Techniques and Resources for Developing Intercultural Awareness in ELT at the Primary School Level

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Study Programme: Double Major MA Study Programme in English Language and Literature – Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Scientific field: Philology
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Nastavni materijali i tehnike razvijanja interkulturalne svjesnosti u poučavanju engleskog kao stranog jezika na osnovnoškolskoj razini

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Summary

Teaching a new language without teaching its culture is unthinkable and incomplete. The aim of this paper is to explore which techniques and resources for developing intercultural awareness are used in the ELT context at the primary school level in Croatia and abroad. It is also argued that language and culture learning can be much more successfully achieved if students are actively involved in the process of acculturation and acquisition of various social norms and cultural aspects. The first part of the paper aims at defining culture, its relationship with language and the role it plays in teaching and learning English as a foreign language at the primary school level. The second part offers results of the small scale study that was conducted among Croatian and foreign English language teachers. The results of a questionnaire and a structured follow-up interview shed light on the techniques and resources EFL primary school teachers use for raising students' intercultural awareness, and the topics they mostly focus on in their teaching practice. Overall results suggest that EFL primary school teachers use a limited number of techniques for raising intercultural awareness, and that they neglect topics such as stereotypes or raising tolerance and empathy while teaching culture. Finally, some questions for future research are raised and constructive guidelines for improving culture-teaching practice are suggested based on teachers' suggestions and teaching experience.

Keywords: intercultural awareness, English language teaching, primary school level, techniques, resources

Sažetak

Poučavanje novog jezika nezamislivo je i nepotpuno bez poučavanja njegove kulture. Cilj je ovoga rada istražiti koje nastavne metode i izvore koriste nastavnici engleskog jezika u poučavanju interkulturalne svjesnosti na osnovnoškolskoj razini u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu. Radom se također nastoji dokazati da je poučavanje jezika i kulture učinkovitije ako su učenici aktivno uključeni u proces akulturacije i usvajanja različitih društvenih normi i kulturnih aspekata. Prvi dio rada definira pojam kulture, njezinu povezanost s jezikom te ulogu koju ima u poučavanju i učenju engleskog kao stranog jezika na osnovnoškolskoj razini. Drugi dio nudi pregled rezultata istraživanja provedenog među učiteljima engleskog jezika u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu. Rezultati upitnika i strukturiranog intervjua opisuju tehnike i materijale koje koriste učitelji engleskog kao stranog jezika na osnovnoškolskoj razini kako bi podigli interkulturalnu svjesnost učenika. Također se navode kulturološke teme koje učitelji najčešće odabiru tijekom poučavanja. Sveukupni rezultati ukazuju na činjenicu da osnovnoškolski učitelji engleskog kao stranog jezika koriste ograničen broj tehnika za podizanje interkulturalne svjesnosti, te zanemaruju teme poput stereotipa i razvijanja tolerancije i empatije u poučavanju kulture. Naposljetku, rad otvara pitanja za buduća istraživanja i nudi konstruktivne smjernice za poboljšanje poučavanja kulture utemeljene na prijedlozima učitelja i njihovom iskustvu u radu.

Ključne riječi: interkulturalna svjesnost, poučavanje engleskog jezika, osnovnoškolska razina, tehnike, nastavni materijali

1. Introduction

According to Fenner (2001: 104), "[i]n Europe the question of language and culture teaching has become particularly prominent in the last few years". The discussions about the role of culture in language teaching have also brought a number of terms, among which *intercultural awareness* gained its prominence. Some research findings (Lazar, 2003, 2011) suggest that successful culture teaching practice in EFL classrooms should not focus only on teaching general cultural elements but also on raising students' intercultural communicative competence and ability to accept and understand cultural differences in their effort to become world citizens and better people in general.

The impact of cultural globalization on language teaching is particularly evident at the primary school level, where language teachers play an important role and are invited to become active participants in creating a positive attitude towards the target culture or opportunities to expose their students to multicultural environments. Since the ultimate goal of culture-teaching practice is developing intercultural awareness, carefully tailored teaching activities and a great variety of techniques for raising intercultural awareness should be introduced to students in order to make them culturally competent. The present paper therefore aims to investigate what kind of techniques and resources are mostly used by the English foreign language (further in the text EFL term will be used instead) primary school teachers in their culture teaching practice. Furthermore, this paper will also explore whether EFL teachers give enough attention to teaching cultural elements such as tolerance, empathy and stereotypes.

This research paper consists of two parts. The first part of this paper provides a theoretical backdrop for the practical part of the paper. It defines the terminology and elaborates on the effect of globalization on culture teaching in class. It also gives an insight into the area of teacher's role in raising students' intercultural communicative competence and intercultural awareness in general, supported by a careful selection of valuable teaching techniques and resources. Lastly, it focuses on common problems that teachers deal with in culture-teaching practice.

The second part of this research is the experimental (practical) part in which aims, participants, instruments, procedure, and results are presented. For this purpose a small-scale study was carried out among EFL primary school teachers aiming at exploring the topics, techniques and methods used in culture-teaching practice. The emphasis of this paper is on Croatian and foreign language teachers' personal beliefs and experience for which a mixed-method approach is used.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Defining the terms - Language and Culture

The term “culture” has changed and evolved over years. Different types of definitions and conceptualizations are useful for particular types of questions, of different degrees of generality, and consequently for different disciplines and fields. Anthropologists agree about the centrality of "culture" in defining humanity but tend to disagree about definitions. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) collected academic definitions of culture assuming that the culture can be found everywhere. They identified six main understandings of the term “culture”: descriptive definitions, historical definitions, normative definitions, psychological definitions, structural definitions, and genetic definitions. Since the cultural anthropology explores culture in a very broad sense, the next definition of culture encompasses the anthropological point of view. According to Bailey and Peoples (2011), we must differentiate between the parts of culture in order to define the culture; the first part is knowledge which includes attitudes, standards of morality, rules of etiquette, perceptions of reality, language, notions about the proper way to live, beliefs about how females and males should interact, ideas about how the world works, and so forth. The second part of culture is behavior: how people act in particular situations (in church, at home, on the job), how they conduct themselves around different people (parents, peers), what they do when they experience various emotions (anger, sadness, excitement), and so forth.

To give a better idea about the concept of culture, Edward T. Hall (1976, as cited in Fletcher, 2015: 63) compared it to an iceberg: only 10% to 20% of cultural attributes are visible above the water's surface with the meaning hidden below, like an iceberg. The two levels of his cultural iceberg are conscious behaviors (visible) and unconscious (hidden). The conscious behavior includes cultural behaviors, such as, traditions, customs etc. Behaviors below the iceberg reflect our core values, assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs. Hall also proposed that to know the 80% to 90% of hidden culture, one must spend time in the other culture.

The best example of acquiring the elements of culture is learning a language. Sabah (2008, as cited in Clarke, 2008: 129) argues that “learning a language is learning a culture so that once we learn a language and its culture we'll understand the people who speak this culture (language)”. Kramsch (1998) depicts three interesting ways in which culture and language are connected. The first statement illustrates that language expresses cultural reality. It is done by expressing facts, ideas or events and reflecting author’s attitudes and beliefs by using words. Secondly, language embodies cultural reality

through verbal and non-verbal aspects. It means that people create experience through language by communicating with other people, for example, speaking on the telephone or face to face. Also, the way in which people use words, such as the tone of voice, accent, gestures and expressions, creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to. Finally, Kramsch (1998: 3) argues that language symbolizes cultural identity whereby "speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language; they view their language as a symbol of their social identity".

In order to properly understand the meaning of some words, one must be aware of the cultural differences that can depend on environmental, geographical, religious and historical background. According to Lyons (1981), Europeans consider a "good day" as a sunny day while Africans consider a "good day" as a rainy day. In addition, Eskimos do not have a single word for snow, but many different words for different kinds of snow; Australian Aborigines have no word for sand, but many different words for different kinds of sand. It is because the difference of various kinds of snow and sand for Eskimos or Aborigines is of a great importance in daily activities.

Moreover, language is not used only to express our thoughts but to express our values, behavior and beliefs that are taught from members of the same culture. In the process of acquiring a language, we also acquire the body language specific to that culture e.g. mimics, gestures, expressions and intonation. According to Haarmann (2007), even simple gestures may express very different things according to local cultural conventions, for example, sudden rising of the eyebrow as a sign indicating attention or skepticism. Our body language is connected to our speech and our speech is connected to our thoughts. In other words, as Kramsch (1998) says, language and culture are connected so much that we can say that they shape and depend on each other.

2.2. Defining the terms – Language Awareness, Cultural Awareness and ICC

Fenner (2001) explains that the concept of **language awareness** was first made use of in the British school system with a goal of creating curiosity about language in school children. Hawkins (1984, as cited in Fenner 2001: 104) further argues that the concept of language awareness is a useful bridge for barriers that exist between some subjects in language education, such as mother tongue, foreign language, Latin etc. Gnutzman (1997, as cited in Fenner, 2001: 104) agrees and emphasizes the importance of developing awareness of the relationship between the mother tongue and foreign language as an important factor of language awareness.

Quappe and Cantatore (1991) explain that **cultural awareness** is the ability to recognize beliefs, values and ways of other culture which helps people to develop professional and personal relationships in multicultural environment. Intercultural awareness is, on the other hand, the ability to understand your own culture and other cultures, particularly the similarities and differences between them. When we develop intercultural awareness, we become more aware of positive and negative cultural aspects and differences between the two cultures and we are more likely to accept them. According to Fenner (2001: 104), "cultural awareness is also connected to a number of other terms such as "intercultural communication", "intercultural communicative competence", "Fremdverstehen" (Eng. *understanding 'the Other'*), "intercultural studies", "multiculturalism" etc. and should be seen in relation to these".

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) includes the knowledge and awareness of the other culture's ways, encouragement of establishing contact with the members of other culture, and communication in a foreign language. While participating in intercultural written or spoken conversations, students should use their whole knowledge of the target culture, language and body language in order to establish a successful communication. Along the same lines, Thome-Williams (2016: 217) suggest that "[s]tudents learn linguistic, communicative and intercultural abilities in order to effectively communicate and appropriately relate content in a variety of cross-cultural situations".

3. The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom

Since language is a product of social interaction, learning a language presupposes learning cultural aspects and norms of that society. For the same reason, we can make similar assumptions about the foreign language teaching and the foreign language acquisition. Teaching a foreign language is basically teaching the culture of the target language, in other words, presenting a cultural background as a foundation for language learning. Byram (1994: 4) explains that "knowledge of the grammatical system of a language has to be complemented by understanding of culture-specific meanings". This implies that focusing on grammar and vocabulary, without providing a cultural context in teaching a foreign language, may result in poorly understanding its meaning. Doye (as cited in Risager, 2006: 9) gave a good observation of this matter:

> The very nature of language forbids the separation of language from culture. If language is considered as a system of signs, and signs are characterized by the fact that they are units of form and meaning, it is impossible to learn a language by simply acquiring the forms without their content. And as the content of a language is always culture-bound, any reasonable

foreign-language teaching cannot but include the study of a culture from which the language stems.

3.1. Managing Biases and Cultural Misunderstandings

Should the elements of a foreign culture be interpreted in a wrong way, many negative outcomes may arise. In this section, we will mention only a few. One of them is socio-pragmatic failure which happens when both speakers are not introduced to same pragmatic and sociolinguistic rules. Next to that, there are breakdowns in cross - cultural communication occuring when members of different cultures misunderstand or misinterpret the other side. The major cause of that problem is ignorance about other culture's ways.

Similarly, stereotypes and generalization of one social group may form negative opinion about that social group which can lead to rejection or hatred. Of course, stereotypes do not have to include only bad things, but in most cases, stereotypes encourage forming a strong opinion and a narrow-minded attitude that is hard to be changed. Hence, according to Byram (1997: 31), "this suggests that there is indeed a need to 'encourage positive attitudes' through language and culture teaching and is clearly of significance for language teachers in primary education. They may have an advantage over their colleagues in secondary school (…)". For that reason, teachers must work on improving student's knowledge about other cultures, and try to "open" their mind from the very beginning of English lessons.

3.2. Keeping up with the Process of Globalization and Multiculturalism

Globalization and multiculturalism encouraged English language to become the most important language in everyday communication. Thus, it is no longer observed only as the language of the English speaking countries, but as an international language. With the use of English as a lingua franca, there is a strong need for fluent non-native speakers of English language. EFL teachers should bear in mind that probably most of their students will be exposed to multicultural environment and for that reason must focus on developing students' cultural competences and raising their intercultural awareness. Next to the communicative competence, it is important to be aware of cultural differences of speaker's native country and other English speaking countries. This is especially important in business, education (exchanges and internships) and because of political reasons (migration and emigration).

4. The Roles of EFL Teachers in Raising Intercultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Teacher's role in raising students' intercultural awareness is of the utmost importance. Teacher is a facilitator, coordinator, organizer, educator and intercultural mediator in teaching EFL and English culture. In line with the bulk of previous research findings by Seeyle (1994, as cited in Khemies, 2014/2015) and White (2011), here are some guidelines for EFL teachers on how to successfully incorporate ICC in their regular EFL classrooms.

4.1. Aims for Teaching Culture

In order to help EFL teachers decide what goals to focus on while teaching culture, Lafayette and Schulz (1989, as cited in Khemies, 2014/2015: 36) suggest the following three culturally oriented objectives for cultural instruction:

1. Knowledge: the ability to recognize cultural information or patterns. The goal focuses on information about selected elements of the target culture, the student's ability to recall, recognize, and describe cultural information.
2. Understanding: the ability to explain cultural information. The student needs to comprehend a cultural pattern in terms of its meaning, origin, and interrelationships within the larger cultural context. Students should see the "logic" of a pattern in its own cultural context.
3. Behavior: the ability to use cultural information. This goal refers to behavioral skills such as the ability to act meaningfully and inoffensively in real or simulated cultural situations.

The selected objectives obtain the most important aims that culture teaching should focus on. These goals are the simplified version of Seeyle's (1994, as cited in Khemies, 2014/2015) seven goals for purposeful cultural activities. Using these goals teachers should make progress in developing intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in young learners.

In order to successfully develop students' intercultural awareness, teachers must raise students' awareness of their own culture. According to Straub (1999, as cited in Thanasoulas, 2001: 15), "learners must first become conversant with what it means to be part of a culture, their own culture. By exploring their own culture, i.e., by discussing the very values, expectations, traditions, customs, and rituals they unconsciously take part in, they are ready to reflect upon the values, expectations, and traditions of others 'with a higher degree of intellectual objectivity".

Moreover, teachers should share their own cultural experience with students and encourage and motivate students to use their cultural knowledge in multicultural environment. Teachers should establish a good working atmosphere where it is not difficult or embarrassing to share positive cultural experiences. In addition, every student should be engaged in a process of learning and understanding foreign cultures, and be actively involved in discussion and critical observation. Also, the classroom should be a place for exploring and accepting cultural diversity and developing empathy and mutual respect.

Barany (2016) suggests that teachers should use methodological approaches which can help in promoting and developing critical and creative thinking, mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance, human rights, democracy and preparing learners to cope with and face life at large outside and beyond the classroom. In addition, teachers must have intercultural communicative awareness and competence so that they will be able to teach and raise both linguistic and intercultural awareness; learning foreign languages must be linked to the lives of the students.

In order to enrich the lesson plans and keep the motivation high, teachers should provide students with a varity of materials incorporating the elements of the target culture. While doing that, teachers should keep in mind not to represent the other culture as "better", but as different. Consequently, the emphasis should be on keeping one's own individuality, while accepting cultural differences.

White (2011: 3) gave a brief overview of the most important guidelines for teaching culture in foreign language classrooms:

- Teachers should determine which definition of culture and approach to teaching culture will be used before designing any objectives
- Teachers must leave their comfort zone. If they have knowledge about "pop" culture but not about the fine arts, they must learn it, and vice versa.
- Remember to focus on how individuals operate within the target culture.
- Plan cultural instruction. It should not be treated as a natural byproduct of language teaching.
- Always use authentic materials, including photographs, props, music, videos, etc. Most importantly, teachers should plan instruction to create a positive attitude toward the target culture. They should also avoid teaching culture as stereotypes or using negative connotations.

4.2. Problems in Teaching Culture

Speaking of teaching culture through language, Byram and his colleagues (1991, as cited in Lazar, 2011: 116) identified three idiosyncratic orientations that influence culture teaching:

- teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching in general;
- the second is personal experience with the target language culture;
- expectations regarding students' learning abilities.

Byram and his colleagues (1991, as cited in Lazar, 116: 2011) indicate that out of the three factors mentioned above, the teachers' intercultural experience is the one that primarily determines their culture-teaching practices. Therefore, it is to assume that teachers' earlier intercultural experiences can strongly influence their beliefs about language (and culture) teaching in general.

Equally important is the fact that primary school teachers should be culturally educated and open minded in order to teach young learners. Teachers' awareness of the relationship between language and culture does not necessarily mean that they will support the acquisition of cultural elements in their teaching process or that they will support cultural understanding and tolerance. Salazar and Carballo (2011) conclude that the fact that teachers respect the tradition and ways of the target culture does not mean that they have the training to teach those ideas to their students. A good teacher is able to think and act from a different perspective, incorporate the knowledge into the teaching process, and pass it onto the students. Therefore, in order to teach culture effectively, it is important for primary school teachers to develop the skills and cultural awareness.

In addition, teachers may be afraid of teaching culture because they may fear they do not have sufficient knowledge about the target culture. Also, students may be judgmental towards the target culture and have a negative attitude towards learning in general. Gonen and Saglam (2012: 29) point out that "students often assume target culture phenomena consisting of new patterns of behavior; thus, they try to understand the target culture within only their own framework of native culture". It happens mostly because of the inappropriate way of teaching, and because the content of cultural facts does not correspond to students' expectations.

Next problem is the most common and it represents a huge obstacle in teaching culture. Teachers often face overcrowded curriculum and feel as they cannot spare enough time for including cultural activities into English lessons. They focus mostly on developing grammar and vocabulary, and leaving only a small part for culture in their lesson plans. This happens because some teachers indeed think that teaching culture is not as important as teaching grammar and vocabulary, but also

because some teachers hope they will expose their students to the cultural material in the later phases, after they have properly acquired grammar rules and vocabulary of the target language. The solution is to introduce include cultural elements in grammar and vocabulary teaching, either through the cultural context or the exposure to authentic materials.

Another problem is disregarding assessment of cultural knowledge and measuring intercultural awareness in class. Paige, et al. (n.d.) confirm that it is challenging because cultural content is perceived as difficult to teach and assess. Furthermore, culture instruction is focused on culture-specific information, and language teachers have not received much help from the profession in terms of teaching, and assessing culture learning. Most assessment methods are of the time pencil and paper variety, although many students feel that this does not allow them to adequately demonstrate what they know. Damen (1987, as cited in Paige, et al. n.d.) mentions four types of evaluation techniques for culture learning: self-report, enactments (such as role-plays or simulations), productions of materials (essays or reports), and observation by the teacher or other students when the student is demonstrating specific cultural skills. For the purpose of assessing empathy, tolerance, the ability to suspend stereotypes and judgment, and the adoption of someone else's point of view Byram & Morgan (1994, as cited in Paige, et al., n.d.: 47) propose the following five-level scale: (1) rejection of the foreign culture; (2) explanation provided but "from the outside;" (3) explanation "from the inside;" (4) "genuine attempt to recreate an alien world view;" and (5) "recognition of how one's own world view is culturally conditioned".

5. Techniques for Raising Intercultural Awareness in ELT at the Primary School Level

In this part of the paper various techniques will be presented together with the explanation of the procedure, positive and/or negative sides, and examples of the activities. Chastain (1988, as cited in Benmostefa, n.d.) talks about two general ways of presenting foreign culture to language students: the first, called "In Class", is divided into "Culture Capsule", "Culture Cluster", and "Minidramas" or "Miniskits", "The Micrologue", and "Cultoon", whereas the second one, called "Out Of Class", is divided into "Pen Pals", "Special Programs and events", "Community Resources", "Travelogue Films", "Summer Camps" and so on.

Cultural Island: It is a very useful and simple technique that subconsciously affects students and is recommended to be created on the first day of class. This technique includes putting pictures of famous people (e.g. actors, historians, and scientists etc.) or famous places, books, movies and

realia from the target cultures on the classroom walls or shelves. Students should be surrounded by items of the target culture. Also, teachers could introduce English culture to young learners by naming each student with a typical British or American name. This would be an interesting method for raising students' motivation for learning a foreign language. In addition, teachers can introduce English culture and language to students by telling them some English words that are implemented in Croatian language, such as band, sandwich, shopping center, etc. The positive aspect of this technique is that it is interesting enough to attract and include students in learning English culture. This is also appropriate for young learners, as well as for older students. As Reid (2015: 942) says, "great number of charts and grammar posters should be replaced by attractive cultural posters".

Comparison method: As one of the most used techniques for teaching cultures, it is recommended to be used in all levels of education, while focusing on the differences between the native and the target culture. According to Reid (2015), the point of using this method is to investigate differences and make students understand and memorize those differences in order to learn how to behave appropriately, but also to establish a successful rapport with speakers of English language. This method is important for raising intercultural awareness and raising awareness of native culture as well. The differences can be introduced by using texts, pictures, songs, videos, etc. Aiming at the target language, teachers can discuss various topics with their students, such as education, holidays, sports, family, food, music and so on. To support further evidence, teachers can play a video that e.g. shows British food[1], and then discuss differences of eating habits with their students. Videos contain more than bare differences; teacher can focus on other aspects of cultural knowledge, such as addressing parents and teachers in appropriate way, greetings, raising hands in the classroom, making orders at the take away restaurant, body-language etc. For young learners it would be better to use pictures or short text of English cultural elements and compare it to Croatian. This is common for topics such as holidays (Christmas and Easter), birthday celebration, food and drinks, sports etc.

Cultural Capsules: The point of this technique is to raise awareness about cultural differences. According to Scheu (1996), they are usually prepared outside the classroom, and are suitable for older students. A culture capsule consists of a paragraph of explanation of one minimal difference between the students' native culture custom and the target culture's custom, which should be represented by the student out loud, together with the relevant pictures or video or realia connected to that custom. A culture capsule should not be longer than 5 minutes, and it is usually done orally by

[1] British food: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKbIilKwJwg

the student with the teacher giving brief instructions and a lecture about the chosen topic. Scheu (1996) reminds that most of the work should be done by the students, especially during the presentation. After the presentation, a teacher could start a brief discussion about the chosen topic with the class. A culture capsule could be done during the lesson as well; teacher might play a video about some aspect of a target culture and ask students to write down similarities and differences to their native culture. This technique is particularly useful for developing students' presentation skills, supporting students active involvement in the research project, raising awareness about students' native culture, and noticing the differences between the two cultures.

Culture clusters: According to Saluveer (2004), a culture cluster is actually a group of three or more culture capsules on related topics followed by classroom simulation. As an example, a culture cluster reporting on American music could contain capsules such as, country music, rock music, pop music, rap music. As a follow-up acitivity, students could be invited to simulate or act out the scene and thus show how they acquired the information mentioned in the capsule. As an example, students can assume the role of the singers or journalists who interview the stars from the specific music category. Henrichsen (1998, as cited in Saluveer, 2004) admits that culture capsules and clusters are good methods for raising students' intellectual awareness and knowledge of several cultural aspects, but he warns that they generally do not cause much emotional empathy.

Culture assimilator: This technique is used to describe cultural incidents of cross-cultural interaction that would occur due to misunderstanding of cultural ways. According to Paige (2004, as cited in Tolbert, 1995), there are several ways to use this technique. One way is to briefly describe an incident in a form of a story and offer four possible solutions for students. It takes approximately three minutes for responses which are followed by discussion and teacher's explanation of the appropriate ways. A teacher can demonstrate some cultural ways on some students as an example, and students should choose the right answer. For example, a teacher can demonstrate types of cheek kisses (one time or two times), or the "V" sign with two formats: when the back of the hand is facing the other person it is considered insulting in the UK. This technique can be used with younger learners as well, and motivate them to learn cultural differences.

Cultoon: Cultoons are visual culture assimilators. Chastain (1988, as cited in Saluveer, 2004) explains how to use the technique: teacher shows four pictures to students with cultural situations (e.g. possible misunderstanding) of the target culture. The situations are also described orally by the teacher or by the students who read the descriptions written underneath. Teacher then asks students whether

they think the reactions on the cultoon are appropriate or not. After giving answers, students are asked to read the explanation of what was happening and why there was misunderstanding. Cultoons generally promote understanding of cultural facts and can be used with all age groups. Saluveer (2004: 43) concludes that "cultoons do not give real understanding of emotions in cultural understanding".

Cultural aside: is basically a cultural information offered by teacher when it arises in the text. This is a brief, unplanned comment on some cultural aspect. Saluveer (2004) argues that disadvantage of this technique is that the cultural information presented to students is likely to be disordered and incomplete due to teacher's lack of preparation. Also, this technique can help students create a cultural content for language items.

Games: an inevitable method in teaching culture, especially with young learners. All sorts of games can be played with students, but we will mention only some:

1. Memory cards (with pictures or names of some cultural custom, target country's places, holidays etc.)
2. Hot Seat: teacher forms 2 teams and puts a chair next to the board, facing the class. Students from each team rotate turns sitting in the chair. The goal is to guess the word written on the board (cultural element). Each team has 20 seconds to guess the word written on the board from their teammate sitting in the hot seat.
3. Two Truths, One Lie: teacher demonstrates a game by writing two correct and one false information about the target culture on the board. Students should guess the false one. After that students should write their own examples and take turns into presenting their ideas (orally or on the board).
4. Games on smart board using applications and the Internet.
5. Board games and playing cards
6. Tic-Tac-Toe: teacher distributes handouts with questions inside the grid. Teacher draws a grid on the board and divides the class into two teams. Teams take turns and answer question about culture, and teacher draws their symbols on the grid. etc.
7. London Bridge: young learners sing *London Bridge is Falling Down* and raise their hands in the air to demonstrate the arch. The arch is then lowered at the song's end to catch some student.

Drama and minidrama (role-playing): Drama is a teaching strategy which enables students to put themselves in some other people's shoes for a moment. A teacher can prepare various situations

that can be played by students. This is a good technique for raising intercultural awareness because it resembles real situations, and put students in the role of a member of the other culture which helps students to understand the problem. Also, this is recommended for learning and practicing social phrases and appropriate behavior. According to Saluveer (2003), if planned thoroughly, drama is a fun teaching method which can raise students' empathy and motivation in learning language. Minidrama is a series of skits or scenes of everyday life with examples of cultural miscommunication. The skit is read out loud, viewed on a video or acted out in front of the class. After that follows the discussion about the scenes. Usually there are three to five scenes to be seen or acted out. Role play requires a good command of English language, thus can be difficult for younger learners. Nevertheless, a teacher can adjust the activity according to students' age, knowledge and skills level. Charades can be played with young and older students, thus it is a perfect example of a role play activity: teacher forms two teams, and fill the hat with papers of cultural ways, gestures etc. Students from each group take turns into performing a given word and the rest of the class must guess the meaning. Also, teacher can organize a tea party with young learners, and bring tea cups and kettle. Next to that, teachers can organize more demanding plays for older students. They can be asked to practice and perform some cultural situations, such as being tourists in a target culture, seeing a doctor, ordering food, job interviews, being Hollywood stars, being journalists and paparazzi, being servants, kings and queens, meeting strangers, talking with someone older etc. For making atmosphere more authentic, teachers should provide appropriate clothes for dress up and role play, e.g. royal cloak for a role of English kings, or scarf as an Egyptian veil. Finally, drama takes a lot of preparation, and it depends on students' willingness to participate. Furthermore, younger students may feel ashamed of acting in front of others at first. Therefore, in order to get students used to the idea of acting and role playing, teachers should introduce drama techniques as early as possible.

Quizzes: Quizzes test students' knowledge on various topic, and can be used as a fun activity. Teachers can make quizzes using pieces of paper, board, or using technology (smart board). Simple quizzes should check cultural knowledge of individuals, which are followed by a brief discussion. Playing quizzes on a smart board is very amusing for students nowadays. Students can be questioned through Multiple-Choice quiz[2], *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, *Kahoot* application, *Jeopardy* quiz etc. They should be divided into groups and cooperate in giving answers. Quizzes are high-interest activity for all age groups of students and can be accustomed to any cultural topic.

[2] http://learningapps.org/2914184

The slice-of-life technique: Saluveer (2003) explains that the teacher chooses some part of cultural element of a target culture and usually presents it to learners at the beginning of the class. This is, for example, a news item, or a video of some rituals, a song, or a quotation related to the topic. This technique can be used as a warmer for some cultural topic at the beginning of the class, or as an energizer in the middle of the class. Also, this can be used with all age groups and is recommended because it catches students' attention in a minimum period of time.

Auto-motor unit: this technique is similar to total physical response (TPR). Teachers orally give instructions to students who carry out appropriate actions. Teacher can ask students to repeat the actions several times with different students doing the same thing. The point of repetition is to acquire appropriate way of behavior, or the appropriate way of doing a specific gesture. According to Reid (2015), teacher can then instruct students to do some changes in their performance, and ask them whether they should change or adjust their behavior; e.g. eating with a knife and fork, or is shaking hands with adults and children done at the same way? This technique, together with TPR, is great for young learners who prefer singing, acting etc., but it is also good for older students. Teacher can ask students to act out various gestures while other students should observe and guess the culture where that gesture is usually done (kissing on the cheek, a hand shake, shaking of head etc.)

Micrologue: According to Chastain (1988, as cited in Saluveer, 2004), this is a technique where culture is made the focus of language learning. The teacher chooses a text about some cultural aspect and asks students to read it out loud in the class. After that, students answer questions, give an oral summary, and write a small dictation about the topic. The advantage of this technique is that students practice their speaking, listening and writing skills while learning cultural elements. Also, the teacher does not need to be an expert in the target culture. On the other hand, this technique is suitable for older students only, and it can take some time for students to think of their dictation.

The self-awareness technique: Chastain (1988, as cited in Saluveer, 2004) explains that this technique serves to raise students' consciousness about their beliefs, values, attitudes and actions. Teachers may use self-assessment questionnaires, problem-solving and checklists to help students measure their level of stereotypes about the target culture and awareness of their own culture.

Critical incidences: as Henrichen says (1998, as cited in Saluveer, 2004), critical incidences are descriptions of incidences or problematic situations which demand students' decision on the ways of solving problems. Firstly, students read the incidences by themselves and make individual decisions. After that, they are put into small groups where they should discuss their decisions. This is

followed by discussion in class where students explain their decisions out loud. Finally, the teacher shows them what a native member of a target culture would do in such situations, and students can compare their answers and contrast it with decisions of natives. Teachers should find critical incidences in newspapers together with information about what native speakers would do and why. This technique is good for raising discussions in ways of problem solving, understanding other culture's ways and raising self-awareness in students (they become aware of their attitudes towards problematic situations). This technique should be used with older students with a good English command.

Research: research supports students' independent learning and searching for information. A teacher can ask students to do research on their own about a specific topic or about the topic of their own choice. Seelye (1993, as cited in Saluveer, 2004) explains that research skills are of the great importance because they remain with students after they have finished school. Students should use all kind of resources for their research, such as the Internet, library, magazines, songs, movies, realia, other people's testimonies and their personal experience. Also, the product of a research can be an essay, a presentation, a project, or a poster that is going to be presented in front of the class. A teacher can ask students to present their research individually, or they can be divided into groups and share their individual research with their group members and create a final product in a group work. More researches can be done as parts of a longer period project about some cultural aspect of a target culture. This means that a teacher can ask students to do several researches of the same topic during their school year and combine it into a one final project. Research is one of the best ways for developing cultural knowledge, because it promotes a self-study and raises students' interest in cultural topics.

Portfolio: making a portfolio is a good way of increasing students' knowledge of a target culture. Teacher can also ask students to compare or give their own opinion on some cultural ways which develops intercultural awareness and enhances opinion forming in students. Portfolio is recommended for older students, but the tasks should be adjusted to students' English level. The point of making portfolio is that students collect information about English speaking countries continuously, most frequently after cultural lessons at their class. Teacher should also give guidelines for making portfolio, such as, cultural topics to research, worksheets to fill in, questions to answer, comment on something, draw something, describe their favorite English movie, song etc. Portfolio should be divided into chapters, such as, sports, education, movies, music, literature, food, history, and students should do tasks, offered by the teacher, after each cultural lesson. This would be a way of practicing

cultural knowledge acquired during the class lessons. The teacher can send the portfolio with tasks to be filled via e-mail and ask students to print it out, or can ask students to be creative and make their own portfolio on specified topics. Portfolio can raise students' motivation on learning about foreign culture because it can cover a great number of cultural aspects, and forces students to work and add information on their own, mostly based on their interest.

The CultureQuest: this technique is based on a mix of tech skills and cultural knowledge. This is actually a web-based activity for older students, with a goal of making a website with cultural elements. In CultureQuest teacher's guide (2007) there are many different ways of exploring specific cultural elements for students: teachers may focus on the culture of another country where small student groups investigate different aspects of culture, focus on elements of their own culture, focus on different countries (the UK and the USA) and explore their differences and similarities, or they can choose a single cultural aspect (music, literature etc.) and ask different groups to compare those aspects across cultures and countries. CultureQuest has three big parts which are divided into steps: planning the CultureQuest, implementing it, and evaluating it. When planning it, it is recommended to consider the choice of a country, resources and developing the goals. The implementation phase includes writing to students from the target country to get the right information, and lastly, creating a website. This technique promotes better understanding and appreciation of other cultures, develops inquiry, research, 21st century technology skills, and literacy skills (CultureQuest[3], n.d.).

Celebrating festivities: celebrating foreign festivities is a very interesting activity for many students. Teachers can prepare celebration for St. Patrick's Day, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving Day, Halloween etc. The preparation of festivities can include various things, such as, decorating classroom with posters, pictures, hand-made figures etc., practicing folk songs and folk dances with students which should be played at the festival's day, learning recipes of some typical meals, organizing workshops with elements of the specific festive, etc. Festivity can be done with students of every group age, and it is one of the most important methods for actively involving students in target culture's cultural ways and heritage. This technique is widely spread because it creates authentic atmosphere, raises cultural awareness, and develops empathy.

Focus on non-verbal communication: while teaching English, teachers should pay attention to a body language because non-verbal communication covers seventy percent of some language's communication. That's why teachers should raise students' awareness of the non-verbal

[3] CultureQuest: http://www.culturequest.us/index.htm

communication and use gestures of a foreign culture when presenting dialogues, talking to students, and giving a lecture. Teacher can practice students' focus on the body language by playing a video or a movie without a sound and making students focus on body movements. Teacher could also point out students' body movements and gestures made unconsciously to make them aware of the non-verbal communication. This should be practiced with younger and older students.

Cultural artifacts: this technique is good for raising cultural awareness of any culture. The point is to make students think of some object that belongs to foreign culture but it has sentimental value for the student as well. For example, that can be old grandma's watch from Bosnia, or mom's book from Germany, or students' own objects from foreign countries, such as, souvenirs, postcards etc. Student should bring the object to the class and prepare a three minute speech about the object and its importance to the student. After that, the teacher should ask students to pair up and discuss the most interesting thing they have learnt about themselves, their colleagues, and foreign cultures from this activity. Also, the teacher can ask students to do a reflective writing on cultural artifacts as an extra activity. This activity is good for older students because it increases the students' personal and cultural awareness. It also helps students to practice their speaking and presentation skills.

Cultural scavenger hunt: Wesp and Baumann (2012) explain that this is a fun activity which can be adjusted to students of all age groups. Firstly, a teacher should introduce names of cultural elements that are going to be mentioned in the activity. After that, the teacher distributes handouts with elements that should be interrogated among students. Each student should find another student who can answer the question from the handout or who corresponds to the statement from the handout (e.g. find a student who knows where is Ellis Island or Tasmania etc.). Students should mingle around and search for the information among their colleagues, who should give answers and explain the meaning. After that there should be a discussion, together with a repetition of the meanings of cultural elements from the handout. Another ways of scavenger hunt can be organized: the teacher can ask students to visit supermarkets and write down all products that were imported from the English speaking countries, or the students could be asked to find information while their visit to the museum (find English painters, sculptors, famous paintings etc.). Hunt can be done in groups as well. This activity enhances cross-cultural awareness and raises competitive spirits. It is also a great tool for repeating and acquiring cultural knowledge.

Pen Pals: Even though this technique sounds old fashioned, it can be very motivating for students. Also, it can be adjusted to today's technology, so students can send e-mails instead of letters.

Teachers can find native volunteers who would be willing to exchange e-mails with students and answer their questions. Teachers can prepare couple of questions or guidelines for students to focus on during their e-mail exchanges. After couple of letters, students can be asked to present orally what they have found out about their pen pal, and what they have learnt about their lifestyle.

6. Resources for Raising Intercultural Awareness in ELT at the Primary School Level

Probably one of the most difficult issues that teachers confront while teaching culture is the choice of adequate instructional materials. Durant (1997, as cited in Choudhury 2014: 12) lists nine sources of materials which he considers to be of a great efficiency. The sources vary from interaction with members of the target culture, recorded testimonies of members of the target culture, visits to the country, the country's media, data from ethnographic fieldwork, historical and political data, surveys and statistics, heuristic contrasts and oppositions to fashions and styles from the target country Next to the mentioned resources, there are also literary texts, textbooks, and the Internet. Teachers can also make their own teaching materials that are relevant to the topic that is being presented. Mostly used paper and pen variety worksheets are time consuming to make, but students can always keep them for themselves and use them for studying or enriching their portfolios. Modern media materials include Smart board applications, PowerPoint presentations and quizzes. They are easy to make and more appealing and interesting to students.

6.1. Textbooks and Student books

Textbooks and students books are a source of facts, texts, ideas, activities, quizzes, songs, games, and literary texts which serve as tools for language learning. Next to that, textbooks serve as a source for culture learning providing students with topics such as home, sports, leisure, clothing, institutions and particular events that are common in some culture (CEFR, n.d.: 48). Many textbooks provide illustrations and texts about foreign and students' native culture. According to Skopinskaja (2003) there are two types of textbooks: international and local textbooks. International or global textbook involves instructional materials that are produced for an international market. Globally designed materials may emphasize either culture-specific or culture-general orientation. On the other hand, local textbooks are usually written by non-native speaking authors such as Breka, Župan, Lukić, Pavuna, Domljan, Knezović, Singer etc. These materials are made according to the requirements of the national curriculum and are approved by the Ministry of Education of a particular country, in this

case Croatia. Local textbooks encourage the development of learners' awareness of their own cultural identity, and they include texts and activities which promote students' awareness of the target culture as well. According to research conducted by Skopinskaja (2003: 49), textbooks and student books focus mostly on developing theoretical knowledge about cultures, including educational elements such as historical and geographical background and etc., and less on developing students' values, attitudes and feelings about other cultures:

> The low scores of local English TM on all questions suggest their relative inadequacy to develop the students' tolerance/empathy towards otherness as well as to challenge their stereotyped views (...) It can be concluded that local TM tend to incorporate tourism-oriented situations and lack problematic, or even negative social and cultural, aspects of the foreign society.

6.2. Authentic Resources

According to Ellis (2003, as cited in Choudhury, 2014), the use of authentic materials is rewarding and stimulating for both learners and teachers and should be used as far as possible. Traditional songs, rhymes, riddles, and other children's lore are ideal for younger children. Authentic materials not only include newspapers and literature but also materials such as the Internet, TV shows, leaflets, posters, and basically anything written in the target language.

Songs and chants: singing and reciting poems are great ways of exposing students to cultural elements and improving vocabulary. This is especially recommended for younger learners. Teachers can organize singing competition in Christmas carols or singing anthems of English speaking countries (introducing the unknown words before that). Also, teachers can play some popular songs and ask students to find a similar match in their country. Teachers should also introduce various music instruments typical for some culture (e.g. didjeridoo, Native American flute etc.), and ask students to compare them to typical instruments from their own country (comparison method).

Literature: a teacher can ask older students of primary school to read at least one literary text in English language per year. This is a good practice for exposing students to authentic material with various vocabulary and grammar rules. Next to that, literary texts are a source of information about the target culture. They portray cultural behavior, actions and social background of some country. Teacher can focus on cultural aspects and check students' understanding of the literary text at last. Students should have guidelines about what to focus on while reading and the teacher should explain

that they will have to answer question about the book orally or in a written way. With younger learners it would be better to use authentic poetry, or fairytales. They would not be asked to read it at home but the teacher should read it in class. A teacher could share specific chapters or scenes from the book with students and ask them to explain characters' behavior, or to give suggestion about what they think should happen next in the story etc. This is a fun activity for most of the students, especially if the literary text is familiar to students.

Field trips: school trips to cultural institutions have various benefits. Students raise their consciousness about historical, social, cultural events, and develop logical skills and critical opinion. The focus of field trips does not have to be on one culture specifically, but on culture and cultural elements in general. Every visit to museum can enhance students' knowledge about some topic, which means they are being exposed to cultural aspects of that topic at the same time. By learning historical and cultural facts about some topic, they raise intercultural awareness and develop the ability to connect specific facts to their existent knowledge. In this way, they become able to connect facts they learnt about the target culture and their own culture with the knowledge about other cultures. Teachers should always ask students to make a report on trips, and raise discussion about learnt things.

Student exchanges: by inviting native speakers to their class, teachers encourage students to practice target language. According to teachers interviewed in this study, this is one of the best ways of introducing target culture to some class because the students have the opportunity to receive authentic information from an authentic source. Teacher may organize a Skype video call with a native speaker and ask students to participate in the conversation. To make it easier for students, the teacher can offer questions to be used in a conversation. After the conversation, the students should create a report on the facts they learnt. In addition, there are a lot of student exchange programs for University students which are great tools for raising intercultural awareness. The teachers can get involved in a program and become a host for University students of English speaking countries who can assist them in class and help their students with practicing English language.

Movies/video clips: movies are very important for developing language skills and for raising intercultural awareness. They are a mixture of pictures and sounds which stimulates students in so many ways. Movies raise students' motivation in learning languages, influence students' way of thinking, and represents native people's behavior in various life situations. Children and adults enjoy watching movies, which means that movies are a perfect tool for exposing students to target culture. By watching an authentic movie or a video clip, students are being exposed to authentic accents, body

language and gestures. Next to that, movies and clips can extend the range of teaching techniques and resources, helping students to develop all four communicative skills. For example, a whole movie or just a scene can be used to practice listening and reading, and as a figure for writing and speaking. Depending on movie's content a teacher can raise discussions on social issues, or use a movie as a model for practicing cultural dialogues, role-play etc. McKinnon (2005, as cited in Choudhury, 2014) suggests that during the movie students should write down four things they noticed are different from their culture (objects, buildings, clothes, food, etc.) and four things that are the same or similar. Teachers then put them on board and discuss why the things are the same or different. There are several web-sites that teachers can use as a resource for helping students learn about the target culture and practice English language at the same time. One of them is *English-attack*[4], where teacher can choose the level of difficulty of the movie scene (and the video with cultural elements), and later on practice vocabulary, comprehension, and grammar with students. There is also *Zimmer Twins* [5]for younger learners, where students with teacher's help can make their own short animated video together with subtitles and voice-overs.

Magazines/newspapers: newspapers and various magazines are also a very interesting and authentic resource of cultural elements for students. Since the level of English used in newspaper is mostly advanced or upper-intermediate, it is usually recommended to be used with older students. Teacher can bring a pile of old newspapers and ask students to focus on one topic. The task can involve a group work with hunt for cultural elements and preparing a short group presentation of the treasure, or making a wall gallery by putting the articles around the class and make students walk around and search for the information. Also, teachers can prepare articles in appropriate format for the tablet use. It can be used with young learners as well, where the focus would be on pictures rather than text, e.g. *National Geographic.*

Realia: teachers can use all kind of authentic posters (music, history, geography, politics etc.), leaflets and touristic postcards as resources of cultural information. These resources do not have to focus on target culture only, but on any culture.

[4] http://www.english-attack.com
[5] http://www.zimmertwins.com/movie/starters

6.3. Technology and the Internet

The fast development of new media technologies (such as VCD, DVD, DTV, MP5, PlayStations, Visual Presenter, PowerPoint, the Internet and Intranet) has begun to usher in new approaches to classroom management. Dai (2011) argues that teachers have to learn to adapt themselves to this new revolution in media technologies with reference to the designing and teaching of cultural lessons.

Internet: the spread of the Internet has brought many advantages and opportunities for learning English language. Nowadays, the Internet is overcrowded with web-sites which provide information and help with English grammar, practicing grammar, and learning cultural facts. Many teachers recognized the Internet as a useful source for teaching English, thus they are actively engaged in sharing teaching materials and ideas with their colleagues. Since technology becomes more and more advent and present in today's classrooms, teaching methods and techniques are also changing and adapting. Zhao (1996, as cited in Saluveer, 2004: 57) claims that "by engaging in web-based activities students can gradually become members of the community of English language speakers, in the same way they might through other forms of immersion in a culture". Teachers should allow students to use the Internet as a resource for valuable cultural information, but should limit their "surfing" to specific web pages only. Therefore, if the students are asked to make presentations, portfolios, projects etc. on their own, they should be advised to use the Internet as a resource, aside from the available textbooks, library etc. Next to that, teachers can use online techniques found on the Internet for practicing or demonstrating specific elements.

Smart board: one of the most interactive tool and resource for teaching English is a smart board. Luckily, smart boards are slowly finding their way into English classrooms and becoming a part of everyday teaching lessons. Since the smart board is an interactive tool for learning, it can be used for all kinds of activities. Teachers can prepare quizzes, geographical maps, games, and videos etc. for testing students' knowledge, but also short energizers, warmers, and activities as an introduction to new lessons. Next to that, teachers can access the Internet and project it on the smart board so that the students can use it for searching for the information. Students can create their own applications for smart board or make "sticky notes" connected to cultural activities. Smart board is indeed an inexhaustible source of ideas which develops students' logical and creative skills, as well as it helps in raising intercultural awareness.

Computer gaming and applications: is another way to incorporate and diversify students' learning strategies. There are simple games that can be used in the classroom, and the more complex games that need to be installed on PC and thus demand to be played at home. Teachers can turn students into detectives and let them play *Orient Express* under their surveillance and assistance. Before that, a teacher can shortly explain the connection of *Orient Express* from Agatha Christie with this game and ask them to memorize typical British items from the game. This game is also great for building vocabulary. For younger learners, there are *Thinker Toy,* and *Kids World Cultures* etc. At home, children are subconsciously exposed to cultural elements while playing games such as *The Sims, Age of Empire, and Civilization Revolution* and so on.

6.4. Previous research

Several researches, which focused on raising students' intercultural awareness, were conducted by English teachers and/or other scientists. Some of them tried to explore the general level of primary students' intercultural awareness, and some of them focused on particular techniques and tried to explore whether particular techniques help in raising students' intercultural awareness. For example, Kourova and Modianos (2013) conducted a research on raising intercultural awareness through videoconferencing and social media tools with native speakers of English in a classroom of students in Russia and vice versa. Kourova and Modianos (2013: 66) concluded:

> The present example of a join Russian-American class project describes how students can gradually develop an awareness of themselves and their own culture by being made to engage with a culture that is unfamiliar to them. In the process, students develop an understanding of the target culture and they develop positive attitudes toward the target culture. They learn that there are multiple ways of perceiving matters and understanding them and, most importantly, they learn that their views and those of their local culture have a large impact on their lives.

Also, Byram, Nichols and Stevens (2001) used the third level of Brogger's model for cultural studies that deals with comparing and analyzing literary texts of particular cultures. In their project they chose linguistic expressions of British and Bulgarian cultures which describe the Christmas tradition of these countries. After the study, Byram et al. (2001: 258) concluded that, "Literature could provide a good basis for developing the cultural skills of the students and achieving the ultimate goal

of culture teaching – the skills for 'reading' another culture, 'interpreting' what you have said and 'understanding' it."

In addition, Šunjić conducted a study on students' opinion about the importance of cultural elements in foreign language culture-practice. This study was conducted amongst high school students of French as a foreign language in Croatia, and it showed a low percentage of using cultural elements in culture-teaching processes of French as a foreign language. Another study, which concerns secondary school students' and teachers' opinions of culture-teaching practice of English as a foreign language was conducted by Saluveer (2004) in Estonia. Similarly to Croatian study, Saluveer's study showed that students' knowledge of some cultural aspects was rather limited, and that culture-related activities were not as included in the culture-teaching practice.

Crnojević (2014: 23) investigated the level of cultural elements in school textbooks, concerning the fact that children are introduced to culture mostly through textbooks, since textbooks, "are the main materials used in language classes". She concluded that only the most popular cultural elements are included in the textbooks used for teaching English language in Croatia; also British culture is prevailing while Croatian and other cultures are poorly represented, mostly only in comparison with British culture.

On the other hand, Deneme, Ada and Uzun (2011) conducted a study which investigates how Turkish children can be introduced to foreign culture in and out of the class. They concluded that public schools' cultural education may not be sufficient in terms of language teaching, and that television, family and computers were the most effective factors in children"s foreign culture acquisition. In addition, in primary school education, the significance of parental support should not be underestimated, since the family takes the biggest part in child's learning process.

Finally, Wiegand (1992, as cited in Byram, 1994: 31) concluded his research with the following words:

> In the primary school we are dealing as much with attitude formation as attitude change. Before learning about other countries many children are neither positively or negatively disposed towards those countries.

For that reason, there is a need to encourage positive attitudes through language and culture teaching and that is clearly of significance for language teachers in primary education.

7. Study

In this chapter we will present a study conducted among Croatian and foreign English language teachers at the primary school level. The study deals with the culture-teaching practice in general and investigates the methods of raising intercultural awareness among students. It also gives further insights into teachers' culture-teaching practices based on participants' previous experience in the classroom.

7.1. Aims and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine tehcniques and problems of teaching culture amongst English language teachers in Croatia and abroad. Moreover, it demonstrates the examples of teachers' firsthand experience in class and, consequently, investigates their acquaintance with the less known techniques and resources and the accompanying learning outcomes. Finally, it questions whether EFL teachers pay enough attention to teaching non-verbal communication and proper cross-cultural ettiquette with the purpose of reducing misunderstandings and stereotypes.

The primary research questions were:

1. What techniques and resources do teachers use in raising students' intercultural awareness?
2. Do teachers prefer teaching general cultural elements to using methods in raising students' empathy and tolerance for other cultures?
3. What kind of problems do EFL teachers encounter while teaching culture?
4. Which factors influence culture-teaching practices?
5. According to teachers' opinion, do their students achieve desired level of intercultural awareness?
6. Are there any differences in culture teaching practice at the primary school level under the influence of different curriculum models in Croatia and abroad?

It is hypothesized that teachers are not familiar with or do not use most of the suggested techniques and resources for teaching culture and raising intercultural awareness and that they mostly focus on general cultural elements in class. Moreover, it is expected that teachers tend to neglect methods that raise students' empathy and reduce stereotypes while teaching. With response to our last research question regarding different curriculum models, it is expected that teachers of other nationalities use different types of techniques and materials for raising students' intercultural

awareness but that they probably encounter the same type of problems in teaching culture as their Croatian colleagues, such as overcrowded curriculum and insufficient amount of cultural elements in English textbooks. It is also assumed that students taught by research participants in Croatia and other countries have the same or similar level of intercultural awareness.

7.2. Participants

Participants were chosen based on ease of access and their experience in teaching English at the primary school level and they were asked to participate in this study via e-mail. Due to the international character of the topic, teachers of other nationalities were asked to participate in the study. The total number of participants was thirteen. Eight of the participants were female EFL teachers, currently employed in primary schools in different parts of Croatia. However, four of them teach English to yourng learners. The other five participants were foreign English teachers who worked or had worked at primary schools in Lithuania, Turkey, Spain and Belgium. By including international respondents into the study, we managed to get the cross-cultural perspective and possible similarities/differences concerning culture teaching practice.

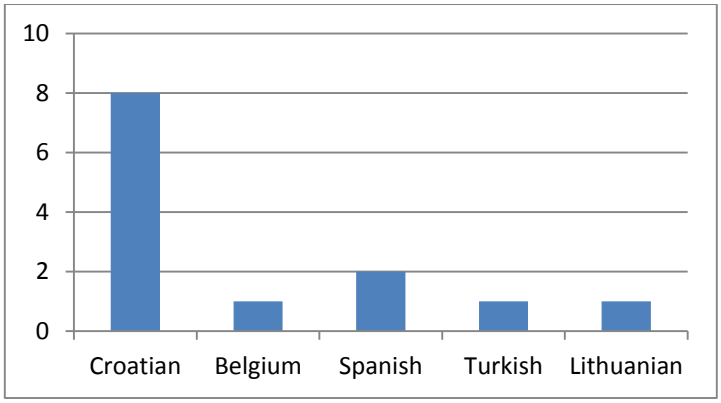


Figure 1: Participants' nationality

It is important to mention that seven out of thirteen teachers who participated in this study had studied or worked abroad, namely, five out of five foreign teachers and only two out of eight Croatian teachers (see *Figure 2*).

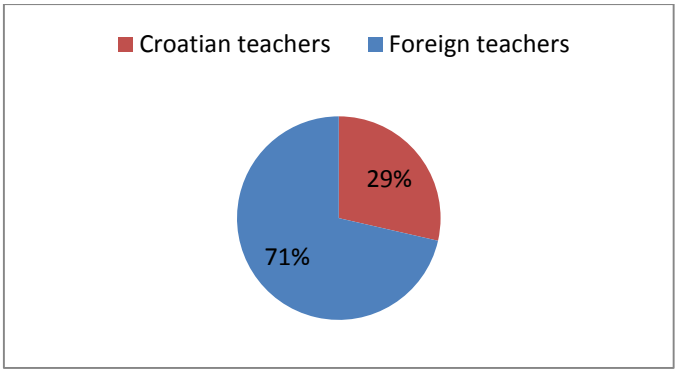


Figure 2: Working or studying abroad

As *Figure 3* below shows, all participants were involved in English language teaching at the primary school level and had had at least some experience in working with children.

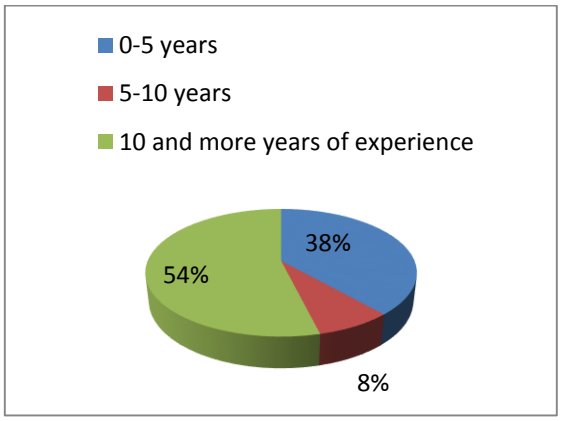


Figure 3: Participants' work experience

7.3. Instruments

The present study is a small case study based on a mixed-method approach for collecting data. For the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration, the initial quantitative results are further supported by the additional qualitative data. The instrument used is a questionnaire for primary school teachers of English language which focuses on the relevant questions about teaching culture. It is later corroborated by a follow-up interview which gives insights into teachers' personal opinion on the integrating techniques and problems facing teaching culture in their respective countries.

The questionnaire consists of the demographich part (inquiring about participants' age, nationality, work experience, experience with studying or working abroad), and the topic-related part, consisting of 25 items divided in two subsections:

A) factors that influence teaching and elements to be taught;

B) techniques and resources for teaching cultural elements.

The interview was created by the author of the paper and administed among the EFL primary school teachers as an additional method to support the initial questionnaire results.

7.4. Procedure

The questionnaire for teachers was sent to personal teachers' e-mail address, only then to be administered to the other participants from the same school. The questionnaires were collected after two months since it took a long time to find reliable foreign English language teachers willing to participate in this study.

In the first part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate each statement using numbers from 1 to 4, 1 being the least important to 4 being the most important. In the second part, participants were asked to tick the techniques and resources they use for teaching culture. Additionally, they were asked to give their personal opinion on the learning outcomes by rating each statement with numbers from 1 to 3, (1) – not at all to (3) – very much. Their task was to tick the number they agree with the most.

A structured interview consists of eight open-ended questions used for qualitative analysis. Questions are structured in such a way to give additional items of information and further elaboration on most of the problems mentioned in a previous questionnaire. Teachers who participated in questionnaire also participated in a structured interview.

7.5. Results

7.5.1. Questionnaire

A) Factors that influence teaching and elements to be taught

With the reference to the first question, all the participants (100%) agreed with Clarke's (2008: 129) statement that "learning a language equals learning a culture" and thus confirmed our initial hypothesis.

In the next question, the participants had to rate what aspects of culture they considered the most important to teach. They had to use numbers from 1 to 4 (1 being least important to 4 being the most important). The enlisted topics were mentioned in Gloria Vickov's (2007) textbook analysis (Dip In 3 and Dip In 4), covering mostly Anglo-Saxon elements such as following: *history and geography, customs, festivities and symbols, music, arts and literature, political system, educational system, family, cuisine and sports*. The respondents' answers are presented in the *Figure 4.*

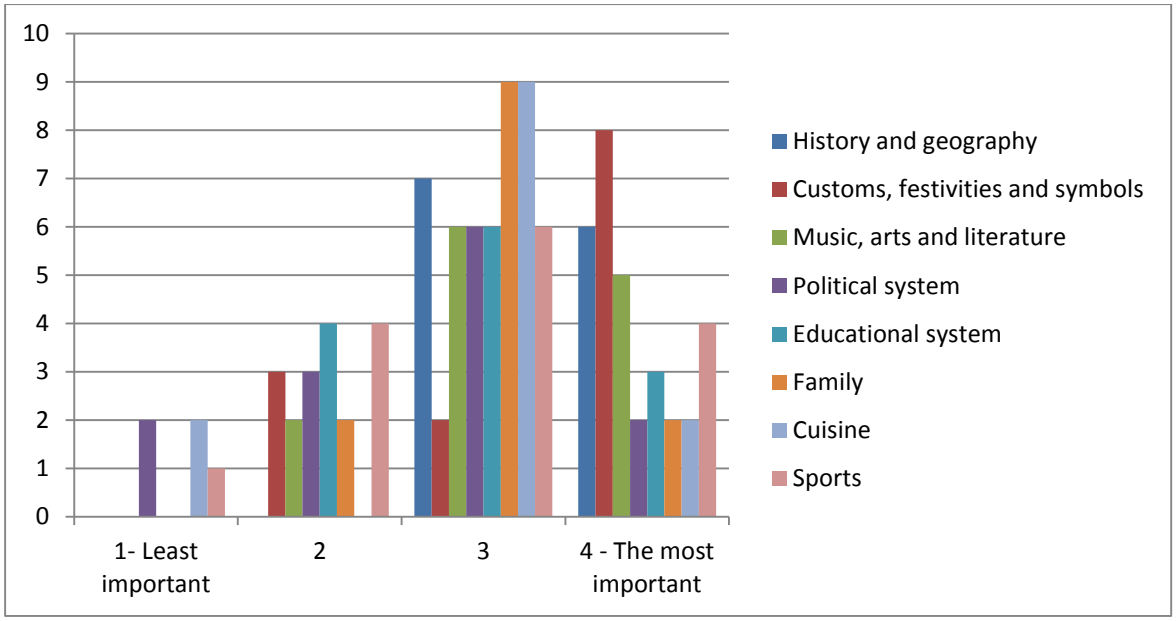


Figure 4: Teachers' responses about cultural elements

According to the results, the most important general cultural elements were *customs, festivities and symbols* (symbols receiving the highest rank), followed by *music, arts and literature, history and geography, cuisine and family*. Less important elements for teaching culture were *sports*, *political system* and *educational system*.

In order to get a better insight into this matter, separated charts were made to differentiate the answers provided by Croatian and foreign English language teachers. According to the results, Croatian teachers consider customs, festivities and symbols, music, arts and literature and family as more important elements than their foreign colleagues. More specifically, 100% of Croatian teachers

marked family as an important element to teach, whereas only 40% of foreign teachers considered family as equally important. Foreign teachers were more oriented toward teaching sports, cuisine, politics and educational system of the target language countries (see *Figure 5 – 12*).

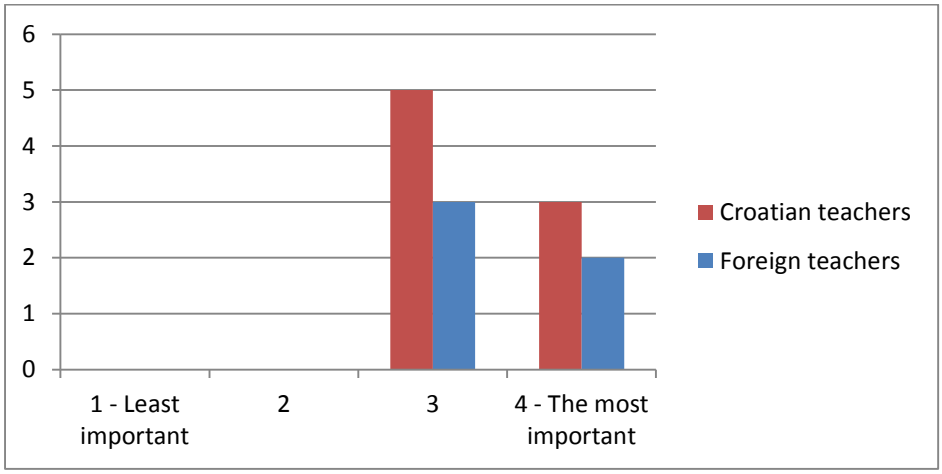


Figure 5: Comparison of teachers' responses: History and Geography

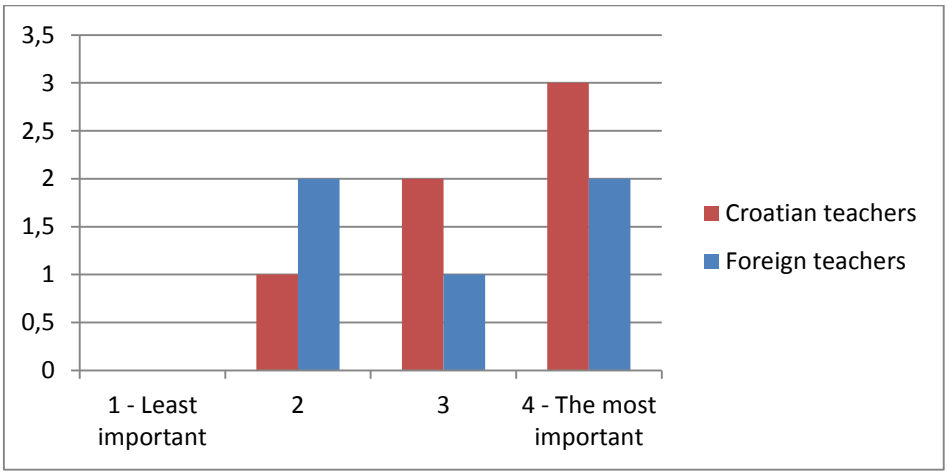


Figure 6: Comparison of teachers' responses: Customs, festivities and symbols

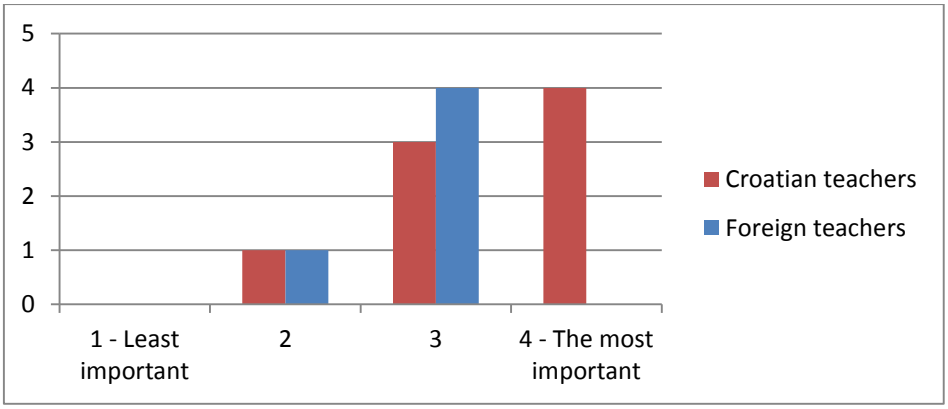


Figure 7: Comparison of teachers' responses: Music, arts and literature

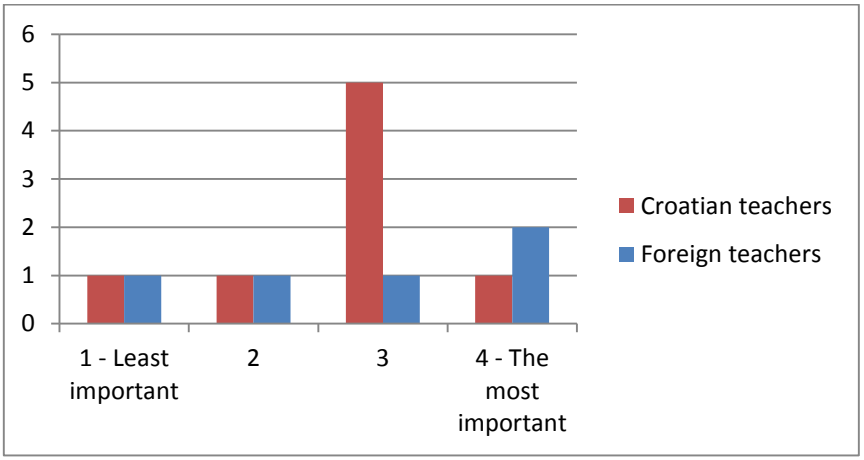


Figure 8: Comparison of teachers' responses: Political system

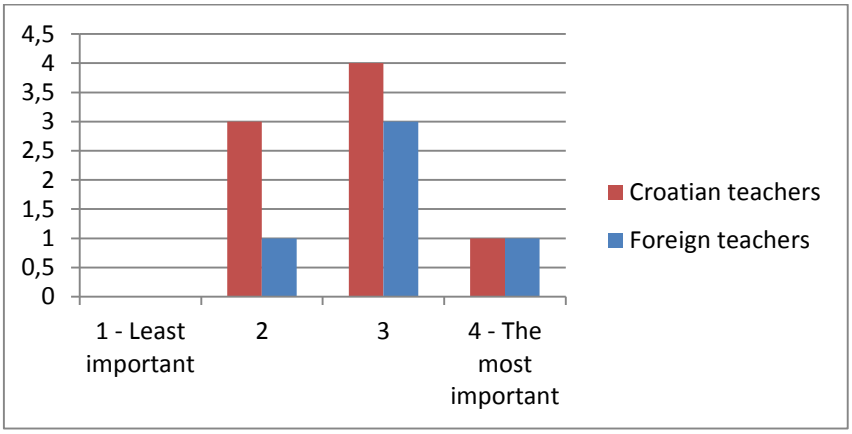


Figure 9: Comparison of teachers' responses: Educational system

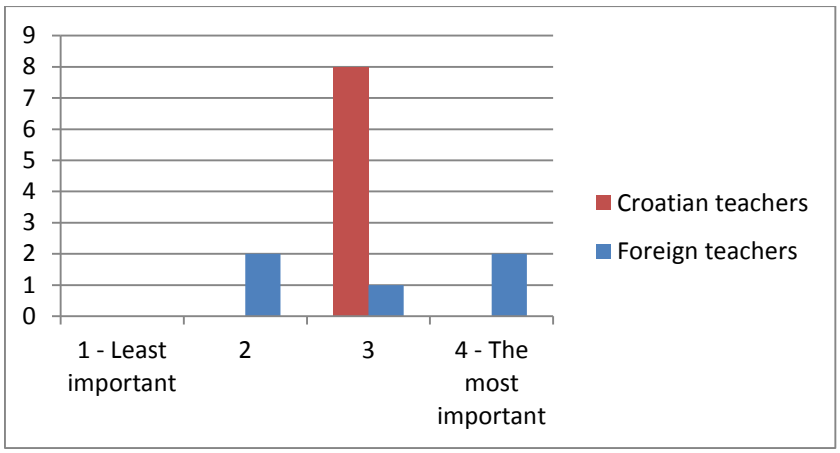


Figure 10: Comparison of teachers' responses: Family

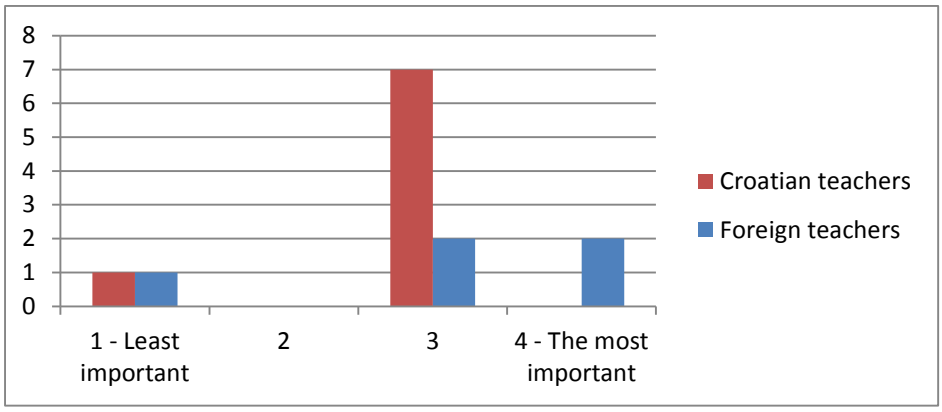


Figure 11: Comparison of teachers' responses: Cuisine

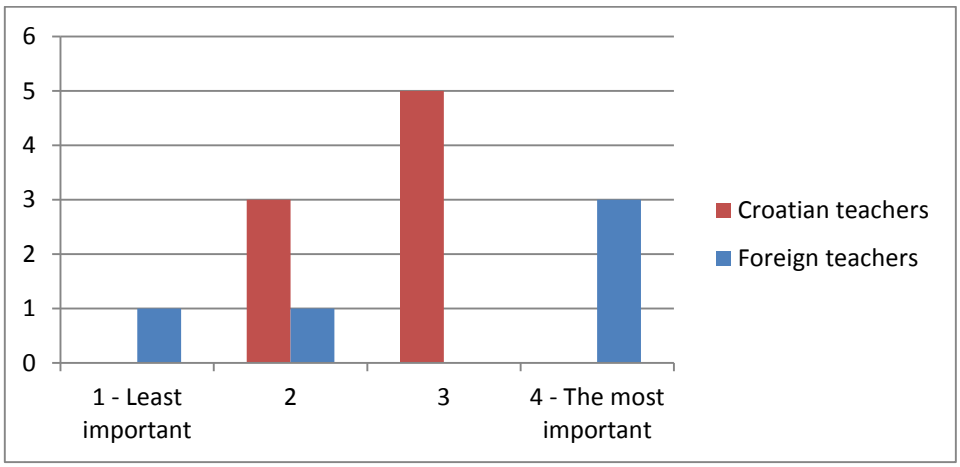


Figure 12: Comparison of teachers' responses: Sports

As for the cultural elements related to reducing *stereotypes, teaching acceptable behavior, non-verbal communication to socio-pragmatic rules*, the results are presented in *Figure 13*.

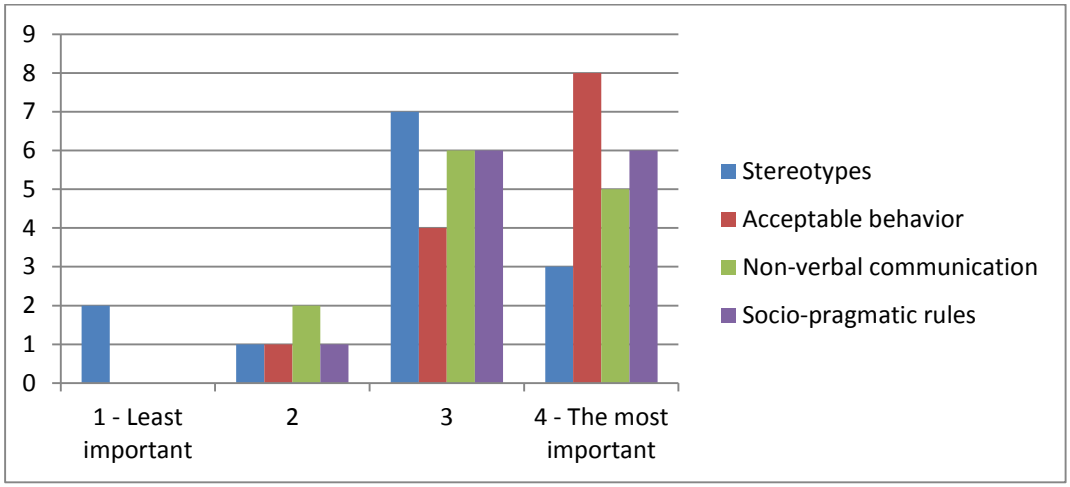


Figure 13: Teachers' responses about cultural elements

The respondents considered *acceptable behavior* and *socio-pragmatic rules* as the most important elements in "opening" the students' mind and raising their intercultural awareness, while *teaching about stereotypes* as least important.

As for the differences between the ranking of the above mentioned cultural elements among the Croatian and foreign teachers (see *Figure 14–17*), we notice that Croatian teachers ranked *acceptable behavior* as more important element than their foreign colleagues, while they *stereotypes* almost equally as foreign teachers. On the other hand, 60% of foreign teachers consider non-verbal communication as an extremely important element, in contrast to 38% of Croatian teachers. Foreign teachers also ranked *socio-pragmatic rules* as more important in comparison to their Croatian colleagues.

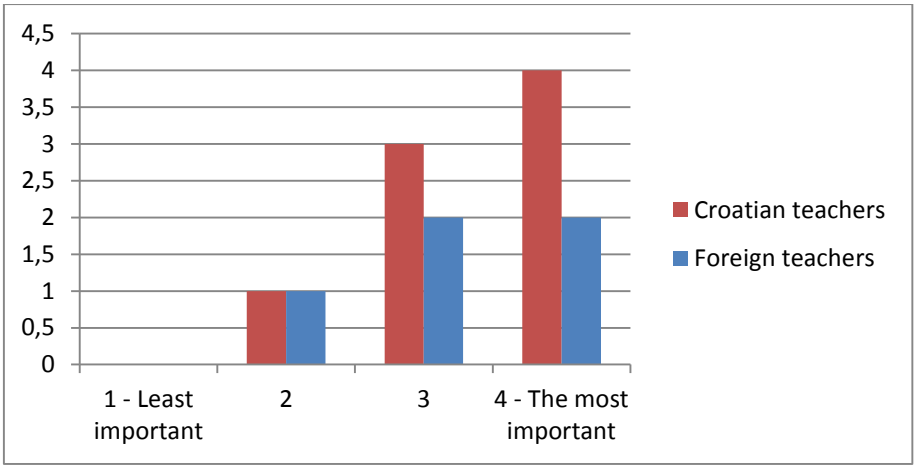


Figure 14: Comparison of teachers' responses: Stereotypes

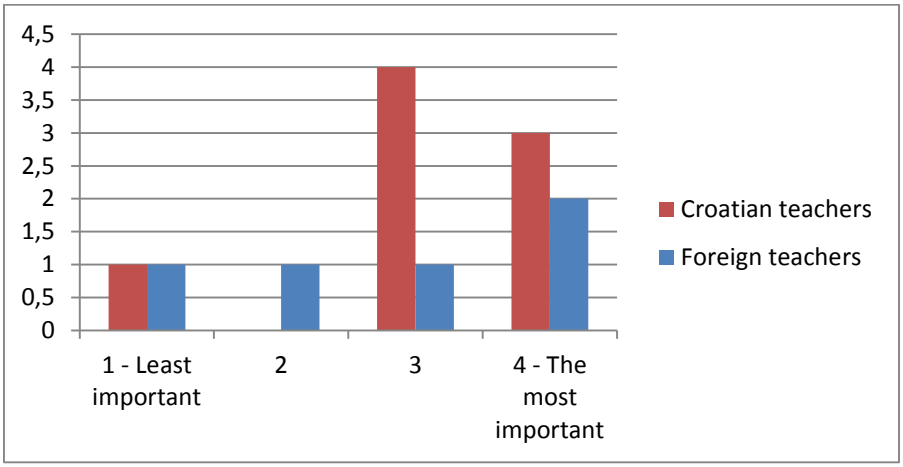


Figure 15: Comparison of teachers' responses: Acceptable behaviour

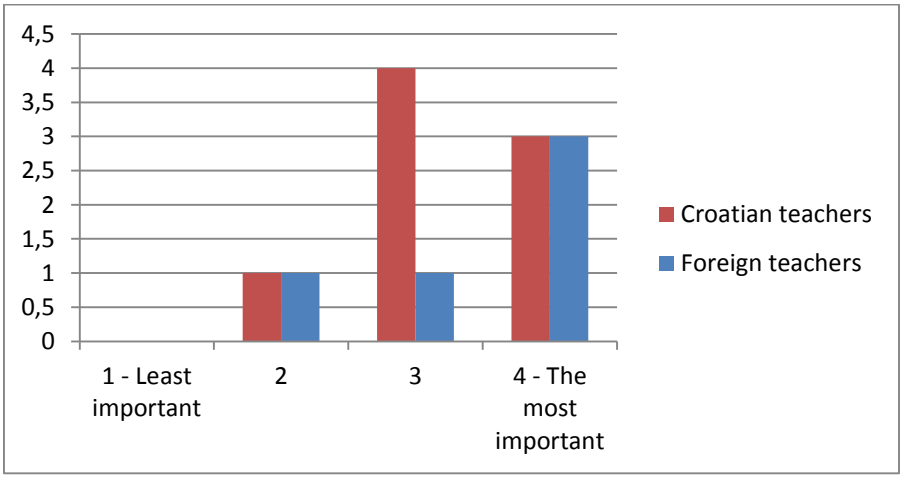


Figure 16: Comparison of teachers' responses: Non-verbal communication

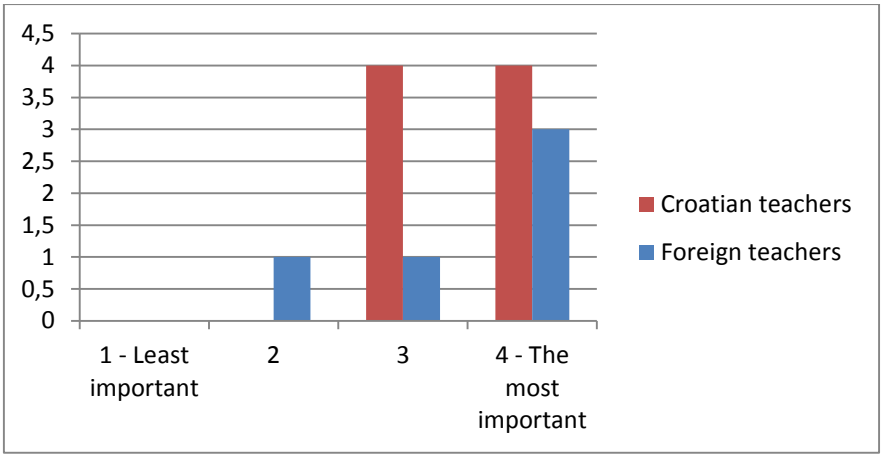


Figure 17: Comparison of teachers' responses: Socio – pragmatic rules

When asked about the factors that influence culture teaching practices, participants had to rank each element with numbers from 1 to 4 (1 – least important to 4 – the most important). Elements to be ranked were *teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching, teacher's personal experience with members of other cultures, expectations regarding students' learning abilities* and *teacher's education about the target culture*. *Teacher's education about the target culture* was considered the most important element which influences culture-teaching practices, while *teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching* was considered the least important element. The results are presented in *Figure 18*.

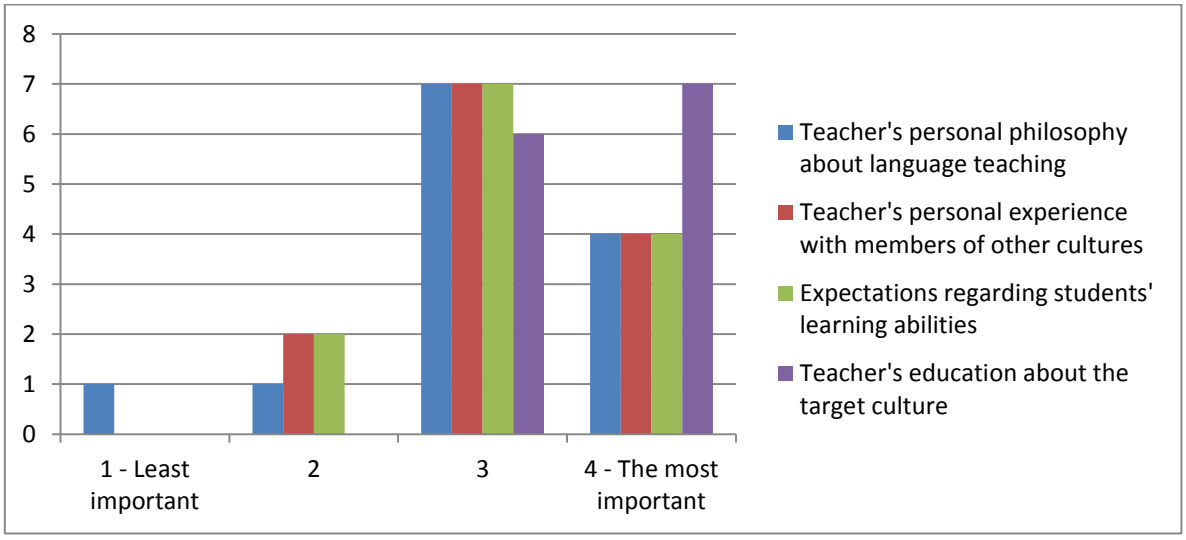


Figure 18: Factors that influence culture-teaching practices

In comparison to their foreign colleagues, Croatian teachers gave preferance to *teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching*. Furthermore, foreign teachers ranked *teacher's personal experience with members of other cultures* as the most important element, together with *expectations regarding students' learning abilities*. *Teacher's education about the target language* was ranked similarly; it was considered an important factor which influences culture teaching practices among teachers from different backgrounds.

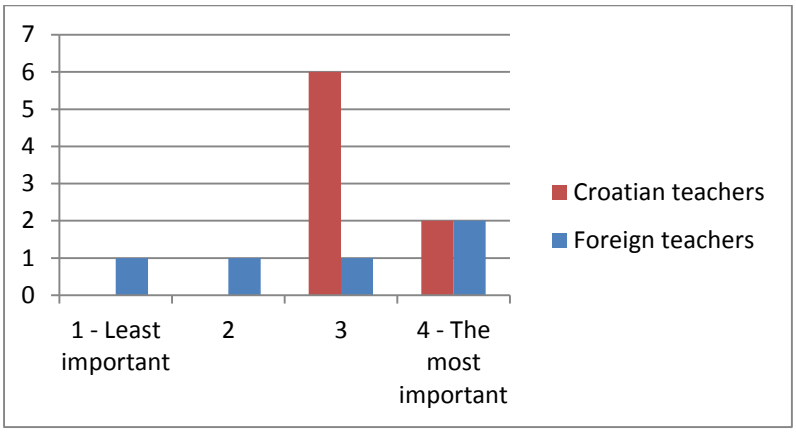


Figure 19: Comparison of teachers' responses: Teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching

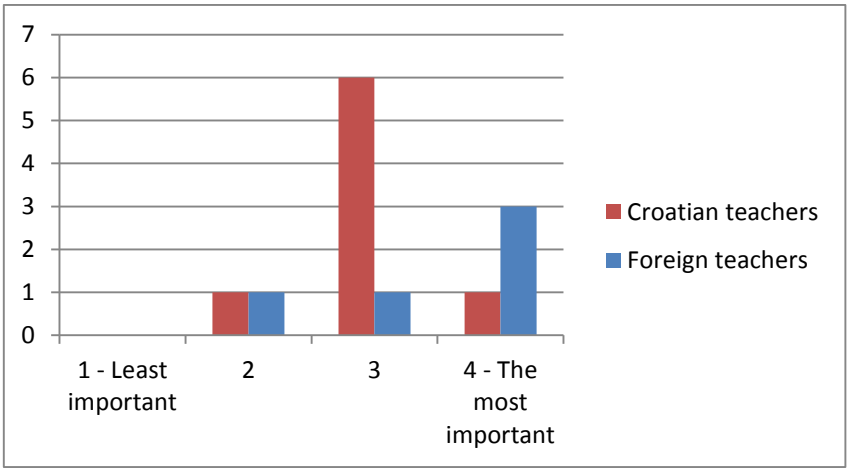


Figure 20: Comparison of teachers' responses: Teacher's personal experience with members of other cultures

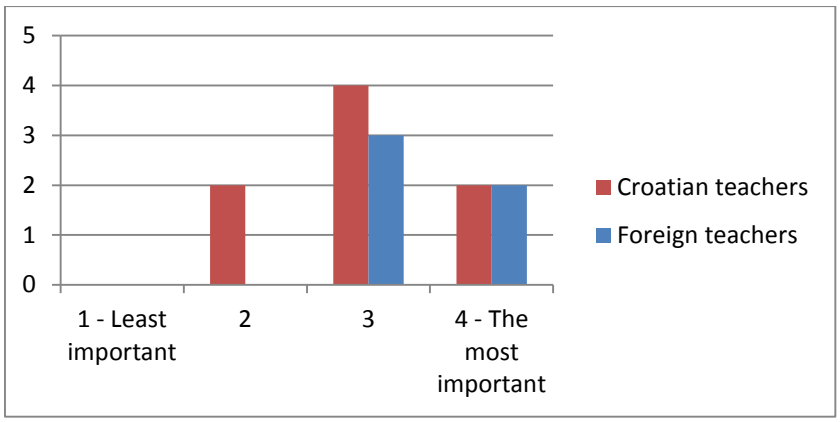


Figure 21: Comparison of teachers' responses: Expectations regarding students' learning abilities

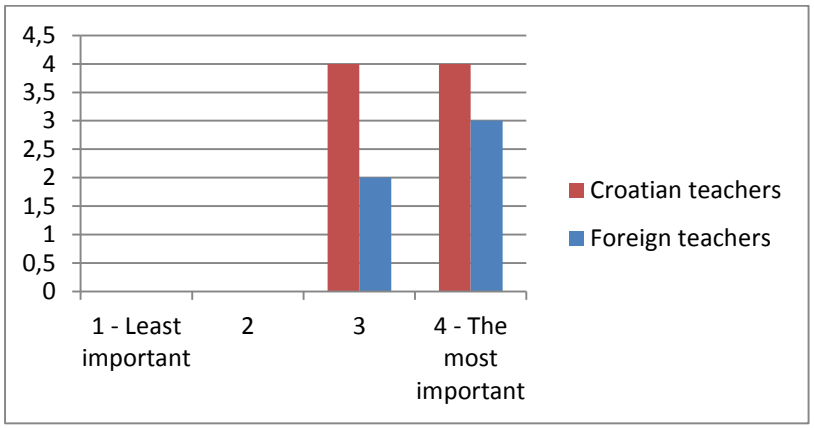


Figure 22: Comparison of teachers' responses: Teacher's education about the target culture

B) Techniques and resources for teaching cultural elements

In the second part of the questionnaire, participants marked the techniques they use in class for teaching culture and raising intercultural awareness. Out of 24 techniques, *quiz* was rated as mostly used technique for raising intercultural awareness followed by *games*, *songs*, *celebrating festivities*, *doing research* and using *comparison method*. The least used or known techniques were *cultoons* with 0 %, and *cultural assimilators*, *cultural islands* and *cultural scavenger hunt* with 15.4%.

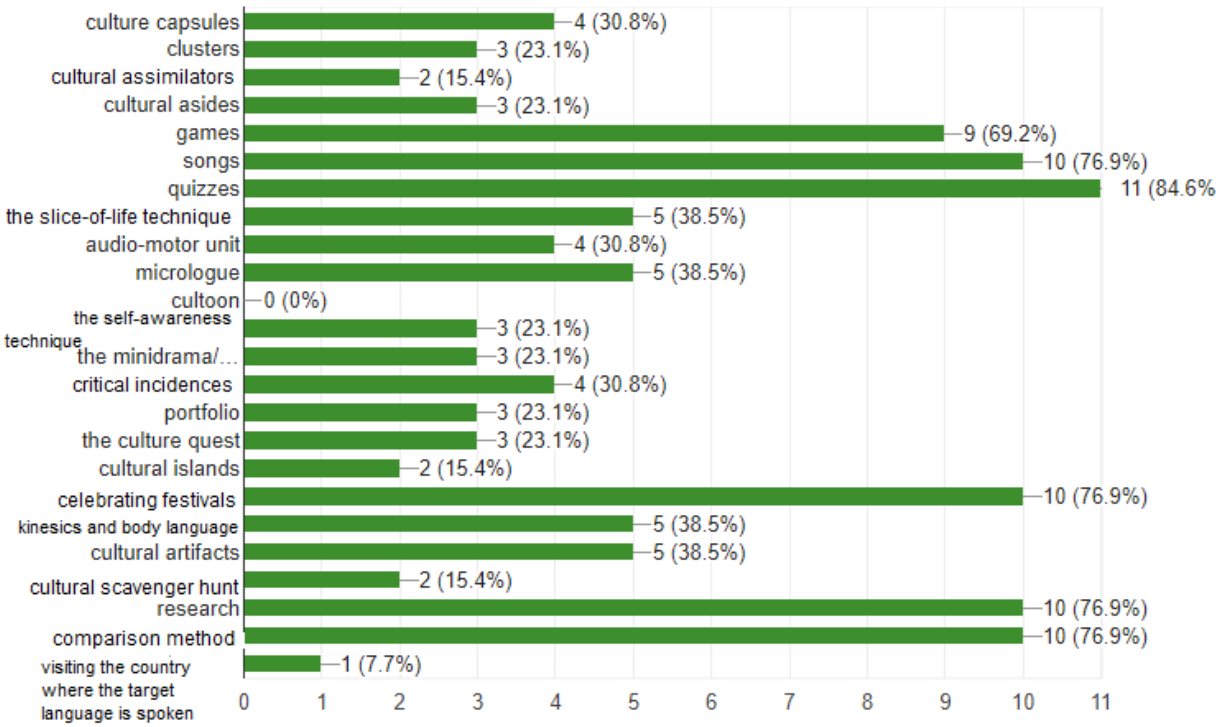


Figure 23: Techniques for raising interculture awareness

Based on the assumption that there might be some differences in the selection and usage of the previously mentioned techniques for raising cultural awareness among Croatian and foreign EFL teachers, we compared the results and presented them in *Figure 24.*

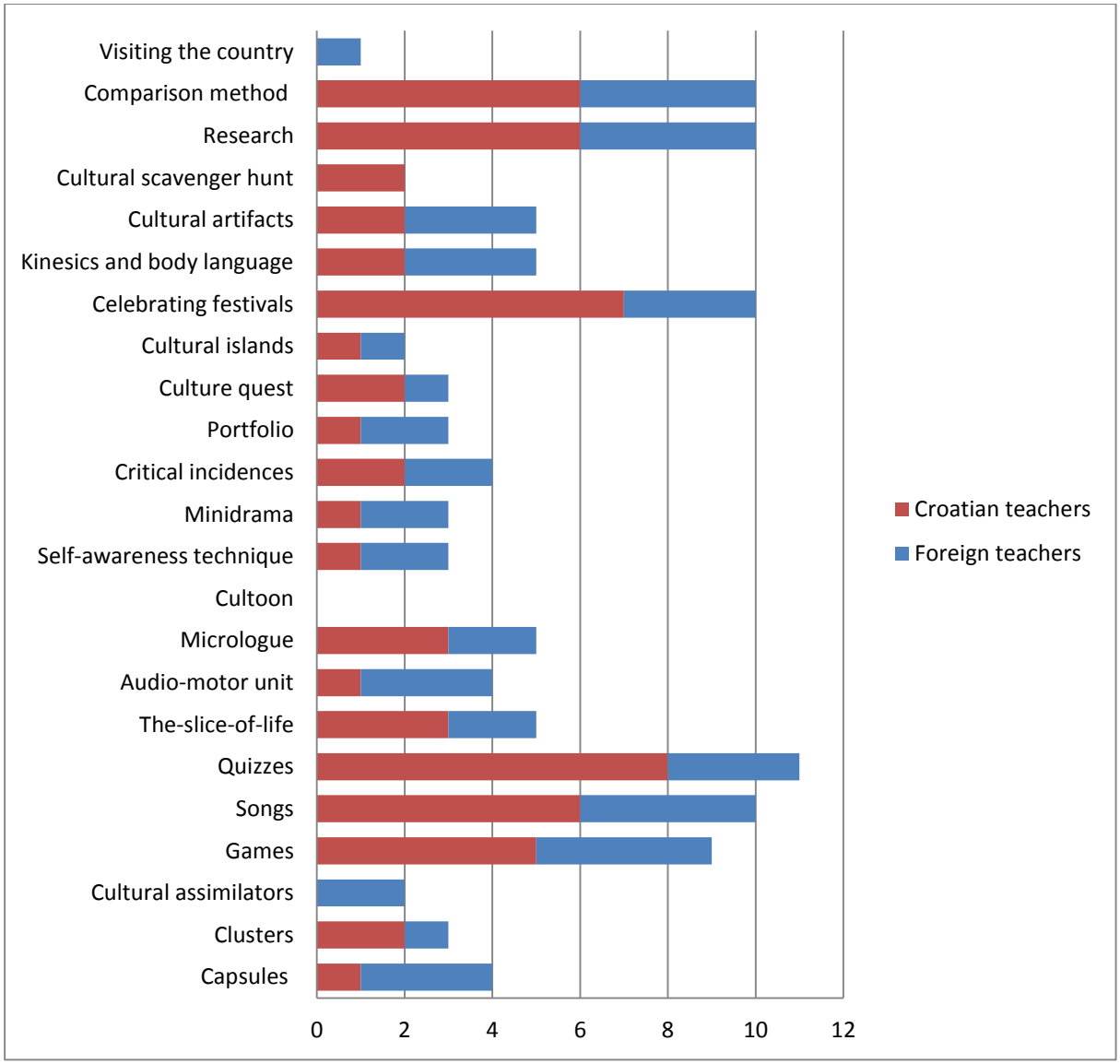


Figure 24: Comparison of teachers' responses: Techniques for raising interculture awareness

From the following charts it is visible that foreign teachers mostly use *comparison method, research, songs, games*, followed by *capsules, adio-motor unit, body language, cultural artifacts* and *celebrating festivities* as techniques for teaching culture. Croatian teachers mostly use *quizzes, comparison method, celebrating festivities, songs, games* and *research*. Croatian teachers do not use *cultoons* and *cultural assimilators*, similarly to foreign teachers who avoid using *cultoons* and *cultural scavenger hunts.*

Teaching English to young learners is somewhat different and requires careful selection of teaching methods and techniques. The comparison of the answers provided by Croatian and foreign young learners' EFL teachers is presented in *Figure 25*. It shows that Croatian teachers mostly use *comparison method, reserach, celebrating festivities, songs* and *quizzes* for teaching culture to young learners. On the other hand, foreign language teachers use *quizzes* and *songs* the most. In contrast to their Croatian colleagues, foreign language teachers use *audio-motor units*, while Croatian teachers use *kinesics and body language* and *cultural scavenger hunt*. These results also point to a greater number and variety of techniques used by Croatian teachers in comparison to foreign language teachers.

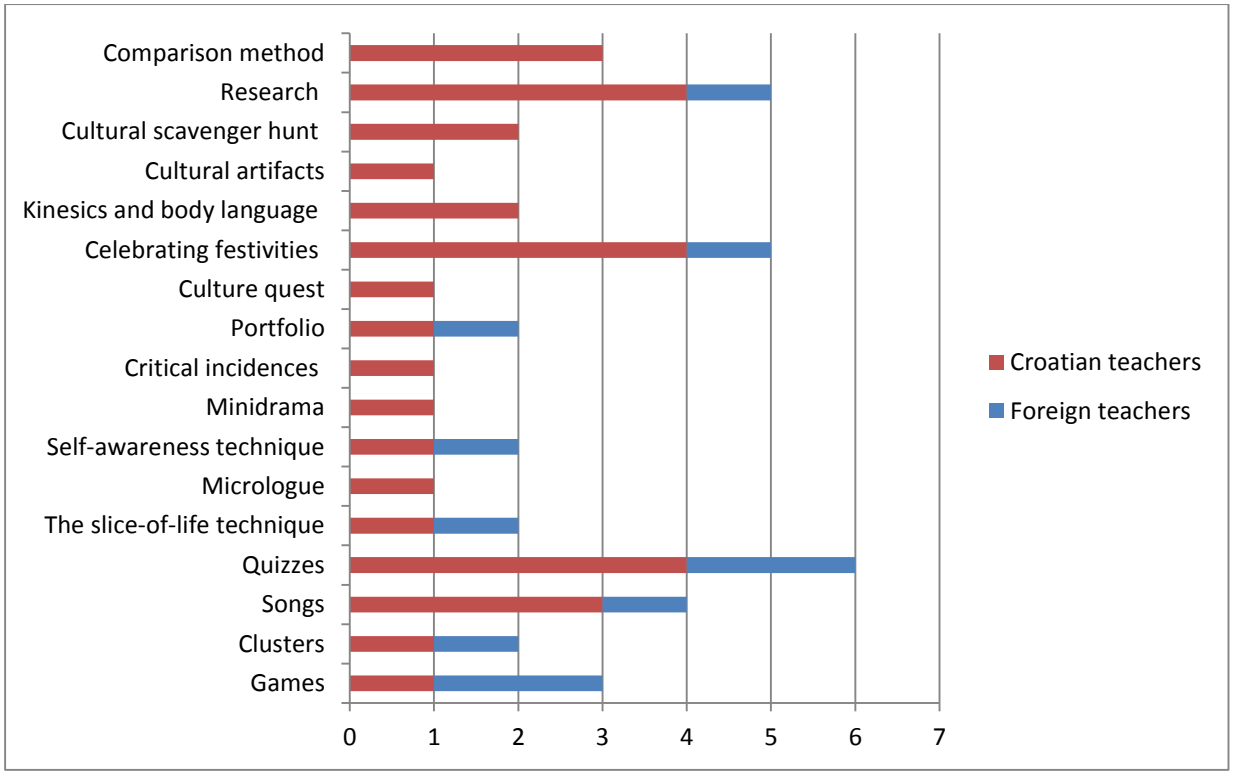


Figure 25: Comparison of teachers' responses: Techniques used with young learners

In the next section, participants had to answer questions about resources they use for teaching culture and raising intercultural awareness. As textbook is one of the most used and most known resource for teaching language, participants were asked to say how often they use textbooks in teaching culture. 92.3% of participants use textbooks often, and 7.7% use textbooks rarely. However, participants were not satisfied with the amount of cultural content in English language textbooks.

Namely 69.2% of participants said they were not satisfied with the amount of cultural content, contrary to 30.8% who were satisfied with the amount of cultural content in English language textbooks. According to the results, 76% of Croatian teachers are highly unsatisfied with the amount of cultural content, in contrary to 52% of foreign language teachers.

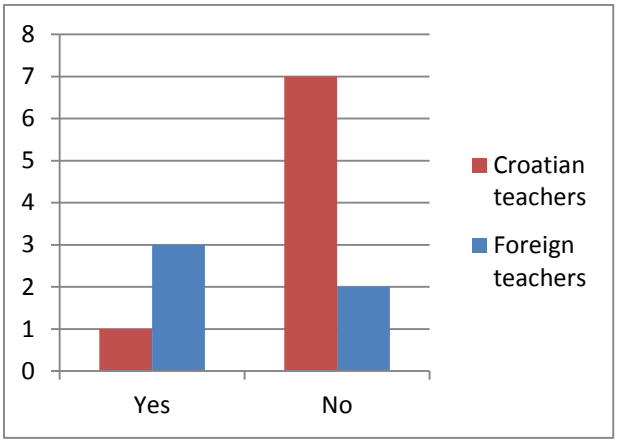


Figure 26: Comparison of teachers' responses: Amount of cultural content in English language textbooks

In addition, participants had to tick which authentic resources they use in their culture-teaching practice. Results are summarized in *Figure 27*.

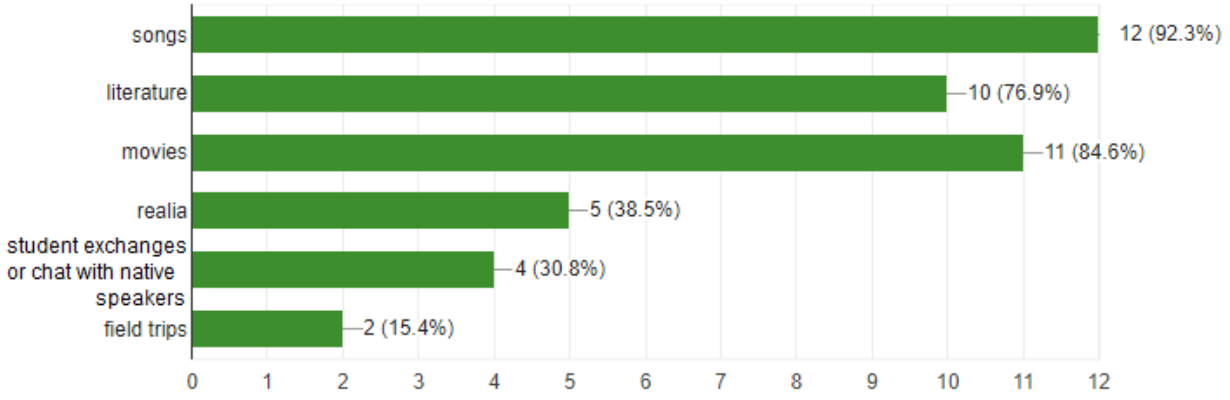


Figure 27: Authentic resources for raising intercultural awareness

Results emphasize preferences for songs, literature and movies. Surprisingly, realia were chosen by only 5 teachers. Also, 2 teachers chose field trips and 4 of them chose student exchanges and chats with native speakers as resources they used. Usually, field trips are hard to organize, so the

result was somewhat expected. Unfortunately, student exchanges and chats with native speakers got a low rank within authentic resources, even though international chats can easily be organized with the use of technology.

As the results in *Figure 28* show, Croatian teachers mostly use previously mentioned *songs, literature, movies* and *realia.* Only 1 Croatian teacher uses *student exchanges* or *chat* with native speakers and not one Croatian teacher uses *field trips* as authentic resources for teaching culture. Foreign teachers, on the other hand, use most of offered resources, including field trips and chats with native speakers. Namely, 3 out of 5 foreign teachers use *student exchanges* or *chats* with native speakers, and 2 out of 5 foreign teachers use *field trips* as authentic resources for raising intercultural awareness. On the contrary, only 1 foreign teacher uses realia as the authentic resource for teaching culture.

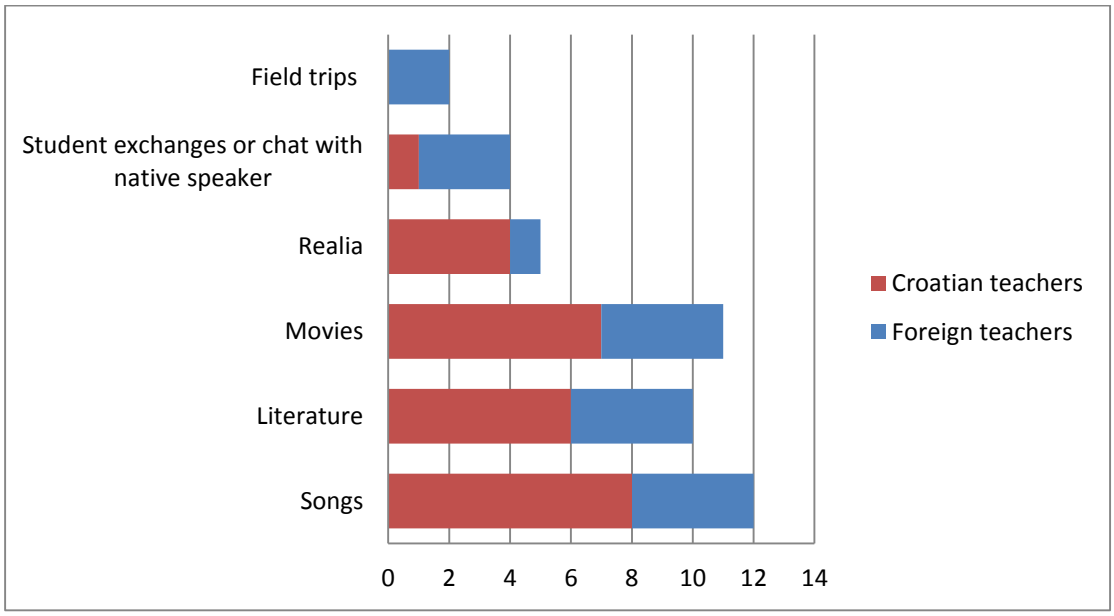


Figure 28: Comparison of teachers' responses: Authentic resources for raising intercultural awareness

When it comes to teaching young learners, Croatian teachers mostly use *songs, literature, movies,* and *realia.* Only one participant uses *exchanges* or *chat* with native speakers as an authentic resource for raising intercultural awareness with young learners. On the contrary, foreign language teachers do not use realia, but rather *field trips, chats with native speakers, movies, literature and songs*. The results are visible in *Figure 29.*

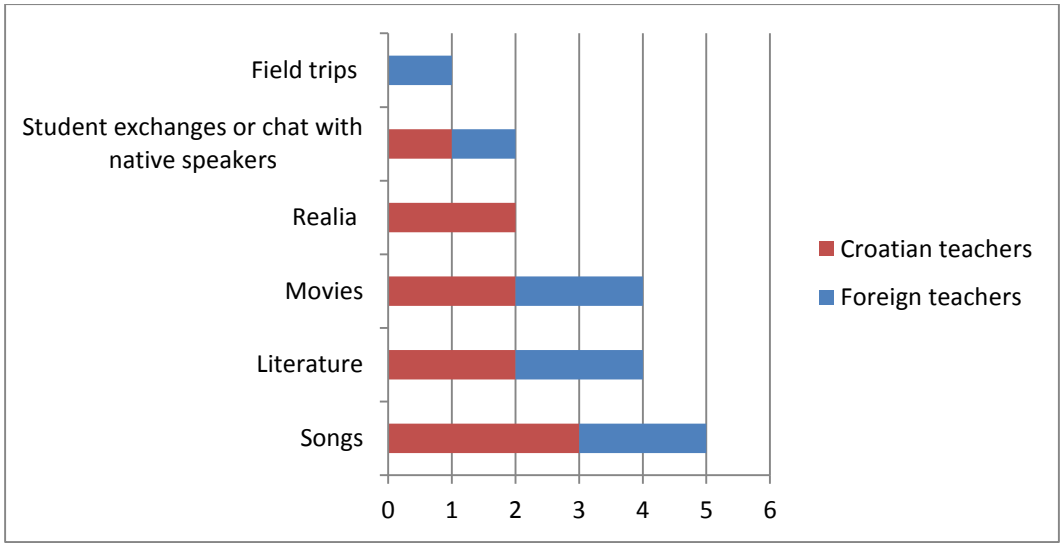


Figure 29: Comparison of teachers' responses: Using authentic resources with young learners

In addition, participants were asked about the use of *technology* as a mean for raising intercultural awareness. Most of them consider technology as a very useful tool in culture-teaching practice; namely 84.6% of participants use technology most of the time, while 15.4% consider it useful and use it from time to time. No participant considers the use of technology as time-consuming or not useful.

When it comes to the teaching outcomes, teachers were asked to give their personal opinion and rank to what extent they think their students are culturally competent. Only 7.7% of participants consider their students extremely culturally competent, while 92.3% consider their students competent to some extent. Not one teacher considered his/her students culturally incompetent. Namely, all Croatian teachers ranked their students' level of cultural competence as competent to some extent, 25% of foreign teachers ranked their students as extremely competent, and the rest of the foreign teachers ranked their students as competent to some extent.

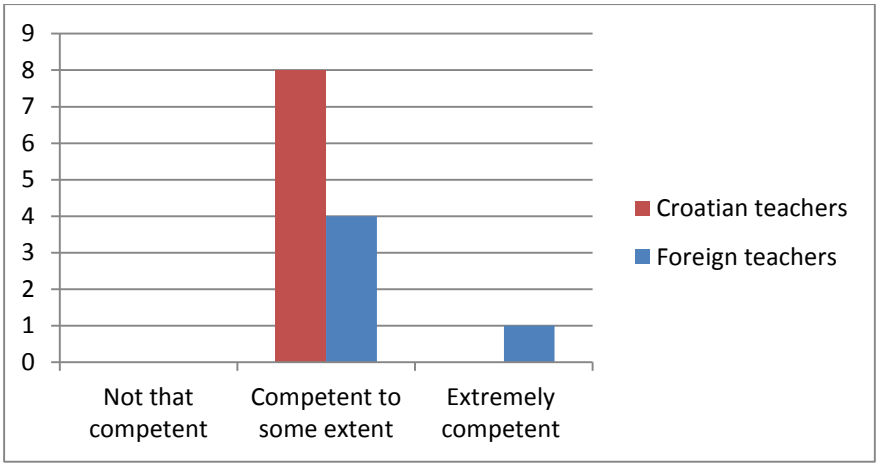


Figure 30: Comparison of teachers' responses: Teaching outcomes

When asked about the level of the achieved goals of intercultural teaching, the respondents had to choose a number from 1 to 3 in order to rate students' stereotypes of other cultures and students' intercultural communicative competence. Only 3 teachers believe they have successfully achieved the first goal, while only 2 teachers believe they were successful in achieving the second goal of intercultural teaching (see *Figure 31*).

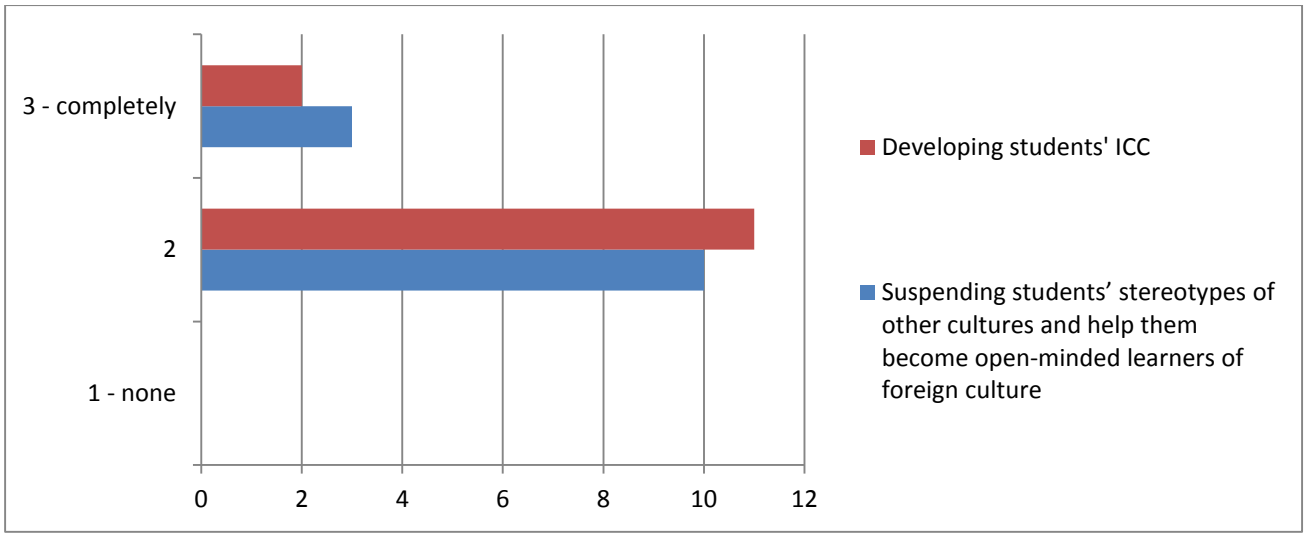


Figure 31: Goals of intercultural teaching

In comparison to Croatian colleagues, foreign language teachers ranked their work better. A slight but visible difference is evident in the results demonstrating that 33% of foreign teachers believe

they completely suspended students' stereotypes against other cultures, and 20% of foreign teachers say they completely succeeded in raising students' ICC. Results are summarized in *Figure 32* and *33.*

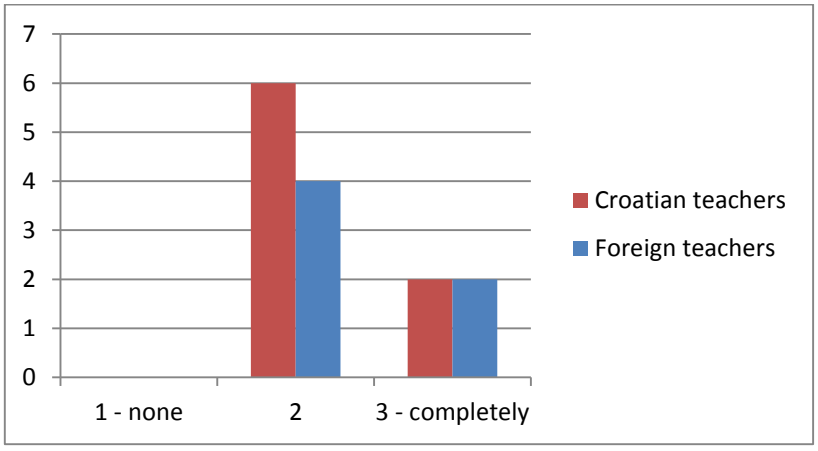


Figure 32: Comparison of teachers' responses: Suspending students' stereotypes

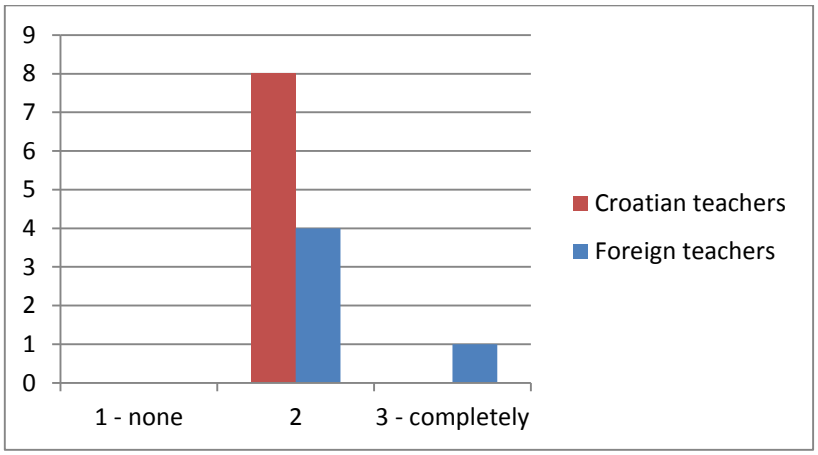


Figure 33: Comparison of teachers' responses: Developing students' ICC

7.5.2. Interview

In order to provide a better perspective and a deeper understanding of the problem, an interview was conducted among the same participants. There were 8 questions to be answered, and most of the answers offer personal opinions on culture-teaching practices and some explanations of the previously presented analysis. Questions were classified according to the topic discussed.

Teachers' influence

We started this interview by asking the teachers about the methods they use to reduce stereotypes and raise students' empathy and tolerance. Answers vary from focusing only on historical background (Croatian and Belgium teacher listed historical background as the only method they use) to using comparison method and anecdotes. In addition, a Spanish teacher said that students' attitude and behavior depend on their "previous experience with foreign cultures" (e-mail interview, 2017). A Croatian teacher emphasized the significance of using technology in teaching culture: "I often use one of many video clips on this topic. My ultimate goal is to "let students step into other people's shoes and wonder around. I believe that such an approach contributes immensely to suspending stereotypes and raising tolerance. I also provide a lot of up-to-date stories (short ones, e.g. articles from the Internet) to show them what empathy is and how to react in specific situations" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Furthermore, Croatian teachers mentioned using the comparison method in combination with the historical elements of the source and target language countries in teaching English to young learners:

"I give my students examples of different customs (in written form, video or audio materials). We discuss what they have seen or read to check comprehension and then we compare the situations to the ones in our culture. Throughout the discussion the emphasis is on the similarities (if there are any) and the differences, I try to explain and emphasise that they are normal " (Croatian young learners teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

"During my lessons, I try to teach my students to be open-minded and tolerant, to respect our, Croatian, traditions and culture as well as to understand and respect other traditions and cultures. I always spend some time talking about the history trying to explain the roots of some tradition or custom. We always compare interesting things in our culture to the similar cultural aspects in the target cultures. I think that it is the best way for students to learn something new - one has to understand WHY and compare it to the real-life example from his/her own environment" (e-mail interview, 2017).

The Spanish teacher also mentioned the comparison method and the anecdotes as the tool she uses: "I usually use the comparison method while comparing Spanish and British elements of culture. I try to explain to my students that culture affects people's behaviour. Sometimes I tell them anecdotes about everyday situations where people act differently" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Students' exposure to target language

Next question tries to explore students' reactions to cultural differences. The purpose of this question was to slightly check the outcomes of participants' culture-teaching practices. Even though students' reactions to cultural differences may be influenced by many factors, it was considered as one of the crucial elements to question in this study. 5 out of 8 Croatian teachers and 4 out of 5 foreign teachers acknowledged mostly positive students' reactions to cultural differences.

A Lithuanian teacher and 4 Croatian teachers said their students usually tend to mock differences at first until they were not introduced to the topic appropriately:

"Depending on the class, sometimes there are students that tend to mock first, more with the intention of being the cool person in the classroom. I believe it is mostly them being apprehensive of something different. After the discussion they too agree with the majority who accept and ultimately understand the differences" (e-mail interview, 2017).

"As always, there are pupils who have to contradict and mock everything. Fortunately, my students are very well educated and take everything I teach seriously, of course, with some additional but controllable, comments" (Lithuanian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

A Turkish and a Croatian teacher explained that they use authority in order to influence students' opinion:

"My students do not mock and disrespect anyone or anything because that is simply not acceptable in my classroom. The goal of my lessons is not just teaching them to speak a language, it is to give them an opportunity to develop into healthy and tolerant young individuals who understand and respect other nations and their cultures" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Also, both Spanish and Croatian teachers acknowledged students' curiosity while learning about other cultures:

"Sometimes they act surprised, but they usually try to learn about British ways as much as possible. Students are usually interested in hearing about other cultures; to them it is a fun way of learning English" (Spanish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Teaching practice – reflective feedback, personal beliefs

Next group of questions focuses on problems culture-teaching practice carries and tries to find simple solutions to actual problems. Some of the problems Croatian and foreign English teachers mentioned are: overcrowded curriculum or lack of time to focus on cultural lessons, deciding which

cultural elements to teach, and insufficient amount of interesting cultural elements in English textbooks. This is handled by neglecting cultural topics such as religion and politics, using technology and authentic materials in teaching culture. Only the teacher from Turkey claimed that overcrowded curriculum did not represent a problem for her. Four foreign teachers and six Croatian teachers stated the opposite. Two Croatian teachers who were teaching English to young learners said that despite overcrowded curriculum, teachers can make room for teaching cultural elements if they really want so, "If a teacher has interests in teaching culture, she or he will make room for it in the overcrowded curriculum. Nowadays, teachers have more resources for doing so. By this I mean the Internet and other technology. It is very easy to make a lesson interesting and fun; everything is just a click away" (e-mail interview, 2017).

One of the Croatian teachers stated her insecurity about the aspect of culture to be taught, "The most common problem is, I believe, deciding which elements of culture to teach or not to teach, and to what extent. I believe that even with the curriculum as it is (overcrowded or not), there are ways to insert elements of culture, even if it is only for a few minutes" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017). Another Croatian teacher claimed that cultural elements presented in textbooks (namely DipIn) are not presented well enough, which requires preparing extra-materials, "The information in the textbooks is not usually appealing to the students and the teacher needs extra time to prepare the topic in an interesting way. The overcrowded curriculum is certainly a problem" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

A Spanish teacher suggested ignoring certain topics to save time and get more space for teaching culture, "The most important is not to teach 'politics' and 'religion' (e-mail interview, 2017). A Lithuanian teacher further suggested using interactive methods for teaching culture, with an emphasis on teaching the most necessary elements during class and then letting students choose which elements they want to practice in their free time, "Yes, overcrowded curriculum represents a problem in teaching culture because despite the fact how good it is, other methods should be used which should be more interactive and less time consuming, i.e. that children would be able to learn everything needed at school and then during their free time practise other things they prefer, and not something that is obliged by school. During my lesson I try to make the children use their memory, make vivid stories and make them learn everything in the moment" (e-mail interview, 2017).

In addition, teachers were asked about their opinion on assessing cultural elements and whether they considered cultural elements as important enough to be assessed. Only 5 out of 13

teachers said they did assess cultural elements, mostly by assessing projects, discussions, materials, games and other fun activities.

Two Croatian teachers teaching English to young learners said they mostly assess cultural elements by grading posters, "Sometimes I ask the students to make posters about a certain part of culture and then I grade them" (e-mail interview, 2017). In addition, one Croatian teacher said she assesses students' factual knowledge, "I assess their knowledge of details" (e-mail interview, 2017), while the other Croatian teacher assesses cultural elements through projects and discussions, "I assess projects, discussions and presentations" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Four out of five foreign teachers said they do not assess cultural elements, and a Belgium teacher stated she assesses students' knowledge through fun activities, "Yes, by integrating them in fun activities, literature and games" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Four Croatian teachers said they do not assess cultural elements due to lack of time or because they think it is not necessary, "No, they learn it for fun, and that's the beauty of it" (e-mail, interview, 2017).

If we summarize the resultS, we can notice that Croatian teachers tend to assess cultural elements more than their foreign colleagues (see Figure 34).

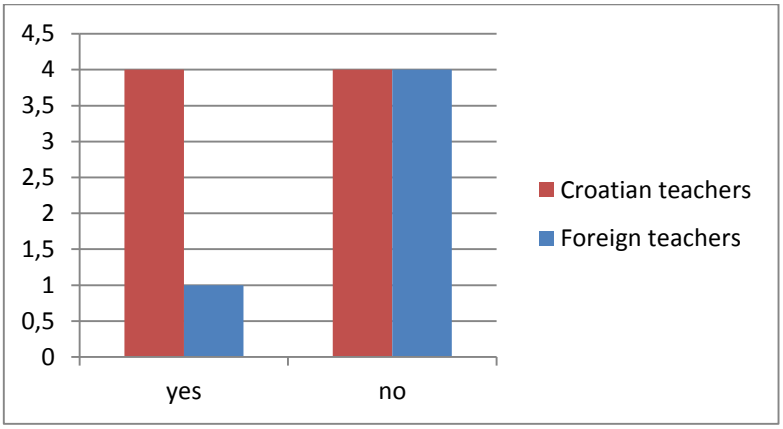


Figure 34: Comparison of teachers' responses: Assessing cultural content

Methods and techniques

In the final set of questions, teachers were asked to give their suggestions about culture-teaching practice and to list some techniques for raising intercultural awareness they use the most. Obviously, this question gave the biggest insight into participants' culture-teaching practice. Given answers showed that teachers acknowledge the importance of culture in ELT more than expected.

Most of teachers use movies, songs and literature to raise students' intercultural awareness. The positive practice is evident in the combination of various techniques and various resources. Also, some of them gave suggestions on how to make culture-teaching practice easier, "Integrate more cultural aspects into other courses and reforce them during cultural courses" (Belgium teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

"I would like to see the culture more integrated with the rest of the lessons in the textbooks, not just as a separate lesson in a unit. That way students would learn about culture in a more organic way, it wouldn't seem as though it came out of the left field. I mostly use songs, videos and literature. Sometimes I also use re-enactment of an event or a custom (e.g. five o'clock tea - we have a tea party in the classroom etc.)" (Croatian teacher of young learners, e-mail interview, 2017).

"It would be nice to have some ready-to-use software or other extra material so the students can put themselves in the country they study about. I usually use photos, presentations, quizzes, games, projects and so on" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Three Croatian teachers acknowledge the value of incorporation of cultural elements into the young learners' classrooms mostly by using presentations, realia, songs, videos, acting and literature for teaching cultural elements:

"Teaching culture is very useful because it gives students the opportunity to develop their writing, reading and speaking skills (presentations, posters). It is also a very good way of doing group/research work - they develop teamwork skills" (e-mail interview, 2017).

"I use realia a lot, because when a person who has been to e.g. London shows you how to use a Tube map or how to get to Stonehenge, students are all ears because that is what they would like to know. They have Geography classes where they learn about UK and GB in a geographic sense, and they have History classes to learn about its history. It's okay to revise that during English lessons, but only in a short paragraph. We have to teach them what to do when they come there or if they meet a local" (e-mail interview, 2017).

A Lithuanian teacher acknowledges the importance of interaction among young learners saying that, "Interaction is a key. Colours, sounds, shiny things, use all materials possible to introduce the subject and involve the children in activities such as creating costumes, writing stories etc. Everything has to be easy to understand and easy to apply" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Most of the respondents acknowledge the importance of student exchanges and making international friends:

“I would like my students to practise English with me more but they feel discouraged because of their former education. I suggest them to make foreign friends and read more books in English; unfortunately, they are too busy with their schedule” (Turkish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

“I believe the culture should be taught by using all sources possible, such as, movies, postcards, songs, tales, and retelling personal anecdotes about meeting people of other nationalities. Sharing your experience with students can make it easier for them to understand the cultural differences. Also, I accept international students for internships and try to include them in my classes as well. I think that exposing my students to people of other nationalities is a great method of teaching cultural elements in general” (Spanish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

“Communicating with native speakers would be very useful. I use many techniques for teaching culture (songs, games, quizzes, learning about holidays, money, food, traditional clothing...)” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

As far as the curriculum is concerned, two Croatian teachers mentioned the following, “We as teachers should have more up-to-date information because those presented in textbooks are not satisfactory” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017). “I would like if curriculum provided more time and resources for cultural activities” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Moreover, teachers were asked to give their opinion about positive and negative side effects of culture teaching methods. This question refers to culture-teaching outcomes and visible side effects of culture teaching methods that participants use with their students. Most of the teachers agreed that raising intercultural awareness made their students became better people. Only one Croatian and one Lithuanian teacher mentioned some negative side effects of culture teaching practice:

“Positive is that students are usually happy to learn about the culture but they see it as a sort of break from "normal" part of the class. The negative is that they often complain that they won't need this information, that it's an extra” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

“Positive is that they learn about new cultures and can get acquainted with their way of living, their behaviour and widen their point of view. Negative, of course, are that there will always be someone who won´t understand it and will try to mock other cultures” (Lithuanian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

The rest of Croatian and foreign teachers focused only on positive side effects of culture teaching methods saying that, “It raises students’ own cultural awareness and teaches them to accept other cultures” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), “Communication is the most important

aspect of teaching a language" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), "They learn how to be world citizens" (Turkish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), "Students get open minded, they become more competent in using correct expressions because they understand the cultural ways of the target language, and they become better people" (Spanish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Teaching resources - materials

Next group of questions deals with culture-teaching resources. The goals of these questions were to find out whether teachers spend much time on preparing extra materials that would be interesting for children, and how often they use authentic materials to raise students' intercultural awareness. 3 Croatian and 2 foreign teachers said they prepared extra materials often, "I use extras very often, that's not a waste of time; in contrast extras are essential. Preparing extra materials is my hobby" (Turkish teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), while one Spanish and one Croatian teacher said they used extras couple of times per month or even a year. The most mentioned reason for not preparing extra materials is that it is time-consuming; namely, 6 Croatian and 2 foreign teachers mentioned this as a reason for not using extra materials that often, "Yes it is very time-consuming. You need to prepare the materials thoroughly first before using them with students... Afterwards I use them a lot and tend to repeat them until there is some new material" (Belgium teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

A Spanish teacher explained that he usually consults with native speakers about certain matters, "I try to contact different people to find out differences by first hand, in order to explain things better" (e-mail interview, 2017), and one Croatian teacher of young learners mostly uses extra materials for teaching about festivities, "It is time consuming and I prepare them for teaching about certain festivities" (e-mail interview, 2017).

Furthermore, most of teachers said how authentic materials were the best way of teaching culture. They especially mentioned videos, songs, films, realia and inviting native speakers to the class. Two Croatian teachers (one of them is a teacher of young learners) said they used authentic materials rarely or never, "I don't use them with such young children" (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), while one Belgium teacher said that old authentic materials were not as useful, "I think some of them are useful and some of them are already too old. New technologies are sometimes better to be used than older materials. Even though older materials can be sometimes used to show basics / general info of cultural courses" (e-mail interview, 2017).

In contrary, six Croatian teachers (three of them are teachers of young learners) recognized authentic materials as the best way of teaching culture:

"I like to travel a lot, so I often show them my video clips, pictures, various realia - e.g. souvenirs, maps, postcards, museum and attractions tickets, and how to avoid waiting in line for those and use a secret entrance if there is one" (teacher of young learners, e-mail interview, 2017).

"Using authentic materials in teaching culture is a good idea. I use songs (listening, talking about the lyrics, various tasks), web pages (reading...), TV broadcasts, films..." (e-mail interview, 2017).

Five out of five foreign teachers agree on the significance of using authentic materials in culture-teaching practice; Turkish teacher said that, "Authenticity creates curiosity, as the result we can achieve higher efficiency in teaching" (e-mail interview, 2017).

In addition, a Spanish and a Lithuanian teacher listed inviting native speakers to class as authentic resources of cultural elements for their students, "If it is possible, I try to invite people from different cultures that would present something for children to enjoy it" (Lithuanian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017), "I think authentic materials are the best ways of teaching culture. I use my friends' postcards, invite native speakers to my class, play authentic songs and dances to my students" (e-mail interview, 2017), while one Croatian teacher of younger learners already planned the visit to her class, "This year my plan is to bring a native speaker from Canada and give my students a chance to speak with him" (e-mail interview, 2017).

7.6. Discussion

Based on our research questions, we can conclude that this group of teachers mostly use quizzes, songs, celebrating festivities, research, comparison method and games for raising students' intercultural awareness. More specifically, 11/13 teachers use quizzes, 10/13 use songs, celebrating festivities, research and comparison method, while 9/13 use games as techniques in culture-teaching practice. In contrary, cultoons, cultural assimilators, cultural islands, cultural scavenger hunt were not recognized as techniques for raising intercultural awareness. If we compare asnwers of Croatian teachers to foreign language teachers about the techniques they use, we can see that they mostly use the same techniques. Croatian teachers mostly use quizzes (8/8), celebrating festivities (7/8), the comparison method, research and songs (6/8), while foreign teachers use the comparison method, resarch, songs and games (4/5). When it comes to young learners, Croatian teachers mostly use research, celebrating festivities and quizzes (4/4), while foreign teachers use quizzes and games (2/2).

These results are not in accordance with our initial hypothesis which says that Croatian teachers use different techniques than their foreign colleagues in culture-teaching practice.

However, difference in the number of used techniques is noticed. Namely, 7 different techniques are used by only one Croatian teacher, while minimum 2 different foreign teachers used the same technique. It shows that Croatian teachers use smaller number of techniques for teaching culture, and that they are not as various. In contrary, foreign teachers use greater number of techniques with greater variety; Turkish teacher even suggested an extra technique 'visiting the country where the target language is spoken' which was added to the chart. On the other hand, it was noticed that Croatian teachers use greater variety and number of techniques for teaching younger learners than their foreign colleagues.

In addition, teachers mostly use songs (12/13), movies (11/13) and literature (10/13) as authentic resources for raising intercultural awareness. In contrary, a low number of teachers use realia as means for raising students' intercultural awareness (5/13). We assume it is because realia are sometimes difficult to find, and teachers tend to use them with culture-specific techniques which may be time-consuming. Moreover, there is a noticeable difference between Croatian and foreign teachers in using exchanges, field trips and chats with native speakers as an authentic resource. Only 1 Croatian teacher uses student exchanges or chat with native speakers and no Croatian teachers use field trips as an authentic resource for teaching culture. Foreign teachers, in contrary, use most of the aforementioned resources, including field trips and chats with native speakers. Namely 3/5 foreign teachers use student exchanges or chat with native speakers, and 2/5 foreign teachers use field trips as an authentic resource for raising intercultural awareness.

These results confirm our initial hypothesis that foreign language teachers use different resources for raising intercultural awareness than their Croatian colleagues do. It shows us that foreign language teachers acknowledge the importance of exposing their students to multicultural environment more than Croatian teachers do. It can be related to the fact that all foreign participants of this study were involved in student exchanges and had developed the habit of doing school trips and inviting native speakers to their classrooms or asking native speakers for reference or confirmation of some information. As our initial hypothesis suggests, teachers do not use a great variety of techniques and resources. It is because teachers are often not familiar with these kind of techniques or resources, and because some of them are time consuming and difficult to organize. It was concluded

from teachers' answers in the interview, e.g., “I am not sure I understand what authentic materials in teaching culture really means” (Croatian teacher, e-mail interview, 2017).

Secondly, while teaching culture, teachers mostly focus on general cultural elements such as customs, festivities and symbols (8/13), music, arts and literature (5/13), history and geography (6/13). While trying to raise students' intercultural awareness teachers mostly focus on teaching acceptable behavior (8/13 ranked it as an extremely important) and socio-pragmatic rules (6/13). On the other hand, foreign teachers consider non-verbal communication as an extremely important element with 60%, in contrary to 38% Croatian teachers, which is in accordance with the percentage of using kinesics and body language and audio-motor unit as techniques (namely 3/5 foreign teacher use them, while only 2/8 Croatian teachers focus on kinesics and 1/8 uses audio-motor unit). From the number of cultural elements marked as an extremely important in this study, we can conclude that teachers consider elements that focus on non-verbal communication, stereotypes, acceptable behavior and socio-pragmatic rules as more important than general cultural elements (namely 29% or 30/105 in general cultural elements and 44% or 22/50 on other elements). However, based on the interview, some teachers combine different elements for raising intercultural awaraness, so 3 teachers said they use historical elements in suspending stereotypes. It is because some teachers like to link specific topics to make it more comprehensible for students. Also, no teachers in the interview mentioned that they focus on non-verbal communication or acceptable behavior while teaching culture. For that reason, we cannot completely discard our initial hypothesis which says that teachers tend to give priority to teaching general cultural elements over using methods to raise students’ empathy and tolerance for other cultures.

Thirdly, the most common problems teachers encounter while teaching culture are: overcrowded curriculum (10/13 teachers), cultural elements in textbooks which are not appealing for students or not up-to-date (namely 76% Croatian teachers, and 52% foreign teachers who are not satisfied with the amount of cultural content in textbooks), not being sure of what elements or topics to focus on while teaching etc. Foreign language teachers also complained about overcrowded curriculum (4/5), but they were more satisfied with the amount of cultural elements they have in their textbooks than their Croatian colleagues. Hence, foreign language teachers deal with it by ignoring certain topics and using authentic materials which are not as time-consuming, according to the interview. For that reason, we can say that these results are partially in accordance with our initial

hypothesis which states how foreign English language teachers encounter the same types of problems in teaching culture as their Croatian colleagues.

Next, teacher's education about the target culture was marked as the most important element that influences culture-teaching practice in teachers (7/13 teachers), which discarded Byram's statement that the most influential element is teacher's intercultural experience. In comparison to their foreign colleagues, Croatian teachers gave preferance to Teacher's personal philosophy about language teaching (75% comparing to 20% foreign teachers who marked it as important). Furthermore, foreign teachers ranked Teacher's personal experience with members of other cultures as the most important element (60% comparing to 13% Croatian teachers who marked it as extremely important) acknowledging Byram's statement, together with Expectations regarding students' learning abilities (40% comparing to 25% of Croatian teachers). Teacher's education about the target language was ranked similarly; it was considered as an important factor that influence culture-teaching practices in teachers by the both sides (60% of foreign teachers and 50% of Croatian teachers). Again, we can explain the results by saying that foreign teachers consider personal experience more important since they had personal experience in working or living abroad.

According to the results, foreign teachers ranked their culture-teaching practices more successful than their Croatian colleagues. 33% of them think they have completely suspended stereotypes with their students while 25% Croatian teachers think the same. Also, 12/13 teachers think their students are competent to some extent while one foreign teacher consider her students as extremely competent; in addition, better result in developing students ICC is visible with foreign langauage teachers in 20%. Therefore, this partially discards our initial hypothesis that students in Croatia and other countries have the same level of intercultural awareness. This result can be also linked to the fact that, according to the study, foreign teachers use greater number and greater variety of techniques and resources in culture-teaching practices.

This study shows that culture-teaching practices of Croatian teachers do not differ much from foreign teacher's teaching practice, but certain differences are noticed. Answers are mostly similar; most of teachers confront similar problems and use similar or same techniques and resources in teaching culture. However, one of the biggest differences is that all foreign teachers focus on travelling abroad and international communication while teaching culture. Foreign teachers emphasized these means as extremely important in the questionnaire and especially in the interview. There is another slight difference in assessing cultural elements. According to the interview, foreign teachers do not

assess cultural elements (4/5), in contrary to 4/8 Croatian teachers who claim to assess cultural elements through projects, posters and discussions. Every foreign teacher has a different reason for not assessing cultural elements and the only foreign teacher who assesses cultural elements does it through games and fun activities.

To sum it up, culture practices among the foreign and Croatian teachers differ the most in types of resources they use for teaching culture. The results of this study can be used as a general reminder for Croatian teachers that they should focus more on inviting native speakers or organizing field trips with their students in order to raise their intercultural awareness.

8. Conclusion

Developing intercultural awareness is the ultimate goal of culture-teaching practice. Straub mentioned the importance of students' knowledge of their own culture in order to get to know other cultures. From this study we can see that Straub's attitudes about culture-teaching practices are in accordance with attitudes collected from this study; participants acknowledge a comparison method as one of the most important and used methods in culture-teaching practice. In addition, White's suggestions on how to teach practice were mostly in accordance with this study participants' teaching practices, such as participants mostly use authentic materials while teaching culture, they mostly plan their culture teaching instructions, and they use comparison method. Furthermore, some of the results from this study are not in accordance with Byram's suggestions. Namely, teachers tend to combine cultural elements in teaching culture with very little or none percentage of assessing those elements. Also, none of the teachers assess empathy, tolerance, the ability to suspend stereotypes and judgment, and the adoption of someone else's point of view as Byram suggested.

Clearly, there are problems in culture-teaching practice which concern not only Croatian but also foreign English teachers. Most of the teachers complained about overcrowded curriculum and textbooks that are not satisfactory. Since it is pretty difficult for Croatian teachers to be up-to-date because new textbooks are not published or introduced every year, teachers should have the freedom to combine topics from multiple textbooks and not to focus on one textbook only. Also, specific number of cultural topics should be introduced to teachers at the beginning of the school year with the permit to be handled in a way that is the most suitable to the teacher. This could allow teachers to elaborate and/or assess cultural elements the way they want and at the time they want.

Furthermore, one of the goals of culture-teaching practice is to raise level of students' cultural competences, but in this study teachers noticed that their students are not fully culturally competent, which means that teachers should open up to using new techniques and resources. Croatian teachers should focus more on reducing stereotypes, non-verbal communication, and socio-pragmatic rules in order to make their students' true world citizens. Finally, we can conclude that better results in raising intercultural awareness could be achieved by using a greater variety of techniques and resources in culture-teaching practice, together with emphasis on using realia, inviting native speakers to the classroom, asking references from native speakers, organizing school trips and exchanges. Also, teachers should focus more on using techniques which can reduce stereotypes and raise students' tolerance and empathy.

However, conclusions based on this study may not be as reliable for there is a small number of participants. Furthermore, the study was focused only on teachers' perceptions, so we cannot draw conclusions about students' level of intercultural awareness. In addition, cultural elements were not elaborated in the interview because the focus of the study was primarily on the techniques and methods for raising intercultural awareness. Thus, another study is necessary to check actual students' level of awareness and to see whether techniques and methods used by teachers help in raising intercultural awareness; also, an extra study about teachers' criteria for choosing cultural elements is recommended. Nevertheless, the results of the study may serve as guidelines for improving culture-teaching practice in Croatia for they detect some current problems and offers practical suggestions.

Appendices

Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear participants! The following questionnaire is a part of Master's Thesis that investigates methods and techniques used for raising intercultural awareness at the primary school level in ELT and I would like you to participate. The data collected will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Thank you!

Personal information

Name and surname:_____

Work experience: _____

Nationality:_____

Have you studied or worked abroad? yes or no

Your students' age: _____

A) factors that influence teaching and elements to be taught

1. Do you agree with Clark's statement which says that, „Learning a language equals learning a culture"? yes or no
2. What aspects of culture do you consider the most important to teach? Please rate from 1 to 4 (1- least important, 4 – the most important).

   History and Geography, **1 2 3 4**

   Customs and festivities and symbols, **1 2 3 4**

   Music, Arts and literature, **1 2 3 4**

   Political system, **1 2 3 4**

   educational system, **1 2 3 4**

   family, **1 2 3 4**

   Cuisine, **1 2 3 4**

   Sports, **1 2 3 4**

Stereotypes, **1 2 3 4**

Acceptable behavior, **1 2 3 4**

non-verbal communication, **1 2 3 4**

socio-pragmatic rules (e.g. phrases that have different meaning) **1 2 3 4**

3. Which factors influence culture-teaching practices in teachers? Please rate from 1 to 4 (1-least, 4 – the most).

Teacher's personal pilosophy about language teaching in general, **1 2 3 4**

teacher's personal experience with members of other cultures, **1 2 3 4**

expectations regarding students' learning abilities, **1 2 3 4**

teacher's educational background and target culture exposure **1 2 3 4**

B) techniques and resources for teaching cultural elements

Please tick the techniques you use for raising intercultural awareness in class:

- culture capsules
- clusters
- cultural assimilators
- cultural asides
- games
- songs
- quizzes
- the slice-of-life technique
- audio-motor unit
- micrologue
- cultoon
- the self-awareness technique
- the minidrama/ miniskit
- critical incidences/problem solving
- portfolio

- the culture quest
- cultural islands
- celebrating festivities
- kinesics and body language
- cultural artifacts
- cultural scavenger hunt
- research
- comparison method

4. How often do you use textbooks for teaching culture in ELT?
   1-rarely, 2 – often, 3 – textbooks are the only material I use for teaching culture
5. Are you satisfied with the amount of cultural content in English textbooks?
   yes or no
6. Please tick the authentic resources you use for raising intercultural awareness and teaching culture:
   - songs,
   - literature,
   - movies,
   - realia,
   - student exchanges or chat with native speakers,
   - field trips
7. What do you think of technology as means for raising intercultural awareness? 1- not useful and time-consuming, 2 – useful – I use it from time to time, 3 – extremely useful – I use it most of the time
8. To what extent do you think your students are culturally competent? 1 – not competent at all, 2 – competent to some extent, 3- extremely competent
9. Please circle 1,2 or 3 for the next two statements. In your opinion, to what extent have you achieved the following aims of intercultural teaching:
   a) suspend students' stereotypes of other cultures and help them become open-minded learners of foreign cultures
      1- not at all, 2 – to some extent, 3 – very much

b) develop students' intercultural communicative competence

1- not at all, 2 – to some extent, 3 – very much

Interview

Interview

Dear participants! The following questionnaire is a part of Master's Thesis that investigates methods and techniques used in raising intercultural awareness at the primary school level in ELT and I would like you to participate. The data collected will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Please try not to be brief and try to answer in full sentences! Thank you!

Teachers' influence

Can you explain how you influence your students' attitudes towards cultural differences? What do you do to reduce stereotypes and raise students' empathy and tolerance?

_____

_____

_____

Students' exposure to target language

Please describe your students' reactions to cultural differences. Do they understand and accept differences, or do they tend to mock and disrespect other cultures?

_____

_____

_____

Teaching practice – reflective feedback, personal beliefs

In your opinion, what is the most common problem when it comes to teaching culture and how do you cope with it? Does overcrowded curriculum represent a problem in teaching culture?

_____

_____

_____

Do you assess cultural elements, and if yes, how do you do it?

_____

_____

_____

Methods and techniques

Please, give your suggestions for teaching culture and raising intercultural awareness in the classroom. What are your experiences, what would you like to change, or what would you like to add to your current teaching methods? Please list some techniques for teaching culture and raising students' intercultural awareness you use the most.

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Can you provide us with some positive and negative side effects of culture teaching methods that you use with your students?

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Teaching resources - materials

Is preparing extra materials time-consuming for you and how often do you use them in your classes?

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What do you think about using authentic materials in teaching culture and in which way do you use them?

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