



“Where am I?”

Cultural Diversity and Racial
Representation in English Language
Teaching Materials

María Skúladóttir

Thesis for B.Ed degree

Faculty of Subject Teacher Education



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS
MENNTAVÍSINDASVIÐ

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“Where am I?": Cultural Diversity and Racial Representation in
English Language Teaching Materials in Icelandic Compulsory Schools

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Ágrip

Þessi rannsókn skoðaði kennsluefni í ensku til þess að athuga hvort að fjölbreytileiki kæmi fram í efninu. Fjórar kennslubækur og tólf kennslumyndbönd sem hægt er að finna á Menntamálstofnun voru skoðaðar.

Hugmyndin að verkefninu kom frá BA lokaverkefni um fjölmenningu í barnabókum. Niðurstöður þeirrar ritgerðar sýndu að fjölbreytileiki sást lítið, og engar bækurnar höfðu skýran fjölmenningarlegan boðskap. Niðurstöðurnar komu mér á óvart og ég fór að velta fyrir mér hvernig fjölbreytileiki kæmi fram í námsefni í enskukennslu. Börn byrja snemma að skoða og lesa kennslubækur og það sem þau sjá í þessum bókum hefur áhrif á þau, hvort sem þau eru hvít eða ekki. Mér þykir mikilvægt að kennslubækur sýni alla þá mismunandi menningu sem er að finna í heiminum, því Ísland er að verða fjölmenningarlegra með hverju árinu og það er mikilvægt að nemendur okkar sem eru í minnihlutahópum líði vel og finnist þeir velkomnir í skólana í landinu.

Umræðunni er skipt í þrjú hluta: hugtök, fjölmenningarleg menntun og framkoma mismunandi kynþátta í námsskrám. Niðurstöðunum er síðan skipt í fimm hluta: Framkoma mismunandi kynþátta í kennsluefni, upplýsingar um mismunandi menningarheima, staðalímyndir, fordómar og stuðningur fjölmenningar.

Niðurstöður þessa lokaverkefnis sýndu að lítið var um framkomu fjölmenningar í kennsluefninu og hvít menning var í miklum meirihluta. Flest sjónarhornin komu frá Vestrænu sjónarhorni og yfirleitt voru fjölbreyttir kynþættir sýndir sem hluti af framandi menningarhópum, áttu í erfiðleikum eða urðu fyrir fordómum. Þrátt fyrir það, kom í ljós að kennsluefnið sýndi ekki fordóma í garð annarra kynþátta og sýndi mikinn stuðning í garð fjölmenningar.

Abstract

This thesis analyzed four textbooks and twelve videos approved by the Directorate of Education to be used in schools around the country in order to see how diversity and racial representation is reflected in the teaching material in English language class.

The motivation for this project was a BA thesis about multiculturalism in children's books. The results showed little to no representation of people of color (POC), and none of the books had a clear multicultural message to the story. This had me thinking about the material we teach in schools and whether there is any representation of people of color in said material. Children are exposed to textbooks from an early age, so what they see in those books influences them, whether they are white or POC. I believe it is important that the textbooks represent all cultures living in the world. As Iceland is becoming more multicultural, it is important that our students who fall into a minority group feel welcomed and represented in their school.

The review of the literature is divided into three parts: Concepts, Multicultural Education, and Racial Representation in Curriculum Content. The findings are divided into five parts: Racial Representation in Teaching Material, Information About Other Cultures, Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Support of Diversity.

The findings of the thesis showed that diversity was lacking, and white culture was in the forefront of the teaching material. Most of the viewpoints were from a Western point of view and usually POC were portrayed as being non-mainstream, having difficulties, or experiencing prejudice. However, a lot of the teaching materials were not prejudiced against POC and showed support for diversity.

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Ágrip	3
Table of Images	6
Preface	7
1 Introduction	8
2 Review of the Literature	10
2.1 Concepts.....	10
2.2 Multicultural Education.....	12
2.3 Racial Representation in Curriculum Content.....	15
3 Methods	18
3.1 Checklist.....	19
4 Findings	21
4.1 Data Sources.....	21
4.2 Racial Representation in the Teaching Materials.....	23
4.3 Information about other cultures.....	23
4.4 Stereotypes.....	24
4.5 Prejudice	25
4.6 Support for Diversity.....	27
5 Discussion	29
5.1 Limitation of the Study and Further Research.....	32
6 Conclusion	33
References	34

Table of Images

Image 1. Stories, pg. 48	25
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Preface

The inspiration for this thesis came to me while taking a multicultural educational course at the University of Iceland. It occurred to me that a lot of people are not thinking about the representation of minority groups and I wondered how diversity was represented in Icelandic compulsory schools. As a growing multicultural society, it is important that the teachers in Icelandic compulsory schools are involving all students in their curricula, not only the majority of students. I believe that good representation can grow self-esteem and self-worth in a student and show them that their stories are worthy of being written about or represented.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Samúel C. Lefever, for his patience and help throughout the writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank my parents, Sigríður G. Jóhannesdóttir and Skúli Guðmundsson, for their endless support throughout this and all of my other endeavours. Special thanks to my father, Skúli Guðmundsson, who has been my own personal proofreader for the past three years and is always ready to sit down with me and read over my projects.

This thesis was written solely by me, the undersigned. I have read and understood the University of Iceland's Code of Ethics (https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_code_of_ethics) and have followed them to the best of my knowledge. I have correctly cited to all other works or previous work of my own, including, but not limited to, written works, figures, data, or tables. I thank all who have worked with me and take full responsibility for any mistakes contained in this work.

Signed:

Reykjavík, May 12th 2021

María Skúladóttir

1 Introduction

Iceland is changing and subsequently, its classrooms. In 1990, 1,9% of the Icelandic population were foreign citizens, while thirty years later, in 2020, it had risen to 13,5% (Hagstofa Íslands, 2020). This change is largely due to Iceland becoming a part of the European Economic Area (EEA) which increased migration in the country and many others in Europe. Before the entry into the EEA most of the immigrants coming to Iceland were from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland), Germany, the United Kingdom and North America (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012). Now the biggest immigrant population is Polish (Hagstofa Íslands, 2020). Over 1.800 students speak Polish in Icelandic compulsory schools and over 300 students speak Filipino or English. Therefore, the classrooms have gotten more diverse.

The question is, has the teaching material evolved like the students have? One of the six fundamental pillars in the National Curriculum Guide is equality. The fundamental pillars should be reflected in the teaching material and therefore, equality should be reflected in the materials teachers choose (Ministry of education, science, and culture, 2013). One of the tasks of the fundamental pillar equality is developing Iceland as a multicultural society. So how is multiculturalism being developed in Icelandic curricula?

In the Reykjavík City Department of Education and Youth policy on multicultural education it clearly states that teachers must keep in mind what teaching materials are available that support multicultural learning (Reykjavik City Department of Education and Youth, 2014). Hanna Ragnarsdóttir (2005) suggests that changes need to be made to create a positive learning environment for all children and one of those suggestions centers around the teaching material used in classes. What messages are we sending our students of color, whether clear or unclear? Is the material we use made for children of all races or classes? Is diversity represented in the textbooks and other material used in classes? Can all children relate to the materials used and see themselves in it? If I look at a textbook in an Icelandic classroom, will I see the 300 Filipino students studying in Icelandic compulsory schools represented in those textbooks?

In this thesis the representation of diversity in the English teaching materials in Icelandic compulsory schools will be discussed and analyzed. The research question in this thesis is: How is diversity reflected in the teaching materials used in English classes in grades 8-10 in Icelandic compulsory schools? My assumption is that although the National Curriculum preaches equality and support for diversity, there is still not enough representation of students of color in the teaching material. I suspect that representation of

students of color is lacking and that teaching materials do not show the diversity that is represented in classrooms. I think that compared to white representation in teaching materials students of color are in the minority. I believe this can have a negative impact on students of color's self-image and confidence levels and therefore, I think this research is important.

2 Review of the Literature

This chapter will be split into three sections: Concepts, Multicultural Education, and Racial Representation in Curriculum Content.

2.1 Concepts

For the purpose of this thesis, the following terms will be used. Therefore, in this chapter these terms will be defined.

Diversity: Every individual is different. Diversity explores these differences in a positive and safe environment. Diversity appreciates what makes people different, for example people's background, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or education (Global Diversity Practice, n.d.). Diversity means understanding these differences and respecting every individual, no matter their background. Diversity and inclusion are two very related terms, as including diverse people is the idea of diversity, whether it is inclusion in certain industries, workplaces, or education, diversity is always important as it ensures equality. In the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide (Ministry of education, science and culture, 2013), diversity is explained as a "source of strength that can eradicate poverty, contribute to peace and secure living conditions and quality of life for all, wherever they live in the world." (pg. 18). Diversity is in many cases associated with "racial diversity". Racial diversity refers to including a variety of different races or ethnicities in a project, workplace, school, etc. Racial diversity can aid inclusion, disrupt negative stereotypes about race, create a racially collegial society and promotes belonging in those underrepresented racial groups (Guerrero, 2002).

Equality: Equality is the act of ensuring that every human being has the same opportunity to make the most of their lives. It is the belief that individuals should not have poorer chances in life because of who they are, where they come from or what they believe. Historically, certain groups of people with certain characteristics, such as age, disability, race, religion, and sex, have been discriminated against. Equality enforces change and acceptance of everyone (Equality and Human Rights, 2019). In the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide, education for equality has the objective to give all individuals an opportunity to "develop on their own terms, nurture their talents and lead a responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, broadmindedness, and equality." (Ministry of education, science and culture, 2013, pg. 20). Equality both refers to the content used in schools, teaching methods, and learning environment. One of the tasks of having equality be a fundamental pillar in education is to develop Iceland as a multicultural society.

Privilege: Privilege is the unearned benefit gained from a person's social status or race (Phillips & Lowery, 2018). In the United States, European settlers advanced on the Native peoples, enslaved

Africans, and created policies and practices designed for the settlers' benefit. Descendants of these settlers are still benefitting from these discriminative policies today. Therefore, when speaking of privilege, it is important to understand that it does not have to do with what people have worked for in their lives, but what benefits they have received based on things they cannot control, such as gender, race, and social status.

Race: The term race has been used throughout history to refer to a person's skin color or nationality, so there is both a cultural and a biological approach to the term (Relethford, 2010). Although, Relethford argues that because it is not possible to split humans into subspecies, the biological concept of race has been difficult to apply to humans. Even so, he defines the term biological race as a group of people who share certain biological traits that distinguish them from other groups. Scientists have never agreed on how many races exist. Some have suggested that there are three: Europeans, Africans, and Asians, but many populations do not fit into one of these three categories. Others have gone so far to say that there are 7, 9, and even more races. There never has been a consensus on the matter which further proves that the concept of race does not fit human biology well. Many traits that are used to distinguish human races try to fit a variable into a small number of groups, skin color for example. People use the words: "White", "Brown", and "Black" to describe skin colors, but in reality, skin colors do not come in 3, 5 or 10 shades. There is a full range of human skin colors in the world, both dark and light, so grouping them together can be difficult. Some argue that it is unnecessary and confusing as the term often has heavy historical baggage. In some cases, classifications such as these are necessary, especially when defining social groups that have suffered inequality such as racism. As this is a very complicated term, in this thesis the word person of color (POC) will be used for anyone who is not white. Only when it is relevant, the color of a person's skin will be mentioned.

Person of color (POC): A person of color, or a POC, is someone who is not Caucasian or described as "white".

Subtle racism: Contemporary racism can either be expressed blatantly or subtly (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Violence and racial slurs are examples of blatant racism, while subtle racism is indirect and more difficult to detect because it can be explained by various factors. Poor service at a restaurant could be because of racism, but the reasons can also be varied, the server could be having a bad day or has had inadequate training (Reid & Foels, 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand that racism can be perceived differently, depending on the person who experiences it. In a recent research by Liao, Hong, and Rounds, black and white college students watched video clips of different confrontations between white people and POC and judged whether the confrontation was racist or not. The findings showed that black participants perceived subtle

racism cues more often than white participants (2016).

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism is the cultural diversity in human society. It does not only refer to ethnic or national culture, but also the “linguistic, religious, and socio-economic diversity” (UNESCO, United Nations. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006, pg. 17).

Multicultural literature: Multicultural literature is about people from different “cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds, who have been marginalized and are considered outside of the mainstream of society.” (Morrell & Morrell, 2012, pg. 11). Multicultural literature should offer a realistic representation of marginalized groups and their life experiences. It should offer a perspective on their beliefs and life experiences which have been dominated by mainstream society.

Multicultural education: Multicultural education began in the United States in the 1960s, during the civil rights movements (Banks & Banks, 2001). Since then, many scientists have tried to define the concept. Banks and Banks define it as an educational reform movement, whose sole purpose is to change the structure of the educational system so that all students have an equal opportunity in school. Other definitions have explained it as adopting culturally responsible pedagogy facilitated by trained instructors or “antiracist education” (Özturgut, 2011). In 2003 McLaren introduced the concept of critical multicultural education which was supposed to contribute to a change in society and improvement of social justice and equality in our society. Critical multicultural education aims to build a stronger society by highlighting the oppression and inequality found in the social structure of society (Arsal, 2019).

Teaching material: In this thesis, teaching material in compulsory schools in grades 8-10 will be analyzed. Teaching material can refer to textbooks, reading material, digital media and any other form of material used in English classes in Icelandic compulsory schools. However, this thesis focuses on four textbooks and 12 instructional videos, all found on the Directorate of Education’s website and available for use in Icelandic schools.

2.2 Multicultural Education

Racially diverse children in Iceland fall into a minority group, as most of the Icelandic population is white. Academic institutions have been criticized for designing teaching techniques based on the needs of society’s majority groups while minority groups’ backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and languages are ignored (Benediktsson, Wozniczka, Tran & Ragnarsdóttir, 2019).

It is important that both teachers and administrators work towards understanding the learning needs of multicultural students. That way, they can recognize how their needs are different from students from the dominant culture (Özturgut, 2011). When multicultural students in Icelandic compulsory schools have been researched, the focus of the research is often on the

students not speaking Icelandic and they are depicted as having special needs. This can increase injustice and racism towards these students and their backgrounds (Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, 2005). Therefore, we need a system which can make these students feel encouraged and welcomed.

Banks (2006) has identified five aspects of multicultural education: Content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, empowering school culture and social structures. These five aspects can help teachers better understand multicultural students and their needs. One of the most important aspects of multicultural education is content integration (Banks, 2010). Content that is related to ethnic and cultural diversity must be added into the curriculum before knowledge construction and prejudice reduction can be accomplished. To integrate multicultural content into the curriculum, there are four methods that should be used: Contributions, Additive, Transformative, and Social Action.

Contributions: This is the easiest method that all teachers can follow by adding various facts about diversity into the curriculum (Banks, 2010). Otherwise, the structure and characteristics of the curriculum stay the same.

Additive: This method is similar to the contribution's method, because the curriculum stays the same but this time the teacher adds certain topics about diversity into the already established curriculum (Banks, 2010).

Transformative: In the transformative method, the structure, content and goals of the curriculum are changed to allow for students to view concepts and cases from multiple perspectives. This could be done by introducing students to the music, dance, and literature of different ethnicities and cultures (Banks, 2010). Implementing multicultural literature into the curriculum can empower students and transform their beliefs, as well as help them analyze their cultural, social, and political world, and gain perspectives towards different cultures in minority groups (Morrell & Morrell, 2012). Reading text that is culturally relevant allows students to make connections between their experiences and the reading material. This can increase their interest in the material and result in improved academic performance (Morrell & Morrell, 2012). Multicultural literature is not only for racially diverse students, but for everyone. Literature and teaching material can also explain how systematic discrimination works for students in the majority groups, which can help them understand other points of view. Implementing this in the students' teenage years can benefit them at a moment in their lives when they are learning acceptance and understanding, both of themselves and others.

Social Structure: The social structure method helps students to gain knowledge, values, and skills to partake in social criticism and change (Banks, 2006). This method is more complicated than the other three, as the teacher must teach the students democratic values and ideals, by

planning activities where students can examine and reflect on their values, attitudes and beliefs related to racial prejudice and discrimination. Teachers can use poetry, biographies and case studies from newspapers or magazines as sources.

These four methods can be used to create a diverse curriculum and to integrate ethnic and cultural content into teacher education programs (Arsal, 2019). These programs must offer appropriate courses in line with the needs of student teachers. They need to challenge and urge student teachers to leave their comfort zones, as well as expand on their knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures that will be in their classrooms one day (Özturgut, 2011).

The increase in cultural or ethnic diversity in classrooms has caused many teachers to recognize the need to deepen their understanding of multicultural education. The need for multicultural education has become urgent and therefore, universities have started giving courses on cultural diversity and multiculturalism. Research has shown that teachers who attended a course specifically on cultural diversity had better attitudes towards teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students than teachers who did not attend the course (Bodur, 2012).

Integrating multicultural content into the teaching practice can also have a positive effect on student teachers. Student teachers who taught racially diverse students gained better and more understanding attitudes towards multicultural education by teaching the students (Sassi, Bertolini & Ketterling, 2012). Another study on student teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism found that integration of multicultural content in teacher education programs resulted in positive changes in the student teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards multiculturalism (Arsal, 2019).

For teachers to be prepared for their multicultural classes, intercultural competence is essential (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). Intercultural competence's components are attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Intercultural competence's essence is in the attitude of the teacher, or that they are curious, open, and ready to exclude disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about their own. The component of knowledge does not have to do with how much the person knows about a certain culture, but how a social group functions and what is involved in their intercultural interaction. It is impossible for a teacher to have knowledge of students they may teach one day, which is why they must develop skills to understand how misunderstandings can arise, and how they might be able to resolve them. Lastly, teachers need to have a critical cultural awareness, or the ability to think critically based on criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in their own culture, as well as others.

2.3 Racial Representation in Curriculum Content

In the 1960s, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher and educational theorist, cultivated a movement which advocated teachers and students to examine the unequal relations of power in their everyday lives and to take action for social justice. He stated that this could be done by raising awareness about inequality buried beneath knowledge which has been taken for granted and by transforming our society so that those who feel powerless can become a force for change in their world (Taylor Mendes, 2009). Furthermore, a dominant aim of the ethnic revival movement was to change school curriculum so it would reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity in Western societies (Provenzo, Shaver & Bello, 2011).

Even so, curricula in The United States, a very ethnically diverse country, continues to be centered around the experiences of mainstream Americans (Banks & Banks, 2008). A curriculum that mostly ignores minority groups' experiences, cultures and history has a negative effect on both the mainstream students and minority students. "A mainstream-centric curriculum is one major way in which racism, ethnocentrism, and pernicious nationalism are reinforced and perpetuated" (Banks & Banks, 2008, p. 234). A curriculum that focuses on the mainstream majority negatively effects students of color, like African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. By focusing on the majority groups, the curriculum does not reflect the ambitions, hopes, and viewpoints of people of color. It does not give them social equality within the school as it does not represent their cultures, experiences, or perspectives.

Presenting children and teenagers with authentic representation of themselves can benefit them immensely (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006), as mentioned above. Multicultural literature represents minority groups and often the characters, as well as the students reading the stories, are pushed to contemplate negative stereotypes, prejudiced language, and unfair events towards the characters. Furthermore, students of color who read about their group or culture being represented, learn that their experiences are worthy of being written about and that others have gone through similar experiences as they have (Baghban, 2007). It can be difficult for people in the majority groups to understand this fact and to imagine the experiences and the hardships of the minority groups, which is why representation matters for people in both majority and minority groups.

This is precisely why the choice of teaching materials is very important. Dewey (Gay, 2000) stated in the beginning of the 20th century that teaching material should be something to help students affirm and emphasize their present and future characteristics, capabilities, attitudes, and experiences. For all students to be able to do that, the teaching material must be

applicable to all students, not just the majority groups. Dewey's description is similar to the definition of culturally responsive teaching, which is to use "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them" (Gay, 2000).

The fundamental goal of culturally responsive teaching is "to empower ethnically diverse students through academic success, cultural affiliation, and personal efficacy." (Gay, 2000). Cultural diversity is a strength, and it is equally as important for students of color to learn about their culture as it is for white students, as it improves educational capabilities for all students. Gay suggests that to be successful in teaching in a culturally responsible way, the content used in class should be chosen so that it is meaningful to all the students it is intended for. This means including personal experiences and cultural heritages in the curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching can not only improve academic achievement, but it can also create a sense of community among students, help them maintain their identity and connection with their ethnic group or community, develop an understanding of companionship, and responsibility, as well as acquiring a virtue of success.

The power of the textbooks is that a lot of students consider them to be absolute truth (Gordy & Pritchard, 1995). In Gordy & Pritchard's research, they found that often, when asked questions about the understandings of issues in the textbooks, the students would respond: "Because the book said so.", showing their trust in the textbooks. There has been a great deal of research determining how textbooks deal with people of color and culturally diverse groups (Gay, 2000). Textbooks produced in the 1980s and 1990s indicate that ethnic stereotypes, exclusions, and racism have been eradicated. However, in many cases, textbooks do not show different groups of color communicating with each other. Usually, they only communicate with European Americans or other groups of mainstream society.

Research indicates that most English-as-a-foreign-language textbooks focus on the point of view of the Western culture, usually the United States or the United Kingdom (Alptekin, 1993). Minority groups have been under-represented and stereotyped in English language textbooks throughout the years (Gray, 2002) but more recent studies show that multicultural content has increased (Hilliard, 2014). However, a 2009 study by Taylor-Mendes has revealed that pictures in textbooks show racial biases, stereotypes and "reinforce a made-in-Hollywood version of culture that does not exist". The pictures indicated that white people were usually shown in roles of

authority, while people of color were workers, poor, or in stereotypical non Western clothing or shown as being poor.

In a study on representation and culture in English language textbooks, Hilliard (2014) found that minority groups were under-represented, presented readers with shallow and unrealistic views of other cultures, and mostly featured viewpoints from a Western standpoint. Therefore, the textbooks did not develop students' intercultural communicative competencies. For intercultural communicative competency to be developed textbooks need to have credible and complete characters with different backgrounds and of various cultures, instead of focusing exclusively on the experiences of white Westerners. Hilliard points out that in recent years publishers have made an effort to portray women both positively and fairly to avoid gender stereotypes and suggests that the same should be done for minority groups when publishing textbooks. Another point Hilliard noticed in her analysis was the oversimplification of the culture present in the textbooks. Instead of these simplistic approaches to culture, publishers should incorporate in-depth cultural materials that explain cultural practices and traditions, as well as presenting several different points of view to the readers, so not to perpetuate stereotypes.

Research on this topic in Iceland is limited, but a BA thesis from 2009 analyzed children's books from a multicultural perspective to see if people of color were represented or whether they contained a multicultural message. In the research, Eypórsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir analyzed one hundred Icelandic children's books published between 2000-2008. They used a checklist to analyze whether there was a clear or a hidden multicultural message in the books and looked at the illustrations in the books to see if any of the characters were POC. The researchers found that out of the 100 books none of them had a clear multicultural message, although six books included a hidden multicultural message. Out of the 77 books where it was possible to analyze the characters' race, 56 showed characters with white skin and 21 showed characters as POC.

Researchers and specialists in multicultural education emphasize the importance of representing diverse cultures in teaching materials. Very little research has been done on the cultural content of teaching materials used in Iceland. The next section will describe the methods used for the research study looking at the representation of diverse cultures in English teaching materials in Iceland.

3 Methods

This research was conducted by analyzing 13 randomly chosen school-based curricula in compulsory schools in the capital area of Iceland.

Out of the thirteen school websites looked at, only eight had their English language curricula available online. Therefore, a question was posted on a Facebook group for English teachers to see what teaching material was used in grades 8-10. Two teachers gave their input, so all in all this study analyzed curricula in ten compulsory schools in Iceland. Out of the ten schools analyzed, the majority, or nine schools, used the Spotlight book-series, two schools used Stories and two schools used World Wide English.

Some of the texts in the textbooks did not discuss people, instead they were about food or animals, so those stories were not included in the analysis.

Most compulsory schools in Iceland in grades 8-10 use Spotlight as the main textbook. In eighth grade students read Spotlight 8, in ninth grade Spotlight 9 and in tenth grade Spotlight 10. Spotlight 8 came out in 2011 and the authors are: Evy Robertssen, Eva Olson and Jennifer Heythorpe. Spotlight 9 came out in 2012 and the authors are: Catharina Lantz and Randall Jonas. Spotlight 10 also came out in 2012 and the authors are: Catharina Lantz, Carolin Key and Randall Jonas. With all the textbooks comes a workbook and separate listening material to use in class. All the workbooks are translated from Swedish to Icelandic. Another textbook English teachers tend to use is Stories, which came out in 2018. The textbook is written by Dóra Ósk Halldórsdóttir and Kristen Mary Swenson.

Technology has changed the world and the classrooms as well. A lot of teachers use digital media, such as videos, audio, or games. A lot of teachers use films, TV-shows, or news sources as teaching material to pique students' interest in the material and have diverse teaching methods. Many schools analyzed in this thesis use videos called World Wide English. There are twelve videos which give students a chance to get to know young people from all over the English-speaking world. Each video is about 15 minutes long and assignments are available online, which makes these videos ideal to use in English classes. All the material above is recommended by The Directorate of Education and can be found online on their website, www.mms.is.

It is important to note that teachers also use a variety of reading, listening, and digital material of their choosing, such as simplified versions of classic novels, films, TV-shows, and websites. This thesis focuses on the material which has been recommended the Directorate of Education, so the additional reading material will not be analyzed at this time. Although, it may be argued that the material the teachers choose is more varied and diverse than the material

recommended by the Directorate of Education's website.

To analyze how diversity was portrayed in the materials a diversity checklist was created. The checklist was based on a checklist from a 2009 B.Ed. thesis by Eypórsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir where they analyzed Icelandic children's literature from a multicultural perspective. The checklist was adapted for the purpose of analyzing English teaching materials.

Each story in the teaching materials was read and analyzed by using the checklist and the images in each textbook were also analyzed and counted. It was sometimes difficult to decipher if a character was a POC or not, but the images usually gave hints. So, if there was a story about a boy and a picture of a white boy next to it, that counted as a story about a white boy, and the same went for cases of POC. When watching the videos, POC were counted, but since the majority of the people in the videos were white, it was difficult to count them all, and therefore the main characters were analyzed, i.e., whether they were POC or not. Below is the adapted checklist used in the study of English teaching materials.

3.1 Checklist

Title of material:

What kind of material (Textbook, literature, digital media, etc.):

Year published:

How many of the people portrayed in images or videos are POC?

How many of the people portrayed in images or videos are white?

Is the material about a person of color? Is there information about their background, i.e. what country they come from, what religion they belong to and what their culture is? How is it described?

Are there ever examples of hidden, or blatant messages which can be interpreted as diminishing or prejudiced towards any culture, race, or lifestyle?

Do any of the stories or pictures support common stereotypes often associated with different races or ethnic backgrounds? (For example, Chinese people only eat rice, Muslims are terrorists who treat women unfairly, etc.) If yes, how does it appear?

Is there a clear or unclear message in any of the materials which teaches about prejudice or discrimination towards POC? If yes, how does it appear? What is the message?

Other: Something that is important to note but has not appeared in the checklist.

In the next section I will present the findings of this thesis. I will begin by discussing each of the material analyzed in the research, and then I will discuss the findings which will be categorized

into five areas.

4 Findings

The findings are categorized into five main areas: Racial Representation in the Teaching Material, Information About Other Cultures, Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Support for Diversity. The data was analyzed by using a diversity checklist, which helped to categorize the findings and figure out similarities in the material. Each photo was counted to figure out how many people of color were in the teaching materials and all the videos were watched to see the main characters racial ethnicity.

4.1 Data Sources

In the following section, the teaching material analyzed in this thesis will be discussed and the racial representation in each teaching material will be discussed.

4.1.1 Spotlight

The structure of the Spotlight textbooks is by units and in each unit there are several stories, articles, and dialogues. Some are based on a true story; some are educational while others are fictitious. In a lot of the stories, by default it is assumed that the characters are white because the ethnicity or background is not mentioned, typically the pictures were of white people. On the other hand, it was specified in the text when certain articles were about people of color.

Spotlight 8 has eight units:

- Unit 1: Animal Power
- Unit 2: Me and You and Everybody Else
- Unit 3: Sweden Ahoy!
- Unit 4: Sports of All Sorts
- Unit 5: Fashion and Looks
- Unit 6: Fast and Furious
- Unit 7: Britain is Great!
- Unit 8: The USA – Last but Not Least.

Three of the units are about culture, although they are all about a Western culture. However, there are cases where POC are mentioned in the units, 9 out of 49 texts are about a POC and 32 images were of a POC, compared to 78 white people.

Spotlight 9 has six units:

- Unit 1: All You Need is Love

- Unit 2: Canada is Gigantic!
- Unit 3: Fantasy and Myth
- Unit 4: New York, New York
- Unit 5: Different Perspectives
- Unit 6: Asia.

Three of the units focus on a certain culture (Canada, New York, Asia), although Unit 5: Different Perspectives, does discuss life in Botswana, so it can be argued that four of the units are about culture. Two about Western cultures and two about diverse cultures. Out of the 33 texts in the book, 10 of them mention a POC and a considerable number of POC are portrayed in the images of the book, or 86 POC compared to only 53 white people. A big reason for this large amount of POC, is that in a picture of women laborers in India, there were about 30 women in one image.

Spotlight 10 has seven units:

- Unit 1: Growing Up
- Unit 2: Ireland
- Unit 3: A Sense of Fear
- Unit 4: Voices of English
- Unit 5: Fame – A treacherous Thing
- Unit 6: South Africa
- Unit 7: Dead or Alive

Two of the units' main focus was culture, Irish and South African. In 41 texts twelve mentioned or were about a POC. Out of the 62 people portrayed by images in the book, 26 of them were POC.

4.1.2 Stories

Stories is divided by four chapters: Exciting Adventures, Choices and Dilemmas, Good Work, Be the Change. Each of the chapters include 4-5 articles about different subjects that are related to the chapter in some way. The articles are educational, some are set up as interviews, while others are historic. Out of the 19 stories in the textbook, 5 of them mention a person of color and there are 16 POC portrayed in the images, compared to the 28 white people portrayed.

4.1.3 World Wide English

As previously stated, World Wide English are 15 minute educational videos on English speaking countries and their people. The videos start with an introduction on the country or city and the history, then a main character is introduced and followed throughout the video while they

introduce different aspect of the country or cities culture, population, nature, etc.

Out of the twelve World Wide English videos available online, four main characters were a person of color compared to 8 white main characters. The characters of color appeared in the videos about London, New York, The Bahamas, and India.

4.2 Racial Representation in the Teaching Materials

In all the teaching material analyzed, the pictures or videos showed 204 white people and 146 people of color, or 58% white and 42% POC. Seven pictures in the textbooks showed a variety of races or cultures within the same image, and all of those included a white person.

Around 42% of the people portrayed in the teaching material were people of color. Sometimes it was evident because of the pictures next to the articles or because the material was in video form, while other times their ethnicity was mentioned in the text. A lot of the chapters are missing racial representation, for example: Unit 3: Fantasy and Myth, in Spotlight, which shows no representation of diverse cultures. In all chapters of the textbooks, there was representation of a white person, whether the article is from that person's point of view, or there are pictures of them. In all the videos watched, there was representation of a white person in some way, but in a lot of them there was no diversity shown at all. So clearly, representation of POC was always in the minority when it came to the teaching material.

4.3 Information about other cultures

There is plenty of information about other cultures in all the teaching material. Each Spotlight book has at least two units which focus on different cultures and even though the cultures are Western, there is usually an element of diversity in the units. For example, in a unit about Sweden there is a mention of two men who moved from Kenya and India to Sweden and there is a text about their experiences there and a picture of them. In a unit about Britain, it states: "Take a walk down a street in one of Britain's big cities and you will see that people all look different.", expressing that the cultures of Britain are diverse and welcomed. In a unit about the USA, which is a very diverse country, there is a particular story which discusses an immigrant hockey team and their members which come from Somalia, Laos, and Jamaica. The story discusses how their different cultures define them, but also how they bring them together. In the chapter about South Africa there is plenty of cultural information about living there. The music, the history and the country's diversity are discussed in detail.

There are also examples of Indigenous people in a lot of the texts. In a unit about Canada, there is text about the Aboriginals, or the First Nations people of Canada. The text describes their

culture and the fact that they are not called “Indians” anymore, and it also discusses the Inuits and the fact that they are not called “Eskimos” anymore. On the same page there is discussion of the fact that Canada is a multicultural country where all cultures and ethnic backgrounds are welcome and accepted. It even states that it is against the law to be racist, showing a clear support for diversity and disapproval of prejudice and racism. Another example of Indigenous people in the books is a four-page article about the original people of Botswana called the San, or “Bushmen”. The story centers around the racism towards the people of San in Africa. After the story, there is a short text about the people of Botswana, which discusses that being called “Bushman” is racist, and that “aboriginal” is the proper word to use. These four pages open students’ eyes towards racism and how it can affect others. It is also very educational, as it discusses what words should not be used when talking about Aboriginals. In Stories, there is a whole chapter dedicated to the Lewis and Clark expedition, about their travels and the Indigenous people they met, like the Shoshone girl, Sacagawea, who joined them on their way to the Rocky Mountains and could help them out because she spoke the language. Although some of the discussion in the chapter is problematic, which will be discussed in a further chapter, it is also informational about Native Americans.

There is only one chapter in Spotlight which focuses on a whole continent, and not a country or a city: Asia. The chapter does not go into detail about the culture of all the countries of Asia, as that would be nearly impossible in 22 pages, but instead looks at the culture of some of the countries from a Western point of view. Only one out of the five stories, in the unit is told from the point of view of a local – an Indian boy who wants to make it as a Bollywood star. The other stories discuss the Japanese culture and how that has inspired a Swedish manga illustrator in her art, the cashew laborers in India, learning Chinese as a European, and a Swedish girl’s life in Saudi Arabia. The story about the Swedish girl who moved to Saudi Arabia gives a very simplistic view of life there, as can be the case when there is only one point of view to a culture.

4.4 Stereotypes

Stereotypes can have a negative impact and can cause racism because of ignorance. The teaching material did not portray a lot of stereotypes, although there were a few instances which could be interpreted as stereotypical and therefore be harmful towards certain cultures or groups.

One of the examples is in a story about a Mexican boy who likes to play football and later gets a chance to play for a top English football team. The boy is portrayed as a poor, illegal immigrant who was smuggled across the border to the USA and later went on to play for England.

Although the story shows him in a positive light, there are a lot of people who associate Mexicans with illegal immigration and criminality, especially in the United States (Schubert, 2017). That has created a stigma against Mexicans, which is why this story could be interpreted as stereotypical.

In the story discussed earlier about a Swedish girl moving to Saudi Arabia, she described the rules of living in Saudi Arabia. For example, what to wear, that women were not allowed to drive, Islamic religion, and that Saudi Arabia is the strictest Middle Eastern country when it comes to Islamic rules. The stereotypes of Muslims are often very negative, that they are terrorists, treat women unfairly, etc. Although, this text does not perpetuate those stereotypes, it is very simplistic and does not delve deep into the culture of the country.

One of the most stereotypical text in the teaching materials is about a Chinese girl who moves to London to study English. Chinese people have often been made fun of for their accent and the way they speak English (Kim, Wang, Deng, Alvarez & Li, 2011). This text perpetuates that stereotype, as it is written grammatically incorrectly, there are missing words, and words are misspelled throughout the text to show that the girl does not know English. Although, most of the textbook is told from the point of view of Swedish students, this is the first time we see a text which showcases that someone does not know the language. It is not only stereotypical but could be used to make fun of Chinese people, and therefore Chinese students could be offended because of this text.

The stereotype that black men are violent, or criminals, is very well known and it is often seen in movies and TV-shows. There is one story in Spotlight 10 that perpetuates that stereotype, and it is told from the point of view of two white people living in South Africa. The story is about the tension between black and white people in South Africa and ends with three black men robbing and killing the two white people in a very violent way, leaving the reader to pass judgment on the three black men.

4.5 Prejudice

Two vantage points of prejudice were found in the teaching materials: 1. People of color are victims of prejudice, 2: The authors show their prejudice in their writings and representation.

As mentioned above, a lot of the teaching material discussed Indigenous people. There was only one instance which used the wrong wording when discussing Indigenous people and called them "Indians", instead of Native Americans. This is an example of the publishers being uninformed, but as stated in Spotlight using "Indians" is offensive, and the same goes for "Eskimos". Another example which involved the publishers of Stories, is based on a picture and a

quote next to it. The quote preaches equality and human rights and is by Thomas Jefferson, a known slave owner. Behind the quote there are five fists in the air, which could be interpreted as a sign of resistance or inclusion, all the fists are white. This is quite an unfortunate use of both a picture and a quote, because those who know that Thomas Jefferson was a slave owner and see white fists in the air might think that white supremacy is being preached here. Even though that is not the case, this could have been fixed by using a quote by another public figure, Martin Luther King for example, and added some diversity into the picture behind it.

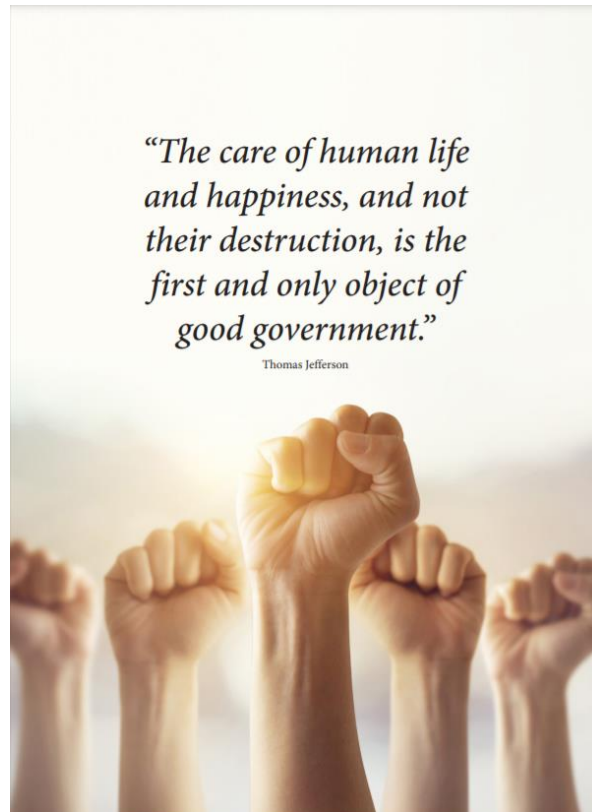


Image 1. Stories, pg. 48

There were a lot of stories which discussed prejudice. For example, the story about Raven Wilkinson who was the first black ballerina for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1955 and received tremendous scrutiny and racism while on tour with the company. Wilkinson had to wear a lot of white make up to try to blend in with the other ballerinas and was sent to motels which were only for people of color because she was not allowed in the hotels with the other ballerinas. The endless racism she experienced resulted in the ballet company fearing for her life because of threats from the Ku Klux Klan.

In Spotlight 10, there is a story about the aboriginal people of Botswana: the "Bushmen". The story is about a girl who is adopted but must live with prejudice because of her "Bushman" roots. One quote from the story shows students the prejudiced thinking POC sometimes have to

endure: “White people say: “At least I am not African.”. African people say: “At least I am not a Bushman”. The text also goes into detail about the usage of the word: “Bushman” and how that is racist and instead of using that, Aboriginal people, First Nation people or Indigenous people are to be used.

In a video about South Africa from World Wide English, the main character mentions that after Apartheid all the cultures of South Africa share the same rights, but not all have the same chance to live a good life. This is evident in a story that also happens in South Africa and can be found in Spotlight 10, Unit 6. The story is about a black woman who goes to work for a white family. When she arrives, she is shocked because she and her fellow workers are only allowed to eat “servant” meat and are treated unfairly, while the family receives feasts every night. She takes matters into her own hands and gives the workers the meal that was intended for the family and gives her employers the “servant” meat. The story shows how prejudiced life was in South Africa, but also shows how Gladys, the main character, stood up for herself and other black people with this small act. This story does not perpetuate the Mammy stereotype of the black woman who was happy to serve a white family, which was used to make fun of black women for centuries.

The last story that stood out to me as example of prejudice is a story about Marilyn Monroe arriving in Tokyo. Her fans react like most would when seeing Marilyn Monroe, and this was her first appearance abroad, so it makes sense that there would be a lot of fuss. The way the Japanese fans are described, however, is not how most Western cultures would be described. Marilyn becomes frightened because they are chanting her name in Japanese in “an eerie, near-uniform” way, which makes Marilyn wonder: “Weren’t the Japanese supposed to be a restrained people? Bound by tradition, exquisitely polite?” She then recalls with horror, Pearl Harbor, and the Japanese camps. This text is both full of stereotypes and prejudice. Although, this was Marilyn’s first trip abroad, she looked at the Japanese people like some sort of monsters instead of human beings.

4.6 Support for Diversity

In most of the World Wide English videos, there is a short segment where the diversity of the culture of each country or city is mentioned, and the main characters support for it. There was almost always some mention of the Aboriginal people, or the first people of the countries, which shows support and acceptance of those cultures.

Subtle racism is connected to privilege and racism, and a lot of POC encounter it every day. In a story in Spotlight 9, there is an interaction between a white teenage boy and his parents. The boy has recently started dating a girl whose parents are from India and Iran. His parents ask

him about her and start asking question he does not think are appropriate to ask, such as about her religion and what her parents do. This interaction stood out to me:

Mom: "So where is Parizad from Alex?"

Alex: "She was born in Birmingham."

Mom: "You know what I *meant* Alex. Where do her parents come from?"

Alex: "Her mum's from India and her dad's from Iran."

The boy shows understanding of the fact that his parents are being prejudiced and scolds them for it, showing his support for diversity and giving the reader a peek into the subtle racism and prejudice POC sometimes have to endure.

There are a few articles in Spotlight 8-10 which discuss politics, for example Martin Luther King, Barack Obama, and Nelson Mandela. All these articles show support for diversity, are informative about Black history and discuss how badly white people have treated Black people in the past. World Wide English: The Bahamas also discuss black history, slavery, Nelson Mandela and Apartheid. All of these examples show support for diversity, as it informs the readers of the injustices Black people have had to endure and therefore gives them another point of view on their lives.

In World Wide English: The Bahamas, the main character, a black woman, says that in her dreams, everyone could travel the world freely and there would not be any borders. Not only does this support diversity, but it supports immigration and acceptance of the people around us. In the chapter about Canada, it says: "All religions are practiced freely in Canada and all cultures are accepted. It is against the law to be racist." This quote is a clear message of support for racial diversity.

The findings suggest that representation of POC is always in the minority and that Western or White culture is predominant in the teaching material. In the next chapter, the findings will be discussed in more detail and whether they are similar to the research discussed in the literature review.

5 Discussion

The findings of this analysis of teaching materials show that the stories are predominantly told from a Western point of view, like Hilliard (2014) pointed out in her research on English language textbooks. Although in some cases the text dives deep into a certain culture, that is rarely the case. In a story in Spotlight 8, about a Swedish girl who moves to Saudi Arabia, the story is told from her point of view and the rules of living in Saudi Arabia are discussed. Like Hilliard mentioned in her research, this was often the case in older textbooks, however, this was the only example of that in my research.

Representation of POC in the teaching material was considerably less than representation of white people, and the portrayal of POC was very different. There were rarely examples of POC as main characters living “normal” lives, or lives that are perceived as normal in a Western culture. In all the textbooks, only 36 stories were about a POC out of 142 stories or articles. Most articles that centered around POC were about their struggles, their culture which is different from the Western culture or about prejudice. Although, a lot of times it is good to learn about prejudice and cultures, representation of normal teenagers living their lives as a POC in the Western world was lacking.

Most of the pictures and texts about or portraying POC in the textbooks were in chapters about culture. Spotlight discussed Indigenous people in a very respectful way and gave the readers information about what names were appropriate to use and which were not. Stories did not go the same route and used the word “Indians” to describe Native Americans. This can be harmful, as studies show that students rely on textbooks to give legitimate information and think of it as the absolute truth (Gordy & Pritchard, 1995).

Often, textbooks simplify culture (Taylor-Mendes, 2009) and the textbooks analyzed in this research were no exception. In Spotlight 9, there is a 22-page unit about Asian culture. This is the only unit in the three-book series that discusses a whole continent in one unit. On the first page there is a map of Asia which is very inadequate, most of the countries’ names are missing, and only a few tourist attractions are presented. As Asia is the world’s largest continent, having one chapter about it seems like a strange choice. Even on the first page it states: “Since Asia is such a large continent - ... - it is very hard to define specific characteristics belonging to the continent.”, the text then goes on to say that calling somebody from Asia “Asian” is wrong. Then why, did the publishers decide to discuss this large continent halfheartedly in one unit, putting all the countries of Asia together? The texts are oversimplistic and are given, from the point of view of Westerners or tourists, except for one text about an Indian boy who wants to be a Bollywood

star. This unit could have been very informative, if the publishers had chosen one Asian country, and told stories from that country from different perspectives.

There were some portrayals of stereotypes in the textbooks, one of which centered around a Chinese girl who moved to London. Her lack of English language skills is focused on and illustrated by using incorrect grammar and vocabulary use. Focus seems to be on her English deficiency rather than multilingual skills. It does state in the text that the girl is studying English, which is why she speaks like she does, but there are no other examples of a character's dialogue being grammatically incorrect in any of the textbooks, even though most of the characters do not come from an English speaking country. This text, therefore, perpetuates the stereotypes that Chinese people speak English incorrectly or strangely, this could even be used as a way of making fun of Chinese people, although the story was not meant to do so. This is one of the two texts which I think show a culture in a negative light. The other story is about Marilyn Monroe arriving in Tokyo and her Japanese fans welcoming her. The way they are described is as if they are not human. She is immediately disgusted and scared by them chanting her name, which I am certain would not have been the case if the fans had been American. Both stories are about people of Asian heritage, Chinese and Japanese. These cultures often experience prejudice and particularly today, Chinese, and Asian culture has been a target of racism because of the spread of the Corona virus (Ziems, He, Soni & Kumar, 2020).

Examples of prejudice against POC were evident in much of the teaching material. Articles or stories which show and explain systematic discrimination can be beneficial for students in majority groups, as that helps them understand other points of view (Morrell & Morrell, 2012). A lot of the stories tackle prejudice in many ways, whether the prejudice was told from the point of view of the person experiencing it, prejudice was being explained or someone was standing up for prejudice against others. The same could be said for support for diversity. Most of the books showed support of racial diversity and made it clear in the text that racism or prejudice of any kind was not tolerated. A very good quote from World Wide English: South Africa explained prejudice so well: "All of the cultures of South Africa share the same rights, but not all have the same chances to live a good life." This shows how various cultures or races are still suffering and that POC continue to encounter blatant and subtle racism in their everyday lives.

Out of all the images in the textbooks, there were only seven pictures which showed different ethnicities in the same picture. Just like Gay (2000) noticed in her research, the pictures shown in the teaching material did not show different cultures together in the pictures shown. In this research, there was only one picture which showed two groups of color in the same image. A black man and a man of Asian heritage, although he was blurred so it was difficult to tell. What

message are we sending if there are no pictures in teaching materials which include groups of color communicating together? Like in Gay's research, the majority of the pictures had Europeans or other mainstream groups in society communicating.

The results of the research showed that representation of POC was lacking and was always in the minority. Most of the times when POC were portrayed it was to show a certain culture or to show hardship, prejudice, and overcoming difficulties. Although that is a very big part of the history of racism, and is very important for everyone to understand, authentic representation of POC was lacking. Representation of teenagers of color in their "normal" lives in the Western world should also be represented, because normalizing POC in the Western world is a very important part of prejudice reduction. Most viewpoints came from a Western point of view, therefore POC should also be shown as a normal part of the Western society.

Although representations of POC in images and in texts were in the minority, there were examples of representation of POC, support for diversity, and discussion of prejudice which are beneficial for both minority groups and mainstream students. Such representation gives students of color a chance to see their culture being recognized and they learn that their experiences are worthy of being written about. Representation of POC also gives students from the majority group a chance to understand other points of view and learn about systematic discrimination and prejudice against POC (Gay, 2000).

The findings of this study suggest that the schools which participated in the study are in Bank's second stage of Content Integration (Banks, 2006). The research suggests that the schools analyzed have added ethnic and cultural content, goals, and materials into the curriculum, but have yet to change the structures, goals, and characteristics of the curriculum, to further explain and identify the prejudices around us, to widen our knowledge, values, and skills to partake in social criticism and change. If changes are to be made, it all begins and ends with the teacher. Teacher education must put emphasis on multicultural education and intercultural competence and provide student teachers with the training they need when they enter the classroom. Studies show that integrating multicultural content in teacher education results in a positive change in student teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards multiculturalism (Sassi, Bertolini & Ketterling, 2012).

Research has shown that students put a lot of trust in textbooks and therefore, authors and publishers of textbooks must consider multiculturalism, prejudice and intercultural competence when designing and writing textbooks. It is astounding that textbooks produced in 2013 have similar faults as textbooks designed in the 1980s and 1990s. While the teaching materials analyzed in this study show a lack of racial representation there is much more that can

be done to accurately represent POC and show all students an authentic representation of themselves in their textbooks.

5.1 Limitation of the Study and Further Research

Although this study gives an accurate guess about the teaching material that is available on the Directorate of Iceland's website, it does not analyze other teaching materials chosen by English teachers for use in schools around the country. Originally my intent was to analyze all of the material used by English teachers, but since the material was so vast, I chose to analyze the most used teaching material, which was Spotlight 8--10, Stories and World Wide English videos. This study, therefore, does not show the variety and diversity of teaching materials used to teach English in Icelandic schools. Therefore, it does not provide a complete picture of how race and cultural diversity are represented in English teaching materials.

Further research should be done on the teaching materials teachers use to see if teachers are thinking about diversity when planning their curricula. That would give a greater example of how diversity appears in English classrooms around the country and if teachers altogether think about diversity when putting together their curriculum.

6 Conclusion

At the beginning of this research, I wondered how diversity was reflected in the teaching materials used in English classes in grades 8-10 in Icelandic compulsory schools. My suspicion was that there was not a lot of representation of students of color in the teaching material, or that there was an overall lack of diversity.

The findings suggested that my suspicions were true in that the representation of diverse students was lacking. Representation of POC was always in the minority, whether the material was in the form of images, videos, or text. However, the material showed support for diversity, although POC were not represented as much as Caucasians in the material.

Of course, the limitation of this study is that it did not assess classes or analyze other teaching materials in detail, so it is difficult to say whether teachers have gone further with their content integration in the classroom or not. Further research should be conducted to assess how teachers are including diversity in their curricula and to see if diverse students are being represented in the classroom.

This is an important subject which has not been researched a lot in Iceland. Therefore, I do not think that teachers give much thought to the representation in the material they use in class since they have not been made aware of the issue. For changes to be made, we must start a discussion about exactly that. With this thesis, it is my hope that teachers become more aware of the importance of representation and how that can affect their students. We are all still learning, but as long as we are open to change and willing to make changes for the better for our diverse students, we are going in the right direction.

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