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IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY: AN ANALYSIS OF EFL TEXTBOOKS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

Abstract: The aim of this article is to examine the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in elementary schools in the Republic of Srpska (RS) based on their representation of community and the development of cooperation and connectedness among students. As a universal teaching material, the textbook is very significant for both students and teachers, and the quality of its content and the values it promotes are extremely important in the learning process. Given that the RS Law on Elementary Education includes provisions referring to the development of social awareness, tolerance, and empathy, the analysis of the main texts is expected to show what themes related to these values are most prominent, who the main participants are and what kind of relationships they develop, as well as what forms of cooperation among students are expected in their school activities. The approach used in the article is content analysis of the texts and the instructions preceding the exercises in the textbooks. The main themes are identified based on how far they extend to strangers and who is included in different communities. The article focuses on tolerance, compassion and empathy as necessary skills to develop for a thriving society and it also examines the language of the task instructions based on whether they promote cooperation among students and what kind of language skills these exercises are meant to develop.

Keywords: community, content analysis, cooperation, empathy, textbooks.

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1. Introduction

The aim of any country's education system should be to help children become the best versions of themselves. This includes acquiring various types of theoretical and practical knowledge as well as developing many skills which can help children go through life in an easier and more meaningful way. As social beings, children have to learn how to live with other people, interact and share with them, and help them so their immediate community and the whole society can thrive and develop the best conditions for everyone to flourish.

As Shaaban (2005:p.204) points out, the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom “has traditionally been an appropriate place for discussing and promoting social values”. One of the most important aspects of the learning process in the classroom is the textbook. The aim of this textbook analysis is to identify different ways that the main characters engage in social situations and what kinds of connection are formed in the process. The analysis focuses on the manners that social interactions are represented and how far a sense of connectedness extends beyond the self to encompass various communities. These topics are a huge part of civic education, which is included in many other subjects, and are best learned through cross-curricular tasks and activities (Jerković, Ilić & Josifović-Elezović, 2018), which is reflected in the elementary school curricula in the Republic of Srpska (Republički pedagoški zavod Republike Srpske, 2022).

The paper discusses the importance of the textbook in general and the role it plays in the education process. Then, it briefly examines two education policy documents before it embarks on the analysis of the texts and exercises in the EFL textbooks used in elementary schools in the Republic of Srpska. The identified themes are examined in terms of their main actors, their relationships and activities they engage in, and the results of the analysis are discussed in relation to what kind of community students are taught to work for. Moreover, the paper analyzes how often students are encouraged to cooperate using the textbooks and what types of exercises are based on cooperation.

2. Textbooks

Learning is a complex process whose success cannot be guaranteed even if all the relevant factors converge. One of the most important factors in this process are teaching materials, with the textbook playing the most prominent role (Antić, 2018; Suzić, 2021). Language instruction would be a much more challenging

process without the textbook as its “most obvious and most common form of material support” (Brown, 2001:p.136). As an almost universal element of teaching (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994), the textbook is a useful framework for studying because it gives both students and teachers a clear sense of structure, progress and security. It follows the syllable, provides excellent guidance for less experienced teachers and gives students a sense of autonomy (Ur, 1991).

Language materials may determine what may or may not be legitimate to say (Littlejohn, 2022). They may be said to possess a semantic potential which readers will respond to either in a positive or a negative way, depending on their own previous knowledge and experience (Risager, 2014). However, since textbooks are supported by state institutions, students might consider them carriers of truth (Weninger & Kiss, 2015). As Babaii (2021) points out, textbooks are written to influence their readers’ view of the world consistent with the general policy accepted by a given community.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the English Language textbooks used in the elementary schools in the Republic of Srpska since 2016. The textbooks *English is Fun 2-7* (EIF 2-7)² were written by local authors and published by the Institute for Publishing and Teaching Aids Istočno Novo Sarajevo, and are approved as the only textbooks for learning English in the RS elementary schools in grades 4-9 of elementary school (Ministarstvo prosvjete i kulture Republike Srpske, 2024). Before these textbooks were published, English teachers in the Republic of Srpska could choose among several EFL textbooks published by famous foreign publishers (e.g. Cambridge University Press).

English is the first foreign language taught in elementary schools in the Republic of Srpska (Milićević, 2022), and the subject English Language is introduced in the 3rd grade of elementary school and taught until the end of elementary school. Students have two 45-minute classes every week, which amounts to 72 classes per school year³. The expected level of the English language knowledge upon completion of elementary school is A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Republički pedagoški zavod Republike Srpske, 2022).

²The textbook *English is Fun 1* for the 3rd grade (first year of learning) is not included in the analysis because it does not contain any textual content (it is based only on images), and a visual analysis of learning materials is beyond the scope of this paper.

³Or 68 classes in the 9th (final) grade.

3. Education Policy

The Law on Elementary Education passed by the Republic of Srpska Ministry of Education and Culture in 2022 (Vlada Republike Srpske, 2022) emphasizes the importance of children's social development in Article Five. Among its many aims and objectives, the Law stipulates that the elementary education should encourage active involvement in the life of family and society, development of many values (i.e. justice, truth, freedom, honesty, personal responsibility), and belonging to one's own national and cultural identity and tradition in a way compatible with civilization legacy. It also aims to nurture friendship and develop competences to recognize one's own and others' emotions, ecological awareness, communication competences, tolerance, respect of differences and others' opinions. Furthermore, it focuses on developing competences for constructive problem-solving and working in a team, developing a sense of cooperation and responsibility, encouraging and developing cultural, religious, language and sex equality and tolerance, as well as empathy for the weak, the old and the helpless.

Similarly, the English language curriculum (Republički pedagoški zavod Republike Srpske, 2022) emphasizes students' communicative competence as one of its main objectives and also stresses the importance of learning about and respecting one's own culture as well as the culture of other nations, i.e. intercultural communication competence. In addition to this, students are taught to develop a positive attitude to cultural, religious and other differences, and to take part in the society in an efficient and responsible manner. Students should develop self-confidence, self-respect and respect and tolerance of others. They should also develop ecological awareness and love of nature, and learn the principles of humane gender relationship. Besides developing their critical thinking skills, supporting their opinions and solving problems, students should also develop their listening skills and respect other people's opinions. Students are taught to develop independence, cooperation, collaboration, the culture of dialog, understanding of others, multiculturalism and plurilingualism.

4. Analysis

4.1. Content Analysis

The analyzed content in this paper consists of the main and additional texts (the Reading section) in all the units throughout the six textbooks as well as exercises following the texts and those in additional sections. The most useful structural

element of the textbook is its main text so students will mostly focus on it while studying any subjects (Antić, 2018:p.229). The textbooks are analyzed based on the content analysis⁴ focusing on the formulation and representation of community. The perspective adopted here entails “the analysis of materials ‘as they are’, the content and ways of working that they propose“ (Littlejohn, 2011:p.181). The texts in the textbooks are approached from the perspective of qualitative content analysis as “a reserch method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns“ (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:p.1278). Content analysis reveals the author’s explicit and implicit intentions and beliefs and his/her implicit pedagogy and value system (Antić, 2018:p.220).

The analysis answers two groups of questions:

1. What is the nature of connection among the characters in the texts and how is it represented? What kind of community is represented in the textbooks? How far does community extend?

2. How much cooperation among students is expected when they do exercises? Which language skills are mostly developed through pair or group work?

After all the main and additional texts were examined in detail, the four main *themes* concerning the representation of community were observed: *family, friends, animals and nature*, and *culture and society*. Each of the identified themes was then analyzed in terms of its *participants*, the *situations* in which they found themselves or *activities* which they engaged in, and the *locations* of their encounters⁵. The participants were represented taking many roles in these encounters and the quality of their relationships was described. The analysis focuses on instances of compassionate behavior, empathy, tolerance and prosocial behavior in general.

Many of the texts revolve around the life of various families, local or American, but the distinction is emphasized only when it is considered relevant. Foreign language learning can never be separated from learning about the cultures where a language is spoken as the first language, a second language or an international language, which provides students with the opportunity to understand that there are many different perspectives on various subjects and that they may be different from those of the students themselves (Risager, 2021). However, this analysis does

⁴ There are two main approaches to textbook analysis in ex-Yugoslav countries: the analysis based on the methodological acceptability of analyzed textbooks and content analysis focusing on a socially-relevant topic (mainly cultural content analysis or gender stereotyping). A more in-depth analysis (e.g. Critical Discourse Analysis) would provide better insights into the workings of different power relations and ideologies if these are defined as research aims.

⁵ See Appendix for more details.

not focus on intercultural communication, as the content of the textbooks provides enough material for a whole new analysis using that approach. This analysis refers to different cultures only as illustrations of how the concept of community develops in the textbooks and what global issues are included. The locations without any of the main actors of the storylines were also included as illustrations of the expansion of the world.

4.2. Representation

4.2.1. EIF 2 and EIF 3

The first two textbooks (EIF 2 and EIF 3) are analyzed together because they contain the same storyline about a local family, the Kecmans, and their trip to the USA to visit their relatives who live there. EIF 2 ends with the Kecman family packing for the trip and EIF 3 begins with the family's arrival in Chicago, where their relatives live. The textbooks also present the main characters' relationships with other characters and introduce students to characters with English names without specifying who they are.

As expected, the most important communities for students at this age are their family and their friends or classmates. The main characters's parents, siblings, and grandparents are the main actors and they are portrayed in everyday situations, having a Sunday lunch together or celebrating Christmas. Students usually see them in or around the family house. The family is extended onto the main child characters' uncle and his family, who live in the USA. This is a convenient way to introduce the culture of the target language in the story as well as widen the community. EIF 3 begins with the Kecmans traveling to the USA, where the reunited family have fun, go on a picnic, and go sightseeing. They are portrayed as a big happy family, with an emphasis on loving relations among all the family members. The locations now include foreign cities (e.g. Chicago), which gives students the opportunity to gradually transition to learning about the target culture.

There is a huge focus on friends and the importance of friendship, which can also be observed in all the other textbooks. At this stage, friends are persons who live in the same street and/or go to the same school, and students learn that it is important to be a good friend. The friends are seen playing together, reading, singing, exercising together and celebrating a birthday. The last activity entails *sharing* candies with friends and family as an important quality of friendship and family relations. The main characters and their friends engage in various activities at school, at home or in

their street. The circle of friends in EIF 3 widens to encompass the cousins' friends and neighbors, so the number of characters grows, providing the opportunity to include more locations and more information about the target culture. Among these characters are American children who engage in various activities, which are used to develop students' awareness of different cultures (e.g. eating Chinese food, interacting with a Frenchman of African origin or a German food seller at the Taste of Chicago). As the textbook mentions more foreign cities and countries (e.g. London, Washington, Greece), the world slowly *expands* for students.

One more element is included in the portrayal of these little communities – animals. They are introduced in relation to their own behavior and the question of whether the main characters like or dislike that behavior, and are encountered only at the zoo at this stage. The textbook EIF 3 broadens this topic by including a story about animal lovers and animal rescue, with a clearly expressed value judgment that people who love animals are good people. The location is home, which may indicate that animals belong to the innermost circle of students. This is an excellent way to develop students' sense of compassion and empathy.

4.2.2. EIF 4

The analysis of the next books in the series adds other topics to the already mentioned ones (i.e. family, friends/acquaintances and animals) – nature and culture/society. Proceeding from the 5th to the 6th grade of elementary schools marks an important transition for students as they leave their old teacher and begin studying various subjects taught by different teachers. The education thus becomes more serious and complex for students, which is also visible in the English language textbooks. There are more characters who are not family relations to the main characters, the family relationships do not refer only to local lifestyles, and the topic of animals is now connected to the bigger issue of nature and its protection. The world continues to expand as new cities are mentioned (both from the target cultures and other parts of the world).

EIF 4 portrays children in an American school or at home, in predictable situations (e.g. having classes, talking with friends, joking, sending messages, celebrating birthdays). However, there is a visible focus on sharing something with friends (e.g. sharing oranges, buying a birthday gift) and caring for them (e.g. supporting a friend and his team at a baseball game, showing support to a friend moving away). Students also learn about the Boy Scouts and the values of trust and responsibility, and learn how to be good people and good friends. An important

episode discusses the problem of bullying and shows what acceptable behavior of friends entails (helping the victim of bullying, reporting it to parents). This is the first time that students learn how to deal with negative relationships among them.

The family issues are now related to the American contexts and they are largely similar to students' local lifestyle (e.g. attending a cousin's wedding, traveling to a big city, buying a present for parents' anniversary or as a reward for the child's accomplishment). However, there is an introduction of different family relations and they are discussed through an example of an American family: divorce, single parents and adopted children. These are, obviously, important questions to discuss with children but the authors' decision to attribute them to the American family does not seem coincidental.

The topic of animals is now represented through people and animals' love for each other or the difference between living in zoos or in wilderness. In addition, the bigger topic of nature is also introduced and is treated either as a location for an activity (e.g. rafting) or, even more importantly, as an environment in need of saving (e.g. recycling paper, plastic and metal). This topic is discussed by all the other textbooks, which raise students' awareness of environmental problems and help students see themselves as someone who can try to find solutions for them, thus developing students' sense of agency.

As already mentioned, the world is expanding as more cities and countries are mentioned (e.g. Belgrade, Paris, Las Vegas, San Francisco, China), while students learn about kings and queens and famous local people and people belonging to the target culture (e.g. Nikola Tesla, kings and queens, Columbus, Vespucci). As Risager (2021) points out, the more countries are represented in a textbook, the more it takes the role of a window to the whole world.

4.2.3. EIF 5

English is Fun 5 continues to portray friendship in a similar manner as the previous textbooks (e.g. students are excited to see each other after holidays, they make new friends, keep in touch with old friends, and support friends in a competition), and the family includes grandparents and cousins reuniting or just talking to each other. Families are shown taking holidays together, attending a wedding, throwing a surprise party for mom and celebrating a wedding anniversary. The new locations are a village (where grandparents live, which is a familiar notion in the local culture) and honeymoon destinations (as a great way to introduce more locations worldwide).

There is more emphasis on animals and nature – besides images of idyllic nature (e.g. a meadow, forest) and a story about weather and different climates, there is a focus on the importance of water and water pollution as well as a location related to this topic (the Sahara desert). Animals are portrayed in relation to giving or receiving help – there is a story about a service dog and a story about a veterinarian helping animals. These texts continue to raise students' social awareness and empathy (living beings might need help, living beings help each other).

The “big world” offers many new locations (local: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, and international: India, Ireland, Australia), activities which can teach about fair play, as well as situations teaching about other people's different lifestyles and beliefs and traditions. These stories serve as a reminder that students should love other people and teach them understanding and tolerance, crucial notions in the education of “responsible, socially aware, concerned citizens” (Shaaban, 2005:p.210).

4.2.4. EIF 6

The 8th grade textbook once again emphasizes the importance of nurturing friendship (e.g. keeping in touch with old friends, giving them support, asking what is wrong) but it also draws students' attention to a negative situation when classmates are teased for being different. The locations are school and home, which is in agreement with where teenagers mostly socialize. There is a continued portrayal of a loving family; however, the issues of the lack of understanding and a family's influence on a potential career choice are also raised. Overall, although the representation of friends and family remains significant and positive, there is more focus on the topics of nature and bigger communities.

The environmental issues are given prominence and students are portrayed as possible agents of change and are constantly motivated to take small steps to preserve the nature. There is a text on air pollution, global warming, deforestation, water preservation and endangered species and the characters featuring in the text are referred to as “nature's young protectors”. Students seem to be encouraged to follow in the steps of the characters in the text and imitate them, thus taking the first step to a nature preservation activity.

The society expands to include people from various places of the “big colorful world” (the list of people, cities, countries and areas mentioned in the texts is the longest so far: New York, Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Vietnam, Egypt, Germany, Native Americans, Greece, China, Iran, New Delhi, Berlin, Tokyo, Banja Luka,

Canada, the world). There is a text teaching how to be tolerant, and Lennon's "Imagine" is mentioned as an image of a united world, a world of peace and love. A particularly important topic is discussed to raise social awareness – that of homelessness, and the need to help the homeless in some way. Social problems constitute elements of deep culture, which should be an important aspect of any foreign language textbook (Suzić, 2021).

4.2.5. EIF 7

In addition to the representation of friends already seen in the previous textbooks (e.g. having fun and being happy when they spend time together, sharing things and being there for each other), friends are also seen in new situations in the final textbook. The book introduces the ideas of homeschooling and online relationships but points out that the biggest problem with these concepts is the question of socialization. The texts acknowledge vast possibilities of doing things online but still favor live contact. The families are represented in traditional forms because they are shown celebrating a family patron saint's day, an important event in the local community. The importance of family is once again highlighted in the text dealing with factors ensuring a healthy life (e. g. hugging friends and family for a healthy life).

The textbook continues to address the green issues, emphasizing the planet's bleak prospects unless "we" do something. The explicit vocabulary used to describe this dangerous situation (e.g. dark future, natural disaster) is counterbalanced by statements encouraging individual action to protect the Earth (e.g. *we* only have one home, *we* have to save the planet, little steps, participation of *all*).

As the world becomes bigger, the society now includes globetrotters and backpackers, diaspora and online communities, and the texts mention numerous new domestic and international locations (Jahorina, EU, Europe, America, continents, the Balkans, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, China, Spain, Great Britain, Tunisia, Vicenza). A text on the Serbian community in Vicenza reiterates that home is where the heart is, thus allowing for the possibility of finding home abroad provided that one is close to one's own ethnic community.

A special emphasis is placed on the importance of doing good deeds. For example, Robin Hood is described as a fighter against poverty and injustice because he steals from the rich and gives to the poor, and Mark Zuckerberg and his wife are praised for giving their own wealth to help the poor. This confirms the authors' commitment to developing students' social awareness and empathy.

4.3. Cooperation among students

This section of the paper examines the formulation of tasks in the textbooks in two ways: how often students are expected to cooperate on tasks and assignments, and what type of exercises cooperation is usually connected with.

Research into social interaction shows that cooperation among students increases their social awareness and agency, which is always negotiated with both the immediate environment and the society and is, therefore, collaborative (Murphey, 2012:p.226). Cooperative activities involving pair and small groups of students are the basis of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), aimed at providing students with the experiences necessary for healthy psychological, social and cognitive development (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CLL also aims to change the organization of the classroom from a competitive to a team-based structure with a great performance, while group work creates “an embracing affective climate“ (Brown, 2001:p.178). Such an approach to learning reduces students’ stress, increases student motivation and develops teamwork skills, creating a positive classroom atmosphere (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). CLL is a welcome alternative to teacher-fronted teaching. Besides increasing the feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class, group work builds learner responsibility, improves motivation and independence (Ur, 1991), and promotes learner autonomy (Brown, 2001).

EIF 2 consists of 6 units, each followed by a mini test comprising 6 tasks. The instructions for each task are written based on individual work except the last exercise, which is a role play and could be organized as pair work or group work, even though the images indicate that this task is done as pair work. However, teachers are allowed to use the textbooks in any way they deem appropriate (Republički pedagoški zavod Republike Srpske, 2022), so even the tasks not intended as pair or group work could, in fact, be redesigned as such. Teachers are advised to use different contemporary teaching methods and forms, among which are pair and group work, especially when developing speaking skills is concerned (e.g. listening to others, not interrupting others, tolerance). Pair or group work is also recommended in error correction, which depends on the teacher’s lesson plan and the arrangement between the teacher and the students.

EIF 3 also consists of 6 units, each followed by a mini test comprising 6 tasks. Unlike the mini tests in the previous textbook, these contain tasks explicitly involving both the student using the book and his/her friend. Each test comprises 2 pair work exercises and 1 role play exercise (e.g. “Describe the picture in five sentences. Your friend can mark them”, “Ask five questions about the picture. Your friend can mark them.”). Thus, cooperation among students increases as they grow older.

EIF 4 consists of 6 units but the textbook has more pages than EIF 3 (100 vs. 60 pages) and is more complex in outline and content⁶. Each text is followed by 6-8 grammar and vocabulary tasks. Most are intended to be individual work but there is much more pair and group work compared to the previous textbooks. Students are sometimes instructed to ask their friend questions about a text they have read and to answer the friend's questions, simply tell them about a text, make a dialog based on a text, or do a word-matching exercise. Most tasks are formulated as individual work and consist of telling the classmates (friends or partners) about a topic previously read about or discussed (only one is formulated as a guessing game to be played by the whole class together). However, there is a great potential for the tasks to be reorganized into group work⁷. Besides these speaking tasks, there are also 2 reading comprehension tasks explicitly designed as group work (a competition between two teams).

Unlike EIF 2 and EIF 3, this textbook contains two more revision sections, separate from the texts and text-based grammar and vocabulary tasks following them. The first one is called *Check your knowledge* and consists of 6 grammar and vocabulary exercises providing students with more material for revision. One of the exercises includes pair work and is aimed at helping students practice their speaking skills. All the other exercises are to be done individually. The second section is *Speaking and Writing Corner*, which provides students with topics for speaking and writing practice. The instructions for the speaking tasks read as follows: "Tell the class something about it. Talk about it with your classmates/friends. Interview your classmates about this. Ask your friends about this. Find somebody in your class who does not think so." The Speaking and Writing Corner section follows the communicative and analytical approach to learning foreign languages, which is to be expected in contemporary language learning textbooks (Mitić, 2020).

In EIF 5, the outline of each unit remains unchanged compared to EIF 4. The grammar and vocabulary exercises following each text are formulated as individual work. However, almost all the speaking tasks (21 in 36 smaller units) contain either explicit instructions for group/pair work or can be organized as such (e.g. Tell your friends/class about cultural events in your town). EIF 5 contains 2 additional sections: *Speaking and Writing Corner*, and *Projects*. The Speaking part lists 6 topics for discussion, which are directly related to the overall topics of each unit. Most of the topics are meant to be discussed in pairs or groups, and those

⁶The transition from the 5th to the 6th grade of elementary school is described in section 4.2.2 (EIF 4).

⁷For example, students can pair up and ask each other reading comprehension questions, work on new vocabulary in groups, or play vocabulary charades with other groups.

formulated as group work are role plays, interviews, making a dialog, guessing games, and comparing ideas (agreeing/disagreeing). In the Writing part, most topics are designed as individual work, but some can be redesigned as pair or group work (e.g. writing a letter to the school principal or as a school principal, preparing a project to save water etc.) The Projects section contains six project ideas, five of which are group work and one pair work (e.g. making a poster, writing a story, making a PowerPoint presentation, a role play, preparing a quiz). It is evident that, as they grow older, students are encouraged to cooperate more on doing school tasks and assignments. Moreover, language activities such as discussions, writing letters to relevant parties and making presentations about important issues are connected with higher student involvement, which helps students learn better (Shaaban, 2005:p.210).

The outline of the last two textbooks (EIF 6 and EIF 7) in the series changes, consisting of only 6 units and no additional sections. All the exercises follow four one-page texts that each unit comprises and they contain grammar and vocabulary tasks as well as speaking and writing tasks. In EIF 6, cooperation among students in the form of pair and/or group work is expected mostly in speaking exercises. Out of 27 exercises designed as pair/group work, only four are projects (2 pair work, 1 group work and 1 individual, all meant to be presented in the classroom), 3 writing tasks (which are to be shared and discussed with classmates) and only one grammar exercise. As already pointed out, many of the grammar and vocabulary tasks can be redesigned as pair or group work but that depends solely on the teacher's decision.

The final textbook (EIF 7) is similar to the previous one in its outline and content. It consists of 6 units comprising 4 texts each, followed by grammar, vocabulary, speaking and writing exercises. The majority of them are meant to be done individually, with the exception of the speaking exercises, which are usually designed to be done in pairs or groups. Most of the 15 speaking exercises are the final tasks following the texts, with only 3 exceptions, which are formulated as warm-up speaking tasks preceding the texts. Group work is favoured because only 2 of the 15 exercises are formulated as pair work, while the others are designed explicitly as group work or there is a choice between pair and group work, or a combination of the two.

5. Discussion

The representation of the closest interpersonal relationships goes from tightly connected *families* to close *friendships* (to be a good friend is a to be a good person). *Supporting* friends and *helping* others (people in general, including friends and

strangers, as well as animals) are portrayed as extremely important character traits. *Sharing* (food, gifts, values, wealth) is represented as an important value, whereas intolerance and violence are condemned. The values of *benevolence* (i.e. concern for others' welfare within the family and other primary groups) and *universalism* (i.e. tolerance and concern for the welfare of all people and for nature) are represented as ultimate goals, which is in agreement with the pan-cultural value hierarchy (Schwartz, 2012). The textbooks systematically promote *universal socialisation values* (Shaaban, 2005), thus helping students further develop social awareness.

The textbooks consistently raise issues related to citizenship education such as *climate change*, *inequality* and *poverty*. There is a clear narrative of the *endangered planet* and a constant appeal to engage in even the smallest activities to save it. Occasional mentions of *social problems* (e.g. homelessness, intolerance, injustice, poverty) serve as illustrations of the state of the world and can be used to raise students' awareness of such problems. Students are explicitly or implicitly taught that these issues matter and that they should regularly *participate* in activities aimed at solving them. Discussing such topics is a part of teaching global understanding (Brown, 1997) and the development of students into engaged (*global*) *citizens* (Risager, 2021), or "citizens of the world" (Shaaban, 2005:p.210).

Location expands gradually from the *immediate environment* (home, street, school) to foreign cities and *countries*. Although not the focus of this analysis, it must be observed that the countries and parts of the world mentioned in the textbooks mostly belong to the Inner Circle of World Englishes but also to many countries of the Outer and the Expanding Circles (Kachru, 1990). The cultures represented in the textbooks are treated mostly as tourist destinations, using a tourism discourse (Byram, 1997; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015), or sources of information about customs and lifestyles, different from those of the local culture. Although the latter contributes to learning about difference and tolerance, the real question is how far this representation leads to deeper understanding. Whether such representation is sufficient to conclude that the textbooks are compatible with the English as an International Language pedagogical framework is yet to be confirmed by a separate analysis. These, among other topics mentioned in the article, make intriguing topics for further research.

6. Conclusion

This analysis shows that the representation of community starts from the main characters' small communities in their vicinity (friends, family) and expands into larger ones such as society, nation or the whole world. The change of the sense of belonging from the small community to the global community is consistent with the stages of children's development from the egocentric self through their relations with others in their immediate community and beyond to universal altruistic social concerns (Feng, 2019). The main observed *themes* (family, friends, animals/nature and society/culture) and the type of engagement represented in the texts (various social activities; respect of friendship, honesty, justice, tolerance, empathy, family, environment; active participation in solving problems in the immediate community and in global terms) provide enough content for students to discuss (and, possibly, act on) relevant issues of the world today, which is one of the aims of education.

The textbook remains the point of departure for most of the classroom teaching, which is why the relevance of its content is of huge importance. What happens when it is actually used in the classroom may be different from what was intended by the authors because both teachers and students interpret it in their own ways (Littlejohn, 2022). It is important to bear in mind that textbooks are ideological, political and economic constructs and their content should be approached and adapted carefully and critically (Keles & Yazan, 2020). Both textbook writers and teachers might agree with this proposal but it also raises the question of how much pressure this puts on teachers and students in the classroom. Littlejohn (2022) suggests a more fluid use of materials but classroom observation is needed to see whether foreign language teachers have the training required to adapt and supplement the textbook as a primary teaching material adequately. There are so many questions to consider, from the developmental appropriateness of topics (Košuta, 2015) to students' agency (Murphey et al., 2012) and forms of collaboration, and the organizational structure of the classroom (Richards & Rogers, 2001), so if the textbook is not a completely reliable material, the learning process will be less successful than it can be. Teachers are often seen as role models, who impart knowledge and facilitate students' development (Liu, 2023), and they should be given the chance to prepare for all these roles during the pre-service education.

Language teaching research is nowadays approached from various sociocultural perspectives (Littlejohn, 2022) and it should certainly continue to discuss issues relevant to every human being. As "agents for change", teachers are expected to help people tune into the principles of cooperation, empowerment, and understanding

as primary channels of communication (Brown, 2001:p.445); however, they are unable to do so without structural support. The texts and exercises analyzed in this paper provide enough content for many valuable discussions of what students might do in order to make the society a better place for everyone, provided teachers are trained to focus on the values of community and connectedness. The analyzed textbooks contain quite a lot of material for many more potential analyses, such as the representation of consumerism, gender roles, environmental issues, dominant and subordinate cultures, local versus the English-speaking cultures mentioned in the textbooks as well as opinions of teachers and students actually using the textbooks in the classroom. The results of such analyses might be used to adjust and adapt the learning materials and approaches to learning to the needs of students of tomorrow.

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Appendix

English is Fun 2 (4th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/ Activity	Location
<i>Friends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good friends - live in the same street - go to school together - are in the same class - neighbors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading, drawing, singing, counting, exercising - playing in the snow - celebrating birthday - <i>sharing candies</i> with friends and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - classroom - school - home - field trip - their street

<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mother, father, sister, brother (local) - grandmother, grandfather - uncle (mother's brother), his wife and two children (cousins living in the USA) - American family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunday lunch - celebrating Christmas - writing an email to a cousin in the USA; the cousin replies - packing for a trip to visit the relatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - family house
<i>Animals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of various animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expressing likes or dislikes (based on what animals can do) - listing characteristics of animals and what they are doing at the moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - zoo

English is Fun 3 (5th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/Activity	Location
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relatives - loving relations - together again - a big happy family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - travelling to the USA to visit uncle - having fun - going on a picnic - seightseeing - going to a shopping mall - making a snowman - celebrating birthday at a restaurant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chicago - supermarket

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<i>Friends</i>	- cousins' friends and neighbors - school friends	- meeting their cousins' friends - school subjects	- Lake Michigen - school
<i>Animals</i>	- animal lovers - animal rescue	- people who love animals are <i>good people</i>	- family house
<i>Culture/ society</i>	- uncle is a pilot - American children	- flying to different countries - (dis)liking Chinese food - interaction with a Frenchman (African parents; race) - buying food from a German seller	- London - Washington - Taste of Chicago - Greece

English is Fun 4 (6th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/Activity	Location
<i>Friends</i>	American children	- having classes - talking with friends, telling jokes, sending messages during recess - making pancakes for birthday - <i>sharing</i> oranges with friends - being targeted by a bully - <i>helping</i> friends - buying friends a birthday gift	- school - home

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>supporting</i> a friend and his team at a baseball game - a farewell party because a friend is moving away 	
<i>Family</i>	- American children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attending a cousin's wedding - travelling to Paris (mom's reward) - buying a present at a shopping mall (parents' reward) - celebrating parents' anniversary and buying them a present - introducing the American family (family values: single parent, adopted child, divorce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school - home - various cities
<i>Animals/nature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mother Nature - animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rafting on two great rivers - saving the planet - recycling paper, plastic, metal - loving animals (animals loving them back) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - zoo/captivity - wilderness/freedom - Yellowstone
<i>Culture/society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boy Scouts - "Big wide world" (kings and queens, Nikola Tesla, Columbus, Vespucci) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>sharing values of trust and responsibility</i> - learning how to be <i>good people</i> and good friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belgrade - China - Paris - Las Vegas - San Francisco

English is Fun 5 (7th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/Activity	Location
<i>Friends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excited and happy to see each other again - friendly and funny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gathering in the schoolyard after holiday - making new friends - <i>keeping in touch</i> with old friends - <i>supporting</i> a friend taking part in a competition - spending Sunday together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grandparents - cousins - children - parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - family holiday - attending a wedding - throwing a surprise party for mom - going on a honeymoon - celebrating wedding anniversary - reuniting with cousins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - village - honeymoon destinations
<i>Animals/ nature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - idyllic nature - water - weather - different climates - veterinarian - service dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - barbecue - talking about water pollution - <i>helping</i> animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meadow, forest - the Sahara - animal hospital - the Vienna zoo

<i>Culture/ society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students - teenagers - different people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning about <i>fair play</i> - leading different lifestyles - having <i>different beliefs and traditions</i> - <i>loving other people</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school - Bosnia and Herzegovina - the Republic of Srpska - India - Ireland - Australia
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English is Fun 6 (8th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/Activity	Location
<i>Friends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excited to see their friends again after school break - <i>happy to see old friends</i> and hear good news - <i>best friends forever</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rushing to school to join their friends - <i>keeping in touch</i> with friends who moved away - <i>missing friends</i> who live away - <i>asking a friend what is wrong</i> - <i>giving advice</i> to friends - exchanging knowledge - teasing classmates for being different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school - house
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parents - siblings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plenty of love but lack of understanding - choosing a career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home
<i>Nature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the environment - animals - nature's young protectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school projects on the protection of the environment - air pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school - neighborhood

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - global warming - deforestation - endangered species - water preservation 	
<i>Culture/society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - neighbors - best man - people in need - a big colorful world - people from various places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complaining - <i>learning how to be tolerant</i> - <i>Imagine</i>, Lennon's dream of a united world. the world of peace and love - <i>helping</i> homeless people - holiday celebrations - sense of achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New York - Africa - Asia - the Balkans - Vietnam - Egypt - Germany - Native Americans - Greece - China - Iran - New Delhi - Berlin - Tokyo - Banja Luka - Canada - the world

English is Fun 7 (9th grade)

Community	Participants/ Attributes	Situation/Activity	Location
<i>Friends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>eager to see each other</i> after vacation - online friends - classmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>missing</i> each other - (not) having fun together - homeschooling - <i>sharing</i> chocolate - school as a place where we belong - making jokes and laughing while spending a holiday together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>staying in touch</i> - <i>being there for friends</i> 	
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - traditional family - different families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - celebrating the family patron saint (Slava) - going to the mountains - time flies when you have fun - <i>hugging friends and family for a healthy life</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home - countryside
<i>Nature/ animals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - normal life - climate change - dark future - big businesses - individuals - young generations - animals - marine biologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - natural disaster - pollution - we only have one home - we have to save the planet - participation of all - little steps - animal protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earth - sea
<i>Culture/society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - globetrotters - backpackers - online communities - diaspora - Robin Hood - Mark Zuckerberg (a generous person, he and wife Pricilla are true heroes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - traveling - holidays - socializing online - superstitions - home is where the heart is - <i>fighter against poverty and injustice</i> - giving own wealth to help the poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet - Jahorina - EU - Europe - America - continents - the Balkans - Germany - Greece - Croatia - Portugal - China - Spain - Great Britain - Tunisia - Vicenza

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У ПОТРАЗИ ЗА ЗАЈЕДНИЦОМ: АНАЛИЗА УЏБЕНИКА ЕНГЛЕСКОГ ЈЕЗИКА ЗА ОСНОВНУ ШКОЛУ У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРПСКОЈ

Резиме

У чланку се анализира на који начин се представља заједница у уџбеницима енглеског језика за основну школу који се користе у Републици Српској, те како се развија сарадња и повезаност између ученика док рјешавају вјежбе из уџбеника. Уџбеник се сматра универзалним средством за подучавање и учење и као такав изразито је важан и за ученике и за наставнике, па су квалитет његовог садржаја и вриједности које промовише од великог значаја за процес учења. Будући да и *Закон о основном васпитању и образовању Републике Српске* укључује одредбе које се односе на развој друштвене освијештености, толеранције и емпатије, очекивано је да ће се овакве теме наћи и у уџбеницима енглеског језика. Циљ анализе јесте да покаже које су теме најистакнутије, ко су главни учесници и какви се односи развијају између њих, као и какав се облик сарадње очекује између ученика док обављају школске задатке.

Главни текстови и текст задатака у уџбеницима анализирани су на основу прегледа садржаја. У текстовима су уочене главне теме у зависности од тога колико се главни актери повезују са другим људима и ко је све укључен у различите заједнице. Чланак се бави саосјећањем, емпатијом и толеранцијом као нужним особинама за развој успјешног друштва, па се анализирају и ситуације у којима се ове друштвене вјештине могу уочити. У чланку се анализира и језик упутстава за рад на вјежбама, и то тако да се тражи одговор на два питања: колико вјежбе подстичу сарадњу између ученика и које језичке вјештине развијају.

► **Кључне ријечи:** анализа садржаја, емпатија, заједница, сарадња, уџбеници.

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