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**The Representation of Target Cultures in Foreign Language
Coursebook Series in Hungary: the English and Italian
Perspectives**

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1. Introduction

In the past decades, globalization has been one of the main reasons that have made foreign language learning a huge necessity. Globalization has rendered our world a multilingual and multicultural Petri dish, where languages and cultures are highly influenced by one another: languages are more open to changes than ever before, new words are borrowed from one language to the other to the point where the words and phrases of the foreign language adjust to the syntax of the first language.

It is common knowledge that culture is one of the most important factors of our day-to-day lives: people make decisions based on cultural factors – whether they want to preserve their own nation's culture, or want to adopt various things from another, culture helps people preserve and nurture their national identity, while it also makes it possible for them to connect with like-minded individuals, and it is a common topic of interest and motivational force when it comes to education. Based on personal experience, culture is a great factor when it comes to learning something with passion and interest, because the lack of cultural content in a syllabus makes studying less compelling. The wider the variety of cultural topics that are integrated into the curriculum of subjects in school, the greater the interest, motivation, and enthusiasm of the students will be, because it is always more fun learning something new through noteworthy and relevant content by exploring the unknown than being taught. All of this is (especially) true for language learning.

The history of language teaching and learning is as colourful as it gets, which has an immediate bearing on the perception of culture. A lot had to happen in order for us to arrive where we stand today: methods and different approaches to language teaching were formed according to how important certain components of the language were considered to be (such as the *Grammar-Translation Method* or the *Lexical Approach*); then the focus was on the immersion in said language, where the learners' mother tongue was mostly eliminated (e.g. the *Direct Method* or the *Immersion Method*); some thought that a foreign language is best acquired through habit formation and performing tasks while the students themselves are instructed in L2 (cf. the *Audio-Lingual Method*, *Total Physical Response-TPR*, *Task-based language learning*). Then, in the second half of the twentieth century, a rise of the communicative teaching methods happened: the *Communicative Approach* appeared, in which the focus was on being able to communicate successfully in the foreign language at hand. However, in Hungary educators have traditionally been somewhat reluctant to approach language teaching from a communicative perspective, although the situation has become promising in recent years.

Although these methods, which all appeared within a relatively short period of time, were quite different from one another, they all had something in common: they were not enough by themselves only, something has always been missing from them. Nowadays we know what one approach or method lacked: the others. Languages are complex systems of rules, habits, and constant changes; because they are so complex, they cannot be acquired through only one approach or another. Grammar is not enough in itself, nor is it lexis, since both are necessary for effective communication. Moreover, even if multiple approaches and methods are combined, it will not necessarily result in successful language acquisition if the teaching and learning lack content (e.g. cultural content).

It is always a question of language learning goals and situations when it comes to the decision as to which methods and/or approaches to use. It depends on the pedagogical aim, the composition of the group, the classroom setting, and the personal preference of the educator. Also, it is of great importance to consider the interests of the students to be able to attract and hold their attention. Thankfully, ‘culture’ as an umbrella term covers most topics in which learners might be interested: history, national customs, arts, theatre, cinema, technology, geography, and so on. That is why it truly matters to include cultural content in foreign language learning textbooks.

When it comes to teaching English as a foreign language, we must consider which variety of English should be taught in an English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) environment, thus the pluricentric nature of the language itself must be taken into account. Pluricentric languages were first defined by Heinz Kloss in 1978, then the definition of Clyne (1991) became known worldwide, according to which a language is pluricentric if it is present in multiple countries and has an official status to a certain degree (for instance, English is an official language in the United Kingdom, in Australia, and in Canada as well, among others). However, the situation of Italian as a “pluricentric language” is not as easily determinable, as it is discussed in the subsequent chapters of this paper.

Since Hungary is situated in Central Europe – geographically closer to the United Kingdom than to the United States, for example –, most textbooks that are on the official textbook list compiled by the Hungarian Office of Education contain the British variety of English, which seems like a logical decision. However, some might argue that students should be exposed to many more, if not all varieties of the foreign language they are learning. It is of great importance to broaden the learners’ horizons when it comes to acquiring a foreign language: most students are socialized in an ‘Americanized’ environment since Western culture has found its way to (almost) every corner of the Earth. It might seem unfair to constrain

learners to encounter and teachers to disseminate only one of the many varieties that most languages have. In the case of Italian, however, the question is different. It is not the case as in English, where students learn one of the many standard varieties; in Italian, foreign language learners learn a so-called artificial standard variety because the Italian standard that is accepted worldwide is basically non-existent in real-life communication, as it is discussed later.

The above-mentioned reasons are all important factors when it comes to the analysis of foreign language textbooks, which is carried out in this paper. In the following chapters, EFL and Italian as a foreign language textbooks are analysed and compared since their situation is quite different (considering the fact that English is used as a lingua franca worldwide, and Italian is not as widely spoken). The following three major language skills' representation in the foreign language textbooks is analysed: vocabulary, listening, and reading comprehension.

In Chapter 3, the methodology based on which the analyses have been carried out is explained. The textbook series, *English File 3rd Edition* and *Pioneer* are analysed with respect to listening comprehension tasks and written coursebook exercises in Chapters 4, 4.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3 and 4.1.4. These are followed by the similarly structured analyses of the Italian textbook series, *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano* and *Giro d'italiano* in Chapters 4.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4.

Chapters 5, 5.1, and 5.2 deal with the juxtaposition of these four textbook series, explaining the similarities and differences, benefits and drawbacks of certain aspects regarding the structure of the textbooks.

In Chapter 6, in the conclusion, the final remarks are made in regard to the analysis carried out in this paper. The results successfully back up the initial hypothesis, which presupposed that the Italian foreign language coursebook series incorporate more target cultural content than the English foreign language series.

At the end of this paper, the research provides answers whether the textbooks that are available in the Hungarian education system contain a satisfactory overview of cultural content, and whether this content is suitable for teenaged foreign language learners in a classic classroom setting.

2. Textbook analysis around the world: the common consensus

When it comes to textbook analysis, specifically foreign language textbook analysis, it is important to highlight the significance of pluricentricity in connection with cultural representation in these textbooks. As Huber (2022ab, 2023) also emphasizes these concepts in his works, the following conclusion can be drawn: there is no cultural content analysis, or

cultural content for that matter, in foreign language textbooks without underlining its obvious and significant connection to the pluricentricity of the foreign language at hand.

Academic research has a well-established point of view when it comes to the categorization of pluricentric varieties of English. The common consensus is that the English-speaking world can be divided into three main “circles” as for their status in various countries: the Inner Circle (“*norm-providing* regions”), the Outer Circle (“*norm-forming, norm-developing* regions”), and the Expanding Circle (“*norm-following, norm-dependent* regions”) (Huber, 2022a: 3-4). The Inner Circle countries are those of dominant varieties of English (e.g. UK, USA, Australia, Canada, etc.), while the Outer Circle consists of countries where English is not a foreign language but a second language, which means that English plays a significant role in the lives of the citizens, and those living in that country have acquired English in a natural way (Huber, 2022a). The third category, however, the Expanding Circle – if the term is used broadly – can be used to describe all the other countries where English is present because of such phenomena as globalization, and where English is used as a foreign language, a global *lingua franca* (Huber, 2022a). All these pieces of information are key to be taken into consideration when analyzing textbooks from a cultural point of view because this categorization makes textbook analysis easier to carry out.

There are languages out there which are unequivocally pluricentric, such as English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Swahili (Hajek, 2012). However, there are some languages which have not received as much attention when it comes to sociolinguistic research into pluricentricity, as other more prominent pluricentric languages, and Italian is certainly one of them. However, the case of Italian is more complex than it might appear at first glance, and it certainly differs from the situation of English, German, and French. English, German, and French and all their different varieties can be easily established when it comes to identifying standard and non-standard varieties. In the case of Italian, the situation is more complicated. On paper and in foreign language textbooks, there is such a thing as the standard Italian variety, so there is a so-called artificially made standard variety, but it is mostly spoken by language learners, and can be found mostly in very literary and formal texts (Hajek, 2012). Whereas in English, German and other well-known pluricentric languages, there are established and easily distinguishable varieties – including the standard varieties –, in Italian there are various centres within Italy which are competing for national norm-setting influence (Hajek, 2012). These three main centres are the following: Milan, Florence, and Rome. However, the real question and problem arises when we take the Swiss Italian variety into account, i.e. whether it makes Italian a pluricentric language or not. The fact that speakers of Swiss Italian do not make up a cohesive

group of speakers complicates matters even further (Hajek, 2012). The research on this aspect of Italian is still rather unsatisfactory, but has been established that Italian can be considered a weakly pluricentric language source, and the theory and field certainly offers quite a few opportunities for further research.

However, cultural representation in textbooks cannot be understood without the thorough examination and analysis of cultures that can be found in foreign language textbooks, either. Generally speaking, three main categories of culture can be identified while researching cultural content in textbooks (and classroom learning, as well): it is of great import to differentiate between the *source culture*, *target culture*, and *international culture* (Cortazzi and Jin in Alshenqeeti, 2019: 129). According to the literature, the source culture in an EFL context is the culture of the language learners in the classroom (i.e. Hungarian culture in the Hungarian education system). Target culture is described as the umbrella term of those cultures that are practiced in those countries where the foreign language the students are learning is spoken as a first language (i.e. English in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, etc.). Out of the three concepts, international culture is the most widely applicable because this term represents the mixture of English and non-English speaking cultures (Alshenqeeti, 2019). It seems that not only cultural representation matters, but also its influence on foreign language acquisition because certain academics claim that students need to be able to conceptualize their own native culture in the target language as well, and it can be achieved by teaching learners of foreign languages in a way that they succeed in this sense too (Alshenqeeti, 2019).

When it comes to analyzing culture, it is important to highlight its core nature which can be described as constantly changing (Fernández Sánchez, 2021). Since our world is continuously changing, our view of the world is transforming too, which means that with the rapid increase of globalization and its consequences, cultures themselves are also evolving. Not only has globalization contributed to the English language becoming a *lingua franca*, but also the technological advancements of previous decades and the widespread popularity of social media. In the light of our rapidly changing globalized world and the cultural interconnectedness (Alshenqeeti, 2019), Fernández Sánchez (2021) emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence (IC) when it comes to foreign language learning. According to Byram et al (in Alshenqeeti, 2019), intercultural competence has three major components that need to be developed by language teachers: *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitude*. *Knowledge* as a term covers the concepts and the factual information about a particular culture or country students must become familiar with during their language learning journey (Alshenqeeti, 2019). It is mostly objective and deprived of ideological references. The term *skills* is used to describe students'

abilities to put their factual knowledge into use, thus how learners can process and apply cultural knowledge when it is necessary (Alshenqeeti, 2019). The third key concept of IC is *attitude*, which has to do with how a language learner tends to come into contact with other cultures, and how well he or she treats and respects that said language while preserving his or her own identity (Alshenqeeti, 2019).

Although textbooks influence teaching profoundly (Alshenqeeti, 2019; Huber, 2022ab, 2023; Raigón-Rodríguez, 2018), when it comes to language acquisition, a lot of other important aspects need to be considered. As Alshenqeeti (2019) mentions, learners' attitudes towards cultural representation need to be taken into account. Huber (2022b) identifies teachers' and learners' attitudes, perspectives towards pluricentricity – and with this, towards cultural representations in EFL classrooms. His hypotheses were backed up by the evidence accumulated by the end of the research: teachers of foreign languages – namely English and German – were less keen to include different national varieties of English and German, whereas learners of these languages seemed more open to this concept. However, it was also found that English teachers were more open-minded than German teachers in a sense that they were more likely to include various varieties of English in their lessons, which might be the result of the fundamental difference between English and German: English having multiple dominant standard varieties (i.e. the codominance of English), and German having one dominant standard variety (i.e. the monodominance of German) (Huber, 2022b). It is also important to mention that the higher the level of education was, the greater the inclusion of pluricentricity and various varieties were. This simply means that adult or higher education showed the greatest interest in incorporating the most varieties of English possible, whereas at *junior section (year 1-4)* the figures were quite the opposite. It is usually the case simply because of Muhr's theory (in Huber, 2022b), *the beginner level neutrality*, according to which a gradual increase of variational content should be applied in language teaching (thus pluricentricity should not play a key role at a lower level, but it should be incorporated into the curriculum in a gradual manner, increasing the variety and amount of variations as learners reach higher levels of acquisition).

Furthermore, as Musumeci and Aski (2010) also imply in their paper foreign language learning aims to make students become familiar with terms in the foreign language which they already know in their mother tongue, hence students at lower levels predominantly have to learn labels for words and phrases that, in their native language, already exist in their linguistic repertoire. This way, culture and the learners' cultural identity play a crucial role in language acquisition. Also, culture may be embedded into the corpora by including materials that convey new information but that also contains cultural content. For instance, it is the case when students

of Italian have a task through which not only do they learn the names of colours in Italian, but also the fact that soccer teams in Italy have colour-based nicknames (Musumeci and Aski, 2010). The incorporation of such content allows educators to personalize the material further by eliciting intra- and interpersonal information (i.e. continue the conversation with questions about their favourite soccer/sports teams, their favourite colour, and so on, so forth), which makes this phenomenon a strong motivational factor in foreign language learning (Musumeci and Aski, 2010). In their 2010 study, Musumeci and Aski establish the importance of the distinction between implicit and explicit cultural content in foreign language textbooks, namely in Italian beginner textbooks in the United States. They consider explicit cultural content the material in which language structure plays a secondary role, thus cultural information is in focus instead of grammar, for instance. In contrast, in the case of implicit cultural content, culture is integrated into language practice tasks, maintaining the focus on the language exercise at hand and conveying cultural information secondarily.

Although most researchers and academics agree that various representations of culture, and the embeddedness of cultural content is crucial to successful language learning (Alshenqeeti, 2019; Huber, 2022ab, 2023), while conducting their research Alshenqeeti and Huber also come to the conclusion that most foreign language textbooks lack cultural diversity and balance. Not only does it appear to be true in the Hungarian context (Huber, 2022ab, 2023; Weninger and Kiss, 2013), but also internationally, such as in the Saudi Arabian (Alshenqeeti, 2019), and the Swedish (Hakander, 2018; Wickersham, 2020) context.

As for the Hungarian context, but also for textbook analysis in general, it is important to highlight the availability of certain textbooks in various regions and areas around the world, since geographical proximity also plays a role in terms of the teacher's choice (Huber, 2022a). For example, in Hungary, teachers' hands are tied in a sense that they are only allowed to choose from textbooks that have been approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, hence from textbooks that are on the national textbook list of the Office of Education. The variety might seem huge, but a lot of textbook series are published by Oxford University Press or MM Publications, and often the authors are the same as well. Moreover, as Huber (2022ab, 2023) also highlights it, although there are textbook series that have several editions (as the *English File* series has an American and a British version), due to Hungary's geographical position and its proximity to the British Isles, in Hungary the British version is more readily available for purchase and teaching/learning, not to mention that it is the only one that is included in said textbook list of the Office of Education. This duality and division of these textbooks is highly disadvantageous since a general version should be on the market for students with the help of

which learners of English would be able to encounter both varieties at a higher degree (Huber, 2023). This combined version would be the most beneficial for students because it is hard – almost impossible – to establish which varieties of a foreign language the learners will encounter once they are out there in the world working, studying, or just living their everyday lives consuming social media content, and so on (Huber, 2022ab).

It has already been established that defining culture is crucial for researchers to be able to analyze textbooks from a cultural perspective, moreover, the audience of said textbook is also pivotal. However, the cultural content itself tells a lot about the quality of various textbooks. According to Raigón-Rodríguez (2018), although a lot of textbooks include cultural content, this content is often based on stereotypical assumptions and stereotypes in general. Since in a foreign language classroom teachers are working on enhancing students' abilities to practice critical thinking and on widening their horizon of possibilities, and their repertoire, this stereotypical approach to culture is not so beneficial for language learners. Among others, Raigón-Rodríguez (2018) highlights the fact that a more complex and comprehensive view of culture should be implemented in textbooks so that students can truly understand the interdependence of language and culture, and that students can acquire the foreign language and cultural content at the same time.

It has become clear so far that among researchers the consensus is that both the attitudes of learners and teachers, and the materials used in a foreign language environment are vitally important. This research concept can be argued further by combining these two aspects of analysis, so that the relationship between the participants of language acquisition and the materials are examined in connection with each other (Weninger and Kiss, 2013). Thus, the analysis of students' and teachers' attitudes along with texts, images, and tasks (the material) utilized in classrooms will show their obvious correlation, their *interplay* (Weninger and Kiss, 2013). While examining classrooms and foreign language lessons with this approach, Weninger and Kiss (2013) conclude their research by emphasizing the dangers of stereotyping culture if cultural content in textbooks only functions as a "linguistic resource". Using culture as a linguistic resource only means that cultural connotations of pieces of language are not investigated in detail, so these texts that contain information on culture function simply as input (for vocabulary building, grammar practice, etc.). This might reinforce stereotypes instead of challenging and questioning them.

3. Research methodology and hypothesis

First, it is important to highlight that the textbook series analysed in the present paper can be found on the official textbook list of the Hungarian Office of Education. All textbooks that are analysed in the current work are levelled according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which is established by the Council of Europe. These levels are the following: A1 – Beginner, A2 – Elementary or Pre-intermediate, B1 – Intermediate, B2 – Upper-intermediate, C1 – Advanced, and C2 – Proficient (as they are described on the official website of the Council of Europe and of the Erasmus University, Rotterdam).

The English textbooks have been analysed before in a previous work of the author (Bálint, 2024). These English textbooks are the following: the *English File* series (all levels are looked at in this series, which is the third edition: from the *Beginner*, *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, *Upper-Intermediate*, to the *Advanced* level) from Oxford University Press, and the *Pioneer* series (from the *Beginners*, *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, *Intermediate B1*, *Level B1+*, *Level B2*, to *Level C1/C1+*) from MM Publications. However, from the present paper the *Pioneer Level C1/C1+* books are excluded because this way the number of total coursebooks in each series corresponds with one another, which makes the results of the analysis align with each other. Furthermore, it is pivotal to underline the fact that the *English File* series has both an American and a British version, but in this paper the British version is analysed since this edition is on the official textbook list of Hungary, due to the geographical proximity (Huber, 2022a).

As for the Italian as a foreign language context, the two major textbook series are analysed that are used in the Hungarian education system, because these two series are the only options from which Italian language teachers are able to choose: the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series (from level *1a – A1*, *1b – A2*, *2a – B1*, *2b – B2*) from Edizioni Edilingua, and the *Giro d'italiano* series (from level *1 – A1-A2*, *2 – A2-B1*, *3 – B1*, *4 – B2*) from Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó. It must be declared that both series' editions are in line with the newest National Core Curriculum in Hungary (NAT 2020), which is currently in practice in the Hungarian education system at the time of the analysis. Regarding the *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano* series, the current paper lacks both the level C1 and C2 books because these are not on the official textbook list of Hungary. Moreover, excluding these from the analysis provides a better overview and comparison of the two series, since the *Giro d'italiano* series only has four books on the market. Also, this way the analysis of the two series aligns with each other since the level of books is the same.

The methodology of the research is the following: all textbooks are analysed based on the division of written tasks (reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary) and listening exercises. The listening comprehension tasks were counted individually in each series, and then the target cultural content (henceforth TCC) was searched for in each audio- and video file. The written tasks were counted using the following method: since most written exercises had several sub-exercises, they were considered as one exercise throughout the analysis (e.g. if exercise 5 – Grammar had a), b) c), and d) sub-tasks, they all counted as one exercise, not four). This decision was made mostly because the sub-tasks of each exercise deal with the exact same TCC that was the initial input, so it would not have been effective to count these pieces of content multiple times if it was only one type of TCC. It is also important to mention that not only the input texts were examined, but the instructions, the tasks themselves, too. Often input texts for exercises other than reading comprehension tasks (such as writing tasks) contained valuable research data.

In the analysis, the TCC was established based on the following criteria: only those pieces of information were considered as TCC that were based on facts, research, happenings, and/or media content, so it had to contain *real* information. Moreover, when certain names of places, people, companies, establishments, etc. were *only* mentioned, they did not count as TCC because in this paper cultural content is considered to be material which adds to the popular and overall education of the pupils, hence these pieces of information had to be elaborate sentences and/or texts. For instance, if a sentence contained some information only in the form of the following sentence: ‘Last summer, I travelled to Sydney’, it was not counted as TCC. However, if the sentence contained at least as much information as the following: ‘The capital city of Canada is Ottawa’, then it was counted as TCC. Furthermore, language use was also one of the main key elements of analysis: regarding listening comprehension, apart from factual content, files and exercises were also looked at from the point of view of pronunciation, vocabulary, semantics, and syntax. Most of the information gathered about the tasks and materials are types of content with which the students would be likely to deal with in greater detail later.

Both English and Italian textbook series are examined in accordance with the cultural appropriateness in the context of high school education, thus cultural content is examined whether it is suitable for teenagers.

Based on the aforementioned methodology, this paper presupposes that examining and juxtaposing English and Italian as a foreign language textbooks, it is clearly the case that target cultural content (TCC) is more likely to be found and to be incorporated into the material in the case of Italian textbook series than in English textbook series.

4. Textbook analysis: initial observations

As it has already been stated previously, the textbook series that are analysed in this paper are officially available in Hungary for language teachers since they are on the official textbook list of the Hungarian Ministry of Education.

Regarding the English context, the *English File* series by Oxford University Press, and the *Pioneer* series by MM Publications are examined. It is important to highlight the fact that there is a newer edition of the English File series which is also available in Hungary, which might be worth looking into in future research.

Prior to examining the textbooks – listening to the audio files and watching the additional video lessons, moreover reading through the coursebooks fishing for target cultural content – it was expected by the author of this paper that both languages' textbook series include an exhaustive amount of audio files, since nowadays language teaching methodology highly relies on the Communicative Approach, which has as its goal for the students to be able to *use* the language, i.e. communicate and understand the language properly.

The initial hypothesis was that Italian textbooks in general contain a vast amount of cultural content, especially when it comes to the representation of the target culture (Italian culture). However, the situation is more complicated than it would seem at first glance, especially considering the structure of the textbooks examined in this paper, their publication, and the cultural context they exist within Europe, within Hungary.

4.1 Textbook analysis: the English context

Examining the English textbook series, it is not surprising to come across various challenges establishing cultural content, since English is spoken all around the world, and in many countries – as an official language and a first language or mother tongue (L1) – its cultural context is very rich and ramifying. The present paper regards as *target cultural content* the cultures of the Inner Circle countries (e.g. the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand etc.)

4.1.1 The English context: listening comprehension – *English File*

The *English File* series contains altogether one thousand five hundred and seventy-five (1575) audio files, which are the basis of the listening comprehension tasks in the textbooks. These all are available to download from the official website of the publisher, Oxford University Press (<https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/?cc=hu&sellLanguage=hu>).

In certain cases, these audio files serve as supplementary audios for reading and/or vocabulary, or other exercises. Moreover, in this series separate files can be found for the **Practical English** (from *Beginner* to *Intermediate*) and **Colloquial English** (from *Upper-intermediate* to *Advanced*) parts of the textbooks, which mostly consist of videos that are rich in cultural content and that function as part of popular education. Even though there are separate files (videos) for these parts, they are included in the research only once, since they are also part of the audio files. It is true for all the other data that is analysed in this paper: those files that are included more than once in one book's audio file collection are only considered once in data collection but are part of the total number of files.

In **Practical English** units, pupils have a chance to get to know two speakers of English: Jenny, who is an American speaker from New York, and Rob, who is a Londoner. They are both journalists, and throughout the textbooks series students may get to know them and familiarise themselves with the lives and the relationship of Jenny and Rob. They are very well put together videos, because they allow students to encounter the American accent as well. It is highly beneficial as for pluricentricity since this textbooks series is based on British English spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

In **Colloquial English** units of the higher CEFR level coursebooks, learners may watch generally interesting interviews with professors, actors, and researchers from a variety of backgrounds. In these parts of the book, the American pronunciation is also very well-represented through these interviews, which further enhances students' popular education.

Moreover, apart from the representation of American culture, other various target cultures are present in the series: for example, the Scottish culture, which was present in the *English File Elementary Student's Book* in the form of a reading exercise (*Would you like to stay in a haunted house?*, p.64), is part of the collected data that can be seen in Table ..., as well as the juxtaposition of American and British English in the same book (*British & American English – the same, but different*, p.19).

Furthermore, in the **Revise and Check** units of the coursebooks, there are additional videos included which are called 'In the street'. These are similarly part of the total number of audio files, since the videos have their separate audio versions. In the end of each **Revise and Check** chapter, exercises for another type of popular educational video add up to the whole of exercises; these are called 'Short films', which are indicated separately from the audio data collection – as it can be seen in Table 1. These videos almost always contain target cultural content.

Looking back at all these audio- and video files, it can be stated that English as a foreign language teachers are provided with a great number of exercises and content from which they can choose to use in class. However, it does not certainly mean that English teacher cannot or will not use additional material in their lessons, but they are aided with the possibility of choice.

In the following table (Table 1), the data collection of the listening comprehension tasks in the English File series can be found. The table contains each part of the textbook series followed by the total number of audio files ('Total' column), the number of files which contain target cultural content (TCC), and then these numbers' percentage distribution is included in the last column.

English File	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Beginner</i>	288	32 (+ 5 'Short films')	11.11%
<i>Elementary</i>	327	51 (+ 6 'Short films')	15.60%
<i>Pre-Intermediate</i>	295	50 (+ 6 'Short films')	16.95%
<i>Intermediate</i>	255	64 (+ 5 'Short films')	25.10%
<i>Upper-Intermediate</i>	218	36 (+ 5 'Short films')	16.51%
<i>Advanced</i>	192	45 (+ 5 'Short films')	23.44%

Table 1 The data collection of audio files of the *English File* series.

In general, it is true for the *English File* series – which is demonstrated by numbers as well – that initially the writers tend to stick to beginner level neutrality, i.e. the language use of textbooks stays neutral, without using any particular pieces of language that might be indicators of a certain variety of English. This means that mostly the British standard variety is represented, followed by the American variety, and in some cases various other varieties like Scottish or Irish. In fact, in some cases even foreign pronunciation is present – mostly the Spanish English accent is represented, which was surprising.

It is important to highlight that in those cases when the aim of the task is to improve pronunciation or to practice grammar structures, vocabulary, most of the time the British English variety is preferred and used – especially in lower levels. Sometimes it is even hard to identify specific pronunciations or accents because the speaker uses neutral language and/or a standard variety. It is also the case due to the fact that sometimes speakers have such short parts in a conversation or in a single audio file that the variety cannot be identified unambiguously.

The numbers in table one might be misleading since it only contains *target* cultural content. However, the *English File* series is very rich in international cultural content as well. Indeed, sometimes it includes general information about society, education, psychology, or nature, which could only be characterized as “international culture” or “popular education”.

These pieces of content are not included as target cultural content since only solely those content were counted that are directly related to one of the English target culture countries – countries from the Inner Circle.

Examining the numbers in Table 1 closely, the percentages show that the target cultural content is in direct proportion to the level of textbooks: the TCC is increasing as we proceed in the series towards level C1. Although it was surprising to see and hear these many audios with target cultural content as low as level A1 and A2 (*Beginner*: 38 out of 274; and *Elementary*: 58 out of 357). At beginner levels – *Beginner* and *Elementary* –, it should be underlined that when American culture is included, it is often mentioned in a context alongside with other cultural facts from around the world, so it is part of the international cultural content, but still, it is there. As it has already been stated previously, the tasks which aim to practice pronunciation, grammar structures, and vocabulary are mostly contain the British standard variety of English, enhancing the acquisition of British English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Additionally, target cultural content at lower levels are mostly represented by geographical information, such as names of cities, countries, and states. Previously, it was highlighted that sometimes audio files do not always serve as sources for listening comprehension tasks but as complementary audios for reading tasks, and it is especially true at beginner and elementary levels. It does not include, however, the transcripts of listening comprehension tasks since all of them are listed at the back of each coursebook.

As we proceed towards higher levels in the series, students might encounter content which are far away from their lives in a sense that they might not be able to relate the content and participate in the conversation in class about it. For instance, there are instances in the *Intermediate* book where the speakers are talking about adopting a new child or buying a new car. These topics cannot be further away from high school students, but of course, these textbooks were made in a way that it may be suitable for the widest range of age groups. Moreover, although the **Practical English** units of the textbooks are great for demonstrating the difference between the British and American varieties of English, the topics that these units are treating and shed light upon are above high schoolers, the content is not something to which they may easily relate. As an example, they talk about their jobs, moving abroad because of a job offer and the relationship, and getting engaged – which are not typical events in the lives of teenagers. But the higher the language level, the wider and the more colourful the variety of cultural content and of English are represented in the coursebooks. In fact, the pre-intermediate, intermediate levels introduce more varieties of English represented within one single audio, which is beneficial for students.

It is also indicated in Table 1 that the videos called ‘Short films’ are not added to the number of files which are counted as TCC because these videos are separate from the total number of audio files. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that they are also part of the material, because they carry significant TCC. These videos mostly contain information about the United Kingdom (e.g. Edinburgh Castle in the *Elementary* book), Ireland (e.g. an informational video about Trinity College in Dublin among the *Intermediate* videos), but the American culture is also represented (e.g. in the form of an informational tour around New York City showing some parts of it which are considered famous movie settings in the *Intermediate* book).

4.1.2 The English context: listening comprehension – *Pioneer*

The *Pioneer* series from level A1 to level B2 contains all together six hundred and forty-five (645) audio files in a CD format. It does not, however, have additional video lessons to broaden the horizon of language varieties. Online resources are available for this series as well, although they can only be accessed through registration on their website using (www.mmpublications.com).

It is astonishing to see the number of audio files compared to the *English File* series: for instance, at the beginner level, the number of audios in the *Pioneer* series is approximately half (55,56%) of the number of audios that can be found in the Beginner book in the *English File* series. Altogether, the *Pioneer* series has fewer audio files hence listening comprehension exercises compared to the *English File* series. Furthermore, the number of audio files which contain TCC is low as well, Table 2 demonstrates the findings well.

Pioneer	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Beginners</i>	160	1	0.63%
<i>Elementary</i>	177	6	3.39%
<i>Pre-Intermediate</i>	148	8	5.41%
<i>Intermediate B1</i>	85	11	12.94%
<i>Level B1+</i>	43	11	25.58%
<i>Level B2</i>	32	11	34.38%

Table 2 The data collection of audio files of the *Pioneer* series.

In Table 2, the results of the analysis of the listening comprehension tasks can be found regarding the series by MM Publications. Each book in the series has multiple CDs (*Beginners*: two; *Elementary*: three; *Pre-intermediate*: three; *Intermediate B1*: three; *Level B1+*: two; *Level B2*: two), and the number of audio files is in inverse proportion to the level of the books (i.e. while the *Elementary* book contains 177 audio files, the *Level B2* book has only 32 audios.)

However, as we proceed towards the higher-level-books, the length of the audio files also increases (from half a minute, one-minute-long audios to three- or four-minute-long audios, or longer.) In this aspect, the *Pioneer* series is similar to the *English File*.

The authors of this series also highly relied on beginner level neutrality because among the audios of the *Beginners* book only one task was found which contained precisely TCC. Moreover, often times it can be observed that although the speaker mentions several cultural items, such as names of places and people, but the exercise – the audio – does not bring to topic any further, it does not mention factual information from which the student would benefit when it comes to popular education; it may be thought as a ‘waste’ of valuable material. In fact, when the opportunity presents itself for the use of a TCC or cultural content in general, the interviews and the content they have created for educational purposes are based on non-existent content. It means that the speaker might mention the name of a person with whom they are conducting an interview, but in reality, that person does not exist according to internet research conducted by the author of the present paper. This phenomenon is particularly present in the written material.

This material is also different from the *English File*’s audios regarding the number of speakers included: in the *Pioneer* series, the audios which contain lists of words to learn – especially at lower levels (e.g. numbers, the days of the week) –, these lists are read by a sole speaker instead of numerous people. It may enhance consistency but might as well deprive students from the chance of hearing and listening to various speakers hence various pronunciations of English.

Another difference between the two series is that while in the *English File* series when it is stated that the speaker is from another country – that is differing from the target culture countries – the speaker talks with that nationality’s native English accent. For example, the Spanish accent is prominent in this regard. However, in the *Pioneer* series, although sometimes it happens rarely, but when the speaker is explicitly from a foreign country – that is, from a country that is not part of the target culture countries – they do not speak with a foreign accent, they speak with a standard British pronunciation.

Furthermore, it happens quite rarely that the speaker diverges from the British standard, but if they do so, they mostly speak with an American standard pronunciation.

4.1.3 The English context: coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) – *English File*

The remaining part of the textbook series is analysed in a different way compared to previous works in this field (Huber...) because all the written exercises in the textbooks are looked at from the used analytical perspective. There is no distinction made between reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary tasks, they are analysed overall how many of the total number of exercises in each textbook contains any type of TCC. Table 3 shows these figures regarding the *English File* series.

English File	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Beginner</i>	274	38	13.87%
<i>Elementary</i>	357	58	16.25%
<i>Pre-Intermediate</i>	355	56	15.77%
<i>Intermediate</i>	270	50	18.52%
<i>Upper-Intermediate</i>	271	57	21.03%
<i>Advanced</i>	273	60	21.98%

Table 3 The data collection of coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) of the *English File* series.

As it has been previously stated before, the tasks were counted disregarding sub-tasks, so all exercises, no matter how many sub-tasks they have, they are considered as one exercise. Based on this methodology, the *English File* series has one thousand eight hundred (1800) exercises. The data in Table 3 clearly demonstrates that the higher the level of the book, the more TCC students may encounter during their studies.

While examining this series, the tasks listed in the **Grammar Bank** and **Vocabulary Bank** parts of the book were also taken into account, which contributed to these numbers. It is important to note that some of the listening tasks are also counted here as well since most of the time these exercises include written ‘assignments’ which require written work from the students (i.e. they have to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire, or they have to complete sentences with the necessary information etc.), so the listening comprehension tasks and the written exercises examined sometimes overlap.

As for the number of tasks in each book, the authors were quite consistent with the structure of them, although it is worth mentioning that the *Elementary* and *Pre-intermediate* books contain the most tasks. The percentages also support the claim that beginner level neutrality is important maintain throughout the series nevertheless the type of exercises.

In addition, pictures were often considered as TCC, which was mostly the case regarding lower-level books, i.e. the *Beginner*, *Elementary*, and *Pre-intermediate* books, but it was typical

of the other levels as well. Sometimes it was troubling to decide whether a piece of information could be considered TCC or not. For instance, in this series many times reading comprehension exercises are based on texts which were adapted from “a British newspaper”, or from the *Times*, or other famous newspapers. Moreover, in the cases of texts that were written by a person who unambiguously represented one of the target culture countries, it was difficult to decide whether the identity of the writer – just because they were Australian or Scottish – made the text also a piece of TCC. In cases where these texts contained clear TCC, or cultural facts and information, it was no trouble to decide whether to include it or not. However, when the text only included general information about the world – e.g. “How men and women argue” (*Upper-intermediate*, p. 65), or how birth order influences the lives of siblings and people in general (*Intermediate*, pp. 10-11). The ‘Writing’ and ‘Communication’ parts of the textbooks, which can be found after the last unit of the book, often provide great TCC basis for further work and learning, engaging with the content and acquiring the necessary skills for successful language use at the same time.

4.1.4 The English context: coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) – *Pioneer*

In the case of the *Pioneer* books, they were also analysed in accordance with the other series analysed in this paper, so although most exercises were built up by sub-tasks, they were always regarded as one exercise. The interesting thing about this series is that each book has a page dedicated to the comparison of ‘British and American English’, except for the *Level B1+* book. There is no explanation for the exclusion of this precious part of the coursebook since the next book in the series – *Level B2* – does not lack in this regard, it dedicates a page to this juxtaposition.

The tables in this part of the books make a distinction between the two major varieties of English based on spelling (e.g. **civilisation** vs. **civilization** from the *Elementary* book), vocabulary – words and phrases (e.g. **autumn** vs. **fall**; **biscuit** vs. **cookie** from the *Elementary* book), and grammar and usage (e.g. **at the weekend** vs. **on the weekend**; **‘It’s ten past six.’** vs. **‘It’s ten after six.’** from the *Elementary* book).

Another characteristic of this series, which is important to note, is that from *Intermediate B1* each textbook includes an ‘Exam practice’ part which includes valuable TCC. These findings are listed in Table 4 below.

Pioneer	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Beginners</i>	240	24	10.00%
<i>Elementary</i>	275	24	8.73%
<i>Pre-Intermediate</i>	277	38	13.72%
<i>Intermediate B1</i>	261	33	12.64%
<i>Level B1+</i>	218	33	15.14%
<i>Level B2</i>	194	25	12.89%

Table 4 The data collection of coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) of the *Pioneer* series.

Compared to the *English File* series, the *Pioneer* books (up to Level B2) contain one thousand four hundred and sixty-five (1465) exercises in total. As opposed to the series of Oxford University Press, the results of the analysis of the *Pioneer* series are not as linear. There cannot be made a clean-cut conclusion that the higher the level of the book, the more TCC it contains, because it is varying, and randomly distributed.

As opposed to the numbers in Table 4, the series includes various cultural content some of which cannot be regarded as TCC. However, analysing this series the same dilemmas made it hard to collect data: whether the texts and various input adapted from newspapers or websites can be considered as TCC or not. Moreover, the discovery that throughout the entire series there are texts and input which lack authenticity and real-life experiences – because in some cases, when a certain text is labelled as an interview, the ‘person’ being interviewed does not even exist (for example, based on internet research by the author of the present paper, the “celebrity chef Celina Howard” is not a real person in the *Elementary* book; or “Grantham Museum” instead of Grantham Museum in the *Level B2* book). It might be confusing for students when it comes to fact-checking the information they are learning about. Also, being able to connect pieces of language (grammar, vocabulary etc.) to *actual* facts and content from around the world can make it easier for students to remember important aspects of language.

Furthermore, TCC is often represented by pictures, especially in lower levels, but it is generally true for all books analysed throughout the series. As for general cultural content, it was interesting to see that most texts which contained cultural content represented universal, all-encompassing information about society, the way of living, wildlife, and nature. However, it was an interesting observation that sometimes even the source culture (Hungarian culture) was briefly represented. Additionally, the *Pioneer* series included a considerable amount of Canadian culture in the coursebooks, although it still was not a great number, it was noticeable.

4.2 Textbook analysis: the Italian context

The initial hypothesis of this paper was that the Italian textbook series surely contain more cultural content. This hypothesis is based on the common thought that people usually start learning Italian simply because of their love for its rich culture. The Italian cuisine is renowned worldwide, as well as Italian art with important and excellent figures such as Michelangelo Buonarroti, Caravaggio, Leonardo da Vinci, or Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini; Italy is also famous for its rich history, and magnificent architecture from the Milan Cathedral – *Duomo di Milano*, to St. Mark's Square in Venice – *Piazza San Marco*. Yet, when the data collection is analysed, the numbers might be somewhat ambiguous.

Comparing the possibilities to choose from the textbook list, the situation of the English and Italian language is very different. While the list of the available English foreign language textbooks in Hungary might seem endless with tons of possibilities, the list of Italian foreign language textbooks contains only two series: the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* and *Giro d'italiano*.

It was surprising to see the number of audio files that each series contained. Compared to the English series, the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* and the *Giro d'italiano* might also seem to lack in listening comprehension tasks (see Table 5 and 6), not to mention the total number of exercises in these series (see Table 7 and 8).

The juxtaposition of the two series is interesting because this way a comparison can be made between an Italy-based publisher's (Edizione Edilingua) work and a Hungary-based publisher's (Oktatási Hivatal) work with Italian and Hungarian authors. This also shows in the content that each series include, and sometimes even in the approaches towards language learning, for instance in the *Giro d'italiano* series, the authors emphasize the importance of translating from Hungarian to Italian – even if in these exercises the students have to summarize briefly in Italian what they had just read. Whereas the other series solely concentrates on Italian culture and language.

4.2.1 The Italian context: listening comprehension – *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano*

The *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* is the most widely well-known and used Italian foreign language textbook series in Hungary, simply because there are only two options (the *Giro d'italiano* series being the other) for teachers when it comes to choosing from the official textbook list of Hungary. It has already been noted previously that the level C1 and C2 books are not analysed in the present paper. It is because these coursebooks are not listed on the official textbook list of the Hungarian Office of Education.

All in all, it is true for this Italian textbook series that the majority of the cultural content included – in general – are representations of the number one target culture of the language: Italian culture. And although Italian may be considered a weakly pluricentric language (Hajek, 2012) due to Italian being spoken as a first language in certain parts of Switzerland – primarily in the South-Eastern part of the country, the TCC unequivocally represents the dominant target culture country, Italy.

The analysis of the Italian audios and the results of the data collection were very different from the English textbook series' analysis. In addition, each unit included a special video lesson called '*Episodio*' which continued the story of two Italian young adults, Gianna and Lorenzo, navigating through life and everyday activities, challenges. These episodes were not included in the audio files while collecting the data, thus they are indicated with a '+' sign in each individual line (see Table 5 below). In this aspect, the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series is similar to the *English File* books which also included informative and educational videos. Table 5 demonstrates the result of the data collection.

Nuovissimo Progetto italiano	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 1a</i>	33	2 + 1 ' <i>episodio</i> '	6.06%
<i>Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 1b</i>	24	10 + 3 ' <i>episodi</i> '	41.67%
<i>Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 2a</i>	22	7 + 2 ' <i>episodi</i> '	31.82%
<i>Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 2b</i>	32	14 + 3 ' <i>episodi</i> '	43.75%

Table 5 The data collection of audio files of the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series.

The first and most apparent difference between the two languages data is that the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* books contain a surprisingly low number of audio files altogether. Hence, they include fewer TCC as well, but if we look at the results, these books contain proportionately more cultural content than their English counterparts. For instance, in the case of *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 2b* almost half of the audio files holds some kind of TCC. However, there are cases when the audio files are solely additional material for certain reading exercises which arguably takes away from the value of reading comprehension tasks. At beginner levels mostly, these complementary recorded materials largely consisted of dialogues that hardly ever included cultural content. It is true that they could offer the possibility for beginner learners to practice pronunciation and spelling at the same time, but they could have been made transcripts for the listening comprehension tasks as in the *English File* series instead of providing the whole text as a reading comprehension exercise. In this situation, the educator is responsible for benefitting from this type of material.

The representation of TCC is also different in the cases of Italian textbooks, because there cannot be made a distinction between target cultures based on pronunciation or vocabulary since in Italian textbooks mostly the standard Italian variety is shown – which is considered to be something that is used mostly in textbooks, literary texts, but in everyday communication and spoken language. Although the Italian language has many regional varieties, they are so distinctly different from each other in pronunciation, in vocabulary, in grammar, and in semantics that a general standard variety needed to be ‘coined’ in order for foreign students to be able to learn and acquire it.

Thus, cultural content was mostly identified based on contextual information which might allow enhanced popular education. These pieces of information, which are counted in Table 5, consisted of the following types of information: famous Italian figures in cinema, arts (e.g. Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini’s *‘Apollo e Dafne’* – Apollo and Daphne in *2b*), and cultural history; Italian films and *‘la cinema italiana’* (e.g. the *1b* book provides information on Paolo Sorrentino, Sofia Loren, and other famous people from the Italian movie industry); various societal characteristics of the country (e.g. the phenomenon of *‘cervelli in fuga’*, the problem that younger educated people are leaving the country mentioned in *2a*); informative and educational audio files juxtaposing or presenting Italian cities; introducing *‘la musica italiana’* by describing famous singers (like Luciano Pavarotti, one of the world-famous Three Tenors in *2b*); dealing with Italian literature by presenting – among others – Luigi Pirandello and Eduardo De Filippo. These are just a few examples to demonstrate the nature of the target cultural content that the author tended to include.

The video lesson episodes in each book complemented well the material by incorporating the studied grammar and vocabulary in each chapter, while adding a different kind of value to the information: cultural context. The videos about the lives of Gianna and Lorenzo might even be more relatable for high school students (for teenagers at ages 14 to 19) because, for example, Lorenzo himself is still a student – although at university. Nonetheless, their daily dilemmas – e.g. passing an exam at university or finding the perfect gift for an important person in their lives – could be relatable for teenagers. These videos certainly contain more ‘teenager-friendly’ content than the videos in the *English File* series since Jenny and Rob were adults, and they navigated through their lives juggling with work problems and love-life dilemmas (such as the engagement).

4.2.2 The Italian context: listening comprehension – *Giro d'italiano*

In the present paper, the *Giro d'italiano* series is the only one which was written and published by Hungarian authors. It is apparent from the first glance at the books, because in *Giro d'italiano 1*, the instructions and exercises are in Hungarian. Moreover, the source culture (i.e. Hungarian culture) is highly represented in the exercises from listening to audio files describing the capital city to the students themselves having to interpret certain information for their 'Italian friends' about Hungarian events.

While listening to the audios, it may seem that these books contain more TCC than the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano*, but that is solely because the *Giro* series has altogether more listening tasks throughout the books. The exact numbers are shown in Table 6 below.

Giro d'italiano	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Giro d'italiano 1</i>	66	12	18.18%
<i>Giro d'italiano 2</i>	59	16	27.12%
<i>Giro d'italiano 3</i>	52	17	32.69%
<i>Giro d'italiano 4</i>	45	13	28.89%

Table 6 The data collection of audio files of the *Giro d'italiano* series.

Just as in the case of the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* books, here the number of audio files is also much lower than the numbers were in Table 1. Although this series includes a greater variety of materials, the results vary proportionately from the other Italian series. While the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* had books in which almost half of the audio files were considered TCC, in the case of the Hungarian-published series the percentages show that around one fourth of the audios in each book contained TCC. The numbers are not in direct proportion to the level of the books, they are inconsistent.

The material is rich in TCC, although it is not the only type of cultural content it includes. Following the target culture closely come the source- and international cultural content. Not only that but sometimes even Hungarian speakers can be recognized among the people who present the audio files. It is important to keep in mind that those kinds of recorder material that only mentions certain people, places, attractions without any additional information are not considered TCC. Nonetheless, the following content were regarded as TCC using the methodology described in Chapter 3: the topic of (public) transportation within or between cities; informational materials about famous Italian people throughout history (e.g. Galileo Galilei, Roberto Benigni, or Beatrice Trussardi); the description of specifically Italian festivities, like the story of '*San Valentino*'; interviews with people like Oriana Fallaci and Andrea Stella (who was between 2010 and 2014 the race engineer of the Formula-1 sportsman,

Fernando Alonso at Scuderia Ferrari); and some information about the Sapienza University of Rome. Moreover, it is a characteristic of Italian cultural content in coursebooks that certain texts or recorded materials present the current societal situation of the target culture country or present a societal issue in said country. For example, in *Giro d'italiano 4*, they recorded a text where the speaker talks about what it is like being a woman or a man in Italy in today's time and society (Track 8).

As it has been mentioned before, in this series the emphasis on the source cultural content is noticeable and significant (regarding both the listening comprehension tasks, the written exercises, and source materials). It occurred sometimes that the recorded material was about a Hungarian student talking to their Italian friend regarding the foreigner's visit in Hungary. The source culture continued to appear in the form of informative materials which talked about famous Hungarian sights and cities – e.g. in *Giro d'italiano 4*, the capital city is described in one audio, then Buda and Pest are both described separately in the following two materials (Tracks 31, 32, 33).

4.2.3 The Italian context: coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) – *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano*

As in the cases of the other textbook series analysed in this paper, it is also true for the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* that, apart from the target culture, the representation of international culture is present, but much less frequently as it could be observed in English coursebooks. The TCC is mainly represented through names of food, which is a phenomenon that is worth looking into. Since Italy has a very rich culture in general, it is no surprise that their cuisine is also unique. Hence the textbooks contain items which can be considered TCC specifically because they are part of the Italian culture, they are specific characteristics of their cuisine (e.g. the names of types of pasta are mentioned – like *penne*, *fusilli*, *farfalle*; or special types of cheese – as in *mozzarella* or *gorgonzola*).

Naturally, TCC is also indicated by tons of pictures in the textbooks, sometimes even without any purpose. For example, at the end of each chapter (before or after '*Autovalutazione*', i.e. 'Self-check') pictures of famous monuments and/or places are inserted to enhance cultural knowledge and language identity: e.g. a photo of "*I trulli di Alberobello, Puglia*" – the famous houses in the small town of Alberobello in Apulia is at the bottom of the page without any apparent reason (*Nuovissimo Progetto italiano 2b*, p. 164). These pieces of TCC are also included in the data collection that is shown in Table 7.

Nuovissimo Progetto italiano	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Nuovissimo progetto italiano 1a</i>	252	52	20.63%
<i>Nuovissimo progetto italiano 1b</i>	287	45	15.68%
<i>Nuovissimo progetto italiano 2a</i>	244	59	24.18%
<i>Nuovissimo progetto italiano 2b</i>	293	86	29.35%

Table 7 The data collection of coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) of the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series in relation to the total number of exercises in each textbook.

In the analysis of the exercises in *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* books, the material was collected according to the methodology described in Chapter 3: tasks were counted on the whole regardless of them having sub-tasks or not, because the exercises mostly operate with one cultural content throughout the entirety of the exercise, thus they count as one exercise.

The data shows that the level B2 book (2b) contained the most TCC material with almost 30 per cent of all exercises being part of the cultural content of the target culture country, Italy. The majority of this content is made up of photographs and pictures of various attractions, sights of cities, e.g. the ‘*Cattedrale Santa Maria del Fiore*’ in Florence (2a, p. 48); works of art, for instance *David* of Michelangelo (2a, p. 48.); or internationally renowned Italian people (from the historical past or from today) like Galileo Galilei and Alessandro Volta (2b, p. 50).

4.2.4 The Italian context: coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) – *Giro d’italiano*

When it comes to the analysis of the *Giro d’italiano* series, it is obvious from the first glance that this is a series developed by Hungarian authors.

The first book, which was written for learners of Italian as a second language in high school, contains a considerable amount of Hungarian language input. Mainly the instructions are in Hungarian, probably because of better understanding. A unique feature and an interesting observation were the short Italian-Hungarian wordlist at the bottom of many pages. This complex and well-developed structure of the books may help students learn the language more easily, and it may also enhance comprehension.

On the first few pages and in the initial units, not only were the instructions in Hungarian, but the tasks themselves too, totally excluding the foreign language use in the beginning. This might be because the authors first wanted the students to be familiar with the target culture itself, immerse in it, so that later they would be more likely to be motivated to start learning the language – this is only a hypothesis based on the textbook analysis carried out in this paper.

Then, as we proceed throughout the series, the usage of the Hungarian language is less and less frequent. The continuous changes are the following: after the first book in the series started with Hungarian instructions for each task through the entirety of the coursebook, the second book (level A2) switched to Italian instructions, although the use of Hungarian was still significant here, especially in the beginning where the structure of the book and the guide to use it appropriately is described in detail.

In *Giro 3*, the instructions for use of the book were still in Hungarian, and the table contents still included a considerable amount of L1. However, this is the level at which a new unit is introduced in the series which is called “*Elementi di civiltà*”, i.e. “Elements of Civilisation”, which contains numerous entries regarding Italian society, civilisation, and culture in alphabetical order. These are not shown in Table 8 regarding the number of tasks which contain TCC, they are only added with a ‘+’ sign (“number ‘*e. di c.*’”), so they are not included in the percentages either.

In *Giro 4*, they only preserved the use of Hungarian for the instructions manual on how to use appropriately the coursebook. Here, the table of contents is already fully in Italian. The wordlists at the bottom of certain pages were still present. In addition to these wordlists, all books in the series contain at least seven more pages at back which are dedicated to a complete and structured Italian-Hungarian wordlist in alphabetical order. *Giro d’italiano 1* has eight, *Giro d’italiano 2* has eight, *Giro d’italiano 3* also has eight, whereas *Giro d’italiano 4* has seven pages of additional wordlist. These are not included in the data collection which can be found in Table 8.

Giro d’italiano	Total	TCC	Percentage
<i>Giro d’italiano 1</i>	410	52	12.68%
<i>Giro d’italiano 2</i>	335	65	19.40%
<i>Giro d’italiano 3</i>	294	96 + 60 ‘ <i>e. di c.</i> ’	32.65%
<i>Giro d’italiano 4</i>	302	76 + 53 ‘ <i>e. di c.</i> ’	25.17%

Table 8 The data collection of coursebook exercises (reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary) of the *Giro d’italiano* series.

In Table 8, the findings of TCC are well-represented in numbers. Nevertheless, there cannot be made an unequivocal statement that the higher the level of the book, the more the TCC is, because after *Giro 3*, the level B2 *Giro 4* contains less TCC compared to its level B1 predecessor.

As it was true for the listening comprehension tasks, the written input also favoured the incorporation of source cultural elements. It is peculiar in the cases of ‘speaking’ tasks where

students have to interpret the previously read information – e.g. the poster of a weekend programme from Hungary – to an Italian friend of theirs. Truth be told, these parts of the textbook(s) might be a characteristic of this series because it was written by Hungarian authors, hence people who speak Italian a foreign language created the textbook which allowed them to approach foreign language teaching methodology from a different perspective than a native speaker.

5. English versus Italian: a juxtaposition

According to the initial hypothesis, it was presupposed that the Italian foreign language textbooks contain overall more cultural – especially target cultural – content than their English counterparts. After the thorough analysis of the content of each series, it is important to compare the data so that a finalised conclusion can be drawn.

In juxtaposing the four series, the data is analysed according to the initial points of reference of the research methodology: the results of the analysis of the listening comprehension tasks are compared separately from the written coursebook exercises, which contain reading, writing, vocabulary, and speaking tasks.

5.1 Listening comprehension

During the research, it seemed that the *English File* series contain a great number of TCC, whereas the *Pioneer* series appeared to lack in this aspect. The results, which are collected in Table 9, support this presupposition since overall, the *English File* series contain 278 TCC items, which is around 18 per cent of the total number of listening comprehension tasks and audio files. As opposed to this, the *Pioneer* series contains altogether 48 TCC items, which is only about the 7 per cent of the total number of listening comprehension tasks and audio files.

When it comes to the examination of results of the Italian textbook series analysis, although they contained less listening comprehension tasks and audio files in total, in proportion they show that they contain relatively more TCC item than their English counterparts. In addition, the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series (*NPI* in Table 9 and 10) contains the most target cultural content since out of the 111 tasks and audios in total, 33 of them contain some sort of TCC, which is approximately 30 per cent of the whole. These numbers are included in Table 9.

	Beg. (A1)	Elem. (A1- A2)	Pre-int. (A2- B1)	Int. (B1- B2)	Level B1+	Upper- int. (B2)	Adv. (C1)	Total	Total (%)
<i>English File</i>	32 [288]	51 [327]	50 [295]	64 [255]	-	36 [218]	45 [192]	278 [1575]	17.65%
<i>Pioneer</i>	1 [160]	6 [177]	8 [148]	11 [85]	11 [43]	11 [32]	-	48 [645]	7.44%
<i>NPI</i>	2 [33]	-	10 [24]	7 [22]	-	14 [32]	-	33 [111]	29.73%
<i>Giro d'it.</i>	12 [66]	-	16 [59]	17 [52]	-	13 [45]	-	58 [222]	26.13%

Table 9 The number of listening comprehension exercises and audio files which contain TCC in relation to [the total number of listening comprehension exercises and audio files] in the analysed English and Italian textbook series.

It is important to clarify that these numbers do not contain the additional video lessons, special video episodes, nor extra cultural material, like *'Elementi di civiltà'*, and wordlists from the back of books (i.e. *Giro d'italiano*). Either way, the numbers clearly demonstrate that the Italian textbooks incorporated more target cultural content than the English coursebook series.

5.2 Coursebook exercises (reading, writing, vocabulary, and speaking)

The analysis of all coursebook exercises and the written input, which all influence and enhance the acquisition of the foreign languages, may as well affect the students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the target culture(s) of the foreign language. The cultural content, especially the TCC, highly influence students in regard of their motivation to learn and study, and how they perceive the world, how they connect to or disassociate from certain conversations around them. This is why textbook analysis as a field is so important when it comes to language teaching, because it is the students' *and* the teachers' interest to encounter material which sparks attention and enhances the performance of the learners.

It is surprising to see that overall, barely one fourth of the tasks overall in each series contain TCC items. Nonetheless, the Italian series still win in this round as well: the series which contains the most TCC (*Nuovissimo Progetto italiano*) incorporated almost twice as much TCC in total than the series which included the least amount (*Pioneer*). The results with percentages are shown in Table 10.

	Beg. (A1)	Elem. (A1- A2)	Pre-int. (A2- B1)	Int. (B1- B2)	Level B1+	Upper- int. (B2)	Adv. (C1)	Total	Total (%)
<i>English File</i>	38 [274]	58 [357]	56 [355]	50 [270]	-	57 [271]	60 [273]	319 [1800]	17.72%
<i>Pioneer</i>	24 [240]	24 [275]	38 [277]	33 [261]	33 [218]	25 [194]	-	177 [1465]	12.08%
<i>NPI</i>	52 [252]	-	45 [287]	59 [244]	-	86 [293]	-	242 [1076]	22.49%
<i>Giro d'it.</i>	52 [410]	-	65 [335]	96 [294]	-	76 [302]	-	289 [1341]	21.55%

Table 10 The number of written coursebook exercises (reading, writing, vocabulary, and speaking) which contain TCC in relation to [the total number of written coursebook exercises (reading, writing, vocabulary, and speaking)] in the analysed English and Italian textbook series.

As it is demonstrated in Table 10, the number of TCC in each series overall may be deceiving, that is why percental results are also included. The ranking is the following from least to most: the two English series were forced to be fourth and third in this order, because the *Pioneer* series (in fourth place) included around 180 TCC items, which is only the 12 per cent of the total number of written coursebook exercises. The *English File* came in third place with its results of barely 320 TCC items, which is less then 18 per cent of the total number of exercises and written input. In second place, came the Hungarian authors' *Giro d'italiano* with around 290 TCC, which is almost 22 per cent of the overall number of tasks. As it has already been established, the *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* series contains the most TCC, at least in proportion to the overall content of the book: around 240 items which equals more than 23 per cent of the exercises.

All in all, the findings show clearly that the Italian coursebook series incorporated more target cultural content in proportion to the total number of exercises in each individual textbooks and series.

6. Conclusion

Textbook analysis is a highly important field of research regarding foreign language learning and teaching, since textbooks are one of the most important tools and guidelines of educators and teachers around the globe. It is worth noting that only the very well-put-together textbooks may serve as useful aids in education, because these might make it less necessary to do additional research in search for complementary and extra material to bring in for class.

Students are more likely to be engaged in the material if it includes content in which they are interested, and in which they might feel the urge to engage. It is the main reason that

this paper aimed at discovering the underlying target cultural content (TCC), which is an essential part of the foreign language learning and foreign language acquisition process.

Before starting the research, it was important to establish the main fields that were worth looking into. The distinction between source, target, and international cultures helped in deciding the main focus of this paper (Cortazzi and Jin in Alshenqeeti, 2019: 129). However, the internationally differing positions of the English and Italian languages made the research more colourful, since the English language distinguishes between countries belonging to the *Inner Circle*, *Outer Circle*, and *Expanding Circle* (Huber, 2022a: 3-4). The countries where English is an official language, a first language, are part of the Inner Circle (e.g. the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, etc.). In the Outer Circle countries, English is spoken as a second language and it plays a significant role in the lives of the citizens, whereas in the Expanding Circle English is spoken as a *lingua franca*, which – broadly speaking – means that countries from all around the world take part in the Expanding Circle.

In the case of Italian, the situation is not so worldwide. Italian is considered a weakly pluricentric language according to Hajek (2012). This means, that although Italian is an official language in Switzerland, the Vatican City, and in San Marino apart from Italy, when it comes to cultural representation, the homeland's country is the only one that is represented. It is also true for the Italian language that people often choose to learn it because of its culture is appealing. This led to the initial hypothesis of this paper, which was that Italian foreign language textbooks contain more TCC than English foreign language textbooks. The results of the present research backed up this hypothesis, which shows in the percental results of the research. Although initially it seemed that English textbooks contain a wider variety of cultural content, Italian textbooks dominated in the sense of target cultural content.

For further research, it may be useful and interesting to look into the target, source, and international cultural content. By distinguishing between these three subcategories of cultural content, a more colourful and more representative study could be carried out with a more detailed data collection and greater amount of information on the overall (cultural) content of the various textbook series. Moreover, it would be interesting to include English textbooks from Hungarian authors, and juxtaposing those with the already existing data. In the future, a more comprehensive study could be carried out by analysing entire textbook series from A1 to C2 levels to get more detailed and satisfying results.

Overall, the initial hypothesis turned out to be true, so Italian culture is, indeed, greatly represented in Italian foreign language coursebook series, and further research in the field might complement and deepen the findings of the present paper. Moreover, the analysed content is

more or less suitable for high school students, although in various cases improvement needs to be done in this regard so that students encounter content which is also relatable for people of their age (14-19 years).

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A célkultúrák megjelenése magyarországi idegen nyelvi tankönyvekben: az angol és olasz nyelv helyzete

1. Bevezetés

A globalizációnak köszönhetően világunkban egyre fontosabbá válik az idegen nyelv tanulása és tanítása. Ez a folyamat elengedhetetlenné teszi világunkban a kommunikáció fejlesztését, ezáltal egy világszerte beszélt, közös nyelv használatát (ez a *lingua franca*).

Ahhoz, hogy az idegen nyelv-elsajátítás minél sikeresebb legyen, szükségünk van az erre a célra kifejlesztett legmegfelelőbb eszközökre, melyek közül a legegységesebb, és a többség számára legelérhetőbb választás a tankönyv. Ahhoz, hogy minél inkább olyan tartalommal tudják a pedagógusok megtölteni a tanóráikat, amely leköti a diákokat, és motiválja őket, szükségük van a tankönyvek minél pontosabb és szélesebb körű elemzésére azért, hogy kiderüljön, megfelelőek-e ezek a középiskolások számára.

Az, hogy melyek ezek a nyelvi és kulturális tartalmak, nem könnyű meghatározni, azonban általánosságban véve elmondható, hogy az olyan kulturális tartalmak, mint a tudományok, történelem, művészetek, filmek és zene felkeltik a középiskolás korosztály érdeklődését.

Jelen pályamunkában angol és olasz idegen nyelvi tankönyvek kerülnek elemzésre, még pedig a 3. kiadású *English File* sorozat, a *Pioneer* sorozat; az olasz nyelv terén pedig a magyarországi tankönyvlistán megtalálható olasz tankönyvek kerültek átvizsgálásra: a *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* sorozat, illetve a magyar kiadású *Giro d'italiano* sorozat. Ezek elemzésének módszertanáról a 2. fejezetbeli részletes szakirodalmi elemzés után a 3. fejezet szól részletesebben. A negyedik fejezettől kerülnek kifejtésre a tankönyvelemzés eredményei – mind az angol (4.1 fejezet), mind az olasz (4.2 fejezet) nézőpontjából külön-külön. Először a hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok és azok hanganyagainak elemzése (4.1.1 és 4.2.1 fejezetek), majd pedig az írott tankönyvi feladatok nyelvenkénti elemzése (4.1.2 és 4.2.2 fejezetek) olvasható. Az 5. fejezet tartalmazza az angol és olasz tankönyvekben talált információk összevetését, táblázatosan, majd ezt követik a levont következtetések és a konklúzió a 6. fejezetben, s végül a bibliográfiával zárul a pályamunka.

2. Tankönyvelemzés: nézőpontok a világ minden tájáról

Jelen pályamunka többféle nézőpontból is körbejárja a tankönyvelemzést, mint kutatási területet.

Huber (2022a) tanulmányában a magyar kontextus olvasható, mégpedig angol és német tankönyvek elemzése során. A szerző az elemzés szempontjából kihangsúlyozza a többközpontú nyelvek fontosságát, hiszen az angol e közé a nyelvek közé tartozik. Továbbá az

angolt három nagyobb „körre” szokás osztani (a Belső körre, melybe azok az országok tartoznak, ahol az angol hivatalos nyelv; a Külső körre, melyben azok az országok találhatóak, ahol az angol, mint második nyelv van jelen a lakók életében; illetve a Bővülő körre, melybe minden olyan ország beletartozik – tágabb értelemben –, ahol az angolt beszélik, mint *lingua francát*).

A továbbiakban szaúd-arábiai (Alshenqeeti, 2019) és svéd (Hakander, 2018; Wickersham, 2020) tankönyvelemzési kontextusok is bemutatásra kerülnek, melyek egyértelműen kijelentik, hogy a tankönyvek közel sem tartalmaznak elegendő kulturális elemet.

3. A tankönyvelemzés módszertana és a hipotézis

A kutatási tézis a következő: az olasz idegen nyelvi tankönyvek nagyobb arányban foglalnak magukban és sorakoztatnak fel célkulturális elemeket, mint az angol idegen nyelvi tankönyvek.

A 3. kiadási English File sorozat (*Beginner* szinttől az *Advanced* szintig), illetve a *Pioneer* sorozat (a *Beginners*-től a *Level B2* könyvig) kerültek elemzésre; az olasz nyelv szempontjából pedig a *Nuovissimo Progetto italiano* (1a-tól 2b-ig), illetve a *Giro d’italiano* sorozat (1-től 4-ig) kerültek elemzése. Ezek mindegyike elérhető a magyarországi hivatalos tankönyvlistán.

A módszertant tekintve az alábbi metodológia került alkalmazásra: minden hanganyag, illetve írott (nyomtatott) tankönyvi feladat megszámlálásra került, s ezekben a feladatok lettek megvizsgálva célkulturális szempontból. Mind az olasz, mind az angol tankönyvek esetében egybeszámoltam minden feladatot, amely alfeladatokkal rendelkezett, hiszen ezek az esetek nagy többségében mind ugyanazzal a kulturális elemmel, illetve *input*-szöveggel dolgoztak tovább, így ezek egynek számítottak.

Nem volt egyszerű a kulturális elem, mint keresendő tartalom, meghatározása, hiszen sok esetben csak említésre kerültek bizonyos kulturális elemek – mint helynevek, személynevek, vagy vállalatok megnevezései. Így ezeket nem számítottam bele az összegyűjtött adatmennyiségbe.

4. Tankönyvelemzés: kezdeti megfigyelések

Az elemzés kezdete előtti elvárás az volt, hogy mindegyik tankönyvcsalád nagy mennyiségű hanganyaggal rendelkezik, hiszen manapság a kommunikatív megközelítés a legelterjedtebb az idegen nyelvoktatásban.

4.1. Tankönyvelemzés: az angol kontextus

Az angol nyelvű könyvek gazdag kulturális tartalommal rendelkeztek, főként az English File-sorozat. A célkulturális elemek főként képek, interjúk, ismeretterjesztő szövegek nyomán találhatóak meg a tankönyvekben.

4.1.1 Az angol kontextus: hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok

Az összegyűjtött eredmények Table 1- és Table 2-ként megjelölt táblázatokban találhatóak. Ami megdöbbentő volt, hogy a Pioneer-sorozat sokszor alkalmazott „nem valós” anyagokat a különféle feladatokhoz, tehát például olyan interjúk voltak hallhatók, amelyek kitalált személyekkel történtek az internetes kutatások alapján. Meglepően kevés hanganyagot tartalmazott ez a sorozat az English File-hoz képest, amely több célkulturális elemmel rendelkezett.

4.1.3 Az angol kontextus: írott szövegű tankönyvi feladatok

Az eredmények a Table 3- és Table 4-ként számozott táblázatokban találhatóak. Összességében elmondható, hogy a nagy mennyiségű írott szövegű feladat ellenére meglehetősen kevés célkulturális elemet tartalmaznak az angol könyvsorozatok.

4.2 Tankönyvelemzés: az olasz kontextus

Az elemzés előtti elvárások között szerepelt az, hogy sok hanganyag lesz várható a kutatás során, azonban ez nem így történt: meglepően kevés hanganyaggal rendelkeztek az olasz tankönyvek, főként a Nuovissimo Progetto italiano. A célkulturális elemek főként fényképek, illetve ismeretterjesztő szövegek formájában voltak jelen. Az olasz esetben pedig sokkal gyakoribb volt a célkulturális elemek megjelenése, mint bármely más kulturális elem beépítése a tananyagba.

4.2.1 Az olasz kontextus: hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok

A kevés hanganyag ellenére, a megoszlást tekintve, mégis az olasz hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok voltak azok, amelyek arányaikban a legtöbb célkulturális elemet tartalmazták. Az eredmények a Table 5 és Table 6 jelölésű táblázatokban szerepelnek.

4.2.3 Az olasz kontextus: írott szövegű tankönyvi feladatok

Az eredményeket a Table 7 és Table 8 jelölésű táblázatok tartalmazzák.

A feladatok nagy számát tekintve elenyészőnek tűnhetnek a célkulturális elemek a tankönyvekben, viszont ha jobban megnézzük a tananyagot, ez egyáltalán nem így van, hiszen jóformán minden oldalon megtalálható valamilyen kulturális elem – amely elsősorban mindig olasz kulturális elem lesz.

5. Angol nyelv kontra olasz nyelv: párhuzamba állítás és összehasonlítás

A párhuzamba állítás során tükrözik csak a kapott eredmények igazán a különbséget a négy tankönyvcsalád között. A hipotézis beigazolódtott: az olasz idegen nyelvi tankönyvek

valóban több célkulturális elemet tartalmaznak nyomtatott feladataikban és hanganyagaikban, mint az angol nyelvi tankönyvek.

5.1 Hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok

Az eredményeket a Table 9 jelölésű táblázat tartalmazza. A számok remekül tükrözik, hogy arányaikban az olasz nyelvű tankönyvek mennyivel több célkulturális elemet tartalmaznak az angol nyelvi könyvekhez képest.

5.2 Írott szövegű tankönyvi feladatok

Az írott szövegű feladatokat elemezve szintén az az eredmény állapítható meg, mint a hallás utáni szövegértési feladatok esetében: az olasz tankönyvek arányaikban több célkulturális elemet tartalmaznak. Ezek az eredmények a Table 10 jelölésű táblázatban kaptak helyet.

6. Következtetések

A hipotézis beigazolódott: az olasz nyelvű tankönyvek valóban több célkulturális elemet foglalnak magukban – mindenféle feladatot tekintve –, mint az angol nyelvi tankönyvek. Néhány kulturális elem nem igazán felel meg a középiskolás korosztályban, mert ezek a feladatok olyan információkat és kulturális elemeket tartalmaznak, amelyekkel ez a korosztály nehezen tud azonosulni. Azonban a tankönyvcsaládok olyan tananyaggal rendelkeznek, amelyek kimerítő mennyiségben segítik elő az angol és olasz nyelv elsajátítását.

A kutatás folytatásaként belevehetők az elemzésbe más tankönyvcsalád könyvei is, akár a jelent tanulmányban szereplők teljes sorozatai, illetve olyan angol tankönyvek, melyeknek a szerzője magyar. Illetve megfontolandó a kutatás továbbvitele a háromféle kulturális tartalom szétválasztásával (cél-, forrás- és nemzetközi kultúra), melyek tovább mélyíthetők, és még kielégítőbbé tehetik a már kapott eredményeket.