Byram (2021) gives three examples of intercultural communication, but in summary it is communication between people either from the same country or from different countries, where one speaker is native and one is not, or where they are both speaking in a lingua franca (p. 28).

Intercultural *communicative* competence is based on communication which is “more than the exchange of information and sending of messages” (Byram, 2021, p. 6), it is based on being able to communicate efficiently with someone from another culture in a foreign language (Byram, 2021, p. 6). This means that intercultural communicative competence requires the

participants to understand how their message will be interpreted by the listener based on their cultural and linguistic background. Furthermore, this obliges the speaker to be aware of the cultural connotations and meanings of their language, and this is based on the speaker's language competence (Byram, 2021, p. 97). ICC can therefore become an aid in the acquisition of other languages and understanding of other cultures. In view of this, EFL teaching can benefit greatly from intercultural communicative competence.

Byram (2021) has created a model of the five factors of intercultural competence, as well as a model combining communicative competence with intercultural competence (p. ix). This combination model is essential due to the "connections between language competences and the competences that make up intercultural competence" (Byram, 2021, p. 61), which transforms intercultural competence into ICC. Byram (2021) states that these factors can be taught and assessed, and that this model is a tool for "planning and implementing teaching; it is not a model of learning" (Byram, 2021, p. 9). This means that the model is meant to be helpful for teachers, not for learners. Additionally, it is stated that this model is a comprehensive "description of components of the ability to understand and relate to people from other countries and/or cultural groups" (Byram, 2021, p. 8) and that it describes the requirements of the most fortunate and complex settings of intercultural communication (Byram, 2021, p. 8). The model of intercultural competence is portrayed as consisting of five factors: *knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness, skills of interpreting and relating* and *skills of discovery and interaction*, which in their explanations are conjoined into three main factors: *attitudes, knowledge* and *skills* (Byram, 2021, pp. 44-48). The following factors will be explained based on Byram's most updated theory.

#### 4.2.1 Attitudes and critical cultural awareness

According to Byram (2021), the factor of attitudes is concerned with the views people can have to others who are deemed different in regard to their beliefs, behaviors and values (pp. 44-45). These attitudes are often implicit in people's dealings with others "from their own social groups" (Byram, 2021, p. 45). These attitudes can be categorized as prejudices, which are frequently perceived as negative, and often lead to unsuccessful intercultural interaction between people. Byram (2021) additionally states that attitudes need not only be positive, "since even positive prejudice or tolerance can hinder mutual understanding" (p. 45), one also needs to adopt an attitude of curiosity and be open to respect other people's beliefs and values. Furthermore, people need to be able to hold back on their own beliefs and values and be capable of examining them from the perspective of the other they are communicating with.

This competence is based on being able to ‘decenter’, which is essential in understanding other cultures. The focus on attitudes being based on curiosity and openness in order to achieve effective communication alludes to whether teachers should (and if so, how) address prejudice (Byram, 2021, p. 45).

Byram (2021) states that lessening or eradicating prejudice can be challenging for teachers (p. 45). Through teaching intercultural communication, language teachers’ impact is distinct and crucial, and can be seen in two ways in Byram’s model. The first way is through “knowledge about the processes of communication” (Byram, 2021, p. 45), including knowledge of the existence of, and the process of the creation of, prejudices and stereotypes concerning certain social groups. The second way is through being able to reflect “on one’s own stereotypes and prejudices which comes through ‘critical cultural awareness’” (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Critical cultural awareness is about being able to critique the way one thinks and acts and how societal factors influence this. Byram (2021) explains this further by stating: “Without questioning one’s own and valuing others’ experience, interpreting and relating them is likely to be value-laden and biased” (p. 45). Considering this, if one cannot question one’s own beliefs and values, and one cannot value others’ knowledge, attempting to interpret and relate to others’ beliefs and values will be based on a bias or a predisposition, which will lead to unsuccessful communication. While it is unusual to achieve an entirely value-free (or biased-free) interpretation and relating, becoming more aware of own values and beliefs gives more control over own biased interpretation of others. By comparing own beliefs and values with others’, it is more likely that one will begin to question one’s own. Additionally, Byram (2021) states that if a person has attitudes of being open and curious of other attitudes, the skills of discovery and interaction will be less stressful and more manageable to control (p. 46).

To summarize, in order to become critically culturally aware, it is vital to be able to question one’s own and value others’ “meanings, beliefs, values and behaviours” (Byram, 2021, p. 46), and this cannot be achieved without reflection of the formation of one’s own attitudes and the impact of social factors (Byram, 2021, p. 46). As will be discussed in the analysis and discussion chapter, one way that *Citizens YF* engages with self-reflection is through its ‘Reflection’ tasks, which appear after each of the chosen texts.

## 4.2.2 Knowledge

According to Byram (2021), there are two categories of knowledge that a person can convey whilst communicating with someone else, whether they are local or foreign (p. 46). The first category of knowledge is knowledge of your own social group and its culture, and corresponding knowledge of the other's social group and their culture. The second category of knowledge consists of "knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (Byram, 2021, p. 46). Knowledge of these processes is essential for successful communication (Byram, 2021, p. 46).

The first category of knowledge is continuously present, whether consciously or subconsciously, due to socialization (Byram, 2021, p. 46). The socialization process includes both primary socialization through family and secondary socialization through education. Primary socialization can create knowledge of which social group a person belongs to and information of other social groups existing with which a person has had experience with. Secondary socialization through education can frequently be consistent with "the notion of a 'national' culture and identity" (Byram, 2021, p. 46), as well as regional identity or awareness of social class. This knowledge of social groups and their cultures includes knowledge of the collective values, beliefs and behaviors, as well as knowledge of which aspects are symbolic for the social group and which aspects are unique and distinguishable. In the context of education, the knowledge a learner has of other countries or regions is frequently relational to the knowledge attained from their own social group, and often contrasted to their own country/region. Byram (2021) goes on to give an example of this, by stating that the history of a foreign country is often told through the perspective of the learners' country, which can be based on prejudice and stereotypes, making the history quite altered from the perspective of the foreign country's (p. 47). These situations usually occur due to informal socialization such as through family. Hence, the closer the learner's country is to the country of the foreigner, the greater the effect on the amount of knowledge the learner has of the foreigner's country. In today's modern world of technology, 'close' does not have to be based on geography, it can be based on media coverage and political power. An example of this is knowledge of the United States, which is "probably universal" (Byram, 2021, p. 47), in contrast to a lesser media-dominating country such as Sweden. The degree of knowledge of one's own as well as a foreigner's culture can therefore vary, which might affect communication between speakers.

The second category of knowledge, based on processes of interaction, is connected to the knowledge of own and others' social groups and cultures (Byram, 2021, p. 47). Byram (2021)

goes on to explain that the foundation for successful interaction is based on various processes (p. 47). One of these processes being that a person needs to know how their social identities have been learned and developed. Another process needed in order to achieve successful interaction according to Byram (2021), is based on a person realizing that he or she reflects how fellow social group members are perceived, and the awareness of how they in turn perceive the foreigner (p. 47).

Knowledge of the processes in interaction is theoretical knowledge which helps us understand how people interact and their connections between groups and their identities (Byram, 2021, p. 47). An example of this includes notions of prejudice and stereotypes and how these notions affect interactions between speakers. This theoretical knowledge contains knowledge of “micro-level factors in interaction” (Byram, 2021, p. 47) such as how individuals communicate their identity in interactions with others through their language, or how turn-taking can be perceived differently from one culture to another. This also includes knowledge of written interactions, and being able to differentiate between varying genres of writing traditions. Byram (2021) also states that theoretical knowledge should be taught in a suitable manner according to the age of the learners, which can be especially difficult with younger learners (p. 48). Additionally, this knowledge needs to be accompanied by “procedural knowledge” (Byram, 2021, p. 48), meaning knowledge of how to behave in certain situations. This means that this knowledge is connected to the skills of interpreting and relating, in order to relate similar behaviors or documents to those from one’s own social group. For example, a policy document such as LK20 can be considered ‘conservative’ by some, and ‘progressive’ by others. Byram (2021) also states that in connection to this, the skills of discovery and interaction help expand and refine knowledge of others and appropriate responses to certain aspects of interactions with others (p. 48). This knowledge of one’s own as well as others’ culture is essential for learners in order to become interculturally competent, as the curriculum states (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 2-3). Based on this, *Citizens YF* will be analyzed in view of how it promotes knowledge of culture and processes of interaction.

#### 4.2.3 Skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction

Byram (2021) distinguishes between skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction (p. 48). He begins describing skills of interpreting and relating like so: when a person encounters a document from a foreign country, they can interpret it by using general knowledge frames and explicit information which helps to uncover connotations and hidden references (Byram, 2021, p. 48). This knowledge could have been learned formally or

informally, but it will likely be used consciously either way. Contrary to this, interpreting a local document tends to be dependent on conscious knowledge as well, but also knowledge which is taken for granted or presumed. This presumed knowledge might hide ethnocentric values and meanings in the document, which can make it difficult for a person from a foreign country to understand. The skill of interpreting a document from a foreign country, or to be able to identify connections between documents from different countries is hence determined by knowledge of one's own environment as well as the foreigner's environment (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Additionally, when creating relations to others, a person will find both common ground, clearly recognized concepts and references, as well as inconsistencies, including conflicting interpretations. Comparing or interpreting a document in reference to another, and also to translate a document in order of making it accessible to a foreigner, involves managing dysfunctions and inconsistencies. This is done to be able to determine and solve these potential issues, which requires a person to have previously existing knowledge. The skill of interpreting and relating does not need to be rushed, due to it not needing interaction with an interlocutor (a conversation partner) (Byram, 2021, p. 49). This skill is necessary for learners to know in order to understand connotations and references from different cultures, which means that this skill should be encouraged in *Citizens YF*.

Byram (2021) mentions that the skill of discovery does also not need to be rushed, despite it being part of a social interaction (p. 49). This skill is necessary when a person has limited (or no) previous knowledge in the interaction. The skill of discovery is based on creating explicit knowledge in addition to "an understanding of the meanings, beliefs, values and behaviours" (Byram, 2021, p. 49) that are fundamental in specific situations, both with documents and in interactions. Additionally, this skill of discovery includes being able to recognize meaningful occurrences in an unfamiliar environment, and being able to understand their meanings, references and connections to other occurrences. While the skill is essentially the same in most environments, it can be harder to use in environments that contain substantially different languages or cultures to the persons' home country. Nevertheless, given the influence of global media and popular culture, people may recognize certain occurrences from distant environments, but this cannot be taken for granted as having the same meaning and magnitude. In social interactions, using skills of discovery creates challenges with time constraints, attitudes and common perceptions, which is why skills of interaction are essential. Skills of interaction are primarily about being able to manage time constraints in certain situations with certain interlocutors. A person should then, according to Byram (2021), use

their existing knowledge, maintain attitudes that promote sensitivity to others with different backgrounds and identities, and be able to use the skills of discovery and interpretation (p. 49). Specifically, a person should be able to handle challenges that occur during interactions by using their knowledge and skills. This person might also have to connect their social identities to those of their interlocutor, and be able to mediate between individuals of different backgrounds and identities. It is precisely this ability of establishing connections, handling challenges and ability to mediate which separates an ‘intercultural speaker’ from a native speaker (Byram, 2021, pp. 49-50). Taking this into account, *Citizens YF* should promote skills of discovery and interaction because this skill is necessary for learners to have in order to be able to understand cultural differences and possible challenges in communication as they occur in interactions with people from different cultures.

#### 4.2.4 Competences

In addition to these five factors of intercultural competence, Byram (2021) states that it is necessary to study the connection between these factors and three competences: *linguistic competence*, *sociolinguistic competence* and *discourse competence* (p. 60). *Linguistic competence* is defined as: “the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language” (Byram, 2021, p. 60). This means that linguistic competence is based on the skill of using knowledge of the language’s structure and rules in order to speak and understand both written and spoken language. The focus would in this case be on being able to use the grammar, syntax, semantics and so on of a language in order to speak and understand the language accurately.

*Sociolinguistic competence* is defined as: “the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor” (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Sociolinguistic competence is thus the skill of attributing meanings to the language spoken by an interlocutor. These meanings can be presumed or discussed and explained with the interlocutor.

Lastly, *discourse competence* is: “the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologic or dialogic texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes” (Byram, 2021, p. 60). This competence entails the ability of using, discovering and negotiating different strategies when attempting to understand culture in different kinds of



texts, whether spoken or written. These texts can include conventionally set standards of a specific culture, or have intercultural aspects that can function across multiple cultures. Included in this competence is the ability to understand how to use appropriate language in different contexts, and being able to understand and adapt to subtle cultural nuances as they appear in conversation.

Byram (2021) summarizes this subchapter by stating that “there are connections between language competences and the competences that make up intercultural competence” (p. 61). Additionally, he mentions that by including language competences, intercultural competence transforms into ICC. Considering this connection, these competences are necessary for my analysis of *Citizens YF*, as I will be analyzing and discussing how this textbook portrays different aspects of intercultural competence, including competences of ICC.

### 4.3 Summary of theory

In summary, culture influences a person’s norms, values, behaviours and ways of thinking, and is shaped by their morals and the traditions they are accustomed with (Giddens & Sutton, 2017, p. 995; Williams, 1960, pp. 136, 227). Knowledge of culture is relevant to understanding intercultural competence, which this thesis focuses on. Michael Byram has contributed to many works on this topic, and he has shaped curricula and teacher education in many parts of the world (Byram, 2021, pp. x, 9-10). Before one can truly understand intercultural competence, knowledge of intercultural mediators is necessary. Byram (2003) explains the concept of intercultural mediators as those who understand the connection between language and culture, as well as other’s languages and cultures, and who are able to function as intermediaries between them (p. 61). Additionally, Byram (2021) has a nuanced view of the language learner as an open person filled with curiosity, courage, engagement and responsibility (p. x). Based on this, intercultural competence is needed in situations where both speakers speak the same language, but might not have the same knowledge or understanding of the culture (Byram, 2021, pp. x, 5, 42). This perspective of culture and intercultural competence is the lens I will use to analyze how these aspects are portrayed in *Citizens YF*.

Byram (2021) states that intercultural competence consists of five factors: *attitudes*, *critical cultural awareness*, *knowledge*, *skills of interpreting and relating* and *skills of discovery and interaction* (p. 62). *Attitudes* pertains to the views a person has of others who are deemed different, and how they are perceived in connection to their beliefs, behaviors and values

(Byram, 2021, p. 45). Attitudes are often labelled as prejudices, and can create unsuccessful interactions (Byram, 2021, p. 45). *Critical cultural awareness* relates to the ability to critique one's own actions and thoughts, and the ability to see how societal factors guide this (Byram, 2021, p. 45). *Knowledge* is based on two categories, the first being knowledge of your own social group and culture, as well as knowledge of the other persons' social group and culture (Byram, 2021, p. 46). The second category of knowledge is knowledge of the progressions of interaction at different levels of communication (Byram, 2021, p. 46). *Skills of interpreting and relating* is concerned with consciously using attained knowledge to interpret foreign documents in order to find references and connections. This ability is affected by the amount of knowledge a person has of their own culture and the other culture (Byram, 2021, p. 48). *Skills of discovery and interaction* are needed when a person has limited previous knowledge in an interaction with a person from a different cultural background (Byram, 2021, p. 49). This skill rests upon having and creating specific knowledge which relates to the interaction, such as knowledge of meanings and behaviors that are vital for an accurate understanding of the interaction. Additionally, the skills of discovery and interaction require the ability to identify and understand significant occurrences in unfamiliar environments, and seeing their references to other occurrences (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Byram also connects these five factors to competences of communicative competence.

Intercultural competence mixed with communicative competence creates *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC), which is when a person is able to communicate efficiently with a person from a foreign culture, in a foreign language (Byram, 2021, p. 6). ICC is based on three competences: *linguistic competence*, *sociolinguistic competence* and *discourse competence* (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Linguistic competence draws upon the skill of using knowledge of the rules of language to enable proficiency in both spoken and written communication. Sociolinguistic competence is based on the ability to assign meaning to what the other person is saying whether these meanings are assumed or discussed with the other person. Discourse competence builds upon the skill of using different strategies when attempting to decipher different kinds of texts which can contain foreign cultural standards or intercultural elements meant for specific purposes (Byram, 2021, p. 60).

## **5. Method**

As mentioned, my chosen textbook *Citizens YF* is meant to be used in the English subject in upper secondary vocational studies in Norway, and the aim of this thesis is to analyze and

discuss how this textbook emphasizes intercultural competence. The reason I chose this textbook is because, as mentioned, I have experience with it being widely used in upper secondary schools in Norway, and because research which shows that Norwegian EFL teachers can be reliant of textbooks in their lessons (Bakken, 2018, p. 2; Charboneau, 2016, p. 327)

## 5.1 Textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics

My method in this project is a qualitative deductive approach to a combination of textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics. Qualitative research is based on a process where improved understanding of society is attained through a thorough interpretation of a unit (which in this case is *Citizens YF*) by making meaningful distinctions and interactions with theory (Aspers & Corte, 2019, pp. 146, 154-155). A deductive approach entails looking at data through the lens of theory, and making claims based on the findings (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 27). Textbook analysis can have different perspectives, some view textbooks as pedagogic aids, whilst others view them as cultural artefacts (Weninger, 2021, p. 134). My method will combine both perspectives.

The pedagogical perspective analyzes how textbooks are used in a classroom as a tool for attainment of a foreign language (Weninger, 2021, p. 134). Researchers within this perspective also focus on creating principles for creating and assessing language teaching materials (such as textbooks) which contain language learning theory and the educational needs of the language learners. Researchers of textbook analyses that focus on the perspective of textbooks as cultural artefacts view textbooks as sources of “meaning about the world” (Weninger, 2021, p. 134) that the learners meet as they are learning a new language. This perspective often “highlight[s] biases, omissions and misconstruals” (Weninger, 2021, p. 134) of the way the textbook presents different aspects of the world, and views textbooks as a part of the curriculum for the learners. The pedagogical perspective relies on theoretical criteria of assessment, and the cultural perspective often suggests “principles of social justice and equity” (Weninger, 2021, p. 134) while assessing textbooks.

Multimodality is concerned with different ways of communicating, for example through writing, use of pictures and speaking (Kress, 2011, p. 208). Social semiotics is focused on understanding the process of meaning-making in society through different signs and symbols (Kress, 2011, p. 208). In combination, this approach entails an analysis where the researcher not only analyzes the meaning of linguistic aspects (like written text) but also other semiotic

modes such as the pictures or illustrations, either in isolation or in connection to the text (Weninger, 2021, pp. 133-135). In this thesis I will look at the written texts, as well as some of the accompanying tasks and pictures in connection with each other and to theory of intercultural competence and ICC. This means that I will attempt to get a closer look into how *Citizens YF* displays, explains, discusses and compares aspects of intercultural competence and ICC, through the process of textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotic approach. Due to the scope of this thesis, I have chosen six written texts, where the contents are from chapters 1-4 in *Citizens YF*, with six accompanying pictures, and some of the most relevant tasks. I chose these texts, pictures and tasks based on which aspect of intercultural competence and ICC they could be connected to. Additionally, worth noting is that there is a previous master's thesis that has been done which depicted a similar, though not exactly the same, method of a textbook analysis of the general studies version of *Citizens YF*, where the findings were also based on texts, tasks and illustrations (Frøshaug, 2022, p. 7, 9).

I will answer my research question (*How does Citizen YF promote intercultural competence?*) by comparing how some of the contents of *Citizen YF* promote the different factors of intercultural competence and ICC in light of Byram's (2021) theory (pp. x, 6, 42), previous research in this field, the English subject curriculum's focus on intercultural competence (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3), and the *Knowledge basis* in the English subject's characteristics of a good teaching material (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, pp. 84-85).

## 5.2 Quality criteria of good teaching materials in the English subject

As mentioned, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's (2021) *Knowledge basis* in the English subject has a chapter which states characteristics of a good teaching material in the English subject. These suggestions are based on teaching material research and didactic research (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 84), which is why this will also support my analysis and discussion of *Citizens YF*.

This chapter is divided into three categories of claims, first: guidelines from the National Curriculum (both the Core Curriculum and all the subject curricula), second: pedagogical and didactic quality, and third: design and textual quality (the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 84). Considering how I base my analysis and discussion on the curriculum, I have chosen to focus on the first category based on guidelines from the National Curriculum. These suggestions consist of 13 requirements, and I have chosen to

focus on four of these as they are the most relevant to this thesis. Per my translation, they state that a good teaching material in the English subject:

- reflects a diverse society, so that all pupils can feel included and valued
- presents texts, themes and approaches which contributes to the pupils' development of common frames of reference, as stipulated by the Core Curriculum
- considers that the pupils are a diverse group when it comes to both language background, cultural background, interests and competence in the English subject
- supports the teacher in the work of providing adapted education/differentiated instruction, by, among other things, having tasks that can be solved at different levels (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85)

These criteria for what constitutes good teaching material can help teachers recognize suitable teaching materials for their lessons, which is necessary considering that textbooks are no longer required and therefore not necessarily up to the curriculum's standards (Bratholm, 2001; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2023a, p. 1). Hence, I will be commenting on and discussing whether *Citizens YF* follows these requirements or not.

## **6. Analysis and discussion**

This chapter will attempt to answer my research question: *How does Citizen YF promote intercultural competence?* The findings and the discussion of them will be done in accordance with Byram's theory on intercultural competence and ICC, as well as previous research, the *Knowledge basis* in the English subject, and the English subject curriculum.

### **6.1 *Citizens YF***

*Citizens YF* is a textbook meant to be used as teaching material in the English subject in Vg1 (the first grade of upper secondary education in Norway) (Cappelen Damm, n.d.). This textbook offers "different types of texts about a wide variety of topics" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2) through its five chapters: *Connections*, *Careers*, *Challenges*, *Citizens* and *Courses*. Additionally, the textbook comes with an accompanying website (citizens.cdu.no) with different online resources for each vocational education program (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2), but the website will not be studied in this thesis, as I will solely focus on the textbook. Since the publication of this textbook, three new textbooks corresponding to three different vocational education programs have been published (Cappelen Damm, n.d.). Nonetheless, the

textbook used for this thesis is a joint textbook meant to give more of a general coverage of the nine vocational education programs (Cappelen Damm Utdanning, n.d.).

In order to remain focused on the research question, I have organized my analysis and discussion in line with Byram's factors of intercultural competence: attitudes, knowledge and skills (Byram, 2021, pp. 44-48). Chapter 3 and 4 will be used to take up the factor of attitudes, chapter 1 will highlight the factor of knowledge, and chapter 2 will illustrate the factor of skills. Additionally, at the end of each category one of the three competences of ICC will be linked and discussed to the chosen texts in order to show their possible connection. The findings are sorted by different texts (and accompanying pictures and tasks) from multiple of *Citizens'* chapters, with two texts per category. This was done in order to achieve a representative portrayal of the textbook, by showing the breadth of texts within the book. For the sake of clarity, I have not chosen a text from chapter 5 (the last chapter), as this chapter mainly contains different kinds of courses and learning strategies, making it not as relevant to my research question. Lastly, it is essential to understand that despite having categorized and linked the different texts to a certain factor or competence of intercultural competence and ICC, the texts can have aspects of the other factors and competences as well, seeing how heavily connected they are to each other. I chose to only focus on one at a time for the different texts in order to give a more detailed account of how *Citizens YF* promotes the different factors and competences of intercultural competence and ICC.

### 6.1.1 Attitudes and critical cultural awareness

*Citizens YF* emphasizes attitudes and critical cultural awareness, two of the factors of intercultural competence (Byram, 2021, p. 45), throughout its texts. I have chosen two texts from different chapters to demonstrate how these are emphasized. The first text is "Cultural complications", and is found in chapter 4 of the textbook (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 4, 170). Chapter four, 'Citizens', is described as encompassing how people (especially with different cultural backgrounds) come together to form societies with rules which will ensure that everyone can live together in harmony (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). Additionally, this chapter teaches the learners the requirements of being citizens, as well as how society handles challenging issues such as "gun crime, work rights and discrimination" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). Considering how this chapter entails information about how to live in a society as well as topical knowledge on modern challenges, it is likely to contain attitudes to different people (such as stereotypes) and reflections of these attitudes.

The second text is “The Last Border” which is in chapter 3, ‘Challenges’ (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 140). This chapter looks at complex choices that the learners may meet in their careers, lives or in society in general (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). In addition to this, the chapter introduces the learners to difficult situations that can occur, such as “global problems of child labour, mass migration and the climate crisis” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). Seeing as this chapter introduces the learners to challenging problems that are difficult to solve, it is likely to make the learners reflect on their attitudes to these challenges, and perhaps make them more aware of how societal factors impact these.

### **“Cultural complications”**

This text illustrates the factor of attitudes already through its first couple of paragraphs. Here, an excerpt from a short (fictional) story called “They Don’t Mean It!” by Lensey Namioka (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 170) is given. This excerpt is prior to the rest of the text, which is labelled as factual text. In the excerpt, the protagonist Mary retells the time her Chinese-American family had some American friends over for Chinese New Year’s meal. In short, Kim (an American friend) is shocked at how Mary’s family refuses to accept compliments given about the food, and rather downplays their efforts and contradicts the compliments. As seen here:

“The fish was delicious!” Mrs. Eng said to father. “I’ll have to get the recipe from your wife one of these days. She’s a wonderful cook, isn’t she?” “Oh, no, she’s not a good cook at all,” said Father. “You’re just being polite.” I heard a little gasp from my friend Kim. (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 170)

This is then explained on the next page, where Mary tells Kim that in her culture it is normal to downplay compliments, and that it would be deemed ‘bragging’ if they accepted them. Here, Kim is met with a different culture to her own, where compliments are usually appreciated (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 170). This story can be interpreted as an example of *Citizens YF* accentuating cultural diversity, by portraying two different cultures meeting each other. It also demonstrates Kim’s attitude towards people who she deems as different to her, which is a part of the factor of attitudes in intercultural competence (Byram, 2021, pp. 44-45). Furthermore, this text can aid the teacher in teaching the learners about critical cultural awareness. This is because the text can help them become aware of their own (perhaps subconscious) attitudes by reflecting on how they might have reacted if they were Kim (Byram, 2021, p. 45). However, this story can be interpreted as stereotypical, in the way the

textbook authors (perhaps subconsciously) portrays an entire nation's culture through this one example of a Chinese New Year's meal. Bearing in mind how reliant teachers can be of textbooks (Bakken, 2018, p. 2; Charboneau, 2016, p. 327), this stereotyping can lead to further stereotyping if the teacher does not include other portrayals of Chinese culture. Nonetheless, the story does introduce the topic of the text, which is based on complications that can occur when meeting different cultures.

The aspect of knowledge of prejudice and stereotypes is common for both attitudes and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2021, p. 45), and is emphasized throughout different parts of this text. After the short excerpt, there are various headings related to cultural complications such as: 'Intercultural communication', 'What is culture?', 'Cultural stereotypes' and 'Prejudice' (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 171-175). These headings make it clear that this text intends to educate the learners on culture and its various aspects, including negative connotations through stereotypes and prejudice.

Under the heading asking what culture is, *Citizen YF* defines culture as “the way of life of a group of people” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 172), and that it impacts their lifestyle in different ways, such as what they eat, wear, celebrate and how they greet others. This is similar to my chosen view of culture, which is based on how it influences a person's beliefs, norms, values, ways of thinking and acting in correlation to their morals and the culture's traditions (Byram, 2003, p. 50; Giddens & Sutton, 2017, p. 995; White, 1959, p. 227). Similarly to Byram's (2003, p. 50) definition of culture, *Citizen YF* also differentiates between larger-scale cultures and smaller-scale cultures: “When we talk about “cultures”, we often mean national cultures, for instance the [...] American culture. However, within a national culture there are also other cultures. They can be based on ethnic group, [...] profession or even family” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 172). *Citizen YF*'s view of culture promotes an open and respectful outlook on culture. This is in line with Byram's (2021) requirements of which kinds of attitudes learners should be taught (p. 45).

The word *attitudes* is specifically used multiple times throughout the text. In the section titled 'Cultural stereotypes' it is used here: “Most of us do have a kind of “us-versus-them” attitude when we say about other groups of people that they are like this or that” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). This makes it clear that the text focuses specifically on attitudes and how they influence stereotypes. However, the text does not specify who 'most' are, and also makes a general statement which, ironically enough, can be regarded as stereotyping. It can also be regarded as furthering notions of otherness, which the guide referred to by the Council of



Europe states that intercultural competence can aid in understanding, but not does not promote furthering (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 10). Nonetheless, the text goes on to explain that the act of stereotyping is when: “People we don’t know well, the “strangers”, blend into large groups of people and are categorized according to the group’s characteristics, not the individuals” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). In addition to mentioning the common perception of stereotypes as ‘negative’ and ‘harmful’, the text also mentions positive stereotypes, such as labelling Germans as “well organised” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). Here they explain that despite positive stereotypes being ‘nice’, they are still considered stereotypes which is always an oversimplification or based on little-to-no knowledge of a group (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). This is linked to the next heading, which is ‘Prejudice’. Here, they explain the term as such: “judging someone before we know them. People who are prejudiced often use irrational feelings and attitudes to judge people, and the result of their judgement is almost always negative” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). Here, the word *attitudes* is used again, clearly showing the connection between this heading and the previous one. Furthermore, they state that both prejudiced thinking and stereotypes are relatively common, and that the most severe form of prejudice is racism, which “can vary in intensity from carefully hidden scepticism to open hostility” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). These two headings evidently display the aspect of attitudes based on knowledge of different attitudes people can have of others they deem as different, through stereotypes or prejudiced thinking (Byram, 2021, pp. 44-45). Additionally, these texts make it clear that despite possible harmless intentions or ill-informed assumptions, negative consequences can occur. As Byram (2021) states, attitudes need not only be positive, but need to also be open to respect others’ beliefs (p. 45). This can be connected to his first aspect of the ideal language learner as a person with an open mind, who is aware of, and wants to replace, stereotypes and prejudice with rational knowledge and intercultural interaction (Byram, 2021, p. x). Considering this, these texts can be deemed as

attempting to spread knowledge of and awareness of different attitudes, which can also be seen in the picture found directly underneath the section on ‘Prejudice’ (see figure 2).



Figure 2. “White nationalists and neo-Nazis during a rally in Charlottesville, USA.” (Photo by NTBscanpix. From “Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1” by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 2 shows a crowd of people (seemingly only male) (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). The people are wearing mostly black and white clothes, and several are wearing a symbol on their chest showing a white background with a black cross over it. Additionally, the people have mixed facial expressions, some seeming angry, like the man in the front and center of this picture, as well as the man directly to the left of him, both grimacing. Others appear cheery, with smiles on their faces, like the man furthest to the left on the picture, who seems to be smiling and standing firmly with his hands on his hips, as well as the man with sunglasses behind a man standing with a white shield to the right of the man in front. Some people are wearing helmets, and shields, and some are carrying different kinds of flags and signs. Additionally, there are some people in the corners of the picture with cameras in their hands, outwardly taking pictures of the people.

The description of this picture reveals that this is a rally in the U.S., where white nationalists and neo-Nazis have gathered to show they support of their ideals (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). Taking this into account, one is able to deduce that the symbols on their chests are most likely symbols that can be connected to the neo-Nazi community, like the League of the South saltire flag, which they are also carrying as large flags, in combination with one Confederate battle flag (Webster & Leib, 2008, pp. 169-171). Considering this, the picture can be deemed as a clear but perhaps extreme representation of prejudice, and especially racism, as the text points out is the most serious form of prejudice (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). The position of this picture is directly underneath the section on ‘Prejudice’, which indicates that it is meant to portray this. Additionally, this position is why I chose to include it, because despite it being a severe representation of prejudice, it is what the textbook authors chose to use. The picture is likely attempting to spread awareness of prejudice, which is in line with the factor of attitudes as a part of intercultural competence (Byram, 2021, p. 45). However, there is potentially little reflection that can be done based on this picture. The learners are likely to already know that there are prejudiced racists out there, and if the teacher does not open up for a discussion of how prejudice can form, this picture could possibly lead to more prejudice. This is because the natural reaction of many learners can be to condemn and reject the people in the picture, and not try to understand their viewpoint. Taking this into account, the picture is attempting to promote aspects of attitudes required in learning intercultural competence, but is perhaps failing in its attempt at stopping the spread of further prejudice.

The accompanying tasks can also be interpreted to demonstrate aspects of attitudes, but also aspects of critical cultural awareness. The task I have chosen to focus on for this text is task 2, which consists of reflection questions, with the title “Intercultural communication” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177). This task contains three lighter colored tasks ranging alphabetically from a-c, as well as two darker colored tasks from d-e. It is stated in the beginning of the textbook (after contents) that the darker colored tasks are the “Challenging tasks” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 5), which is relevant for all the tasks throughout the textbook. This a sign of a good teaching material according to the quality criteria from the *Knowledge basis*, as it provides an adapted instruction by including tasks that can be solved at different levels (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85). Additionally, the textbook includes a short-cut version of many of the longer texts throughout the book where they simplify the texts and include tasks connected to the short-cut (Cappelen Damm Utdanning, n.d.). This is

also an example of differentiated teaching, which can support the teacher in their work of teaching these texts (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85).

These are the first three tasks:

- a. Which cultures do you belong to and how are they different from each other? Think in terms of your age, ethnic group, gender, regional identity and so on.
- b. Where do you meet people with cultural backgrounds that are different from your own? What other sources of information about other societies do you have?
- c. When you meet people from other cultural backgrounds, how do you solve cultural challenges not caused by language difficulties? (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177).

In these questions the learners are asked questions concerning their own and others' cultural backgrounds, their potential differences and challenges they may face in their encounters. The textbook considers here that the learners are a diverse group with potentially different cultural backgrounds, which is also a sign of a good teaching material (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85). Tasks b. and c. asks the learners to reflect on where they meet people with different cultural backgrounds to their own, and how they solve cultural challenges when meeting these people (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177). These three tasks can be connected to factors of intercultural competence called critical cultural awareness. This is because critical cultural awareness requires the learner to be able to critically reflect on their own attitudes to people they may consider to be different to them, and be able to critique how they think and act (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Additionally, the learners need to understand how societal factors influences this (Byram, 2021, p. 45), which is perhaps more accentuated in the more challenging tasks d. and e.

In task d. the learners are asked: "How do you communicate with your teachers? How formal or informal is this relationship, and what does this tell you about Norwegian values and ideal of formalities?" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177). Here, the learners are questioned about how they communicate with their teachers, and how this correlates with Norwegian norms of formality. This encourages the learners to reflect on the Norwegian society and its norms and values, as is in line with critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Task e. states: "In some countries it is polite to burp after a meal to show your host that you enjoyed the food. If you were visiting such a culture, would you burp? [...] Discuss how far you are willing to go to meet the cultural expectations of the people you are with" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177).

In this task, the learners are able to reflect on what they are willing to do in different cultures in order to meet cultural expectations of formalities and politeness norms. The task also provides various examples of different politeness norms such as eating with their hands or eating sitting on the floor. In these two tasks, the aspect of societal factors such as national norms and politeness norms in foreign cultures are highlighted, making the learners reflect on their impact on their attitudes and awareness of people with different cultural backgrounds to themselves. As Byram (2021) states, the learners need to learn to reflect on their own attitudes and awareness of other cultures in order to be able to interpret and relate to people from other cultures in an unbiased manner (p. 45). Based on this, these tasks promote intercultural competence through focusing on the learners' attitudes to other cultural backgrounds and by making them reflect on their attitudes by learning of other cultural norms.

The need to focus on the learners' attitudes to different cultural backgrounds has become more significant in recent years, as previous research shows (Lund, 2012, p. 49). Current textbooks have increasingly highlighted this, and included encouragement to reflect on their attitudes from an outside perspective (Lund, 2012, p. 49; Risager 2018, p. 37). Additionally, previous textbooks based on LK-06 have also pointed out how illogical it is "to categorize all citizens of a country collectively into one group" (Lund, 2012, p. 51), which is also emphasized in the section on stereotypes in *Citizens YF* (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). Similarly, the English subject curriculum highlights this in the section concerning the interdisciplinary topic 'Democracy and citizenship', where it states that the subject must focus on preventing prejudice by exposing the learners to different cultures (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, pp. 2-3). Considering this, the tasks can help the learners become more inclusive citizens outside of school by making them more aware of their attitudes to others, and by highlighting the prevention of prejudice.

### **"The Last Border"**

This text can help learners gain knowledge and awareness of their attitudes to refugees and immigrants. The text is an extract from a book by Ben Judah about a young man named Shafiullah from a village in war-torn Afghanistan who is being smuggled into Britain as an illegal immigrant (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 4, 140, 143). The text states that Shafiullah had to pay \$10,000 of his family's savings to an agency in Pakistan for his passage from there to Calais in France (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140). In Calais, the agent responsible with finding a space for Shafiullah in a truck driving to England called, and Shafiullah was hurriedly pushed in with another Afghan man around his age and an older Iraqi man. As they were

driving closer to the last border to England, the boys became excited about being “on the road into the golden city” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 142) and started laughing, knocking over boxes and attempting to look out of the back of the truck. The commotion caused the truck driver to stop at a shoulder in the road, and look into the back of his truck where he saw the three illegal immigrants. He called the police and reported the incident. The police came quickly, but despite this the boys “were so excited and joyful to be at the end of the golden road that they began shouting out *Hello, Hello* – and waving out at the policeman. Shivering with happiness” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 142). This text is shedding light on a certain social group, illegal immigrants, and their experiences with being smuggled. Considering this, the extract can help the learners with gaining knowledge of these experiences, which can potentially prevent development or spread of misinformation or prejudices. This means that the attitudes factor of intercultural competence is being highlighted, as this requires the learners to have knowledge of prejudices of certain social groups (Byram, 2021, p. 45). This is also depicted in the picture used at the top of the page of this text (see figure 3).



Figure 3. "Calais, France. A migrant in the refugee camp called "the Jungle" in October, 2016." (Photo by NTBscanpix. From "Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vgl" by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 3 shows a young man in a black and blue jacket with a green hood walking on a road at a short distance from where fires are destroying buildings (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140). The back of the man is shown as he is walking away from the viewer to the right of the picture. There is a clear juxtaposition between the calmness of the man walking seemingly

slow with his hands in his pockets and the background of dark smoke covering the sky and fires enveloping the grounds. In the description of the picture it is revealed that this is a migrant walking in a refugee camp in France which is being evacuated due to big fires destroying the site. Additionally, this picture clearly portrays the story of the text, of a young man as a refugee, and can be interpreted to portray similar aspects of attitudes and critical cultural awareness. The picture can be connected to the factor of attitudes in the way it presents experiences that may be alien to the learners, which can increase their knowledge of other social groups (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Additionally, the picture can be connected to critical cultural awareness in the way this picture can help the learners reflect and critique their own ways of thinking of migrants, and how societal factors influence their experiences (Byram, 2021, p. 45). The picture can also help the learners become aware of the fact that refugee camps in Europe are also being destroyed in similar manners to camps from other places in the world like the Middle East. This can further help the teaching of critical cultural awareness as the learners can become aware of how they view European refugee camps in comparison to others, and potentially become aware of how societal factors have affected their views (Byram, 2021, p. 45).

The tasks also make the learners aware of their potential biases. Task 2 consists of four reflection questions, where the first two are marked as less challenging: “a. How do you explain the boys’ reaction when they are stopped by the police? b. How do you think the story continues? Will the boys manage to start a life in England?” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 144). Question a. is promoting the aspect of attitudes, in the way that it indirectly asks the learners to attempt to hold back their own beliefs and explain the boys’ reaction from their point of view (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Additionally, question b. challenges the learners to think of what might happen after they are caught by the police and if they are able to start living in England. This question also implicitly opens up the possibility to discuss how current policies in Britain can appear anti-immigrant (McLaren & Johnson, 2007, pp. 709-710). Considering this, the question can encourage the learners to use their knowledge of social groups and possible attitudes connected to them to decipher whether they were able to enter England and if so, whether they could start an enjoyable life there (Byram, 2021, p. 45).

The last two questions are marked as more challenging, and they ask:

- c. Do you think that what Shafiullah experiences is something that many migrants go through?

d. How are immigrants to Norway treated? Is the attitude towards immigrants generally positive, or is there a lot of prejudice (see p. 175) and discrimination towards them? (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 144)

Despite these questions being marked as more challenging, question c. is phrased as a yes-no question, which can be argued to not promote a very complex answer. Unless the teacher provokes the learners to reflect on their answers, this can be seen as less challenging, despite its marking. Nonetheless, both questions do make the learners reflect on attitudes towards immigrants. Not only do the questions make the learners consider their own attitudes to, and knowledge of, immigrants, but also the general consensus of attitudes towards, and experiences of, immigrants in the world and in Norway specifically. This promotes the factor of critical cultural awareness seeing how the learners are asked to reflect on their own, as well as others', thoughts and actions (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Additionally, these questions can promote the learners to be open and curious of others' beliefs and thoughts, which also emphasizes the factor of attitudes (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Furthermore, these tasks can be connected to Byram's (2021) first aspect of the language learner as a person with an open mind (p. x), considering how these help the learners to become considerate of immigrants' experiences as well as others' views and attitudes towards them. Additionally, these tasks can be connected to the 'Identity and cultural diversity' section in the Core Curriculum, where it states that cultural understanding and language skills are increasing in significance due to the world becoming more diversified and interconnected (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 6-7). This is because these tasks also promote cultural understanding and convey an increasingly more diverse world of people with different cultural backgrounds. Considering this, cultural diversity is accentuated here, which is similar to previous research (Lund, 2012, pp. 49-50).

Previous research shows that more recent textbooks present a larger amount of cultural diversity in their modern literature for young people (Lund, 2012, pp. 49-50). In these texts, the action and encounters take place in different cultures, which emphasizes knowledge of cultural diversity (Lund, 2012, p. 50). This text (and accompanying picture and tasks) displays a culture that can be different to what the learners are used to, by making them encounter the experience of an Afghan refugee being smuggled to London. Considering this, the text can be a part of the many suggestions of "'de-Anglo-Americanising' English teaching" (Risager, 2018, p. 33) because it focuses on a boy from a culture which is not primarily English speaking. At the same time, the end goal of Shafiullah is to enter England, meaning that it can



also be interpreted to be furthering the focus on the U.K. and the U.S. Nonetheless, this text reflects a diverse society, which is in line with the *Knowledge basis*' criteria that states that textbooks should portray a diverse society, in order to help the learners feel included and valued if they have, or know of, similar experiences (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85).

In terms of ICC, these texts, tasks and pictures can be also help with discourse competence. Discourse competence is based on the ability to understand conventionally set standards of a culture in texts and conversation, and being able to use this knowledge appropriately in different contexts and in conversations when met with cultural nuances (Byram, 2021, p. 60). The excerpt from a short story called "They Don't Mean It!" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 170), the book excerpt from "The Last Border" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140), and the factual texts about prejudice and stereotypes include common conceptions of attitudes people can have to others with different cultural backgrounds. This is in line with discourse competence in the way it promotes knowledge of the conventional standards of a culture (Byram, 2021, p. 60). However, by having the explanation of cultural stereotypes be as stereotypical as it is, this can impede with the learning of discourse competence due to how it opposes knowledge of cultural nuances, which is likely needed in conversations with people of different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Nonetheless, task 2 in "Cultural Complications" challenges the learners to reflect on what they do in interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds when they are faced with cultural challenges (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 177), which highlights cultural nuances in interactions with others from different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Considering this, these texts aid in the process of learning to understand norms and experiences in cultures different to their own, which can help them be able to use this knowledge in different contexts and in possible conversations with people from other cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2021, p. 60).

### 6.1.2 Knowledge

There are also various forms of knowledge portrayed in the textbook. Two examples of this are first the text 'My story: English for Training and Work' and, second 'Children in a Digital World', both found in chapter 1. This chapter is titled 'Connections' and focuses on connections between people and how English is a common tool for this (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). The textbook authors go on to explain that the chapter concentrates on the use of English for work and how one is able to connect to others on the internet. Additionally, the chapter looks into critical thinking skills concerning fake news and economical judgments

(Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). This can potentially promote the factor of knowledge, as it seemingly focuses on knowledge of the uses of the English language and skills needed to understand and make judgements on significant topics.

### **“My story: English for Training and Work”**

This text consists of personal stories from four Norwegians: “Sebastian, who works in the travel industry, Jørn, who works on a construction site, Nicolay, who works in a hospital, and Rikke, who is a student in Australia” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 18). These stories consist of their experiences with using English in their job or as a student. The first story is from Sebastian, who states that he uses English for 30-40% of his job, and that it is essential to have good basic skills of English due to the travel industry being so international, and because safety is a high priority among cabin crews. Additionally, he mentions that some customers cannot communicate in English, so he sometimes has to be creative: “I use body language and what little I know of other languages – even a little Spanish - to get by” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19). He follows this up by stating that it seems like Norwegians know more English than “many other nationalities” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19). Furthermore, Sebastian mentions that he also needs to use English among his coworkers, because sometimes he works with cabin crews that are not Norwegian. The second story is told by Jørn, who mentions that he needs to speak English every day in his job because he needs to be able to communicate with people on the building site, and many of his coworkers do not speak Norwegian. However, sometimes his coworkers do not speak English either, and he has to “point at things and try to explain” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19), which usually works due to the job being similar in most countries. Furthermore, Jørn states that not only foreigners struggle with using English, but the older generations of Norwegians do also, and he has to translate for them as well. In his view, the older generation of Norwegians would benefit from learning English because safety is a priority and construction sites attract people from all over the world (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19).

The third story is by Nicolay, who says he does not use English a lot for his job, but the times he has to, it is vital that he has adequate skills in order to communicate with patients with little Norwegian skills (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20). He explains that when working with people, it is essential to be able to communicate, and that it affects how safe the patient feels. He believes that English is becoming increasingly more important due to how many foreign people are entering Norway. In addition to this, Nicolay mentions that he wishes he had learned more appropriate vocabulary to his field of work in English lessons in school because

it would have helped him with holding professional conversations in English. The fourth, and last, story is from Rikke, who is finishing her studies in Melbourne, Australia because they had courses she wanted to study, and because she wanted to see another part of the world. She chose to not “fall into the trap” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20) of only spending time with other Norwegians, by sharing a flat with Australian students, which she states most likely “paid off in the long run” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20). She explains that she had a sufficient amount of English skills before she left, which made using English easy. Additionally, she mentions that it does not take long before one learns the accent as well as the slang, because the Australians are “keen to teach you it” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20). Rikke also explains that she had some trouble getting used to Australian humor, because they enjoy “pulling your leg” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20) by making you believe something silly. Nonetheless, she states that she eventually understood their form of humor. These stories can be connected to the factor of knowledge in intercultural competence.

Both categories of knowledge are portrayed in these stories. Knowledge of your own social groups and its culture and corresponding knowledge of the others’ is the first category of knowledge (Byram, 2021, p. 46). This knowledge is depicted in Jørn’s story, in how he states that the older generation of Norwegians can struggle with English as well as some foreigners (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19). Here, his knowledge of both his own social group and culture is present, as well as knowledge of some foreigner’s culture and knowledge. Sebastian’s story has similar portrayals of knowledge, when he notices that Norwegians seem to have more language skills in English than many other nationalities. Rikke’s story also depicts similar knowledge, in how she chose to not only spend time with Norwegians, but live with Australians instead. This likely because she knew it would lead to her only being around Norwegians and not being able to authentically experience the culture of Australia by doing so. Additionally, she likely wanted to maximize her exposure to English. Her story portrays knowledge of the habits of some Norwegians in foreign cultures, and how they can tend to stick together and not expose themselves to the new culture. Furthermore, Rikke states that Australians are eager to teach foreigners Australian slang which shows her knowledge of their culture. The other category of knowledge is knowledge of the processes in interaction which aid us in understanding how people interact and their connections between groups and their identities (Byram, 2021, pp. 46-47). This category of knowledge can be seen in the way Rikke knows that Australians like “pulling your leg” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 20) when they are expressing their humor. Rikke explains that she used to fall for their attempts at making her

believe something foolish, but she has since learned their ways and adapted to their culture. This means that she has learned the procedural knowledge of how to behave in these situations, which is a part of the knowledge of processes in interactions (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Another part of the knowledge of the processes in interactions is knowledge on how to interact between different groups (Byram, 2021, p. 47), which is portrayed in both Jørn's and Sebastian's story. They both use body language and different ways of communicating than through speaking English, because they are speaking to customers or coworkers who have limited knowledge of English (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 19). In these situations, both Jørn and Sebastian know that they need to use other methods of communication, which can be said to promote the knowledge of the processes in interactions. Similar emphasis of knowledge can be found in figure 4.

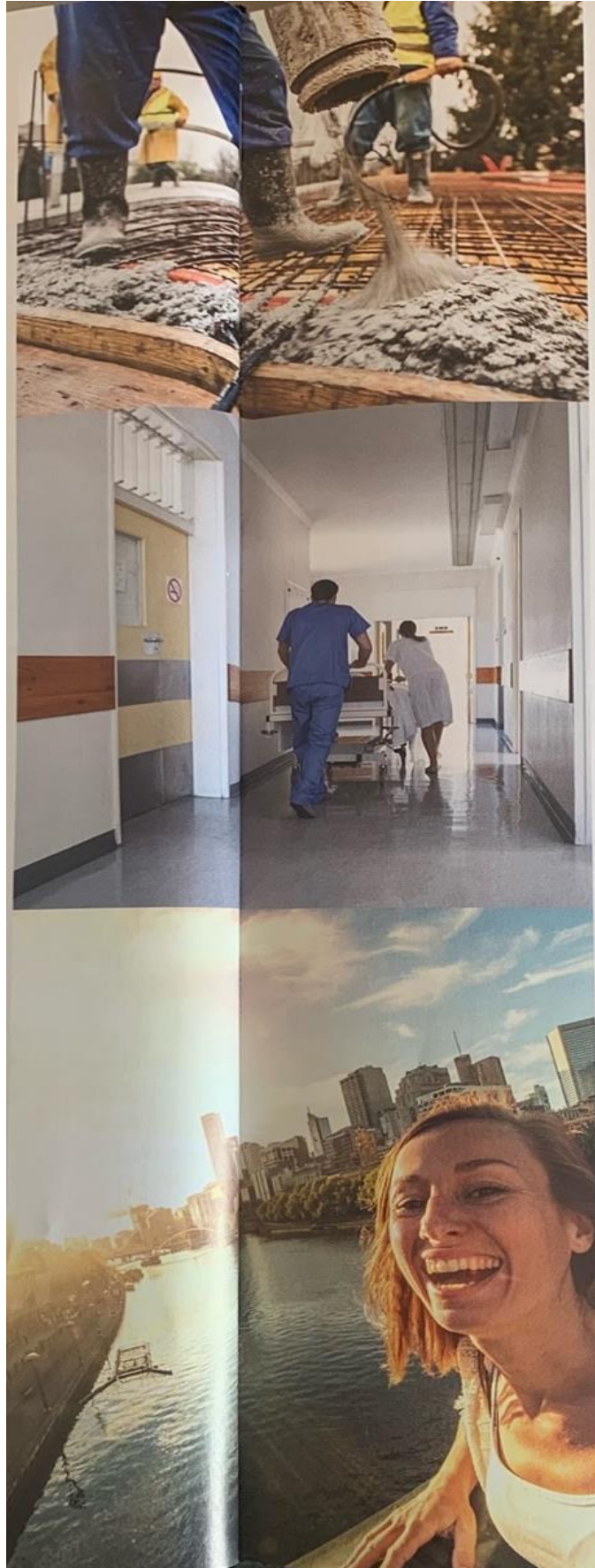


Figure 4. Three different occupations. (Photo by iStock/Getty Images. From "Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vgl" by Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 20-21, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 4 consists of three separate pictures that are stacked on top of each other, and in this way, portrayed almost as one, which is why I have chosen to analyze all three here (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 20-21). The picture at the top shows the legs of a person in blue pants and black boots pouring some kind of dark and lumpy liquid onto a prepared area on the ground outside. Behind this person to the right is the body (from the shoulders down) of another person in similar attire and a yellow high-visibility vest on, holding something resembling a hose. There are also two people in yellow coats to the left of the picture in the background. The description of this picture states that it depicts concrete workers “in action” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 21). The picture in the middle appears to be in a white hall with a yellow door to the left with a no-smoking sign on it. There are two people in this picture, one is a man in a blue t-shirt and blue pants, and the other is a woman in a white coat, both are facing away from the viewer, pushing what appears to be a bed down the corridor towards an opened and brightly lit door. In the description of the picture, it is made clear that this picture portrays health workers in a hectic situation. The picture at the bottom depicts a smiling woman in the front and to the right of the picture, standing at what seems to be a bridge, with the background of a big body of water and skyscrapers to the right of the water and a road with streetlights to the left. She is wearing a white tank top, and her hand is resting on a railing. The weather appears warm with a bright sun shining on the smiling woman. The description reveals that this is a photo of Rikke, one of the Norwegians in the stories, thriving in the city of Melbourne, Australia (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 21).

These three pictures portray different aspects of cultures, the work culture of concrete workers, the culture of health workers and the culture of students studying abroad in a foreign country. In this way, the picture can be interpreted to portray aspects of the stories in the text, by presenting the different occupations in distinct situations. Similarly to the text, the picture can also be interpreted to encourage attainment of knowledge of your own social group and its culture, by making the learners aware of occupations that one can have in Norway or in other parts of the world (Byram, 2021, p. 46). Additionally, when the learners are looking at these pictures, they can reflect on how these social groups are perceived, which is a part of the knowledge of processes of interaction (Byram, 2021, p. 47). These pictures can also be a way of conveying knowledge in a more interesting manner, which is in common with the textbooks based on LK-06 from Lund’s article (2012, p. 48).

Previous research shows that more recent textbooks have attempted to convey knowledge in a more interesting and motivating manner (Lund, 2012, p. 48). This can be done by including

facts about rare animals or exotic destinations (Lund, 2012, p. 48), and the last picture of Rikke in Australia can be viewed as an exotic destination in a foreign country. Additionally, the two other pictures present different social groups in action in different jobs, which portrays this knowledge in a potentially more interesting manner, considering that some learners may be interested in these jobs specifically. Lund (2012) mentions that by attempting to convey knowledge in a more interesting way the textbook portrays the learner as a tourist, which is unlikely to contribute to the teaching of intercultural competence (p. 48). This is because intercultural competence (as well as ICC) is perhaps more likely to be achieved in near-authentic representations of culture, because it requires the learners to be able to communicate with someone from another culture whilst being aware of the others' background and the possible cultural connotations of their language (Byram, 2021, p. 97). Something worth noting is that this picture does not portray a diverse representation of society, except for the male nurse, which is becoming more common. This can be indicative of the textbook authors assuming that male learners are the dominant target group of vocational study programs, as this textbook is aimed for, which can be considered stereotyping in itself. Bearing this in mind, the picture does not meet the *Knowledge basis*' criteria of textbooks as reflections of a diverse society (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85), which can be damaging to the learners if the teacher does not supply the lesson by using a different source than the textbook to show a more diverse society.

The accompanying tasks also portray aspects of the factor of knowledge. Task 1 b. asks: "Some people believe there should be more teaching of English in Norwegian schools to meet the challenges of increasing use of English in working life. Do you agree? Explain your opinion" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 22). Here, the textbook is asking the learners to reflect on other's opinions on the amount of teaching of English in Norwegian schools, as well as be able to say whether they agree to this statement or not, and why that is. In this question the learners are met with knowledge of an unspecified social group's opinion of Norwegian school culture and are being asked to explain their opinion based on their knowledge of their own social group and culture. This is in line with the first category of knowledge according to Byram's (2021) theory, which is continuously present due to either primary socialization through family or secondary socialization through education (p. 46). The learners' opinions can therefore either be based on knowledge they have acquired from their family, or knowledge they have acquired from education. As Byram (2021) mentions, secondary

socialization can often be consistent with the idea of a national or regional culture/identity, which this question pertains to by focusing on Norwegian schools. However, the learners are not provided with information about what it would take to make such a change, for example what kind of English should be taught, or what would be given less time and focus in order to give more to English and so on. Additionally, on account of how teachers may rely heavily on textbooks (Bakken, 2018, p. 2), it is likely that this question will not be given a well-informed answer, but rather be based on personal preferences.

Nonetheless, the question does address a contemporary societal issue, seeing as English is becoming more and more significant in today's society as Risager (2018) mentions (pp. 32-33). This can be connected to Lund's (2012) article, where she states that there are significant differences in how much textbooks address contemporary societal issues (p. 48). She also mentions that the ones that do address them, have connected tasks that make it evident that the learners should form their own informed opinions on this (Lund, 2012, p. 48). This can also be seen in question 1 b. where the learners are asked to express their own opinion on this topic and be able to explain why they have this opinion (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 22). Similar finds can be seen in task 6:

a. Below are some reasons to learn English. List them in order of importance to you in your future profession:

to talk about work procedures with colleagues – to take part in small talk – to make sure safety regulations are followed – to prepare for a future where English use in Norway is increasing – to communicate with customers/patients/clients

b. Explain your choices to a partner and listen to theirs. [...] (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 23)

In these tasks the learners are asked to arrange reasons to learn English in level of significance in accordance with their future profession and be able to justify their choices. This challenges the learners' knowledge of their social group and culture, and what is important to them, which promotes the factor of the first category of knowledge (Byram, 2021, p. 46).

Additionally, these tasks promote the second category of knowledge, as they emphasize the processes of interaction between them in their future profession and colleagues or clients (Byram, 2021, p. 47). This means that the tasks help the learners gain knowledge of how people in a certain social group interact with each other and to other people. Both the text, pictures and these tasks focus on work and work life, which is natural given that this is a



vocational studies textbook. Similar findings were discussed in the textbooks mentioned in Gray's section in Risager's (2018) book, where he also found work life to be given much space (p. 36). Furthermore, Gray noticed that the interactions between the characters in the textbooks he studied had become more personalized, because they expressed their personal experiences and interests in their profession (Risager, 2018, p. 36). The four Norwegians from the story in "My story: English for Training and Work" (Andersen et al, 2020, p. 18) also talked of their experiences in work life, and these tasks also promote the learners to reflect on what they assume would be their experiences in their future profession. Additionally, task b. is marked as more challenging, which again reiterates the emphasis on including tasks that can be solved at different levels, which the *Knowledge basis* promotes (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85).

### **"Children in a Digital World"**

This text is a feature article and is text three (out of four) in an in-depth topic called "Netizens" (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 3, 27, 31). *Citizens YF* defines 'Netizens' as "a person who uses the internet" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 27), and this in-depth topic includes varying genres of texts that all focus on how interconnected life has become for many on account of the internet (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 27). I chose to only focus on the third text 'Children in a Digital World' because it was the most relevant to my thesis and to the factor of knowledge in intercultural competence. "Children in a Digital World" starts off by stating that digital technology has changed the world, and that children are the biggest consumers of the internet. It also says that digital technology "can be a game changer for disadvantaged" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 31), and that it can offer opportunities for people to learn and ensure that their opinions are expressed. However, it also says that digital technology can be "yet another dividing line" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 31). The texts consist of two stories, one from Cameroon, and one from India.

In the first story from Cameroon, it says that internet access is challenging, and that many children live in remote areas, and do not receive the same standard of learning as those living in more urban areas (Andersen et al., 2020, 31). These children from remote areas also rarely have access to the internet, making the digital divide between the children bigger. However, by giving the schools in remote areas access to the internet, this divide in the standard of learning has started to shrink. The rest of this story speaks of a specific child's, Waibai Buka's, experience with suddenly gaining access to the internet through a project which resulted in the installation of a solar-powered satellite in her school. The children received

tablets with educational apps, which were completely new to Waibai, who “never had access to the internet growing up” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 32). Despite this, after only a short period of time, she became well-versed and started to teach other learners in her class how to use the tablets. The story continues by stating that by getting these children internet access, they are likely to be more prepared to “meet[...] the challenges of tomorrow” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 32).

The story from India is a slightly different story (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). This story starts by explaining the experiences of Vikas Gupta, a 17-year-old boy, who has multiple YouTube channels, many Facebook accounts and thousands of friends. It also says that his vigorous internet activity is giving him advantages in school. This is in stark contrast to his younger sister Kritika, a 15-year-old girl who has much less experience with using technology: “I don’t know how to use it so I have to get help from someone” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). The story continues by mentioning that due to Kritika’s lack of experience with technology, her interest has declined, which has led to her not knowing how to use a laptop. It is explained that this divide between the genders is usually due to parents’ concern for their daughters’ safety, and because they are afraid it will result in associations or relationships with men, which would bring “shame on the family” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). This story ends by stating that in “some households, technology is not seen as necessary or beneficial for girls and women” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). These stories can be connected to multiple aspects of the factor of knowledge.

Both the story from Cameroon and the story from India is based on information about, and experiences of, different cultures which the learners might not be used to. This can help the learners in their process of learning about intercultural competence, because they are gaining knowledge of different cultures and social groups (Byram, 2021, p. 46). Additionally, these stories also pertain to knowledge from secondary socialization, because they focus on regional as well as national culture and identity in Cameroon and India (Byram, 2021, p. 46), which could possibly make the learners reflect and compare to their own. The story from Cameroon can also make the learners aware of social class differences between the children in urban areas and those in more remote areas in Cameroon. Similarly, this depiction of social class differences can be found in figure 5.



Figure 5. "A girl is playing in Dharavi, Mumbai - one of the largest slums in the world". (Photo by NTBscanpix. From "Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1" by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 5 shows a young girl in an orange/brown dress standing in the middle of a narrow alleyway, waving her arms in upwards motions in the direction of some red string lights hanging from the ceiling of the two green buildings she is in between (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). It is dark outside, and the alleyway is dimly lit, which is why the back of someone's head and shoulders to the right of the picture is barely visible, as they are walking in the direction of the girl. The description of the picture states that this is a "girl playing the Dharavi, Mumbai - one of the largest slums in the world" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 33). As the description states, this picture depicts one of the slums in India, which can give the learners another opportunity to develop their knowledge on the different regions in India. In this way, the picture can be interpreted to portray aspects of the story from India, by showing a girl playing outside rather than showing a girl using any kind of technology. Additionally, this picture can be connected to the text in the way it portrays aspects of the factor of knowledge. This picture can make the learners more aware of regional culture and social class in Mumbai, as is in line with the first category of knowledge in intercultural competence (Byram, 2021, p. 46). Furthermore, as Byram (2021) mentions, the knowledge the learners have of other countries/regions is often related to the knowledge they have gained from their own social group and is often contrasted and compared to their own country/region (pp. 46-

47). Considering this, the learners are likely to compare their knowledge of their own country/region to the knowledge they are gaining from this picture. However, this picture can also be interpreted to continue spreading misinformation and stereotypes about India. The description of the picture specifies that this is from Dharavi, Mumbai and that it is one of the world's largest slums in the world. Mumbai does consist of large slums (Baliga & Weinstein, 2022, p. 285), but with this phrasing it would seem like that is all there is, which is not true, as the city is also a "financial capital" (Migozzi et al., 2023, p. 504), which indicates significant social class differences within this region. By not showing other aspects of India, the picture can lead to stereotypes about India, unless the teacher includes a section on reflections concerning this picture in their lesson. Considering how reliant teachers can be of textbooks (Bakken, 2018, p. 2; Charboneau, 2016, p. 327), these reflections are not guaranteed to take place if the textbook does not suggest it.

The comparison of cultures and regions can also be found in the accompanying tasks. Task 1 c. asks: "What in the texts did you recognize from your own life?" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 36). This question can be connected to the first category of knowledge because it considers that the learners have knowledge of their own social group and culture, and that they are able to compare that knowledge to the knowledge they have gained from reading these stories (Byram, 2021, p. 46). Additionally, the question assumes that the learners are able to recognize some of the aspects of the stories, which means that it considers that the learners are a diverse group who can have similar experiences. According to the *Knowledge basis* in the English subject this signals a good teaching material because it considers that the learners can have different cultural (and language) backgrounds (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85). Similarly, task 3 d., e., and f. also ask the learners to be able to compare their knowledge of their social group and culture to the knowledge they have gained of other cultures:

d. Imagine what your life would be like if you had no access to digital technology.

How would this affect your daily activities? How would it affect your possibilities in life?

e. How has digital technology had an impact on young people in Cameroon and India (TEXT 3)?

f. Why is it important to give more children worldwide access to digital technology? (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 36)

Here, the learners are not only asked to use the knowledge they have gained through the stories, but they are also asked to take the perspective of the people from the stories with different cultural backgrounds. This is in line with Byram's (2021) third aspect of the ideal language learner, which is "a person with the engagement and responsibility of the citizen" (p. x), and who is able to examine one's own culture with the aim of improving it. Considering this, the learners should be able to compare the life of people with different cultural backgrounds to their own, and see possible improvements that can be made, both to their own culture and to the foreign culture. The focus on improvements can be seen in question e. and f., where it is made clear that the technology has made an important impact on these children (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 36). Byram (2021) also states that the ideal of a language learner as a responsible citizen should be applicable to the learners during and after their school years, which can be connected to his research with intercultural citizenship (p. x). In order to become an intercultural citizen, the learners need to be exposed to cultural diversity and be able to compare and contrast with their own culture(s) (Méndez García, 2006, p. 203). This can be connected to previous research, where there has been discussion concerning whether textbooks should present a more culture-specific universe or a culture-neutral universe (Lund, 2012, p. 50; Risager, 2018, p. 33). In Lund's (2012) article she states that more recent textbooks present a more culture-specific universe in contrast to older textbooks (p. 50). She goes on to explain this by mentioning that LK-06 textbooks included cultural aspects which were specific to certain cultures, rather than focusing on culture-neutral topics such as friendship and so on. This was considered vital, because culture-specific representations accentuates cultural diversity (Lund, 2012, p. 50). Additionally, in Lund's (2012) article, she mentions that all of the textbooks in her study focused primarily on the U.K. and the U.S. (p. 47). In these stories in *Citizens YF*, the learners are met with specific cultural aspects of a region in Cameroon and India (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 31-33), which displays different cultures outside of the U.K. and the U.S. The focus on emphasizing cultural diversity is also present in the English subject curriculum, where it says that the learners will develop intercultural competence through gaining knowledge of different cultures and societies (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3).

These texts, tasks and the picture can also help with gaining sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with being able to understand and express opinions in a conversation on topics which are assumed known by the other person or which need to be clarified in the conversation (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Both of these texts are based on personal

stories from real events in their lives, and by reading these real stories, the learners can gain knowledge of topics which can be assumed by the other person. For example, if a learner is speaking to a student like Rikke who has lived in Australia for a longer period of time, they can assume that she will attempt to ‘pull their leg’ by trying to make them believe something unrealistic about Australia or its citizens. Additionally, in a conversation with a girl from Mumbai, India, a learner can be met with the assumption that they already know of the disparity of internet use between girls and boys in India. By having knowledge of these experiences, the learners are more likely to understand what people with these backgrounds are saying in a conversation, because they may speak in a manner which assumes that the learner already knows what they are talking about. The connected pictures portray these experiences and the knowledge that can be gained through analyzing them and reading the texts can also portray this. The tasks also aid in this knowledge, in the way they purposefully highlight experiences and opinions of others, and how they make the learners reflect on their own opinions on these matters and challenge them to compare these experiences with their own. However, task 1 b. accompanying the text “My story: English for Training and Work” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 22) can impede with learning sociolinguistic competence due to how it does not provide enough information about the consequences of prioritizing English teaching in Norwegian education. This is because it does not allow for the learners to truly express their thoughts due to being ill-informed (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Nonetheless, taking the rest of these texts into account, they can help the learners gain sociolinguistic competence by furthering their experiences with cultural diversity and the experiences of others.

### 6.1.3 Skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction

Different skills are represented in *Citizens YF*. Examples of this are in the texts “The Work You Do, the Person You Are” and “Communication Skills at Work”, found in chapter 2. This chapter, ‘Careers’, centers around topics within the field of work, such as what it takes to make a person feel pride in the work they do (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, this chapter teaches the learners about suitable qualities in employees which will help them get jobs, as well as insight into good communication and how to stay safe at work (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 2). This chapter is therefore likely to portray the factor of skills as it seemingly focuses on skills of communication and behaviours.

## **“The Work You Do, the Person You Are”**

This text is an essay by Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison about her experiences as a young servant in a white family’s house in the 1930s and 40s (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 3, 68). During this period of time, discrimination and adversity for African Americans in the U.S. was even more common than today. The text starts off with her explaining that all she had to do in order to get her salary of two dollars a week “was clean Her house” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 69) after school for a few hours. She describes the house as beautiful and that it has things that were common in that neighborhood, but absent in hers. She goes on to state that she had never seen a hoover vacuum cleaner or an iron not heated by fire before taking this job. Additionally, she mentions that she felt pride in her work because it gave her money she could spend on herself for movies, ice cream and so on, and because she gave half her salary to her mother, in order to pay “real things” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 69) like insurance-policy payment. This made her feel necessary and “adultlike, not childlike” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 69). As time went on, she got better at her job, which led to the houseowner giving her more and more tasks to do. These tasks became increasingly heavier and more stressful, but she knew she could not complain to her mother about it, because she would simply tell her to quit. Eventually, she complained to her father about the heavy workload at her job, and he gave her this advice: “You don’t live there. You live here. With your people. Go to work. Get your money. And come on home” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). It is explained in the text that this advice was interpreted by Toni Morrison as these four rules which helped her throughout the rest of her working life:

1. Whatever the work is, do it well – not for the boss but for yourself.
2. You make the job; it doesn’t make you.
3. Your real life is with us, your family.
4. You are not the work you do; you are the person you are. (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70)

The text ends with her explaining that she has worked with all kinds of different people in different jobs, but since she received this advice from her father, she has never considered the level of work to be an assessment of her worth, and that she always valued home over the guarantee of a job (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). This text can be used as an example of emphasis on the different skills of intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence requires the skills of interpreting and relating, and the skills of discovery and interaction (Byram, 2021, p. 48), and this text can help learners gain the former. The skills of interpreting and relating is based on being able to interpret texts by using knowledge of general and explicit aspects of a culture in order to find and understand connotations and references (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Additionally, this ability of being able to interpret a text based on a foreign cultural background is determined by the knowledge one has of their own as well as the foreign country's environment in order to relate to the interpretations and the knowledge gained through the texts (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Considering this, the factor of skills can be connected to the factor of knowledge (previously explained and discussed in chapter 6.1.2). In this text, the learners are met with the experiences of a woman with a certain cultural background in a foreign environment, which is possibly different to their own both in terms of ethnicity and norms of discrimination and work life. This means that the text promotes the skill of interpreting and relating because the learners need to interpret the foreign environment in the text and be able to relate to their own environment (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Based on this, the learners can experience a foreign environment through the eyes of the author and attempt to relate to the environment they are used to today.

This text can also help the learners in gaining skills of discovery and interaction. These skills entail using previous knowledge when attempting to understanding different beliefs and behaviors in different situations and being able to recognize meaningful occurrences as they occur in unfamiliar environments during time constraints (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Additionally, these skills require one to have attitudes of sensitivity to others with different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2021, p. 49). The text exposes the learners to a period of time where discrimination of African Americans was more rampant, and where people, including young teenagers, had to have multiple jobs in order to support the family (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 68). This promotes the learners to use their previous knowledge of today's environment when reading this text, in order to understand the different beliefs and behaviors of this time. Additionally, this text can advocate for attitudes of sensitivity to people with different cultural backgrounds, specifically African Americans in the U.S. in this case. Based on this, the text can be interpreted to promote skills of discovery and interaction as well due to it supporting the use of previous knowledge in order to understand different beliefs and behaviors, and



potentially emphasizing attitudes of sensitivity to others (Byram, 2021, p. 49). The connected picture can be interpreted to emphasize similar attributes (see figure 6).

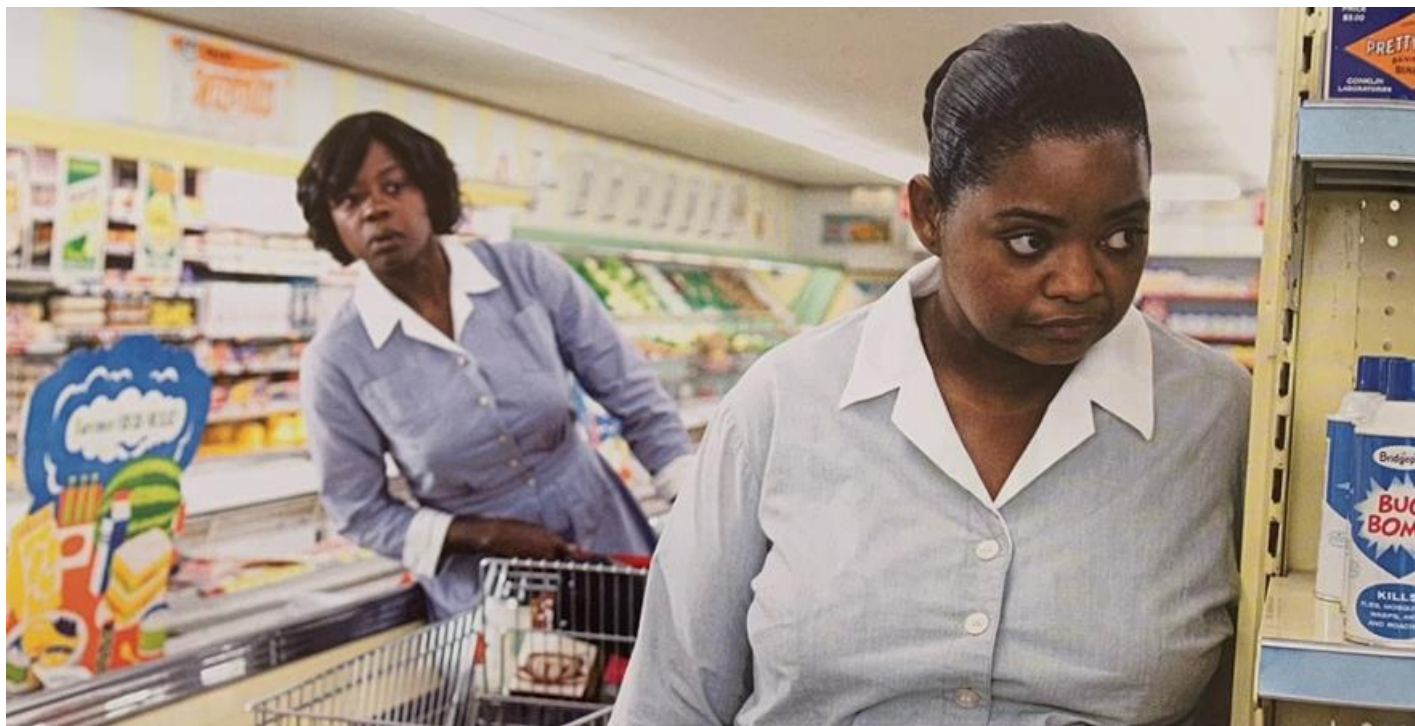


Figure 6. "Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer in a scene from *The Help*". (Photo by NTBscanpix. From "Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1" by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 6 shows two women inside what appears to be inside a grocery store (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). The two women are dressed in old-fashioned maid outfits. The woman in the front of the picture is leaning on a shelf and looking to the right of the picture, with an expression of what appears to be contempt or disdain. The other woman behind and to the left of the woman in front is leaning over in an attempt to look past the woman in front, with a curious and alert expression on her face, whilst pushing a shopping cart. The description of the picture explains that this is taken from a scene in a movie called *The Help*, which is set in the 1960s, when black maids were working in white households in the American South during the civil rights struggle (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). Considering this description, the picture portrays similar aspects to the essay, due to them living in a period of discrimination against African-Americans, and that they likely worked for a white household. Additionally, the women's facial expressions can be interpreted to portray feelings of discontent, which Toni Morrison also expresses in the story (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). However, if one were to only look at the picture and not read the description, the picture does not portray what happens in the story. The picture is placed in the middle of the accompanying text, at the top of page two of the essay, indicating that it should be relevant to the story (Andersen et al.,

2020, p. 70). When you are made aware that the women in the picture are maids working for a white household, it could be connected to the story, but if the picture were to truly be representational, the picture should have been of a young teen cleaning inside a house, rather than two adults in a grocery store. Nonetheless, if one takes the description of the picture into account, the picture can be connected to both kinds of skills needed in order to have intercultural competence. This is because the picture with its description further reiterates the emphasis on both types of skills by conveying attitudes of sensitivity to people with different cultural backgrounds, which is consistent with the skills of interaction (Byram, 2021, pp. 48-49). Additionally, this can aid in gaining knowledge of different beliefs and ways to behave, considering the time it is meant to portray, which can be connected to the skills of discovery (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Furthermore, this picture emphasizes skills of interpreting and relating by showcasing a foreign environment for the learners to understand and attempt to relate to (Byram, 2021, pp. 48-49). Likewise, some of the tasks present aspects of the skills needed to attain intercultural competence.

Multiple of the accompanying tasks reflect aspects of the different skills of intercultural competence. This can be seen in the first two questions of task 1: “a. What does the first paragraph tell you of the age this story is set in? b. Why do you think “Her” and “She” are written with a capital letter?” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 72). These questions can be connected to the skill of interpreting and relating, because it encourages the learner to use previous knowledge of explicit information (the history of discrimination in the U.S.) in order to interpret the text and uncover connotations to a different period in time (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Question b. specifically asks the learners to reflect on this period of time of discrimination, and wants them to imagine why Toni Morrison would capitalize the words “Her” and “She”. This is likely to be due to the then long-lasting wrong of discrimination of African Americans (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 68). By capitalizing the pronouns of her boss, Toni Morrison makes her boss seem like an authority of more significance than her, possibly indicating feelings of inferiority to her boss. By reflecting on this, the learners are also exposed to the skills of discovery and interaction as well, because they can gain explicit knowledge of certain beliefs and behaviors and develop sensitivity to others with a different cultural background (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Task 3 b. can also be interpreted to reflect the skills of interpreting and relating: “The narrator says that she has worked with “geniuses and morons, quick-witted and dull, bighearted and narrow”. Which of these words describe positive qualities, and which describe negative?” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 73). Here, the learners are asked to use general

knowledge frames of the rules of the English language in order to understand which words are describing positive assets and which are describing negative assets, which is in line with the skills of interpreting and relating (Byram, 2021, p. 48). These tasks focus on a specific way to use language depending on the situation, which is similar to earlier textbooks according to previous research (Lund, 2012, p. 48).

Previous research shows that earlier textbooks have focused on how language is used differently depending on the situation (Lund, 2012, p. 48). This essay presents authentic language use in its inclusion of the father's advice to Toni Morrison (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). There, the learners are met with 'natural' language for this time period and this specific cultural background. This is, according to Lund (2012), valuable to the learners as they can learn authentic language in a specific context, but in order to actually benefit from these kinds of language use, the connected tasks need to focus on them explicitly (pp. 48-49). In Lund's (2012) article, she states that such tasks were scarcely included in the textbooks based on L-97, but were more highlighted in the textbooks based on LK-06 (pp. 48-49). In connection to this essay, *Citizens YF* has in some manner included tasks which focus on authentic language. In question 1 b. the learners are asked to reflect on why she has chosen to capitalize words which are normally not capitalized (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 72), which in some regard makes the learners aware of a form of authentic language for this situation. Additionally, question 3 b. focuses on various adjectives that she has used to describe people she has worked with (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 73), indicating her language use in different situations concerning her work life. However, Lund's (2012) article also mentioned that the LK-06 textbooks included aspects of oral, informal language through inclusion of slang (p. 49). This is not emphasized in these tasks or in the essay. Considering this, the learners are not gaining knowledge of oral, informal language through reading this text or by answering these tasks, which does not prepare them for situations where they might need knowledge of this.

Nonetheless, the text and these tasks promote a diverse society by highlighting the experiences of an African American in the U.S. in the 1930-40s, which again is in line with the *Knowledge basis*' criteria on textbooks as portrayals of a diverse society (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85). These tasks can also be connected to the interdisciplinary topic 'Health and life skills', and how it emphasizes that learners should have knowledge and understanding of different ways of living and thinking (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). This is because these tasks and the accompanying text

spreads awareness of cultural diversity by focusing on a certain way of living and thinking, which can aid the learners in becoming more culturally aware.

### **“Communication Skills at Work”**

This text is categorized as an article, written by Ingeborg Madsen Sveen, and is concerned with promoting good communication skills in work settings (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 3, 78). The text starts off by explaining that people communicate differently depending on the situation and the interlocutor: “the way we communicate often changes depending on whom we interact with” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 78). After this, the text continues by defining what the terms ‘communication’ and ‘communication skills’ mean. The former is explained like this: “Communication is sending and receiving information” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 78), which is further explained as involving both a sender and a receiver. The latter is defined as: “different strategies for sharing information and ideas with others in a clear and effective way” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 79), and it is stated that these skills may be crucial in the field of work. This is because, as the text says, being able to transfer communication between colleagues and customers is necessary in order to solve possible challenges or disagreements that may occur. An example of the need for good communication skills is given, and it states that if a job requires you to understand instructions, a significant communication skill is being able to ask questions. Additionally, when talking with customers, you must be able to listen and show respect in order for the customers feel understood and reassured. On the next page, the article provides the learners with the 10 most important communication skills at work, which in summary points out the necessity of being able to adapt to the situation and be respectful, as can be seen in number seven: “Be an active listener and pay attention to others’ body language and feedback” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 80). Subsequently, the article highlights the different mediums of communication which are better suited for certain situations. Oral communication, for example through meetings or phone conversations, is beneficial when one needs immediate feedback and when one needs to discuss in order to reach a shared understanding. Written communication, such as through email or texts messages, is more advantageous when one needs to give more detailed information, or if one needs to give information to multiple people at the same time.

The last section of this article is divided into three categories which are focused on different aspects of what one needs to be aware of when communicating with someone from work. The first category is titled “Adapt your language to the situation” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 80), and focuses on how important it is to adjust your language to the situation and the recipient,

by for example not using specific professional terms related to the job when speaking to customers, because they may not understand them. Nonetheless, these professional terms are needed when speaking with colleagues. Additionally, it is essential to learn necessary vocational terms in English, in case your colleagues or customers do not speak Norwegian. It is further explained that if one has to use English in a work setting, one should attempt “to use polite phrases like “How are you?”, [...] “Sorry, didn’t quite catch what you said. Could you repeat that?”” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). The second category of what the learners need to be aware of is based on “Non-verbal communication” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). Here, the article explains non-verbal forms of communication as involving body language, facial expressions and eye contact. These can affect the way others interpret what is being said, negatively or positively. It is stated that your body language and your words need to match in order to “get your message across” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). Examples are given of either smiling or frowning, or maintaining eye contact or avoiding it when speaking to customers. Furthermore, gestures and posture are also mentioned as body language. Specifically, the article explains how a nod may portray agreement and empathy, while looking at the ground when speaking to a customer may make you seem closed-off or indifferent. The last category focuses on “Intercultural communication” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 82), and highlights that there are different ways of communicating in different cultures. An example is given of how it is common to use your boss’s first name in Norway, but this is less common in Britain where it is more common to use ‘Sir/Madam’ or ‘Mr./Ms.’. Another example is given of how eye contact can be considered respectful in Europe and the U.S., but disrespectful in Asia and Africa. The article ends by explaining that employers look for workers who can communicate well and be respectful to their customers, and that these communication skills may vary from job to job (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 82-83). This article can be interpreted to portray both kinds of skills needed in order to have intercultural competence.

The article can help the learners gain skills of interpreting and relating, as well as skills of discovery and interaction. The skills of interpreting and relating is encouraged in the way the learners are exposed to general knowledge frames of the work culture in Norway, as well as explicit information of different communication strategies in other cultures (Byram, 2021, p. 48). The specific knowledge of other ways of communicating in different cultures is necessary for the learners to know in order to uphold politeness strategies when interacting with others from a different cultural background. This can also be connected to the skills of discovery and

interaction, since having explicit knowledge of different ways of communicating respect in other cultures can make the learners more prepared for these kinds of interactions (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Additionally, by attaining knowledge of different ways of communicating, the learners are encouraged to be thoughtful and understanding in interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2021, p. 49). The knowledge of different ways of communicating is also present in the chosen picture for this text (see figure 7).

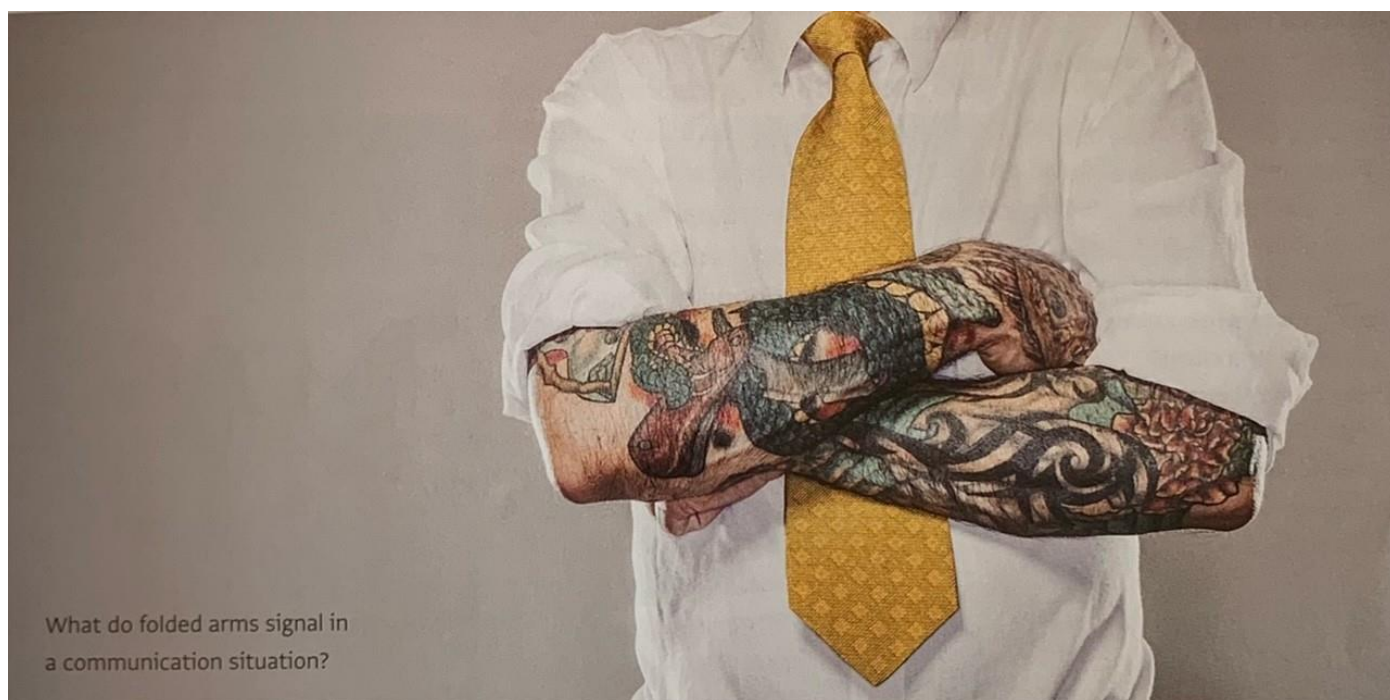


Figure 7. Body language: Folded arms. (Photo by iStock/Getty Images. From "Citizens YF: engelsk for yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram vg1" by Andersen et al., 2020, p. 78, Cappelen Damm)

Figure 7 shows the image of the upper body of a person, presumably a man, in a white dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up to above his elbows, wearing a yellow printed tie, in front of a grey background. His arms are crossed across his chest, showcasing heavily tattooed arms. Inside the frame of the picture is a question: "What do folded arms signal in a communication situation?", revealing the connection between the picture and the topic of this text, which is focused on communication skills in a work setting. Considering this, the picture is likely to attempt to portray a form of body language, and with that question in frame, the text can be interpreted to emphasize reflections on body language in different settings. This picture can be seen as portraying the section in the article on 'non-verbal communication', specifically an example of negative body language (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 82). In connection to the skills of interpreting and relating, this picture can portray connotations and hidden references, which are skills the learners need when interpreting texts or interactions (Byram, 2021, p. 48).

This is because the gesture of folded arms is not necessarily something negative, but in this situation, which is in the field of work, it can be portrayed as a lack of interest and openness when interacting with a customer (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). Bearing this in mind, the picture can be interpreted to present a connotation to negative body language. By gaining experience with pictures like this, the learners can more easily understand references and connotations that can appear in texts or interactions with other cultural backgrounds. Additionally, by analyzing this picture, the learners can gain explicit knowledge of certain beliefs and behaviours connected to communication skills, which promotes the skills of discovery (Byram, 2021, p. 49). This knowledge can be crucial in interactions with others, and can help them interpret a situation during time constraints, making this picture also helpful in teaching skills of interaction as well (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Similar connections can be seen in the tasks connected to the text.

Task 1 is focused on vocabulary, and challenges the learners to connect certain words or phrases to their explanations:

Have you heard the expression, “It’s on the tip of my tongue”? It means that you feel like you can almost remember something, but it just won’t come out. Imagine that your friend has a problem like this. They can’t quite come up with the correct word or phrase. Your job is to work out what the word or phrase could be. (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 84)

The task has nine explanations marked alphabetically from a-i, before the textbook states that the learners should choose the correct word or phrase from a list given below. The first explanation is stated like this: “a. Language that you don’t find in the dictionary, different words for things that maybe only kids use.” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 84), and most likely hints to ‘slang’, which is suggested as the second word in the list. Here, the learners are challenged to use general knowledge frames of what they believe slang is. Additionally, considering how the textbook is aimed for Vg1 learners, they are also encouraged to use knowledge of their own environment as young adults, who are perhaps more likely to have better knowledge of slang. This is in line with the skills of interpreting and relating due to how they are expected to use general knowledge frames as well as knowledge of their own environment (Byram, 2021, p. 48). However, as mentioned in the text ‘The Work You Do, the Person You Are’, previous research shows that earlier textbooks in the English subject have focused on the aspect of authentic language use (Lund, 2012, p. 49). A part of this is based on showing slang as a means of highlighting oral and informal language. As Lund (2012) stated

in her research, there were little evidence of tasks that actually encouraged the learners to practice variations of language use (p. 49), and this task also does not ask the learners to practice this knowledge, only to connect an explanation to the word. Furthermore, this explanation has little adherence to the text that it is connected to. The word slang is not mentioned whatsoever, which further emphasizes the lack of practice on (as well as knowledge of) variations of language use.

Nonetheless, the explanation in d. does adhere to the text: “Communicating without using words.” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 84). This is likely referring to ‘gestures’ or ‘body language’, as mentioned further down in the suggested list of words or phrases. Non-verbal communication is highlighted in the text as well as the chosen picture accompanying the text (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). The explanation in d. is challenging the learners to use the explicit knowledge they have gained from the text in order to connect this explanation to its correct word or phrase. Considering this, the task encourages the learners to use the skills of interpreting and relating in order to achieve the goal of the task; by interpreting the information gained and relating it to the correct answer (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Task 6 can also be interpreted to encourage skills of interpreting and relating.

Task 6 a. focuses on communication strategies, and asks the learners to translate expressions and phrases of politeness into either English or Norwegian:

a. People from English-speaking countries are often seen as very polite. Norwegians, on the other hand, are not as used to polite phrases. Look at the expressions and phrases below and discuss what the best Norwegian or English translation would be. What is the main difference between the Norwegian and English expressions?

*Hæ?* – I’m afraid I can’t make it. – Excuse me, where’s the toilet? – May I have a glass of water, please? – *Takk for sist!* – Could you give me five minutes, please? – *Du?* – Hello, how are you?” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 86)

This task is likely connected to the part in the text where it mentions polite phrases and their significance when needing to speak English at work (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 81). Here, the learners need to use skills of interpreting and relating in order to answer correctly. This is because they need to use general knowledge frames of what they know of polite phrases in English, as well as explicit knowledge of polite phrases in Norwegian which they likely have experience with (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Additionally, the knowledge the learners have of polite phrases in Norwegian may be something they are not actively conscious of. Considering this,



the task also promotes the skills of interpreting by making them more aware of their own environment, as well as the potentially foreign environment of polite phrases in English (Byram, 2021, p. 48). Knowledge of polite phrases in English can help the learners in establishing and recognizing a common ground of respect between them and others who do not speak Norwegian in a work setting, which is also a factor of the skill of interpreting (Byram, 2021, p. 48). This can also promote the skill of interaction, in the way the learners are gaining knowledge of what is potentially necessary in an interaction with an English speaker, by promoting attitudes of sensitivity to others with a different cultural background (Byram, 2021, p. 49). Task 6 a. may then aid learners in learning to use the skills of interpretation and relating, as well as the skills of interaction, which can help them communicate better with people of a different cultural background. Contrary to task 1 a., this task does ask the learners to practice variations of language use, with a specific focus on the differences between polite phrases in Norwegian and English. This knowledge of language variations is vital to the learners, and by having a task that specifically focuses on it, the learners can actually benefit from this knowledge, according to Lund (2012, pp. 48-49). By aiming to achieve knowledge of common frames of reference in communicating politeness, the textbook meets the criteria of the *Knowledge basis* which states that textbooks should present texts and approaches which contribute to the learners developing common frames of reference (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021, p. 85). Additionally, this task can be connected to Byram's (2021) second aspect of the ideal language learner (p. x).

According to Byram (2021), one aspect of the ideal language learner is to be curious and courageous, as an ethnographer (p. x). This means that the learner should want to observe the practices and behaviors of people with a different cultural background, attempt to learn their language and participate in their everyday life and reflect on beliefs and norms. Additionally, the learners should learn more about themselves in this process of observation (Byram, 2021, p. x). By having a task which focuses on a certain way of communicating (through polite phrases) in a different language, the learners can be inspired to be curious and open to different ways of communicating in accordance with the norms of English speakers. Task 6 a. also aids the learners in learning the language of English speakers, as well as it encourages participation in their everyday lives. Furthermore, similarly to many of the chosen texts from *Citizens YF*, this text also allocates much of its content on the topic of work, which previous research shows has been an increasing trend (Risager, 2018, p. 36). This text could have

focused on communication skills in general, but the textbook authors chose to focus on how they are relevant in a work setting, which is perhaps natural given that the textbook focuses on vocational studies.

The texts “The Work You Do, the Person You Are” and “Communication Skills at Work” can also be interpreted to aid the learners in acquiring linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is based on using the rules of language to proficiently produce, as well as interpret, spoken and written language (Byram, 2021, p. 60). This first text is based on an earlier point in time in the U.S., and includes a brief example of authentic language use by Toni Morrison’s father (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70). With this example of authentic language, the learners are able to interpret spoken language, in line with linguistic competence (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Additionally, task 1 b. asks the learners to reflect on why the author chose to capitalize the words “Her” and “She”. This task not only encourages the learners to use the skills of interpreting and relating as well as the skills of discovery and interaction, but it also aids in learning about linguistic competence. The reason for this is because this task emphasizes the rules of language, by focusing on the unconventional way of spelling two pronouns. Similarly, task 3 b. also focuses on the rules of language by including the section in the text where Toni Morrison uses different words to describe people she has worked with (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 73). The aim of this task is for the learners to be able to explain which of these adjectives are positive and which are negative. Not only does this task help the learners with the use of the skills of interpreting and relating, but it also focuses on the standard rules of the English language which can help them be able to understand both spoken and written language (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Furthermore, in the latter text, there is also an accompanying task which focuses on the section in the text as well as what is portrayed in the picture, about conventional standards of language, by emphasizing polite phrases in English and Norwegian (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 86). Considering this, these two texts and their accompanying tasks and pictures can aid in the process of learning the different skills needed in intercultural competence, as well as the aspect of ICC described as linguistic competence.

## **7. Conclusion**

This chapter will first address the research question by drawing together, synthesizing and summarizing the thesis and its findings in light of examples where intercultural competence and ICC is emphasized and promoted, or impeded. Second, this chapter will include the limitations of my research and suggestions of what can be done in future research.

## 7.1 Summary of findings

This thesis is a valuable contribution in its field due its focus on intercultural competence and ICC. Intercultural competence and ICC can help learners become intercultural citizens who are open, curious and respectful of other cultures (Byram, 2021, pp. x, 45; Méndez García, 2006, p. 203), which is crucial in today's world where we are increasingly being exposed to cultural diversity, leading to us growing closer together every day (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 6). This emphasis is prominent in the Council of Europe's works, which have inspired the English subject curriculum in a similar manner (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 11, 27; Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3; Simensen, 2020, p. 31).

Additionally, the findings in this thesis are significant and relevant due to how perplexing the concept of culture can be for teachers, and on account of the heavy reliance Norwegian EFL teachers can have of textbooks for their lessons (Bakken, 2018, p. 2; Charboneau, 2016, p. 327). The aim of this thesis was to answer this research question: "How does *Citizens YF* promote intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in light of Michael Byram's theory?". The textbook promotes intercultural competence through a focus on attitudes, knowledge and skills, as well as linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence.

An example of the factor of attitudes being promoted is seen in the task connected to the text "The Last Border" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 140), where task 2 d. asks the learners to reflect on their attitudes as well as the general attitude of most Norwegians towards immigrants (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 144). Previous research also shows that this focus on the learners' attitudes to people from different cultural backgrounds have become more significant in recent textbooks (Lund, 2012, p. 49). The factor of knowledge is emphasized in the text "Children in a Digital World" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 31), where cultural diversity is accentuated by portraying both regional culture in India as well as Cameroon. Here, the learners are gaining knowledge of different cultures, as Byram (2021) states is a part of the factor of knowledge (p. 46). Additionally, culture-specific aspects are being accentuated in contrast to culture-neutral aspects, which is a discussion that is prevalent in previous research in this field (Lund, 2012, p. 50; Risager, 2018, p. 33). Lastly, the factor of skills can be encouraged in the text "The Work You Do, the Person You Are" (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 69), where the textbook emphasizes a certain period of time in a different culture (1930s-40s in the U.S.). This is because the learners are encouraged to interpret and relate to the contents of the text, as can be seen in task 1 a. and b. where the learners are challenged to use previous

general and explicit knowledge of a certain time in history where discrimination was more widespread (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 72; Byram, 2021, p. 49). Additionally, this text includes aspects of authentic language use in a certain context, which is advantageous for the learners to be exposed to, according to previous research (Lund, 2012, pp. 48-49).

In light of ICC, *Citizens YF* promotes linguistic competence in chapter 2 where they include examples of authentic language use, as well as tasks which focus on the effects of capitalization, the use of different adjectives in certain contexts, and conventional phrases of politeness in Norwegian and English (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 70-73, 86; Byram, 2021, p. 60). Sociolinguistic competence is emphasized in the way the textbook teaches the learners about knowledge which may be taken for granted as known by a person from a different cultural background (Byram, 2021, p. 60). This can be seen in chapter 1, where the textbook accentuates experiences from regional cultures in India and Cameroon (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 19, 31). Discourse competence is highlighted in chapter 3 and 4, in the way it includes information about conventional standards of different cultures, and tasks which focus on what to do in certain situations where cultural nuances are significant in conversation with a person from a different cultural background (Andersen et al., 2020, pp. 140, 170, 177; Byram, 2021, p. 60).

However, there were also findings of examples where learning about intercultural competence and ICC may be impeded. Learning the factor of attitudes may be impeded in the text “Cultural Complications” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 170), where the textbook authors state this: “Most of us do have a kind of “us-versus-them” attitude when we say about other groups of people that they are like this or that” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 174). This can potentially hinder the factor of attitudes due to how it does not promote an attitude that holds back on one’s own beliefs and values (Byram, 2021, p. 45). Not only can this view be regarded as stereotyping, but it can also be interpreted to emphasize the notion of otherness. As Beacco et al. (2016) mention, intercultural competence is based on being able to experience and understand otherness (p. 10), not to further the spread of otherness. This may also impede with learning discourse competence, due to how it can hinder knowledge of cultural nuances (Byram, 2021, p. 60). Another example of the factor of attitudes being potentially impeded is seen in the use of the picture in figure 2 (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 175). This is meant to be a representation of prejudice, but there are no reflections around it, making the picture potentially more likely to lead to more prejudice than an attempt to stop it.

The factor of knowledge may be impeded in task 1 b. accompanying the text “My story: English for Training and Work”, where the learners are asked to reflect on whether there should be more teaching of English in Norwegian schools (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 22). By not providing the learners with more information about what this change would entail, the factor of knowledge may be impeded, seeing as it hinders knowledge of their own social group (Byram, 2021, p. 46). This may also hinder sociolinguistic competence, because the learners are not able to accurately express their opinions in a well-informed manner (Byram, 2021, p. 60).

Learning the factor of skills can potentially be impeded in the picture used in the text “The Work You Do, the Person You Are” (Andersen et al., 2020, p. 70), due to how it can appear misleading in relation to the text it is accompanying. The picture does not depict similar aspects to the story, and in this way, potentially hinders the learners in learning to interpret and relate to the story in the text (Byram, 2021, p. 48). In order to avoid these possible hindrances of learning intercultural competence, teachers need to include discussions and reflections about these findings. On account of this, the textbook leaves much responsibility to the teachers in the process of accurately teaching intercultural competence and ICC.

Considering this, *Citizens YF* can be interpreted to emphasize and promote intercultural competence and ICC through a focus on cultural diversity, but there are also aspects of this textbook which may further stereotyping, prejudice and ill-informed opinions.

## 7.2 Limitations of findings and suggestions for further research

In this thesis, the analysis and discussion was based on only one textbook: *Citizens YF*. This makes the research narrow. It is also narrow because I chose to focus on six texts (and accompanying pictures and tasks) and not include aspects of the rest of the chapters, except for a brief introduction of what each chapter entailed. However, by only investigating one textbook, I have had the opportunity to analyze and discuss in a detailed manner how this textbook promotes intercultural competence and ICC through thorough investigation, which provided numerous examples of findings.

In relation to further research, I suggest comparing how *Citizens YF* promotes intercultural competence and ICC to other vocational textbooks, in order to get more of an overview of the field. Alternatively, or additionally, one could also compare *Citizens YF* with the general studies version. This would grant the researchers a chance to compare and see possible

noteworthy differences between how textbook publishers highlight these competences based on their target audience.

Another suggestion for further research is to use a different method in addition to the one used in this thesis. One could for example choose to accompany textbook analysis and multimodal social semiotics with interviews of learners and/or EFL teachers on their opinions of culture's role in their lives and in the English subject. Furthermore, one could ask both learners and teachers how they think intercultural competence can affect their lives both inside and outside of school. This could lead to interesting findings of the personal effects of how textbooks portray intercultural competence in the lives of EFL teachers and learners.

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