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Beyond kangaroos and didgeridoos: The representation of Australia in Austrian EFL coursebooks with special attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

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1. Introduction

“Language textbooks are not only tools for learning a specific language, they also serve as windows to the world”. (Risager, 2021, p. 130)

In today’s globalized and digitalized society, learners are exposed to countless additional “windows” through social media, streaming platforms, and online communication. Nevertheless, this increased access to global content does not diminish the importance of cultural representation in educational materials. While it is impossible to control the media and perspectives students encounter outside the classroom, coursebooks remain one of the few spaces in which cultural representation can be shaped consciously and critically. As a result, English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks play a significant role not only in language learning, but also in fostering intercultural understanding, challenging stereotypes, and promoting more inclusive and respectful perspectives on different cultures. My exchange semester in Australia has given me a deeper understanding of its culture and made me aware of stereotypical and oversimplified representations currently found in Austria, especially of Indigenous culture.

Therefore, this thesis aims at exploring the representation of Australia in Austrian EFL coursebooks. This study intends to examine the cultural content present in three Austrian EFL coursebooks and whether some themes are more dominant than others. Furthermore, the thesis compares the different coursebooks to find out whether there are similarities and differences between them. Another primary objective of this study is to explore how Australian Indigenous culture is portrayed through textual and visual materials in order to identify underlying biases, stereotypes, or omissions. Using content analysis, this study applies the 4P model of culture (Yuen, 2011) to examine the cultural themes utilized to portray Australia in three Austrian EFL coursebooks. Categorizing cultural content into the four dimensions *products*, *practices*, *persons* and *perspectives* will yield quantitative results about the cultural representation and will make a comparison between individual coursebooks possible. Additionally, critical discourse analysis following the framework of social actor representation (van Leeuwen, 1996) is applied to analyse both textual and visual representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in these materials. This qualitative method will obtain more nuanced results, which will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the representation of Australia.

This thesis is divided into seven main chapters. Chapter 2 starts with a theoretical introduction into culture in English language teaching, addressing the relationship between language and culture, a nation and culture, and how culture is incorporated in the CEFR and the Austrian

curriculum. Chapter 3 continues with a theoretical foundation of different conceptualizations of representation in textbooks. Chapter 4 provides a literature review of prior studies about cultural representation in EFL coursebooks. First, studies having applied content analysis using the *Big C small c* distinction and the 4P model are reviewed. Then, a brief historical background of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is outlined. A review of studies applying critical discourse analysis to analyse Indigenous representation in EFL coursebooks concludes this chapter. Chapter 5 lays out the methodology of this thesis, presenting the textbooks, the two analytical frameworks, and the data collection and analysis process. Subsequently, chapter 6 and 7 present the findings of the study, and chapter 8 provides an interpretative discussion of them. The conclusion summarises this thesis in chapter 9, and afterwards the references and the appendix are given.

2. Culture in English language teaching

2.1 Defining culture

Defining culture is not an easy task, as it is an extremely difficult concept (S. Hall, 1997). There are different ways of looking at and defining culture, a very traditional way is the distinction between high culture and popular/mass culture. High culture is seen as “the sum of the great ideas” (Hall, 1997, p. 2) such as literary works, art, music and philosophy. In contrast, “mass culture” or “popular culture” are the elements that everyday lives of ‘normal’ people consist of, such as popular music, sports, entertainment, etc. Until the 1970’s, this was the classic distinction of culture, viewing culture only as artefacts (Kramsch, 2009). Afterwards, in the 1970s and 80’s, the concept of culture was seen from an anthropological point of view, namely defining culture as “whatever is distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of a people, community, nation or social group” (Hall, 1997, p.2). Another definition is from a sociological point of view, here Hall (1997) states that the word culture “describe[s] the ‘shared values’ of a group or of society” (p.2). This has changed the way of looking at culture, not as a set of things (paintings, books, etc.) but as a set of practices.

Viewing culture as a set of practices shifts the focus to participation, raising the question of what it means to belong to a culture. In his definition of culture, Hall (1997) puts the focus on “shared meanings” of a group, saying that

Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings – the “giving and taking of meaning” – between the members of a society or group. To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. (p.2)

Similar to this definition of culture, is the one by Kramsch (1998); for her culture is a:

[M]embership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting. These standards are what is generally called their “culture”. (p.10)

For her, being part of a culture means making meaning of the world similarly. This is what Hall (1997) refers to as *shared meanings*. For him, “belonging to the same culture” means being able “to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways” (p.18). The aspect of “interpreting the world in roughly similar ways” will be taken up in the next section, which explains the relationship between language and culture.

2.2 Language and culture

A language is part of a culture and a culture is part of a language. (Brown, 2000, p. 177).

As expressed in the quote above by Brown (2000), language and culture are closely intertwined, they are bound together; the one cannot exist without the other. Kramsch (1998) names three reasons for this: Firstly, we use language to communicate, to express our ideas, attitudes, facts, etc. Hence, language expresses our cultural reality. Secondly, language also shapes meaning, we use verbal and non-verbal forms to embody our cultural reality. And lastly, as a system of signs, language itself carries cultural significance, thus, language also symbolizes cultural reality.

In the early 20th century, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of language relativism, tried to explain this close relationship. Their hypothesis is connected to the view of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1936/1971) “who argued that language was uniquely expressive of the worldview of its speakers” (Gray, 2010). Sapir and Whorf declared that the way we perceive our world is dependent on the language we speak. They proclaimed that speakers of one language have a different perception of the world that speakers of another language can never fully grasp (Brown, 2000; Gray, 2010; Kramsch, 1998).

Although strong versions of this hypothesis are no longer supported today, weak versions are. Our language does influence how we perceive the world, however, it not impossible to translate these perceptions into another language. According to Kramsch (1998, p.13) “[t]he way a given language encodes experience semantically makes aspects of that experience not exclusively

accessible, but just more salient for the users of that language”. This is also echoed in Hall’s definition of culture, where he states members of a culture “make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways” (Hall, 1997, p.18).

The Sapir-Whorf-hypothesis supports the idea that language is a tool for perceiving and interpreting the world, hence, learning a language also involves understanding how speakers of that language conceptualize their world (Gray, 2010). Byram (1989) states that by learning the language of another culture, we automatically also learn their world-views. Kramsch (1993) concurs, declaring that learning a foreign language always involves engaging with its cultural context, as culture is ubiquitous in how the language is used in spoken and written discourses. Therefore, language learners inevitably also become learners of the associated culture.

Thus, Hinkel (1999) asserts “teaching of the second or foreign language cannot be separated from teaching the culture of its speakers” (p.132). Naturally, this connection becomes more complex in the context of English language teaching, as English is spoken as a native language and as a lingua franca across diverse cultural settings, instead of being tied to a single, unified speech community. As Barrett & Byram (2022) point out, the notion of a “language group” needs to be treated with caution, as, especially with former colonising powers, it is very vague. Consequently, teaching English involves engaging with multiple, and often competing, cultural perspectives rather than transmitting the culture of one specific group of speakers. Precisely because English is embedded in a multitude of cultural contexts, language teaching must engage with and reflect this diversity. Culture is vital in language learning, it is not “an expendable fifth skill” (Kramsch, 1993, p.1). However, what does it mean to “teach culture”? Kramsch (2009) poses the following questions:

Hence the problem for the language teacher. Which aspects of culture should be taught in a language class: facts of geography and history, national symbols, small cultures of ways of life, norms of interaction and interpretation, attitudes and beliefs, myths and ideologies? Which kinds of culture; national, regional, professional culture, high culture or popular culture, mainstream or ethnic culture, civic or heritage culture? (p.220)

Evolving understandings of culture not only redefined what culture is, but also influenced how it is approached within language education. In the 20th century, the modernist view on culture was prominent, it considered culture as “the shared characteristic of a homogeneous speech community, whose members had a common way of remembering the past, defining the present and imagining the future” (Kramsch, 2015, p.404). This speech community was restricted to a specific place on the map, such as a nation. Hence, modernism saw one culture directly linked

to one language and one place on the map. Communication was seen as an exchange of information between cultures, either about the Big C elements of culture (literature, arts, etc.) or the small c elements (ways of life) (Kramersch, 2015). Therefore, a modernist approach to culture in language textbooks “demands of the textbook that it presents a maximally true, realistic, and representative picture of the foreign society and culture” (Risager & Chapelle, 2013, p.1621). This approach focusses on transmitting “objective” knowledge about the target countries’ cultures to students.

In contrast, communicative language teaching initiated the change towards a postmodernist view in the late 1980s that reflects our globalized world in the 21st century (Kramersch, 2015). Kramersch (2015) states that “[c]ommunication in a global age is thus both transmission of facts and participation, both sharing of content and self-positioning. It is as much about acquiring a voice and making yourself heard, as it is about negotiating differences in intended meaning” (p.407). Thus, the focus gets put on reflexivity, interpretation and the negotiation of meaning. Whereas modernism sees an “objective link” between a language and a culture, postmodernism supposes a “relational, subjective link between language and culture” (Kramersch, 2015, p.409). This relates back to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that explains exactly this relational nature of language and culture. According to Kramersch (2015), the postmodernist view on culture adopted in the 21st century is thus the following: “[c]ultures are portable schemas of interpretation of actions and events that people have acquired through primary socialization and which change over time as people migrate or enter into contact with people who have been socialized differently” (p.409). A postmodernist approach acknowledges that “there is not ‘a culture’ out there to describe” (Risager & Chapelle, 2013, p.1621). It focusses on different perspectives, acknowledging that culture is always subjective, “culture is dependent on the eyes that see” (Risager & Chapelle, 2013, p.1621).

Although postmodern perspectives on language and culture have emerged, modernist views still persist and did not get replaced. These modernist ideas continue to shape how teachers and textbooks portray culture, even if these conceptualizations no longer reflect today’s global world (Kramersch, 2015). In reality, most textbooks often present a mixture between a modernist and a post-modernist view, thus, an interesting point of analysis will also be to see how the chosen coursebooks conceptualize culture through their representations.

2.3 Nationalized culture

In foreign language learning classroom, “culture” is often equated with “nation” (E. Lee, 2015; Meadows, 2020; Stopar, 2015). According to Risager (2007), in language education, culture is often seen through nationalized units – “cultural units are first national ones” (Meadows, 2020,

p.145). This, so called national paradigm (Risager, 2007), presupposes that a standard language belongs to a mainstream culture that belongs to a nation; a seemingly natural, objective connection between language, culture and nation is drawn. However, culture gets reduced to its “mainstream” aspects, seemingly “common” practices, beliefs and values that are assumed to be shared throughout the nation. This reduction simplifies the “national” culture and represents it as homogeneous. Meadows (2020) gives the definition of nationalism from Maxwell (2018) who sees nationalism “as an ideology of social organization that individuals use to discern insiders from outsiders and the privileged from the marginalized” (Meadows, 2020, p.146). While this highlights the role of nationalism in structuring social boundaries, it is important to note that such processes of inclusion and exclusion are not merely limited to nationalism alone, but can also emerge from other ideological and social frameworks.

If the language classroom equates culture with nation, then it is worth asking: what exactly is a “nation”? When it comes to the conceptualization of nations, Anderson’s theory of nations as imagined communities is a core concept. Anderson (1983) famously argued that nations are imagined, “because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them; yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p.15). Similarly to this, Stuart Hall (1996) sees a nation as a “symbolic community”, it is a “system of cultural representations” that gives meaning and interpretation to the imagined community. He argues that a national culture is a system of meaning-making that shapes how we understand ourselves and behave. It forms identities by creating ideas about the nation that people can relate to (Hall, 1996).

Drawing on the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Barrett & Byram, 2022) published by the Council of Europe, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of nation and state, a distinction that is particularly significant in the European context, where cultural and political boundaries rarely coincide. Barrett & Byram (2022) propose the following definitions:

A “nation” is a named human community which lives in its historic homeland and which has a shared history that has been codified and standardised, shared myths of common ancestry, and shared symbols, traditions and practices (which often but not always include a common language). [...] By contrast, a “state” is a sovereign political entity in which a government uses a set of institutions to exercise an administrative monopoly over a territory which has clearly demarcated borders, where the rule of that government is sanctioned by law and backed up with the threat of coercion or violence. (p.18)

Consequently, a national culture does not exist out there, it is created and reproduced in discourse. In their seminal work, Wodak et al. (2009) used discourse analysis to uncover

strategies that construct national identity. Two of the most important strategies that people make use of in discourse to express national identity are *assimilation* and *dissimilation*. Through assimilation, people display homogeneity across their group, assuming that everyone in their “national culture” is similar. On the other hand, dissimilation is used to express heterogeneity, or difference, between nations. These two strategies are essential for the ideological principles that underly nationalism. One of those principles is national essence, which means that each nation has a uniform national character. National essence, or an essentialist view of a culture, leads to conclusions like “all people from country X will behave in way Y” (Holliday et al., 2016). Looking at culture through an essentialist lens means that culture is a describable, static and homogenous set of characteristics that exists and that members of this culture share. Culture in this perspective is bound to a physical place, a state, and its whole nation shares this set of cultural norms, products and practices (Holliday et al., 2016; Risager, 2018). Here, the myth of the nation-state still plays a big role, which equates the concept of a nation with the state, even though “there are very few true nation-states, that is, states in which the borders enclose just a single, ‘pure’ national group” (Barrett & Byram, 2022, p. 18). An essentialist view on culture sees the population’s behaviour being based on and constrained by their culture (Holliday et al., 2016; Risager, 2018). It is thus the culture, the set of characteristics everyone in this culture shares, that define the people. Holliday et al. (2016) state that:

[E]ssentialism is the “easy” answer for culture, which has become popular, useable and marketable in such as management studies and foreign language education where people are looking for simple formulae for communication with clients, students and colleagues from “other places and backgrounds”. (p.4-5)

Hence, there are these cultural characteristics (often in the form of stereotypes) to learn about a culture, which are assumed to describe all members of that culture. This thought of “intranational sameness” (Meadows, 2020) in essentialism gets reproduced through assimilation. In the case of presenting nationalized cultures in coursebooks this means that simplified and homogenized cultural traits are foregrounded. By privileging dominant norms and recurring representations while omitting internal diversity, textbooks can implicitly promote an assimilative view of culture in which differences within a nation are minimized, reinforcing the perception of uniformity.

Another underlying principle of nationalism is *diversity*, which expresses that each nation is different from the others, so that there are clear borders between two nations. This “international difference” gets reproduced in discourse through dissimilation. So, in other words, nationalism

is very basically expressed through saying “in our nation we are all similar but definitely different from the other nations”, as discussed in Wodak et al. (2009).

On the other hand, a non-essentialist perspective sees culture as fluid, as something that is constantly changing and has blurred boundaries. People do not solely belong to one national culture; they identify themselves with multiple cultures at the same time and might leave and take on new cultures continuously. Culture is not what defines the individual people, people are what define the culture (Holliday et al., 2016; Risager, 2018). Non-essentialist perspectives on culture reject the assumption that cultural groups share a fixed set of inherent and predetermined characteristics. Instead, culture is understood as a dynamic and socially constructed process that is continuously shaped and reshaped through interaction, discourse and context. Emphasis is therefore placed on internal diversity, hybridity, and the multiplicity of cultural experiences within any given group (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008). Thus, “culture is not something that can be used to explain people’s norms and values, culture is what should be explained” (Risager, 2018, p.130). Table 1 (Holliday et al., 2016) gives a more detailed overview of the difference of an essentialist and a non-essentialist view of culture.

Table 1 *Essentialism vs Non-Essentialism (Holliday et al., 2016, pp. 3–4)*

A. Essentialist view of culture	How people talk about it	B. Non-essentialist view of culture	How people talk about it
1a ‘A culture’ has a physical entity, as though it is a place, which people can visit. It is homogeneous in that perceived traits are spread evenly, giving the sense of a simple society	‘I visited three cultures while on holiday. They were Spain, Morocco and Tunisia.’	1b Culture is a social force which is evident where it is significant. Society is complex, with characteristic which are difficult to pin down.	‘There was something culturally different about each of the countries I visited.’
2a It is associated with a country and a language, which has an onionskin relationship with larger continental, religious, ethnic or racial cultures, and smaller sub-cultures	‘Japanese culture’ ‘European culture’ ‘Hindu culture’	2b It is associated with a value, and can relate equally to any type of size of group for any period of time, and can be characterised by a discourse as much as by a language	‘Schools in France have a more evident culture of sport than schools in Japan’.
3a The world is divided into mutually exclusive national cultures. People is one culture are essentially different from people in another.	‘People from Egypt cannot ... when they arrive in French culture’	3b Cultures can flow, change, intermingle, cut across and through each other, regardless of national frontiers, and have blurred boundaries	‘Schools throughout the world have a lot of cultural similarities’
4a People belong to exclusively one national culture and one language	‘No matter how long she lives in Italy, she belongs to Austrian culture.’	4b People can belong to and move through a complex multiplicity of cultures both within and across societies.	‘I feel most Malaysian when I travel abroad to places where that is meaningful. A sense of history from my family and upbringing comes into play when I listen to Mexican music, speak the language and think of global politics.’

A. Essentialist view of culture	How people talk about it	B. Non-essentialist view of culture	How people talk about it
5a 'A culture' behaves like a single-minded person with a specific, exclusive personality. People's behaviour is defined and constrained by the culture in which they live.	'German culture believes that . . .', 'In Middle Eastern culture there is no concept of...'	5b People are influenced by or make use of a multiplicity of cultural forms.	'My Mexican- ness enriches my perceptions of and participation in Malaysian society, and vice versa.'
6a To communicate with someone who is foreign or different we must first understand the details, or stereotype of their culture.	'When you want to greet a Swedish businessman, you need to know that in Swedish culture . . .'	6b To communicate with anyone who belongs to a group with whom we are unfamiliar, we have to understand the complexity of who she is.	'What you have to understand about her is that she does not conform to the stereotype of North African women that we see in the media, which she considers false and ignorant. In reality she is different to what we expected.'

Note. Holliday et al. (2016) point out, the statements on the right “are what could be said by some people and not statements of how things are in particular locations” (p.2).

In connection with foreign language teaching, Meadows (2020) argues that

[l]anguage teachers reproduce nationalism when they validate claims consistent with the two principles of national essence (i.e., intra-national homogeneity) and diversity (i.e., inter-national distinction). In doing so, they endorse conventional cultural boundaries and the power relationships intertwined in them. (p.147)

E. Lee (2015) and Kramersch (2015) argue that even though scholarly research in the field has moved away from viewing culture through a modernist lens as something static and monolithic, towards a postmodern interpretation of culture as a fluid and heterogeneous concept, language teaching has not yet adopted this view. Language teaching, and also language teaching materials, still tend to see culture as nation-based, which entails many dangers. Stopar (2015) explains that “equating cultures with nations can become a breeding ground for stereotypes since such discourse is prone to exclude the outliers, that is, anything that departs from what is stereotypical for the observed culture” (p.108). He continues to say that this is very often the case, that learning about a culture is learning about “what is (stereo)typical for these nations/cultures” (p.107). This reduction of culture to “easily assimilated national stereotypes and images that are easy to market” (Limon, 2007, p.93) does not provide students with the complex and dynamic aspects that culture consists of. Angouri (2010) also concurs, suggesting that defining culture based on the nation-state leads to an oversimplified and uniform view that misses the dynamic and discursive nature of how national identities are formed.

What ties in with this representation of an oversimplified national culture is a prevalent “tourism discourse” (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010) found in foreign language textbooks. Many studies have detected that textbooks often equate foreign cultures with countries. They typically present these countries through a touristic lens, imagining the student as a potential tourist to the country and highlighting places to see, food to eat and activities to do. Thus, focus is put on simplified surface-level images of the foreign countries / cultures (Bori, 2018; Corti, 2016; Hilliard, 2015; Kramersch & Vinall, 2015; Uzum et al., 2021). Therefore, students are not constructed as someone who could potentially live in this culture, but only as someone who is visiting (Kramersch & Vinall, 2015). Thurlow & Jaworski (2010) state that this tourist gaze “seeks encounters not relationships, contact non engagement, service not commitment” (p.235). Additionally, these representations are often overly positive, leaving aside unpleasant information. Hilliard (2015) argues that “[e]ven when the textbooks include negative information about travel, it is still described as a positive experience” (p.244).

Many authors agree that culture in language teaching should not be equated with nation, that it needs to be seen from a more fluid perspective. However, taking into account practical

implications of culture teaching in the foreign language learning classroom, Byram (2008) relativizes this argument, saying that:

[N]ational identities are perceived as linked to if not created by national language and traditions of teaching have made this assumption. Teachers thus feel most comfortable with the notion of national culture – even if they have to be wary of national stereotypes – as long as it is treated as a starting point that is later problematised, knowledge about a national culture is an appropriate means to an end. All pedagogy needs simplification, followed by refinement and complexity. (p. 248)

Thus, very much in line with Byram's statement and despite extensive critique from the research community, the tendency to include national cultures in EFL textbooks remains deeply embedded in language education. In the Austrian EFL textbooks examined in this thesis, "Australian culture" is framed as bound to the Australian state. This reflects a nationalized view that risks overlooking Australia's internal cultural complexity, while serving as a useful entry point.

In light of the debate outlined above, this thesis takes a mediating stance. Although essentialist and modernist views on national cultures risk oversimplification and the reproduction of stereotypes, dismissing them entirely overlooks their practical functions as valuable entry points, particularly in educational contexts, providing learners with a necessary starting framework. Especially at lower levels, offering students simplified perspectives about national cultures, is, as Byram points out, "an appropriate means to an end" (Byram, 2008, p. 248) since a purely non-essentialist, postmodern perspective may be too abstract or complex for initial engagement. This thesis therefore argues that essentialist, stereotypical representations can strategically be employed as a starting point, provided they are subsequently deconstructed and enriched through non-essentialist, post-modern approaches that highlight diversity, fluidity, and internal variation within cultures. Thus, the use of the term "Australian culture" in this thesis reflects a terminology and framing found in the materials under analysis, rather than a commitment to a singular, essentialist understanding.

2.4 Culture in the CEFR & in the Austrian curriculum

2.4.1 The CEFR and related documents

As this thesis is carried out in the Austrian foreign language learning context, local conceptualizations of culture, and (inter)cultural-learning need to be considered. The Austrian foreign language learning curriculum is based on and aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which was initially published by the Council

of Europe in 2001 and then revised and released with a Companion Volume in 2020. The CEFR provides overarching principles, goals and standards for modern language learning in Europe and profoundly influenced foreign language learning curricula all over Europe and beyond. With reference to culture learning, it “was the first major European policy document to give significant emphasis to the intercultural nature of language learning” (Kelly, 2012, p.411 as cited in Pölzleitner & Schumm Fauster, 2022). The incorporation of the CEFR and subsequent policies being based on it, led to a paradigm change in Austrian foreign language teaching. While in the past the curricula provided teachers with a list of content that students needed to learn, now the goal is communicative language competence which gives students “the ability to successfully communicate in private and professional everyday situations in a socio-linguistically appropriate way”(Lang-Heran, 2022).

Relevant to this thesis is the conceptualization of culture in the CEFR and the Austrian curriculum, and here the notion of *intercultural (communicative) competence* (ICC) proposed by Michael Byram (1997, 2021) plays a key role. It is a widely used framework for understanding the role of culture in language education that has influenced the CEFR profoundly. The model consists of five components (framed as *savoirs*), that have the following objectives:

1. Attitudes (*savoir être*): Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own
2. Knowledge (*savoirs*): Specific knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and the general knowledge of processes of societal and individual interaction
3. Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own
4. Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre / faire*): Ability to acquire new knowledge of cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction
5. Critical cultural awareness / political education (*savoir s’engager*): An ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one’s own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 2021, pp.62-67).

Most important to this thesis is the dimension of “knowledge”, because, as Risager (2018) pointed out, representations of the world in textbooks are constructions of knowledge of the world. For Byram (2021) there are two types of knowledge: knowledge about one’s own culture and the foreign culture, and knowledge of the processes of interaction that individuals and society carry out (*savoirs* and *savoir faire*). Knowledge about one’s own and a foreign culture is always relational, “it is knowledge acquired within socialisation in one’s own social groups

and often presented in contrast to the significant characteristics of one's national group and identity" (Byram, 2021, p.47). In the case of this thesis, which is about knowledge of Australia, this knowledge acquired in Austria will be different from knowledge acquired in the United States of America or an Asian country, as it is always viewed and presented through the eyes of one's own country's history and socialization. The amount of knowledge available and taught to students is dependent on the proximity of the two countries, not only geographically, but also how dominant and present a country is in the media and politics. If little knowledge is available and gets transmitted, there is often the danger of prejudiced and stereotyped stories, as there are no authentic points of contact between the two cultures (Byram, 2021). This is a potential reason as to why knowledge about Australia is taught so little and so stereotypically in Austria (Toprak & Aksoyalp, 2015).

In the CEFR (2001) the dimension "knowledge (*savoir*)" of intercultural competence is taken up in section "5.1.1 Declarative knowledge (*savoir*)" that consist of three parts: "5.1.1.1 Knowledge of the world", "5.1.1.2 Sociocultural knowledge", and "5.1.1.3 Intercultural awareness". The CEFR (2001) states under knowledge of the world that "[o]f considerable importance to the learner of a particular language is factual knowledge concerning the country or countries in which the language is spoken, such as its major geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features" (p.102). Although sociocultural knowledge can be considered a subset of knowledge of the world, the CEFR discusses it separately due to its particular relevance for language learning. Thus, the CEFR (2001) names various features that are characteristic of a culture, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 *Features Distinctly Characteristic of a Particular European Society and Its Culture (CEFR, 2001, p. 102-103)*

Everyday living	e.g.: - food and drink, meal times, table manners; - public holidays; - working hours and practices; - leisure activities (hobbies, sports, reading habits, media).
Living conditions	e.g.: - living standards (with regional, class and ethnic variations); - housing conditions; - welfare arrangements.
Interpersonal relations (including relations of power and solidarity)	e.g. with respect to - class structure of society and relations between classes; - relations between sexes (gender, intimacy); - family structures and relations; - relations between generations; - relations in work situations;

	- relations between public and police, officials, etc.; - race and community relations; - relations among political and religious groupings.
Values, beliefs and attitudes	in relation to such factors as - social class; - occupational groups (academic, management, public service, skilled and manual workforces); - wealth (income and inherited); - regional cultures; - security; - institutions; - traditions and social change; - history, especially iconic historical personages and events; - minorities (ethnic, religious); - national identity; - foreign countries, states, peoples; - politics; - arts (music, visual arts, literature, drama, popular music and song); - religion; - humour.
Body language	knowledge of the conventions governing such behaviour form part of the user/learner's sociocultural competence.
Social conventions	e.g. with regard to giving and receiving hospitality, such as: - punctuality; - presents; - dress; - refreshments, drinks, meals; - behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos; - length of stay; - leave-taking.
Ritual behaviour	in such areas as: - religious observances and rites; - birth, marriage, death; - audience and spectator behaviour at public performances and ceremonies; - celebrations, festivals, dances, discos, etc.

The last aspect that the CEFR (2001) mentions under “5.1.1 *Declarative knowledge (savoir)*” is “5.1.1.3 Intercultural awareness”. This describes an awareness for the fact that cultural knowledge is relational, as has been explained above. The CEFR (2001) states that “intercultural awareness covers an awareness of how each community appears from the perspective of the other, often in the form of national stereotypes” (p.103).

Since the CEFR's publication in 2001, many subsequent documents were produced to complement and expand on the CEFR's notion of intercultural competence. One of them is “Developing intercultural competence through education” (Barrett et al., 2014) that gives more

detailed and comprehensive information on how culture is conceptualized in European foreign language policies and how intercultural competence can be developed through education. Firstly, it acknowledges that culture is not easy to define, because culture is never homogenous, “cultural groups are always internally heterogeneous groups that embrace a range of diverse practices and norms that are often contested, change over time and are enacted by individuals in personalised ways” (Barrett et al., 2014, p.13). Taking this non-essentialist stance, the document still tries to point out different aspects of culture, namely material, social and subjective culture. Material culture is about cultural products, or “physical artefacts” that members of a cultural group make use of, such as food, clothes, or tools. On the other hand, social culture describes the “social institutions of the group”, for example the religion, language, laws, or cultural icons. Lastly, subjective culture is about beliefs, values and attitudes, norms, and collective memories of a cultural group. Barrett et al. (2014) summarize this by saying that:

Culture itself is a composite formed from all three aspects – it consists of a network of material, social and subjective resources. The total set of cultural resources is distributed across the entire group, but each individual member of the group appropriates and uses only a subset of the total set of cultural resources potentially available to them. (p.14)

In the years that followed, several more projects were carried out and documents were published by the Council of Europe (e.g., Barrett & Byram, 2022). Barrett & Borghetti (2025) attempted to bring all of these together in order to arrive at an up-to-date definition of culture and intercultural competence, which reiterates the above-mentioned characteristics of a culture, namely that it is fluid, having fuzzy group boundaries, internal heterogeneity, etc. They propose that “‘culture’ refers to the total set of material, social and psychological resources that are shared by a group of people” (p.99).

Whereas in the CEFR (2001) knowledge of a culture was equated with knowledge of a country, these more recent documents argue that culture is not necessarily only bound to a nation since smaller groups such as families, ethnic groups or neighbourhoods can have their own culture. However, they still express the view that nations also can have their own distinctive culture.

ICC is explained in detail in the publication by Barrett et al. (2014). Based on Byram's model of ICC (1997, 2021) components of intercultural competence mentioned are “attitudes”, “knowledge and understanding”, “skills and actions”. Again, this study focuses only on the dimension of “knowledge and understanding”, as these components are most explicitly encoded in textual and visual cultural representations. By contrast, attitudes and skills are not directly accessible through material analysis alone, since they are shaped through learner engagement,

classroom interaction and pedagogical interaction. Investigating these dimensions would therefore require a different methodological approach, such as classroom observation. While attitudes and skills remain essential aspects of intercultural communicative competence, they fall outside the scope of this study, which is concerned with how culture is represented within the teaching materials themselves.

One aspect mentioned by Barrett et al. (2014) that contributes to intercultural competence is “knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural orientations” (Barrett et al., 2014, p.20). Following Risager’s (2018) approach that representations should mirror knowledge, this means that representations of culture should encompass beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products of a certain culture.

An additional reference framework promoted by the Council of Europe is *the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (FREPA). It is directly referred to in the updated version, the Companion Volume, of the CEFR (CEFR Comp. Vol., 2020) providing detailed descriptors of the dimensions of knowledge, attitudes and skills that are needed for plurilingual and pluricultural competence, as these are not developed in the CEFR original version of 2001. The first dimension, “knowledge”, is split up in 2 major parts: “language” and “culture”. This was not done because the authors do not acknowledge the intricate relationship of language of culture, but for practical reasons, so the descriptors are clearer and easier to understand. Here, the authors also explicitly refer to the section of “declarative knowledge” in the CEFR, drawing a connection between this and their descriptors of knowledge of language and culture. Table 3 shows the key descriptors of knowledge of culture, each of them having multiple sub-descriptors:

Table 3 *Descriptors of "Knowledge" from "Culture" (Candelier et al., 2012, pp. 30–37)*

K8	Possesses knowledge about °what cultures are / how they work°
K9	Knows that cultural diversity and social diversity are closely linked
K10	Knows the role of culture in intercultural relations and communication
K11	Knows that cultures are continuously evolving
K12	Knows several phenomena relative to the diversity of cultures
K13	Knows that resemblances and differences exist between (sub)cultures
K14	Knows that identity is constructed, amongst other things, in relation to one or more °linguistic / cultural° cultural affiliations
K15	Knows how one °acquires / learns° a culture

Finally, putting together the core information from the CEFR (2001) and FREPA, the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) includes a chapter on plurilingual and pluricultural competence and its associated descriptors. It provides a Descriptor Scale called “Building on pluricultural repertoire” that offers different descriptors for each of the language levels A1-C2. The CEFR Companion Volume (2020) states that:

Key concepts operationalised in the scale at most levels include the following:

- recognising and acting on cultural, socio-pragmatic and sociolinguistic conventions/cues;
- recognising and interpreting similarities and differences in perspectives, practices and events;
- evaluating neutrally and critically. (p.124)

Table 4 offers some insight into the scale, as it lists some descriptors that exemplify how these key concepts are operationalized in the CEFR. This is not the full scale, only part of it to give some examples (full scale see Appendix). There is a clear progression up the scale, starting from simply recognising culturally based problems in everyday situations at the A levels, to explaining the characteristics of one’s own and other cultures at B1, effectively coping with most difficulties at B2, and finally, at level C, developing the ability to engage with, interpret and discuss cultural beliefs, values and practices.

Table 4 *Some Descriptors from the Scale "Building on Pluricultural Repertoire"*

C1	Can sensitively explain the background to and interpret and discuss aspects of cultural values and practices drawing on intercultural encounters, reading, film, etc.
B2	Can, in an intercultural encounter, recognise that what one normally takes for granted in a particular situation is not necessarily shared by others, and can react and express themselves appropriately.
B1	Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture. Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look “strange” to them in another sociocultural context may well be “normal” for the other people concerned.
A2	Can act appropriately in everyday greetings, farewells and expressions of thanks and apology, although they have difficulty coping with any departure from the routine.

Can recognise when difficulties occur in interaction with members of other cultures, even though they may not be sure how to behave in the situation.

- A1 Can recognise differing ways of numbering, measuring distance, telling the time, etc. even though they may have difficulty applying this in even simple everyday transactions of a concrete type.
-

2.4.2 The Austrian National Curriculum

After briefly having examined some influential documents that conceptualize culture and intercultural / pluricultural learning in a European context, a closer look at how these are incorporated in the Austrian curriculum is necessary. All of the coursebooks analysed in this study are used in Austrian academic secondary schools, called *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen (AHS)*. Therefore, the curriculum only for this school type will be looked at (*Lehrplan der AHS*, 2024).

Before the curriculum states its guidelines for each of the subjects, it provides some overarching, interdisciplinary topics (*Übergreifende Themen*), one being intercultural education (*interkulturelle Bildung*). Since 1992, intercultural education has been part of the Austrian national curriculum as an interdisciplinary teaching principle (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2019; Pölzleitner & Schumm Fauster, 2022). More recently, this principle has been updated via the “Interkulturelle Bildung – Grundsatzterlass 2017”. Pölzleitner & Schumm Fauster (2022) state that “[i]ts main goal is to help learners develop an open-minded attitude towards otherness, to raise their awareness of Eurocentric and ethnocentric beliefs and to provide them with the skills to explore different perspectives in today’s open, heterogenous society” (p.187). In the curriculum, intercultural education gets introduced as something that should be incorporated in all subjects, providing students with the tools to live in a diverse society and promoting an understanding of cultural diversity and how to deal with it.

More interesting however, is how the curriculum section for the first modern foreign language (in this case English) incorporates intercultural learning. In the beginning, it mentions a general *Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe* that foreign language teaching has to fulfil. It states that through learning a foreign language, students are able to exchange knowledge, experiences and information about cultures. Addressing inter- and transcultural issues is the task of teachers in order to give students an understanding of the diversity of cultures and sensitise them to cultural similarities and differences (*Lehrplan der AHS*, 2024, p.63). Hence, the focus on intercultural competence is already prominent from the very beginning. Subsequently, the curriculum provides further elaboration on how this can be implemented in the classroom, stating that

“Kultur- und landeskundliche Informationen werden dabei mit kommunikativen zielsprachlichen Situationen verbunden, handlungsorientiert vermittelt und bewusstseinsbildend genutzt” (*Lehrplan der AHS*, 2024, p.64). In upper secondary, the general aim of intercultural competence is to deepen the knowledge of other cultures and ways of living. The curriculum states: “Die vorurteilsfreie Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees, die bewusste Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten sowie die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen bzw. mit österreichischen Gegebenheiten sind dabei anzustreben” (*Lehrplan der AHS*, 2024, p.167).

As the subcategory *Länder und Kulturen* under general didactic principles of foreign language learning in upper secondary, the following statement is given “Durch Einblicke in Gesellschaft, Zivilisation, Politik, Medien, Wirtschaft, Kultur und Kunst der betreffenden Sprachräume soll ein grundlegendes inter- und transkulturelles Verständnis geschaffen werden” (*Lehrplan der AHS*, 2024, p.169). Evidently, there is still a focus on a transmission of cultural information, but at the same time engaging critically with it. Repeated reference is made to intercultural learning, clearly showing the connection to the CEFR. Additionally, focus is put on language areas rather than on nations, suggesting a shift towards a perspective that transcends nation-based conceptualisations of language and culture.

In sum, the integration of culture and intercultural competence into the Austrian curriculum reflects broader European developments initiated by the CEFR. Influenced by frameworks such as Byram’s model of ICC and FREPA, the Austrian curriculum has adopted a more comprehensive understanding of culture that moves beyond only the transmission of factual knowledge to include perspectives and critical reflection (ÖSZ (Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum), 2022). In other words, it can be said that European language policies and the Austrian curriculum conceptualize culture as something diverse and fluid, that is prone to be described by stereotypes and should therefore be evaluated critically and in an unbiased manner. Analysing and reflecting on similarities and differences between cultures, such as in their perspectives, practices and products should lead to an inter- and transcultural understanding. However, curricular guidelines do not provide insights into how culture learning really takes place in Austrian classroom. As established above, textbooks play a crucial role in language learning, Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019) point out, “the ubiquity of course books in everyday life in the FL classroom means that, in real terms, what is presented in those textbooks will constitute a significant input with regard to culture learning” (p.215). Consequently, the cultural content selected and represented in these materials plays a key role in shaping learner’s intercultural competence and it becomes essential to investigate how this takes place.

3. Representation in textbooks

3.1 Defining representation

Various theories of representation argue for different connections between language, meaning and culture. The concept of representation developed by Stuart Hall originates from his seminal 1997 work; however, this thesis refers to the third edition (2024), in which the original chapter is largely retained. Hall differentiates between three approaches to representation, the *reflective*, the *intentional* and the *constructionist* approach.

The reflective approach to representation claims that things (objects, places, etc.) already have inscribed meanings that exist “out there in the world” and language is merely describing / reflecting these meanings. In this sense, “language functions like a mirror, to *reflect* the true meaning as it already exists in the world” (S. Hall, 2024, p. 21). In contrast, the intentional approach states that through language the speaker only expresses their “personally intended meaning” (S. Hall, 2024, p. 11). This perspective assumes that meaning is determined by what the speaker/author aims to convey. While on the one hand, there is some truth in that, as language is always used to convey personal meaning, the goal is always communication and that “depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes” (S. Hall, 2024, p. 22).

The third approach, the constructionist approach, takes this social character of language into account. Hall (2024) points out, “[i]t acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of a language can fix meaning in language. Things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs” (p.22). Following this approach, Hall (2024) gives a more comprehensive definition of representation:

Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events. (p.13)

The concepts in our minds are what he calls “mental representations”, one out of two systems of representation. It consists of the concepts of things, people, places, etc., everyone has in their minds in order to interpret the world. Hence, meaning depends on these mental concepts that “represent” the world. Everyone has slightly different mental concepts, making sense of the world in different ways. This is where culture comes in again: if there is an overlap, if people broadly interpret the world similarly, it can be said that they share a culture. S. Hall (2024) states that

we are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways. That is indeed what it means when we say we ‘belong to the same culture’. Because we interpret the world in roughly similar ways, we are able to build up a shared culture of meanings and thus construct a social world which we inhabit together. (p.14)

A shared language, the second system of representation, thus enables us to represent our mental concepts and exchange meanings. There is a need to correlate the concepts and ideas with signs which represent these mental concepts. Therefore, meaning in culture is created through these two connected systems of representation that bring the three elements – “things”, concepts and signs together. In the first step, “things” in the real world (such as objects, people, but also abstract ideas) are linked to mental concepts. In the second step, we then establish a connection between the mental concept and a sign, organised in different languages. Meaning arises through the relationship between the “things”, our ideas about them, and the signs we use to represent those ideas (S. Hall, 2024). S. Hall (2024) argues that “[t]he process which links these three elements together is what we call ‘representation’” (p.15).

Hall (2024) conceptualizes representation as a process involving two interconnected systems: the connection between real objects and mental concepts, and the use of language to express them. These conceptual maps are not purely individual but are shared within a culture, enabling members of a society to make sense of the world in similar ways. Hence, these mental concepts are themselves shaped through processes of socialisation and language. This idea can be related to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which suggests that language influences how individuals perceive and categorize reality. As Kramsch & Hua (2016) point out “it makes sense that the language in which we were socialised should have an influence on the way we think of things and events” (p.44). From this perspective, conceptual systems are not neutral reflections of the world but are culturally and linguistically mediated. This reinforces a constructionist understanding of representation, in which meaning is actively produced rather than passively reflected.

To summarise this, Hall (2024) explains:

Constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others. (p.22)

3.2 Roles of textbooks in ELT

Cortazzi & Jin (1999, p.199) name different roles of the textbook, namely that a textbook can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner, and an ideology. I want to elaborate on a few of these roles in connection with culture in textbooks. Firstly, a coursebook is a resource in the sense that for many students it is the major source of cultural content in the classroom. Nowadays, students will (hopefully) also get confronted with cultural content outside the coursebook through online media, videos, newspaper articles, etc., but the coursebook will most likely prevail being the biggest input. Secondly, a coursebook is seen as an authority. Due to being written by a team of experts and getting sanctioned by the government, it is deemed reliable and valid. Cultural content may be seen as the “truth”, why this is problematic will be discussed in the following sections in more detail. Lastly, Cortazzi & Jin (1999) mention that a coursebook can be an ideology, “it reflects a worldview or cultural system, a social construction that may be imposed on teachers and students and that indirectly constructs their view of a culture” (p.200). As this is the main topic of this thesis, the following chapter will explore the issues surrounding cultural content in textbooks in more depth.

3.3 Textbooks and ideology

Hall’s (2024) fundamental approaches to representation can also be applied to textbooks. The reflective approach would regard the representation of the target country as a true reflection of reality, with the representation functioning as a “mirror of reality”. Karen Risager (2018) adopts this perspective, claiming that when looking at representations of the world in language textbooks, the reflective approach should be taken as the basis, assuming that meaning resides in the real world and is subsequently represented through language. In her seminal work, Risager (2018) analyses the representations of the world in language textbooks. Risager (2018) states that by focusing on representations of the world, she is focusing on knowledge of the world, more explicitly on the construction of knowledge of the world, that is conveyed in language textbooks. As explained above, representation is conceptualized as a two-step process: first, real-world objects, events or phenomena are linked to mental concepts, forming a shared system of meaning (object – idea), and second, these mental representations are expressed through language (idea – language). Using the reflective approach, the combination of object and idea constitutes a stable mental representation, which is then translated into linguistic form within the textbook. This implies that there is a relatively fixed and unified understanding of reality that can be accurately reflected in textbooks, which can therefore be seen as neutral carriers of pre-existing cultural knowledge. Risager (2018) explains that representations of the

world in textbooks should represent a “true” and “realistic” picture of reality. The language textbook should work as a mirror of reality and “must try to avoid representations of culture, society and the world that are incorrect, outdated, overly simplified and superficial, stereotypical or socially and culturally biased – whoever the author and whoever the preferred reader” (p.6). However, the question arises as to what a true and realistic picture of reality is, and if that even exists.

A constructionist perspective challenges this assumption by arguing that the relationship between object, idea and language is not fixed but shaped by social and cultural contexts. As Hall (2024) emphasizes, meaning is not simply reflected but actively constructed through discourse. From this viewpoint, textbooks do not present an objective reality but rather one possible representation among many, influenced by particular cultural perspectives and power relations.

This study adopts a position that draws on elements both of the reflective and the constructionist approach. On the one hand, following the constructionist approach, meaning is understood as socially and discursively constructed, and therefore never fixed or fully objective. Any representation, such as in textbooks, constitutes only a partial version of reality. On the other hand, the reflective perspective, as employed by Karen Risager (2018), remains relevant insofar as these representations often reflect dominant social meanings and widely shared assumptions. In this sense, what is presented as “reality” is not neutral, but corresponds to prevailing ideologies and power relations, so to some degree it is “a mirror of reality”.

Consequently, textbooks reflect social power and dominance relations and play an important role in their reproduction and legitimisation. They are vital in creating society’s accepted knowledge (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1992). This knowledge is always perspectival: “[i]t is socially situated and embedded in discourses, always seen and represented from somewhere and by some people with specific life histories, experiences and power relations” (Foucault, 1976, as cited in Risager, 2018, p. 2). Textbook knowledge in this case, is what Raymond Williams called the “*selective tradition* - someone’s selection, someone’s vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group’s cultural capital disenfranchises another’s” (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1992, p.4). Hence, textbooks contribute to defining what is seen as true, influencing ideas about knowledge, culture, values and beliefs.

This means that language textbooks are never neutral, they always embody a certain ideology (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1992). The definition of ideology by Chiapello & Fairclough (2002),

that is used by Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger (2015) is the one that will also be used here, namely that ideology is “a system of ideas, values and beliefs oriented to explaining a given political order, legitimizing existing hierarchies and power relations and preserving group identities [...] explaining in particular why one group is dominant and another dominated” (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002, p.187). Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger (2015) add to this definition that “ideology is not simply *any* system of beliefs; it is the dominant political, educational, or cultural value system that secures its legitimacy through institutionally circulated discourses” (p.3). Textbooks are such “institutionally circulated discourses”, because in most countries, like in Austria as well, textbooks are sanctioned by the government. Hence, the textbooks can potentially contribute to the legitimization of prevailing social and power structures.

As mentioned above, the transmission of knowledge through representation – such as that found in textbooks – is always a selective process. Since language is inherently linked to power, it plays a central role in sustaining or contesting political, economic and cultural structures. Rather than passively reflecting social relations, language actively contributes to their construction through including and excluding certain aspects. Thus, decisions about what is included or excluded shape how knowledge about the world is represented (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). These choices are not always made consciously by textbook authors or publishers; nevertheless, they often reveal the underlying ideological frameworks that inform the material (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015).

According to Bori (2022), “the representations of reality in coursebooks are often partial, distorted, overly simplified and biased” (p.124). Simplifying reality often goes hand in hand with a homogenisation of a foreign culture, which is commonly found in foreign language textbooks, when cultures get represented as a monolithic group (Canale, 2016; Hilliard, 2015; Uzum et al., 2021). This ties back in with the process of assimilation and expressing national essence, or intra-cultural sameness. This is often done through the “exclusion of groups, perspectives or non-hegemonic practices within the culture, therefore avoiding any type of cultural diversity whatsoever” (Canale, 2016, p.232). Gray (2013) points out two main problems here: *erasure* and *misrecognition*. These processes mostly affect marginalized groups, such as women, workers, ethnic and religious minorities, queer people, or in our case as explained later, Indigenous peoples. Firstly, erasure means the non-representation of these groups, who are erased from the narrative, making it seem like they do not exist in the constructed social reality. Secondly, misrecognition means the “demeaning or stereotypical

representation” of groups (Gray, 2013, p.6). For instance, as will be explained in more detail in section 4.2.2, Indigenous peoples are often represented as primitive and traditional. Nancy Fraser (1997) famously explains how these practices of misrecognition have grave consequences:

To be misrecognized [...] is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down on, or devalued in others’ conscious attitudes or mental beliefs. It is rather to be denied the status of a *full partner* in social interaction and prevented from *participating as a peer* in social life – not as a consequence of distributive inequity [...] but rather as a consequence of *institutionalized* patterns of interpretation and evaluation that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem”. (p.280)

Apple & Christian-Smith (1991) pointed out that in response to this, textbook authors have started to “mention” prior erased or misrecognized groups. However, their mention only served as a tokenistic “name check”, not exploring problematic issues surrounding these groups further. In their analysis of university-level global textbooks for Arabic, French and German, Uzum et al. (2021) found exactly this, namely only a tokenistic mentioning of minority groups. What is problematic, is that these marginalized groups, such as Indigenous peoples, are often “not represented as ‘carriers’ or ‘owners’ of the culture” (Canale, 2016, p.234), so that their existence as a valuable part of the culture gets delegitimised. Canale (2016) also argues that textbooks represent cultures through the principles of nationalism (as explained in chapter 2.3), namely cultural essence (being internally homogeneous) and diversity (being different from one another). He critiques this saying that:

These representation strategies do not favour students’ understanding of culture from a more modern or post-structuralist viewpoint: as the complex co-existence of conflicting ideologies, discourses and identities which operate in time and space, and which are embedded in wider historical processes. (p.236)

When analysing textbooks, Gray (2013) points out, it cannot be forgotten that textbooks are also commodities – products that are intended for sale as much as they are for teaching. This cannot be ignored when looking at cultural representations, as Apple & Christian-Smith (1992) argue that “[t]exts are caught up in a complicated set of political and economic dynamics” (p.4 in 1992). As a consequence, cultural representations included in textbooks are often shaped by commercial interests, including the need to align with dominant ideology and institutional or national educational standards, rather than promoting diverse perspectives (Gray, 2013).

Lastly it seems important to mention that we cannot assume that the knowledge conveyed in the texts and representations is also taught in the same way by teachers or understood by students. Teachers and students all bring their own ideologies, sociocultural backgrounds, and

perceptions of the world to the classroom, which greatly influence the interpretation of the texts and representations (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1992; Canale, 2020). It cannot be expected that teachers and students blindly accept knowledge conveyed in textbooks without questioning and critiquing it. However, as established above, textbooks are the foundation of the foreign language learning classroom and the biggest resource for language learning, which is why an analysis of cultural representation is still deemed important, even though there might always be the chance of those representations being contested in the classroom. Holbrook & Accurso (2025) explain this with regard to their analysis of the representation of Spanish culture in Spanish foreign language textbooks used in the USA, saying that:

While we cannot assume that students necessarily engage with all these texts uncritically, we do argue that the textbook's way of expression ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings potentially make them complicit in reproducing narratives of deficit thinking toward Spanish speakers. (p.15)

3.4 The conceptualization of cultural representation in textbooks adopted in this thesis

After an extensive review of how culture and its representation is conceptualized in different theoretical approaches and educational policies, it seems important to clearly define the conceptualization of culture and representation that is used in this thesis. As explained above, several aspects can coexist, and this will also be the case here. The representation of culture in school textbooks is examined from two perspectives. First, the textbooks are viewed as “carriers or containers of elements that represent social-cultural realities” (J. Li et al., 2024, p. 7). Similarly to Z. Li et al. (2023) and Keles & Yazan (2023), I view the EFL textbook as a cultural artifact that shapes learners' perception and expectation of the communities they may interact with in English. The textbook is thus seen as a container holding representations of – in the case of this study Australian national culture – these representations are then to be analysed using content analysis (see chapter 6). Through this approach, one can measure cultural content quantitatively and draw conclusions about it. Naturally, there are also shortcomings of this approach, as Weninger & Kiss (2013) point out. Counting instances of cultural content makes its meaning seem fixed, even though it has been developed above that it is socially constructed. Particularly in the second step of analysis, namely of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the conceptualization of culture in the textbook changes accordingly, acknowledging that it is influenced by various social and political contexts. Thus, the textbook is therefore no longer viewed as merely a simple “carrier of culture”, but as a medium that conveys a dominant cultural ideology. Hence, in contrast to culture being quantifiable, in a

second step, emphasis is put on how the dominant social, cultural and political discourse influence the construction of culture. This gives way to a more critical, qualitative, text analysis. As J. Li et al. (2024) summarise

In these studies, analyses aim to unpack power conflicts or ideologies by identifying, describing, and explaining that which is included in the textbook and that which is missed, excluded, or overshadowed in language teaching materials in relation to the social context, and how this is realised. (p.9)

To sum up, in this thesis, textbooks are understood both as carriers of culture and as active sites of meaning-making. On the one hand, textbooks present particular cultural content that can be examined through quantifiable analysis. On the other hand, they are seen as sites where cultural representation operates in a dynamic and cyclical manner. While they draw on existing cultural meanings and thus appear to reflect reality, these meanings are themselves socially constructed and shaped by specific cultural contexts. In selecting, organizing, and presenting particular aspects of culture, textbooks inevitably privilege certain perspectives over others, often aligning with dominant discourses. As a result, the representations they offer are not neutral or exhaustive, but partial, reflecting prevailing assumptions about knowledge, culture, and identity. Through their institutional authority these representations gain legitimacy and can become naturalized as common sense. In this way, textbooks not only reflect dominant ideologies but might also contribute to their ongoing reproduction, reinforcing existing power relations and shaping how learners come to understand the world. The following chapter will explore more deeply how these representations can subsequently be analysed.

4. Analysing cultural representations in EFL textbooks

Language textbooks are the main vehicles through which students are exposed to different cultural representations concerning target language cultures. They serve as “windows to the world” (Risager, 2021) and are “providing learners with their first authoritative glimpses of the target culture” (Risager & Chapelle, 2013, p. 1620). Risager (2023) defines cultural content in coursebooks as “the various textual and visual representations of a potentially wide spectrum of aspects such as people, everyday life and communication, ideas and concerns, languages, institutions, geography and history” (p.1). Hence, the question arises as to what these “glimpses of the target culture are”, what cultural contents are represented that construct the target culture in the textbook. These representations have been analysed from different viewpoints, using different methodological approaches. In the following, I will therefore present an overview of studies which have conducted content analysis of EFL textbooks. Foreign language textbook studies focussing on cultural representations mostly use one (or a mix of) the following three

methodological approaches: content analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and semiotic analysis. In two independent systematic reviews of textbooks studies about cultural content, J. Li et al. (2024) and Zhang et al. (2024) both showed that content analysis seems to be employed most frequently out of the three approaches. These studies will show general tendencies of which cultural themes prevail in the representation of foreign cultures in the language learning coursebooks. To complement this, studies employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) in combination with other methods, such as semiotic analysis, will be discussed in order to synthesize findings regarding more nuanced representations. Specifically, studies analysing the representation of Indigenous peoples and cultures will be looked at here. While content analysis can deliver results of *what* is shown in the textbook, CDA can help explore *why* it is shown and what ideologies are behind it.

4.1 Content Analysis

In content analysis as a quantitative method to measure the frequency of cultural content, different frameworks have been applied. According to J. Li et al. (2024) the most common ones are Kachru & Nelson's (2006) model of World Englishes, Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) distinction between target, international and source culture, the 4P model of culture by Yuen (2011), and categorising cultural content using the *Big C small c* dichotomy. The influential model of World Englishes developed by Kachru & Nelson (2006) categorizes the use of English into an inner, outer, and expanding circle, focusing on the geographical spread, normative status, and sociolinguistic roles of English worldwide. Based on this framework, studies categorize different cultures and analyse their frequencies. Similarly, studies applying the framework by Cortazzi & Jin (1999) categorize cultural content into target (where English is spoken as a first language), source (learners' home cultures), and international cultures. Both of these frameworks can offer valuable insights into cultural content of a EFL textbook, but are not suitable for this thesis. These models focus on the cultural content of an entire textbook or of a generic unit, rather than on a single unit that already represents a specific national culture. In this respect, these frameworks cannot provide any insights into how Australia is represented, as they have a broader focus. However, Yuen's (2011) 4P framework and the difference between Big C small c cultures are useful and valuable analytical tools for the present research aim, which is why they will be presented in more detail below.

4.1.1 Big C small c

The present study draws on a widely used distinction between *Big C* and *small c* cultural elements. Broadly speaking, Big C culture are the easily visible, formal aspects of culture such as literature, arts, history, geography, education, etc. In contrast, small c culture are intangible

aspects of a culture, such as cultural values, greetings, body language, daily routine, etc. There are different conceptualizations of this distinction and it quickly becomes apparent that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the two. The basis for a lot of studies are the works by Chen (2004), K.-Y. Lee (2009) and Peterson (2004) that provided checklists for cultural themes belonging to Big C and small c culture. As these lists are quite extensive, many authors simplified and summarised those, creating their own checklists of analytic criteria, which is why there is no clear delimitation and definition of this dichotomy. Below, a brief overview of studies in this area will be presented.

In their study of three international EFL textbooks, Sadeghi & Sepahi (2018) found a substantial dominance of small c culture, making up almost 70% of the cultural content. Here, the theme *value and belief* was significantly most frequent, accounting for almost one third of all of the cultural themes. This means that *value and belief* was included more often than all of the Big C themes together. Similar results were gained by Liu & Laohawiriyanon (2013), who, in their analysis of Chinese college English textbooks for listening and speaking, also detected a dominance of *values*. *Values* made up more than half of all of the cultural themes included in the textbooks, followed by Big C theme *science*. Small c was also predominant in the analysis of the new *Headway* series. Lasekan et al. (2024) examined the vocabulary lists of the different books of this series and found that across all proficiency level, small c cultural elements prevail. Even though the frequency of both small c and Big C elements increases steadily with the proficiency levels, Big C cultural elements never eclipse small c themes. The authors of this study argue that this approach emphasizes “practical cultural knowledge essential for real-world interactions” (Lasekan et al., 2024, p.4945).

Nevertheless, contradicting results have also been obtained. In her analysis of Italian FL textbooks used at university level in Poland, Kaliska (2022) found that cultural elements such as art, history, geography and literature were more prominent than small c items.

Raigón-Rodríguez (2018) looked at international EFL textbooks (level B2) used at tertiary level in Spain and also found a prevalence of Big C themes. Overall, more than twice as many Big C themes were found as small c themes, especially the category of “literature, films, music and mass media / Icons / Celebrities” was very prominent. This finding was confirmed by subsequent studies, such as Sadeghi & Sepahi (2018) and Lasekan et al. (2024), who both showed “music” and “art” were the most common categories within the Big C framework, but, as pointed out above, were not as dominant as other, small c themes.

To sum up, in contemporary EFL textbooks there is a tendency for a domination of small c over Big C cultural elements, especially including a high frequency of cultural values and beliefs.

Nevertheless, some contradictory results have also been encountered, which is why no clear conclusions can be drawn. Although this distinction can reveal interesting insights, it is not adopted in this study due to its limited analytical precision. As mentioned in the beginning, various conceptualizations of this binary exist, which makes it impracticable for this thesis. Instead, the study draws on a more differentiated framework, which allows for more nuanced and in-depth analysis of cultural representation.

4.1.2 4P Model

Yuen's (2011) framework divides cultural content in coursebooks into *products*, *practices*, *perspectives* and *persons*. This 4P model is based on the three dimensions of culture – products, practices, and perspectives - brought forward by US National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1999) and Moran's (2001) framework of products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons. Yuen (2011) combined these frameworks and developed the 4P model, which, according to Zhang et al. (2024) and J. Li et al. (2024), is one of the most frequently used frameworks in content analysis in this research area. It has also been incorporated in the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Although this model was originally developed in an US American educational context, it still serves as a valuable framework for analysis in the European / Austrian EFL context, due to its conceptual alignments with parts of European frameworks of intercultural competence. In particular, the policy document by Barrett et al. (2014) developed for the Council of Europe, emphasises that intercultural knowledge entails “knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural orientations” (p.20). This conceptualization closely mirrors the categories of the 4P model (products, practices, persons and perspectives), suggesting a shared underlying basis. Consequently, the 4P model can be seen not as a culturally bound framework, but as a transferable analytical tool that is compatible with European educational discourses on culture and intercultural learning.

Nevertheless, this framework has its own limitations, as it tends to conceptualize culture as stable, bounded and internally coherent, producing an essentialist understanding of nationalized culture. From a contemporary post-structuralist perspective, such a view can be considered reductive, and the CEFR for example has already evolved towards a transnational paradigm. However, while the research and the CEFR have advanced, textbooks in practice have not and largely construct culture in an essentialized and nation-based manner (Uzum et al., 2021). The 4P model mirrors this structured representation and therefore aligns closely with the logic of the textbooks. The application of the 4P model is also consistent with the conceptualisation of

the representation of culture in textbooks used in this thesis (see chapter 3.4). Consequently, employing the 4P framework allows for a systematic analysis of how culture is represented in the material. In the following sections, each of the cultural categories will get defined and prior research results presented.

Products

In his own research, Yuen (2011) found the following *products* of culture: *entertainment* (movies & television), *food, merchandise, print* (books, newspapers, literary works) and *tourist attractions*. Subsequent studies using this framework confirmed this categorisation, as they also classify *food, tourist attractions* and *literary works* into cultural *products* (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021; J. Lee & Li, 2020; Vodopija Krstanović & Weber, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024). However, these studies also detected other cultural *products* that were not part of Yuen's (2011) original framework, such as *famous cities and towns, art forms and artistic works* (Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024), *famous organisations, scientific inventions, and native animals* (Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024).

Cultural *products* appears to be a dominant dimension across many previous studies. In Yuen's (2011) own study of lower secondary EFL textbooks used in Hong Kong, *products* was the most prominent category. In an analysis of lower secondary Croatian and global EFL textbooks, Vodopija Krstanović & Weber (2020) also found that cultural *products* amount for more than half of the cultural content. A significant dominance of *products* was also detected in a study of intermediate textbooks "English for Iraq", which is authored and published in England, but produced specifically for the Iraqi context (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019), and in another one analysing primary ELT textbooks published in Hong Kong (J. Lee & Li, 2020).

In an analysis of three global grammar textbooks used in Iranian universities Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh (2020) detected that, even though being only the second most frequent cultural dimension, *products* still made up more than a third of the cultural content in these books. Similarly, Davidson & Liu (2020) concluded that in Japanese elementary EFL textbooks *products* was a prominent category, accounting for more than 40% of the cultural content. In another study focussing on a local Indonesian senior high school EFL textbook, *products* was also found to be the second most frequent category of cultural content, making up almost 30% of it (Hakim & Wahyuni (2024).

These studies confirm a primary focus of many textbooks on "cultural artefacts" and tangible aspects of culture, which are part of the surface culture (Frank, 2013). This predominance of

products is contradictory to the above-mentioned prevalence of small c over Big C cultural content, arguing that Big C can be equated with *products* and small c with *practices* and *perspectives*. When comparing the studies, and especially the textbooks used in them, two aspects stand out. First, most of the textbooks in which *products* dominated were aimed at lower-level, and especially younger, students, whereas textbooks including more small c items targeted students at university and language institutes. A connection could be drawn here and I would argue that the proportion of *products* and small c change with increasing language level and age of students, favouring surface-level cultural products in the beginning but prioritising small c cultural items at later stages. Second, authoring and publishing circumstances seem to have an influence. Textbooks that present more cultural *products* are mostly locally authored or at least targeted for a specific national audience, whereas textbooks that put a greater focus on small c culture are mostly internationally authored and published (e.g. *Headway*, *Top Notch*, *Summit*). Based on these two assumptions, I would infer that language level and learner age, and circumstances of publication influence the representation of cultural *products* vs small c culture heavily.

Practices

The second category of cultural content in the 4P framework is *practices*. Yuen (2011) includes *customs*, *daily life*, *sports*, and *society* into this dimension. All of these aspects get validated by subsequent studies which also identified these aspects and coded them into the *practices* dimension. Moreover, the aspect of *customs* gets defined in more detail by stating that it includes festivals, traditions, holidays, celebrations (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021; J. Lee & Li, 2020; Vodopija Krstanović & Weber, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024). Zhang, Li, & Chang (2024) also add *lifestyles*, *environmental and wildlife protection*, and *historical events* to cultural *practices*.

In terms of relevance, the dominance of cultural *practices* varies. It was found to be the most dominant category in studies analysing higher-level coursebooks, for example global grammar textbooks (Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020), and local Indonesian upper secondary textbooks (Hakim & Wahyuni, 2024). However, in the majority of studies, cultural *practices* make up a smaller portion of the cultural content in the coursebooks. In their analysis of primary EFL coursebooks published in mainland China and Hong Kong, J. Lee & Li (2020) came to the conclusion that for the Chinese textbooks, cultural *practices* made up not even one fifth of the cultural content, however for the textbooks published in Hong Kong, this dimension accounted for almost 30%. Similar results were gained by Vodopija Krstanović & Weber (2020), who

found that whereas for the international book, *practices* came second (around a quarter of the cultural content), for the local Croatian textbook, *practices* only made up around 10% of the cultural content, coming in third. Other studies also detected a similar lack of cultural *practices* in the coursebooks, such as Akandere (2021) in her Master's thesis on Turkish lower secondary EFL coursebooks. In Davidson & Liu's (2020) study Japanese elementary EFL coursebooks, *practices* made up less than 10% of the cultural content.

While cultural *practices* are occasionally emphasized, particularly in higher-level or global EFL textbooks, the general tendency suggests that they are often underrepresented. Despite some notable exceptions, such as textbooks from Hong Kong or certain internationally published books, studies indicate that in most books cultural practices tend to occupy a rather minor portion of the cultural content, especially in locally produced or lower-level materials.

Persons

The category of persons refers to individuals and social groups associated with the (national) culture (Yuen, 2011). Zhang, Li, & Chang (2024) give the following examples: “writers, poets, scientists, philosophers, educators, politicians, entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, actors, athletes, and astronauts” (p. 3404). However, famous fictional characters from stories or movies are excluded from this category, as they are seen as cultural *products* (Yuen, 2011).

The dimension of *persons* shows a lot of variability in terms of frequency. Two studies found *persons* to be the most dominant category, making up more than half of the cultural representation (Akandere, 2021; Davidson & Liu, 2020). Other studies also found a significant percentage of the *persons* dimension, identifying it as the second most frequent dimension in their analysis. For example, Abdulridha Obaid et al. (2019) found that famous people made up more than a quarter of all of the cultural representations in “English for Iraq”. Similarly, in Hakim & Wahyuni's (2024) study of senior high school Indonesian EFL textbooks *persons* made up around 20% of all of the cultural content; however, *products* and *practices* were both more prominent by accounting for around 30% of cultural content each. When comparing locally and internationally produced and utilized textbooks, differences are visible. Vodopija Krstanović & Weber (2020) determined that in the local Croatian textbooks, *persons* is the second most frequent dimension, whereas in the international one it is the third, accounting for a proportion of only 16%. *Persons* was the most insignificant category in the study by Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh (2020). In their analysis of global grammar textbooks, *persons* did not even account for 10% of the cultural content.

There is no clear tendency visible whether *persons* play a major or a minor role in cultural representations in EFL coursebooks, as results from studies vary a lot. Generally, it can be deduced that this category does tend to make up at least a fifth of the cultural content, rather more with lower-level textbooks and less with higher-level textbooks.

Perspectives

Cultural *perspectives* can be seen as the “hidden level of culture” (Gu, 2002, p.8, as cited in Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024). According to Yuen’s (2011) framework, this category consists of *inspirations*, *myths* and *world views*. Many authors also add the general description of a *culture’s values & beliefs*, and *superstitions* to this dimension (Vodopija Krstanović & Weber, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024).

In contrast to a variability of other dimensions, within the 4P framework the *perspectives* dimension is consistently the least represented across a wide range of ELT textbooks. Only in one study, namely in Hakim & Wahyuni (2024), did it occur nearly as frequently as the other categories, whereas in almost all the others, *perspectives* made up an extremely small portion. In some studies, *perspectives* amounted to between 5-10% of cultural representations (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019; Ariawan et al., 2022; Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020), whereas in most others, it did not even make up 1% of the cultural content (Davidson & Liu, 2020; J. Lee & Li, 2020; Vodopija Krstanović & Weber, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024).

Hence, it can be clearly deduced that there is a pronounced absence of cultural *perspectives* from EFL textbooks across different national contexts and language levels. In contrast to cultural *products*, which are part of the surface culture, *perspectives* are part of the deep culture (Frank, 2013). Due to the under-representation of this dimension, students “miss opportunities to discuss and then be familiar with the deep culture of values, beliefs, ideals, meanings and ideas” (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019, p.95).

In summary, the reviewed studies reveal a clear tendency of cultural representation in a range of EFL coursebooks for different national education systems towards representing mostly surface-level culture. Cultural *products* consistently dominate textbook content, offering students tangible and surface aspects of the culture. *Practices* and *persons* appear in varying degrees, while the representation of *perspectives* remains significantly limited. This suggests a lack of depth in engaging with a more comprehensive understanding of culture. Interestingly, when combining these results with the ones from the analysis of Big C and small c cultural elements, some contradictions are made visible. Even though cultural *perspectives* seem to be

marginalized when applying the 4P framework, values and beliefs were extremely frequent in the studies that employed the Big C small c approach. A possible explanation could be the different circumstances of authoring and publishing, as the studies that used the 4P approach mostly looked at local EFL coursebooks, whereas the Big C small c framework was applied to mainly international coursebooks. Additionally, varying proficiency levels could have an influence. Although the coursebooks that were analysed with the 4P model all had different proficiency levels and there was a lack of *perspectives* observed in all of them, the books of the slightly higher levels included at least a little more *perspectives* (Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020; Hakim & Wahyuni, 2024). This might also explain the frequent occurrence of values and beliefs in the university-level books of the big C small c analysis – that *perspectives* are only incorporated more frequently in higher-level coursebooks.

4.2 Critical Discourse Studies and Indigenous representation

This thesis puts a special focus on analysing the representation of Australian Indigenous cultures in Austrian EFL coursebooks. To serve this purpose, first of all, a brief definition of what it means to be an Indigenous Australian should be given. The chapter then continues with an overview of prior studies exploring the topic of representation of Indigenous peoples and cultures in foreign language textbooks.

4.2.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

An official definition still used by the Australian Government is that an Indigenous Australian is “a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives” (The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2020). This means that the correct and most inclusive term to be used when talking about Indigenous Australians is *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*. Using only the term *Indigenous* without a reference to Australia is too broad and generic for some communities, because it is used to refer to Indigenous peoples in the whole world. Only using the term *Aboriginal peoples* should also be avoided as it does not include Torres Strait Islander peoples, and does therefore not refer to all First Peoples of Australia. A term that might be fitting in principle is *First Nations*, but it is used to refer to Canadian Aboriginal peoples, which is why it is contested as a denomination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Using terms such as *Aborigines* or abbreviating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to “ATSI” is outdated, offensive and inappropriate to use (Bunda et al., 2023). Capitalisation in words such as *Aboriginal person* or *Indigenous Australian peoples* is also important. One last vital difference is the one between

peoples and *people*. While the term *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* refers to the diverse communities across Australia, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people* refers to individuals (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.). In this thesis, terminology is used with careful attention to inclusivity and specificity.

In 2021, the last year in which an official estimate of the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was published, they made up 3.8% of the total Australian population, amounting to almost 100.000 people. When looking at the age structure, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people show a higher birth rate and lower life-expectancy than the non-Indigenous population, meaning that they have a younger age structure than the non-indigenous population, with a median age of 24 years, compared to 38 years. One third of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is under 15 years, whereas only 17,9% of the non-Indigenous population are in the same age group (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). In 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a life expectancy that was eight years lower than that of the non-Indigenous population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023b). Lastly, it is interesting to look at where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live, namely generally in cities. Australia is divided into five classes of remoteness: Major Cities of Australia, Inner Regional Australia, Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia, Very Remote Australia. This remoteness scale provides information about relative geographic access to services (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023a). More than one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in major cities, and another quarter in Inner Regional Australia. Overall, almost 85% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in non-remote areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Lastly, a brief historical overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be given. This should serve as a conceptual background of cultural content about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will be found in the coursebook chapters and does not aspire to be a comprehensive historical chapter. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been living on the continent of Australia for over 65.000 years, they are thus the world's oldest continuous living culture. In 1770 James Cook raised the British flag in Queensland, claiming possession of the country, and in 1788 the first fleet arrived in Port Jackson and British settlement in Australia began. After around a century, first official regulations were made. In 1897 The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act (QLD) pretended to be protective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland was something else

entirely (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b). It allowed 'Aboriginal Protectors' to move Aboriginal people to isolated reserves. These reserves

operated initially to separate unproductive, ill and 'problematic' Aboriginal people from those working efficiently in European industries – pastoral, agricultural, marine and domestic. As time passed, they also became labour reservoirs from which Aboriginal contract workers could be drafted to white rural and urban employers. (Museum of Australian Democracy, n.d.)

This act divested Aboriginal people of their basic civil rights and allowed government officials to move Aboriginal people and their children. Until 1965, the so-called Director of Native Welfare was “the legal guardian of all ‘aboriginal’ children whether their parents [were] living or not” (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b). At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, all other Australian states installed laws that made government officials the legal guardians of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, making it possible to separate children from their families (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b). These separated children are known as the Stolen Generations. Over decades, multiple generations of Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families by governments, churches and welfare organisations under the claim that it was in their own interest to be raised by non-Indigenous families or in institutions. There are no official numbers as to how many children were affected, but it can be assumed that “[a]ffecting anywhere from 1 in 10 to 1 in 3 children, there is not a single Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community who has not been forever changed” (The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2025). It was not until 1969 that all states repealed these laws, which had framed the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as “protection” (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b).

In 1901 Australia became a federation, and its constitution explicitly excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from being counted in the national census. Only in 1967 was the constitution amended and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were counted as part of the national population for the first time. However, as a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were removed from the constitution altogether. It took until 1992 for them to be recognised as the First Peoples of Australia, overturning the notion of terra nullius (empty land) (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b). Nevertheless, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are still not acknowledged in the Constitution today, a referendum in 2023 failed to achieve this (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-a). At least in 2008 the Australian government officially acknowledged past injustices by publicly apologising to

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the forced removal of children throughout history (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.-b).

Overall, this short historical summary should underscore the profound injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly through processes of dispossession, systematic discrimination, and the forced removal of children known as the Stolen Generations. While formal steps towards reconciliation, such as the 2008 national apology, represent important symbolic acknowledgements, they do not erase the long-term social, cultural and political consequences of these policies. Moreover, ongoing debates surrounding constitutional recognition and the outcome of the recent referendum suggest that full equality and inclusion remain contested within Australian society. These historical and contemporary dynamics are crucial for understanding how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented in educational materials and whose perspectives are privileged or marginalized.

In the analysis later on, a distinction will sometimes be made between White Australians, understood here as the non-Indigenous population of Australia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The term White is used to denote individuals who are not of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, while acknowledging that such a categorisation is necessarily reductive. As highlighted by Anita Heiss in *Am I Black enough for You?* (2022), questions of identity, appearance, and belonging within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are complex, and there are many individuals who may be perceived as white, while identifying as Indigenous. Even though a full engagement with these issues is beyond the scope of this thesis, this clarification is intended to make explicit that the analytical distinction employed in this thesis does equate White with Non-Indigenous and not necessarily with skin colour.

4.2.2 Review of studies about Indigenous representation in textbooks

In the following, a brief overview of prior studies exploring the topic of Indigenous representation in foreign language coursebooks is given. Indigenous here refers to Indigenous peoples and cultures all over the world, not only Australia but also Norway, Chile, New Zealand, etc. This is due to a lack of studies solely about the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in foreign language textbooks. Therefore, I have decided to include representations of other Indigenous peoples as well, as the representation of different Indigenous peoples and cultures tends to be very similar, as will be explored below. It is important to specifically analyse the representation of Indigenous cultures and peoples in textbooks, because textbooks often present a selective version of reality, which can contribute

to the creation and reinforcement of simplified and stereotypical views on Indigenous and marginalized cultures (Murray, 2023). When looking at the representation of Indigenous peoples, relationships of power between the Indigenous and the non-indigenous, and the Indigenous and the reader, present a central issue. The origin of this inquiry into racialized power dynamics stems from the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire, who, in the 1960s, developed a critical pedagogy that should encourage teachers “to critically examine the politics of unequal relations of power manifested in the everyday lives of people and to take actions for social transformation” (Taylor-Mendes, 2009, p.66). Taylor-Mendes (2009) argues that according to Freire “questioning who benefits from the existing power structures is integral to change [...] [in order not to] reproduce or legitimize unequal power relationships both in and outside our classroom” (p.66).

To begin with, many studies found that Indigenous peoples are only marginally present. Véliz-Campos et al. (2024) analysed the socio-semiotic cultural representations of Indigenous peoples in Chilean EFL coursebooks and found that the presence of different Indigenous peoples was very peripheral. When representations did occur, they mostly depicted Indigenous people as passive subjects rather than active participants in contemporary society. This finding was also produced by other studies, such as Brown & Habegger-Conti (2017), who undertook an analysis of 800 images of Indigenous people from different Norwegian lower secondary EFL textbooks, and showed that Indigenous people were mostly portrayed as passive in contrast to active non-Indigenous counterparts. For example, while a non-Indigenous girl is actively using a radio, the Indigenous boy gets his face painted. Other examples are found where Indigenous people just pose for photos without actually doing something. They also observed that Indigenous peoples were represented as only belonging to the past and being detached from the modern world. Ho (2021) made use of settler colonial theory in order to critically look at EFL and Chinese textbooks used in Taiwan and also found this discourse of modernity versus tradition in his analysis. In contrast, one study, analysing a rather recently published EFL textbook (2020) used in Norway, came to a contrary conclusion, identifying many instances where Indigenous people were actively participating in modern life, depicting them doing different activities and showing them as part of contemporary society (Murray, 2023). Hence, it can be argued that first changes towards a more comprehensive portrayal of Indigenous peoples are visible, representing them not only as frozen in the past but also as participants of modern society.

Nevertheless, many textbooks still represent Indigenous peoples through stereotypical images, showing them in traditional clothing and settings, and “solely representative of ‘heritage’”

(Véliz-Campos et al., 2024, p.10). Portraying Indigenous peoples only as “keepers of tradition”, spiritual and primitive in nature, reduces their complex identities to simplified cultural markers (Ho, 2021; Véliz-Campos et al., 2024). Brown & Habegger-Conti (2017) argue that “there is a marked trend in EFL textbooks analyzed to depict indigenous cultures as one-sided, and thus stereotypical, and to reducing otherwise complicated cultures to a few, superficial characteristics” (p.30). This leads to an essentialist view of the Indigenous culture, where collective traits are emphasized over individual agency, leading to a simplification of culture into a single, uniform image reinforcing existing stereotypes (Murray, 2023). This essentialist view on culture goes hand in hand with a finding by Brown & Habegger-Conti (2017), who observed that Indigenous people “often go unnamed [...] and serve as representatives of an entire culture, way of life, or particular concept that students are learning” (p.23). Therefore, Indigenous people often get collectivized, their culture therefore simplified and represented solely through stereotypes.

When looking at representations of Indigenous peoples, one aspect that gets detected in many studies is *Othering* (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Ho, 2021; Murray, 2023; Véliz-Campos et al., 2024). Holliday et al. (2016) give the following definition:

By Othering we mean imagining someone as alien and different to “us” in such a way that “they” are excluded from “our” “normal”, “superior” and “civilised” group. Indeed, it is by imaging a foreign Other in this way that ‘our’ group can become more confident and exclusive. (p.2)

With regard to Indigenous peoples in textbooks, Othering does not necessarily refer to the relationship between the reader / student and the Indigenous people, but between the two imagined communities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. On a linguistic level, Othering is often done through the use of different pronouns for the different groups. While the “insider” group, the majority of society, is “us”, the “outsiders”, the Others, in our case, the Indigenous, are “them” (Smith, 2021). In his analysis of Chinese language textbooks used in Taiwan, Ho (2021) revealed that Othering the Indigenous groups from the Han Chinese (non-Indigenous) was done through the use of different pronouns. When talking about the Indigenous groups, only third person pronouns were used, mostly *they*, both in the sense of plural and collective. In contrast, the Han Chinese were always referred to through *I* or *we*, creating this dichotomy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. In the analysis of a task where students are asked to reflect on a famous Australian speech, namely the apology to the Indigenous peoples of Australia in 2008 by Kevin Rudd, Murray (2023) points out a direct reference to the use of personal pronouns. Students are asked to critically think about the use

of *we* in the speech, alluding to *we* being used for the non-Indigenous Australian population, excluding the Indigenous peoples. This is an interesting practical example of how this issue of Othering is actively picked up by the coursebook.

Lastly, it seems important to give an overview of the main findings of studies that analysed representation of Indigenous people through images, looking at aspects such as eye contact, angle, composition, lightning, etc. For instance, Véliz-Campos et al. (2024) found in their analysis that Indigenous people were often depicted from distant, secondary positions. This confirmed what Brown & Habegger-Conti (2017) observed as well, namely that Indigenous people were shown from a distance, creating an impersonal framing. This impersonality was also created through little eye contact between the reader (or in reality, the camera) and the Indigenous persons in the books, resulting in an uneven power relationship between the two. This gets even more unbalanced when Indigenous persons get depicted from a high vertical angle, making them seem small and insignificant (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017). However, in the recently published (2020) Norwegian textbook that Murray (2023) analysed, most Indigenous people made direct eye contact with the reader.

To sum up, it can be said that there is a tendency of language learning coursebooks to depict Indigenous people only in their traditional surroundings, making it seem like they are stuck in the past. This calculated stereotypical portrayal ignores their existence in modern society and paints them as the Other. Véliz-Campos et al. (2024) state that this image conveyed in coursebooks is an “oversimplification and misrepresentation of indigenous societies, distorting the dynamic nature of their cultures and histories” (p.15). Nevertheless, there are first changes visible that show a more critical and reflective representation of Indigenous peoples and cultures, such as in the study carried out by Murray (2023).

5. Methodology

This thesis carried out its analysis through a mixed-methods approach, analysing one coursebook unit about Australia from three different Austrian EFL coursebooks each. This research is fundamentally based on the work of Yuen (2011) and his 4P model and takes into account many subsequent studies that analysed the representation of culture in foreign language textbooks (as explained in chapter 4.1.2). Together with critical discourse analysis, this thesis attempts to shed light on the representation of “Australian culture” in Austrian EFL textbooks in order to address this research gap. For the purpose of this thesis, culture is approached in the way it is predominantly constructed in the textbooks: as tied to the “nation-state”. This study

therefore adopts this nation-based understanding of culture as an analytical starting point – not as an uncritical endorsement. This approach is particularly pertinent in the case of Australia, which is frequently represented as a geographically bounded and self-contained space, reinforcing the tendency to frame culture within its national borders. By aligning the analytical lens with the textbooks' own construction of culture, this research is able to systematically examine which cultural *products, practices, perspectives, persons* are selected, emphasized and omitted. In a second step, it shifts its focus onto Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and “their culture”. Here, the understanding of culture is not bound to a space, but instead confined to a specific ethnic cultural group, framed in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, heritage, and tradition. Again, as they are treated as one group by the coursebooks, this view is adopted for analysis purposes for the time being, but will be criticised further on.

This thesis aims at answering the following Research Questions:

- 1) What cultural content is used to represent Australian culture in Austrian EFL coursebooks?
- 2) How do these representations differ across different coursebooks and grade levels?
- 3) How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture represented in Austrian EFL coursebooks?

The following sections explain the methodology applied in order to answer these questions in more detail.

5.1 Textbooks

For the study, three coursebooks were chosen. The official Austrian school textbook list, which lists all approved textbooks for each type of school, was reviewed for all EFL textbooks in all grades to find ones that include an entire unit on Australia. Four books were found, but one, *way2go! 5* (2023) was eliminated after further investigating the specific unit, because it covered only minimal aspects of Australia but was rather about Indigenous Peoples overall. Hence, in the end, three coursebooks were chosen as the analysis material.

MORE! 4 Student's Book Enriched course (2022) provided one unit called “Travelling Down Under”. This book is widely used throughout Austrian lower secondary schools, having two versions, the Enriched course that is typically used in *AHS* schools, and the General course, typically used in *Mittelschulen*. It is arguably the most wide-spread lower secondary EFL

coursebook series in Austria. The fourth volume is aimed at learners around CEFR level A2 and is typically used in the final year of lower secondary.

Another lower secondary book included a whole unit about Australia, namely *easy 4. Over to you!* (2023). Being a very young addition to the Austrian EFL coursebook panorama, the easy series was introduced by the well-known publishing house *VERITAS-VERLAG*. As additional units throughout the book, “Culture spots” treat different English-speaking countries and cultures, such as does the unit “Culture Spot II: Australia, not Austria”. Same as *MORE! 4*, the book is intended for 4th graders of lower secondary, CEFR level around A2.

Lastly, one upper secondary book, *Prime Time 5. Transition* (2017), contained one unit about Australia. Another well-known Austrian publishing house, *öbv*, produced this book for the first year of upper secondary, transitioning from CEFR level A2 to B1. In its layout, task formats, content etc. it is entirely different from lower secondary books. Students slowly get accustomed to task formats used in the school-leaving exam *Matura* and the focus of the content has shifted from children to teenagers. It is also the oldest book of the three, as the latest edition was from 2017. In the book, unit 9 “Australia” was analysed.

All of these coursebooks are used in *AHS* schools; not one coursebook targeted at *BHS* students that contained a whole unit about Australia was found. This is not particularly surprising when considering that *BHS* curricula place more emphasis on job-related communication, while *AHS* curricula prioritise a broader general education.

The basis of the analysis is the unit about Australia from each coursebook with all its textual and visual contents (excluding audiovisual material), hence, everything that is printed. This limitation was made for methodological reasons. Printed content represents the core of the material, whereas audiovisual resources require different multimodal analytical approaches in order to take into account elements such as sound, speech, music, and moving images. Including audiovisual material would therefore have substantially expanded both the scope and complexity of the study beyond what was feasible within the limits of this thesis.

5.2 Analytical framework

For this thesis, a mixed-methods approach was employed: qualitative content analysis primarily provides quantitative results, while critical discourse analysis yields qualitative insights. Through combining these two approaches, the overall analysis is more comprehensive and nuanced, offering frequency counts and measurable evidence through content analysis, and

providing more detailed interpretations, revealing hidden meanings through critical discourse analysis. In the following two sections, the two frameworks will be further presented.

5.2.1 Content Analysis

The qualitative content analysis followed the principles of Mayring (2022). The content analysis was primarily carried out through a deductive approach adhering to the following 7 steps given by Mayring (2022, p.91):

1. Research question, theoretical background
2. Definition of the category system (main categories and subcategories) from theory
3. Definition of coding guideline (definitions, anchor examples and coding rules)
4. Material run-through, preliminary codings, adding anchor examples and coding rules
5. Revision of the categories and coding guideline after 10-50% of the material
6. Final working through the material
7. Analysis, category frequencies and contingencies interpretation

The category system that was derived from theory is the 4P model, with its four main categories *products*, *practices*, *persons*, and *perspectives*, as explained in section 4.1.2. Due to the lack of studies applying this framework to the context of Australian culture, additional themes that did not fit into the base category system have emerged and were integrated inductively. During the first rounds of coding, the category system was continually revised and a coding manual completed. Finally, a finished coding manual consisting of 7 subcodes for *products* (*animals, food, merchandise, print, tourist attractions, famous cities, towns and islands, art forms and artistic works*), 6 subcodes for *practices* (*customs, daily life, society, lifestyles, historical events, environmental and wildlife protection*), 3 subcodes for *persons* (*famous individuals, fictitious persons, generic persons*) and 3 subcodes for *perspectives* (*myths, values and beliefs, world views*) was created and used for the final run-through of the coding. Table 5 provides an extract from the coding manual, the complete manual can be found in the Appendix (see chapter 11.1).

Table 5 *Extract from Coding Manual*

Code	Subcode	Definition	Coding guideline (Inclusion criteria)	Anchor- example	Exclusion criteria
Products	Tourist attractions	Activities to do, sights, places to visit for tourists	Places, landmarks, activities attracting visitors in Australia	Sydney Opera House	Overall mention of places (e.g. cities) that are not mentioned as a tourist attraction.

Code	Subcode	Definition	Coding guideline (Inclusion criteria)	Anchor- example	Exclusion criteria
Practices	Society	Social organisation	Education, health system, migration, infrastructure, demographics	While most immigrants used to come from Europe, now they almost all come from Asia	No cultural norms → values & beliefs
Persons	Famous individuals	Famous Australian individuals	Writers, poets, scientists, educators, politicians, entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, actors, athletes...	Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd	“normal” citizens or fictitious people
Perspectives	Values & beliefs	Normative, moral beliefs that inform about what is seen as “good” “bad” “correct”	Political values, social values, morals	Uluru is a holy place, nobody is allowed to climb it	World views without a normative dimension

5.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

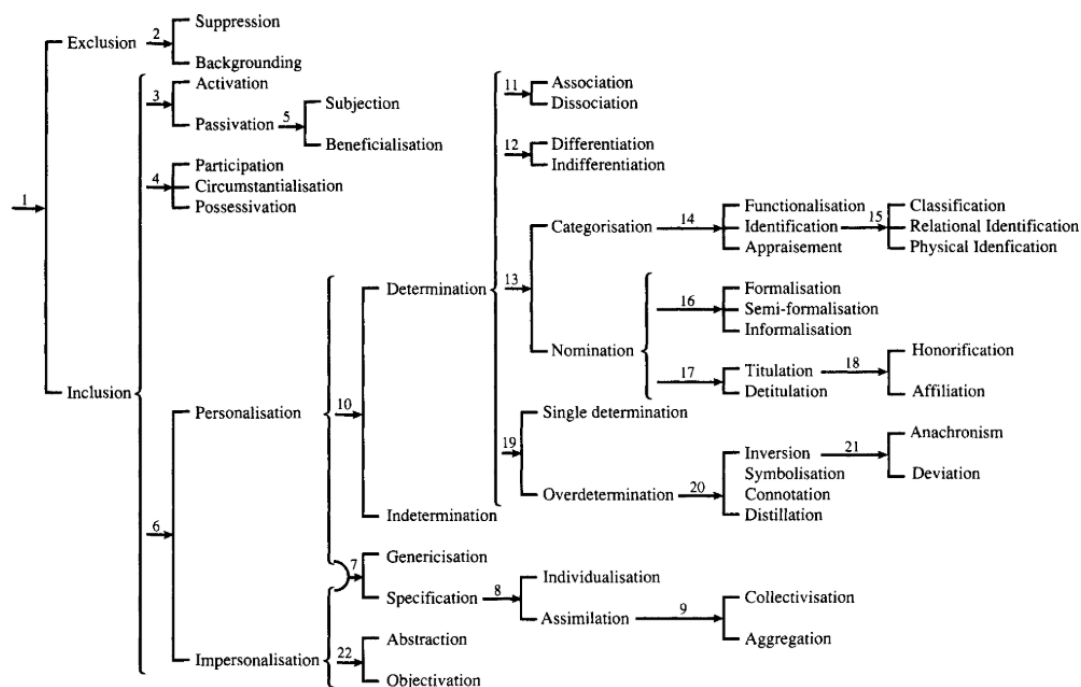
To complement the preceding content analysis, I conduct a focused critical discourse analysis of selected passages about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. CDA is not a single standardized method but a flexible set of approaches for examining how language constructs social reality (Fairclough 1995). In this study I draw on elements of van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) framework for social actor representation to investigate how Indigenous people are represented in the textbook.

In order to answer these questions and find out how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented, van Leeuwen’s framework of social actor representation (1996; 2008) is used. This identifies strategies through which texts include, exclude and represent social actors in discourse. *Exclusion* can take place through *suppression* (omitting actors entirely) or *backgrounding* (mentioning them somewhere else in the text, so the reader is still able to infer who they are). One prominent example of backgrounding is passive agent deletion. If social actors are included, there are multiple ways how to do this. *Activation* versus *passivation* captures whether actors are presented as agents performing actions or as passive recipients.

Another difference can be made between *personalisation* and *impersonalisation*. Personalisation happens when actors are represented as human beings, for example through the

use of personal pronouns or proper names. On the other hand, social actors can be impersonalised, in other words, they are represented “by other means, for instance by abstract nouns, or by concrete nouns whose meaning does not include the semantic feature ‘human’” (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 59). Van Leeuwen (1996) provides the example of referring to migrants by using the term “problems”. For both personalisation and impersonalisation, multiple representational strategies can be identified. One important dimension is the distinction between *genericisation* and *specification*. A social actor is either represented as a generic representative of a group, e.g. his class, or as a specific individual who maybe even gets a name. There is the subdivision of specification, namely *individualisation* and *assimilation*, where the former means social actors are treated as individuals and the latter puts them into groups. A subgroup of personalisation is the difference between *determination* and *indetermination*. Whereas indetermination means that an individual stays anonymous and unspecified, determination offers a multitude of strategies to specify the identity of someone. In contrast to specification, determination refers to whether social actors are identifiable or anonymous, while specification is concerned with the degree and form of identification, for example, whether actors are represented as individuals or groups. Determination offers some major subdivisions, which are briefly presented as they will be useful to the analysis. *Nomination* means that a social actor gets a unique identity, a name, whereas *categorisation* puts a label on a person, based on their role (*functionalisation*), or their age, gender, race, etc. (*classification*), their relational to someone (*relational identification*) or their physical aspects (*physical identification*). This framework offers many more aspects to analyse; the whole system network is illustrated in Figure 1. The above presented mechanisms are the most useful to this analysis.

Figure 1 *The Representation of Social Actors in Discourse: System Network (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 66)*



The analysis therefore focuses on who speaks, how Indigenous actors are described, what roles they are assigned and how power relations shape this representation. Five main guiding questions with multiple sub-questions have been formulated to carry out the analysis.

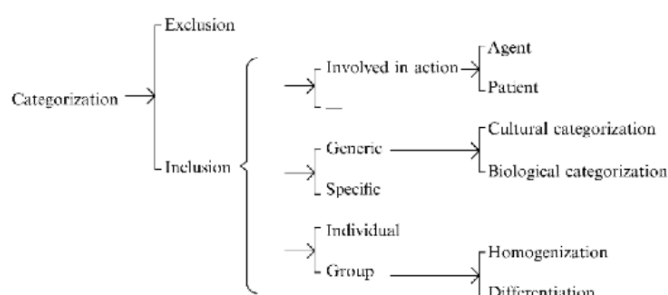
These questions are based on van Leeuwen's framework of social actor representation (1996; 2008) and Kress & Van Leeuwen (2021) analysis of visuals. The guiding questions are also informed by previous research on Indigenous representation in education and adapted to the needs of the current dataset. The aim is not to perform a full-scale CDA but rather to identify representational patterns that may reflect or challenge dominant ideologies about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures. Table 6 shows the guiding questions with their sub-questions.

Table 6 *Analytical Framework Used for Critical Discourse Analysis* (based on van Leeuwen 1996, 2008 and Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021)

Name	Main guiding question	Sub-questions
1. Voice and Speaker Position	Who is speaking, and from which perspective?	• Who produces the discourse (textbook narrator, authorial voice, quoted speakers...)? • Are Indigenous voices directly represented (e.g. quotations, first-person accounts), or are Indigenous people spoken about by others?
2. Naming, labelling and description	How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples described and labelled linguistically?	• What terms are used to refer to Indigenous people (e.g. collective nouns, ethnic labels)? • Are Indigenous people individualized or collectivized? • What adjectives, modifiers, or evaluative terms are used?
3. Agency and Role Allocation	What roles are assigned to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in comparison and what degree of agency is attributed to them?	• Are Indigenous people represented as active agents or passive recipients of actions? • In which processes do they participate (cultural, political, social, historical...)? • Are they depicted as actors in the present, past, future, or all of them? • What are they shown as doing, producing, or influencing?
4. Temporality and Historical Framing	How is Indigenous culture positioned in relation to time?	• Is Indigenous culture primarily framed as historical or as contemporary? • Are continuity and change addressed, or is culture presented as static? • How are colonial history and its consequences represented or omitted?
5. Normativity and Othering	How are relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians constructed?	• How are power relations and asymmetries made visible or backgrounded? • Which groups are explicitly culturally marked, and which are not? • How does whiteness function as an unmarked or taken-for-granted reference point? • How are difference, normality and belonging discursively constructed? • How does the discourse implicitly construct and “us” and a “them”?

Additionally, ideas about legitimation of social practices (van Leeuwen, 2008a) and the visual representation of social actors (van Leeuwen, 2008a) were underlying frameworks that informed and guided the critical discourse analysis. The analysis of the visual representation of social actors in the images was limited to the most striking features and was intended to support the CDA. This study does not aim to provide a comprehensive visual analysis, as that would go beyond the scope of this work.

Figure 2 *Visual Social Actor Network (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.147)*



On the one hand, Van Leeuwen's (2008) visual social actor network was used; it asks "what options, what choices does the 'language of images' give us to depict people?" (p.143). Figure 2 shows the visual social actor network and summarises the different ways how social actors can be included. Similarly to strategies used in textual discourse, social actors can be depicted as agents or patients, generically or specifically, and as individuals or as a group. There are subdivisions as well, for example if social actors are represented as generic, they can be categorized either culturally (highlighting cultural attributes such as dress or hairdo) or biologically (highlighting physical features such as thick lips). Another subcategory is homogenization and differentiation, describing the difference between portraying all people of a group as the same or as different individuals (van Leeuwen, 2008b). As pointed out in the literature review in section 4.2.2, Indigenous peoples are often portrayed as the other, van Leeuwen (2008b) names five key strategies how these social actors are visually represented as others:

- the strategy of exclusion, not representing people at all in contexts where, in reality, they are present
- the strategy of depicting people as the agents of actions which are held in low esteem or regarded as subservient, deviant, criminal, or evil
- the strategy of showing people as homogenous groups and thereby denying them individual characteristics or differences ("they're all the same")
- the strategy of negative cultural connotations
- the strategy of negative racial stereotyping (p.147).

As already mentioned, there was no detailed visual analysis of this kind; the ideas above essentially guided a broad and overall visual analysis which was intended simply to complement the textual CDA by highlighting certain aspects.

5.3 Data collection and analysis

The data for this study was collected from online preview versions of the three coursebooks *MORE! 4 Student's Book Enriched course* (2022), *easy 4. Over to you!* (2023) and *Prime Time 5. Transition* (2017). *More* offered a pdf preview online, from which the respective chapter was extracted. From the online previews of *Easy* and *Prime Time*, the whole units about Australia were captured as screenshots. Then, in order to facilitate the coding and analysis process, text layers were added through OCR (Optical Character Recognition) using a random online program. These prepared screenshots were then imported into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA, where the coding process took place.

5.3.1 Content analysis

The first round of coding was conducted using an initial coding manual based on the original 4P framework by Yuen (2011) which served as a conceptual foundation. The coding manual was also supported and substantiated by the results of previous studies (Abdulridha Obaid et al., 2019; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021; J. Lee & Li, 2020; Vodopija Krstanović & Weber, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024). This was then the basis of the first round of coding, during which additional categories were developed inductively, as new themes emerged from the data. After reviewing the initial codes and coded segments, several subcodes were combined or removed because they did not correspond to the 4P framework or were unrelated to the cultural representation of Australia.

Following this revision, the coding manual was refined and a second round of coding was carried out using the updated categories. Throughout this iterative process, the coding manual was continually adjusted to ensure internal consistency and conceptual clarity. The final coding manual can be found in the appendix (see chapter 11.1). Up to this point, only the textual parts of the coursebooks were coded. Only after the coding manual was final and the coding of the text was done, were the visuals coded in a separate MAXQDA file. Eventually, 290 coded textual segments and 58 coded images were extracted from the three coursebook units. These segments represented the meaningful instances in which Australia was represented and therefore served as the primary material for interpretation later on. These coded segments make up the cultural content of the coursebook chapters. MAXQDA was then used to quantify code

frequencies and visualize these results. To further support the analysis, statistical values, tables and graphs were created in Microsoft Excel, which helped identify patterns and proportions within the data. In most cases, absolute and percentage values as well as averages were calculated. Additionally, the coefficient of variation was used to ensure comparability between the coursebooks as it allows the distribution of codes and subcodes across the individual textbooks to be compared, revealing how balanced they are.

5.3.2 Critical discourse analysis

In each coursebook, the two texts functioning as the primary texts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from these units were the material for analysis. Only in *Prime Time*, there were three, however, two texts informed about the Stolen Generations and were printed on the same page, so were considered both, together with a third text. Additionally, images depicting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were also included in this analysis.

The analysis was carried out with a matrix based on Excel, going through the texts one guiding question at a time. Interesting extracts that gave some insights were copied into the table, and descriptions, interpretations and notes were collected. Once all the data had been compiled in the analysis matrix, the material was systematically examined one guiding question after the other. Recurring patterns were identified and interpreted in relation to the study's research questions. Throughout the whole analysis process, cross-referencing with prior studies and the theory on social actor representation continually took place to better understand and categorize instances.

5.4 Use of ChatGPT

OpenAI's text-generating artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, was used at some stages of the working process. For example, it assisted in formulating the analytical framework for the discourse analysis. Based on notes from previous studies and the relevant theory, a potential outline with guiding questions was proposed by ChatGPT and some aspects of this were adapted and incorporated. For the most part, however, ChatGPT was used as a linguistic aid and feedback tool, helping to make certain formulations more straight-forward and concise when I got lost in over-complicated sentences.

6. Findings: Representation of Australia according to the 4P model

6.1 Overview

As presented in the Methodology section, three Austrian EFL textbooks, namely *More! Student's Book 4: Enriched Course* (2022), henceforth: *More*; *Easy 4. Book* (2023), henceforth *Easy*; and *Prime Time 5. Transition. Coursebook* (2017), henceforth *Prime Time*, were analysed in the course of this study. More specifically, one coursebook unit focussing on Australia was examined in each book, applying the 4P framework through content analysis. The following sections will present the results of this analysis.

First of all, it needs to be stated that the coursebook chapters varied in length, hence resulting in a different number of coded segments in each chapter. While in the lower secondary books, *More* and *Easy*, the unit about Australia consisted of only eight pages, in the upper secondary book *Prime Time* there were 16 pages. This, however, does not correlate directly with the number of coded segments that were found in each book. As can be seen in Table 7, 290 coded textual segments were identified in the texts of the three books, and 57 coded images. This makes a total of 347 coded segments (textual and visual) for the three coursebooks. The table displays that, overall, *Easy* contains the greatest number of coded segments (135), despite covering only eight pages. Even though *Easy* has got the highest number of coded textual segments by far, interestingly, it includes comparatively few images identified within the 4P framework. *Prime Time* ranks second in terms of coded textual segments, but stands out for containing the largest amount of coded visual elements. The appearance of 28 visuals in comparison to 20, or even only 9, might be largely due to the higher number of pages for this coursebook unit and, therefore, having more “space to fill” (16 pages versus eight). This provides an overview of which book contains how many elements of the 4P framework.

Table 7 *Overview of Coded Segments per Coursebook*

Textbooks	Page Numbers	Coded textual segments	Coded visual segments	Coded segments: text and images
More	8	72	20	92
Prime Time	16	92	28	120
Easy	8	126	9	135
Total	32	290	57	347

Note. Frequencies indicate the absolute number of coded cultural segments per coursebook according to the 4P framework.

6.2 Overview 4P Frequencies

It has now become apparent how many coded instances were found in the books, resulting from the 4P framework that groups cultural content into *products*, *practices*, *persons* and *perspectives*. The codes were always counted separately for textual and visual contents. shows the results of the frequency counts found in the text across all three coursebooks. The pie chart in Figure 3 clearly indicates a predominance of cultural *products*. Almost half of all the cultural content (139 instances) in the three textbooks fell into the *products* category. Cultural *practices* was identified as the second most common dimension, making up almost a quarter of the cultural content (67 instances). Even less included were *persons*, this dimension only accounts for 17% (49 instances) of the cultural content. Least represented were cultural *perspectives* with only 12% (35 instances in total).

Figure 3 Frequency of 4P Categories (only in Text)

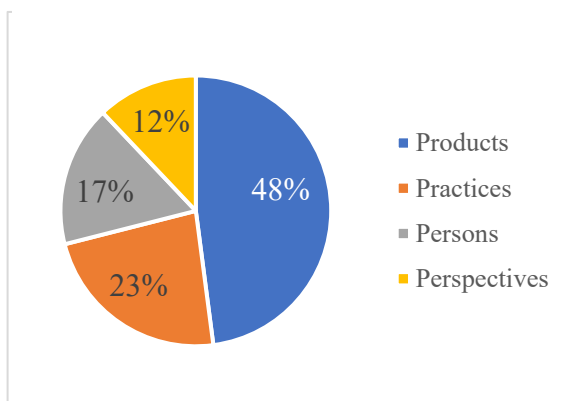
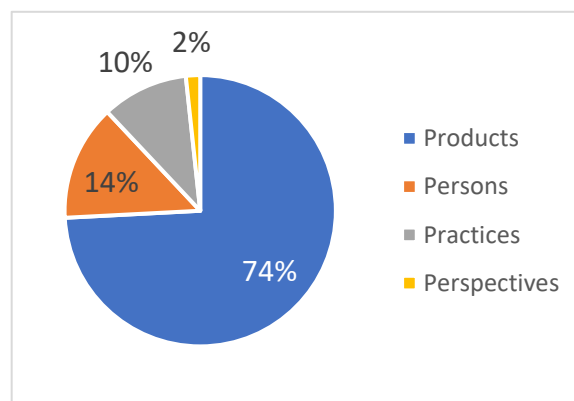


Figure 4 Frequency of 4P Categories (only in Images)

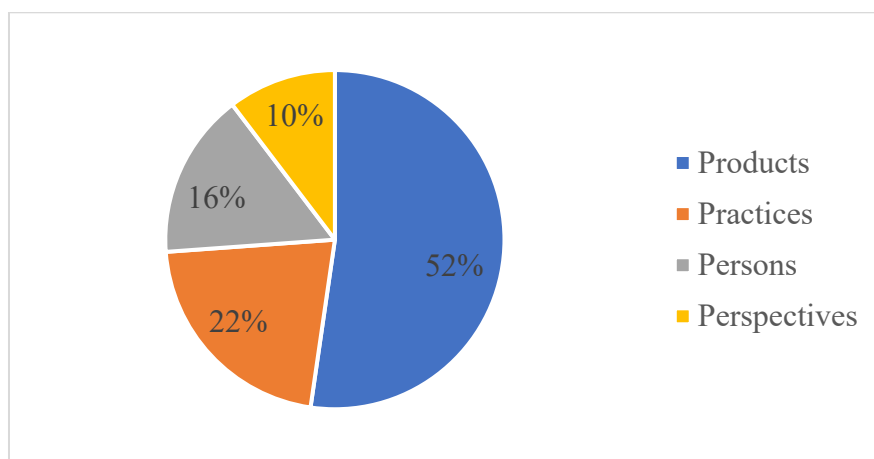


Content analysis of cultural representation cannot only focus on text but has to include images as well. Hence, a content analysis of the images according to the 4P framework was also carried out. In the analysis of the images, cultural *products* were extremely predominant. Looking at Figure 4 it is evident that almost three-quarters of all images used illustrate cultural *products*, with only a fraction covering the other three cultural dimensions.

Figure 5 shows the frequency of the 4P dimensions of all coded segments from texts and visuals combined. Evidently, the pie charts look rather similar to the one that only portrayed the results of the textual analysis. Due to the low number of images (58) compared to the textual segments (290) there is no significant impact visible. The proportion of the *products* dimension increased

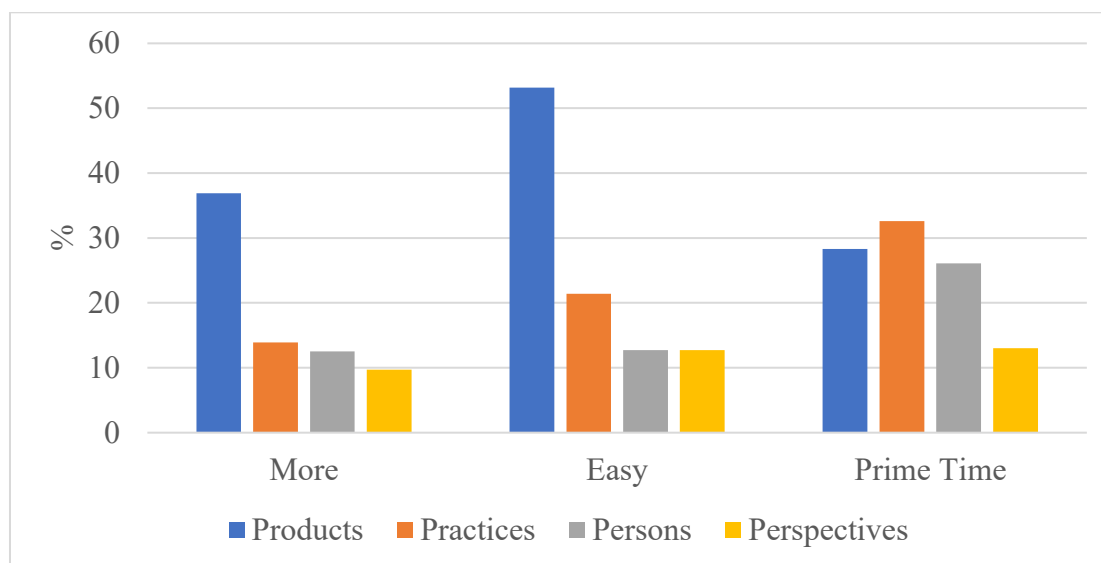
by 4 percentage points and now accounts for more than half of the cultural content. This leads to a decrease in the share of all other categories, especially *perspectives*, which ultimately amounts to only 10%.

Figure 5 *Frequency of 4P Categories in Texts and Visuals Combined*



These figures are only the overall evaluation of all three coursebooks in combination. In order to identify any potential outliers that distort the statistics, it is important to look at the distribution of the 4P categories per coursebook. The predominance of *products* is clearly visible in Figure 6. Especially in the two lower secondary coursebooks *More* and *Easy* this dimension makes up a major proportion of all the cultural content. This leads to the remaining categories being significantly underrepresented and thus to a notable imbalance. However, the upper secondary book *Prime Time* shows a more balanced distribution of the categories, especially *products*, *practices* and *persons* appear to be present in rather equal proportions in this coursebook. *Prime Time* is also the only book where *products* is not the most frequent category, but *practices*. While *practices* make up almost a third of the cultural content in this coursebook chapter (32,6%), *products* only account for 28,3% and *persons* for 26,1%. *Practices* and *persons* are also only represented to such a high degree in the *Prime Time* unit, both accounting for more than a quarter of the content each. In the other coursebooks, they tend to make up only between 10 and 20 percent. The proportion of *perspectives* is very similar in all of the books, it ranges between just under 10% and 13%, making it the least represented cultural dimension in all coursebooks (in *Easy*, *persons* is tied with *perspectives* for the last place).

Figure 6 *Distribution of 4Ps for each Coursebook (Only in Text)*



For this reason, it is often more interesting to look at the results from the analysis of the texts alone, as the results from the image analysis distort the overall picture somewhat, due to the strong prevalence of *products*. Therefore, the following sections will mostly present the findings of the textual content analysis and differentiate between the results of this and the image analysis, or present the combined findings separately.

To sum up, at first glance it became visible that *products* dominate the cultural content, most of all in the lower secondary coursebooks and in the images. The upper secondary book *Prime Time* presented the most balanced distribution of the 4P categories, and *perspectives* was least represented throughout all the coursebooks both in texts and visuals. The subsequent chapters will now present more detailed findings, examining the results of each 4P category and each coursebook unit more closely.

6.3 Products

First of all, the *products* dimension will be analysed in more detail, as it is the most dominant. Figure 7 depicts the distribution of the subcodes within the *products* category, only from the textual analysis. The chart demonstrates that there are three main categories: *tourist attractions* (32%), *animals* (24%), and *famous cities, towns and islands* (24%). Together, these three subcodes make up 80% of the cultural *products* in all three coursebooks. The rest of the subcodes only account for less than 10 or even less than 5 percent of the cultural *products*.

Figure 7 *Distribution of Subcodes of Products in All Three Coursebooks (Only in Text)*

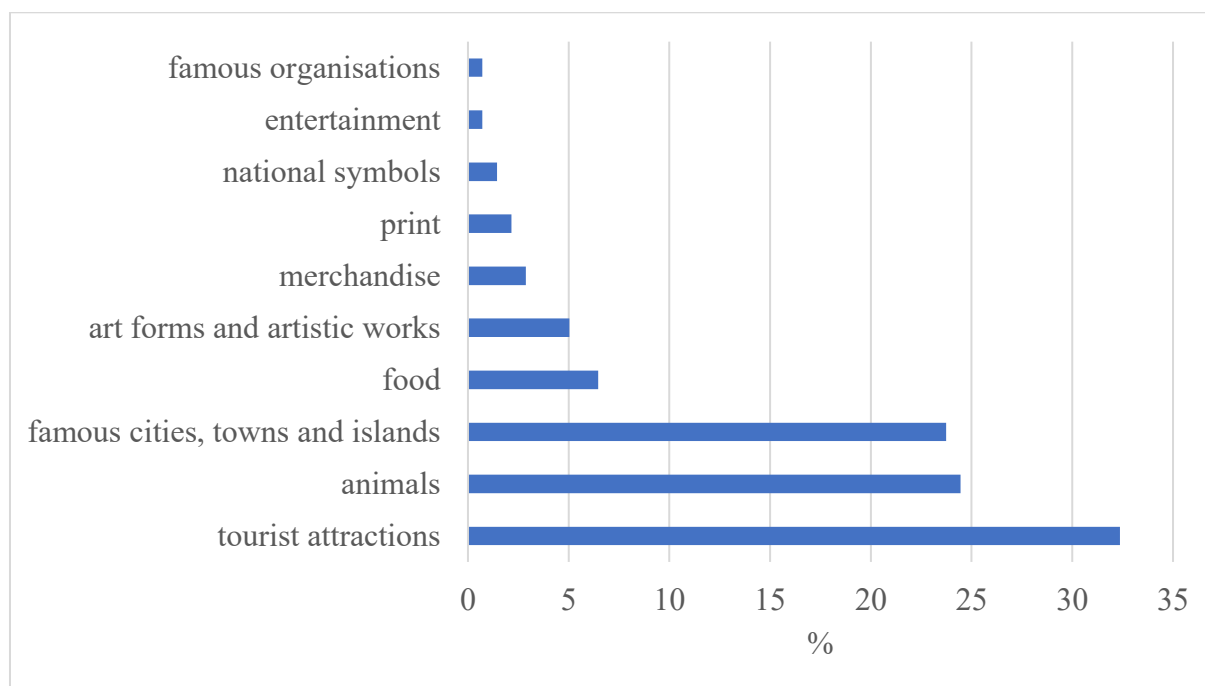


Table 8 shows the distribution of the frequencies of the subcodes within *products* for each coursebook. It can be observed that within the just named three main subcodes (*tourist attractions*, *animals*, *famous cities, towns and islands*), the frequency counts differ. For example, while in the lower secondary books *More* and *Easy*, *tourist attractions* make up between 30 and 40 per cent of the *product* dimension, in *Prime Time* it only accounts for 11,5%. On the other hand, *Prime Time* puts an extreme highlight onto *animals*, making it the subcategory that takes up more than half of the cultural *products*, while the other coursebooks include this a lesser degree, namely not even 20%. *Food* is the only category left that is also included in each coursebook, with a proportion between four and ten per cent. All the other subcodes are used in only one, maximally two coursebooks, making them seem insignificant in the representation of the culture. These are for example *art forms and artistic works*, *print* and *national symbols*. However, they are not completely omitted from the cultural representation, rather they just do not appear in the text, but do so in the images. While *tourist attractions*, *famous cities, towns and islands*, and *animals* are still the three most dominant subcategories for the images, smaller ones such as *art forms and artistic works*, *print* and *national symbols* seem to be at least a little bit more present in the images than they are in the text. However, their share is usually still limited to 5-10%.

Table 8 *Frequency of Subcodes Within Products for Each Coursebook (text and images)*

Subcodes of <i>products</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Prime Time</i>
tourist attractions	32,6	40,3	11,5
animals	15,2	19,4	53,8
famous cities and towns	37	19,4	11,5
food	4,3	6	11,5
art forms and artistic works	4,3	7,5	0
merchandise	0	6	0
print	2,2	0	7,7
national symbols	0	1,5	3,8
entertainment	2,2	0	0
famous organisations	2,2	0	0

Note. Values represent distribution of subcodes of *products* per coursebook in percentages (total = 100% per coursebook).

Apart from frequency counts, it is also worth taking a look into the segments of the individual subcodes. As cultural *products*, *animals* get mentioned second most frequently. Native animals can be considered cultural products because they are widely used as symbols of Australian national identity and reflect how Australian society represents and values its unique natural biodiversity. However, the books include quite different animals. The data displayed in Figure 8 reveals that only three animals, namely sharks, dingoes and koalas, were incorporated across all three coursebooks.

Figure 8 *Overlap of Animal References Across Coursebooks (in Text and Visuals combined)*



Interestingly, the kangaroo, which is featured on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms is not mentioned in the text nor the visuals of the *More* unit. The second animal that is present on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the emu, which is not mentioned or shown in any of the three coursebook chapters. Figure 8 also shows that there are not many overlaps between the coursebooks, a variety of different animals is mentioned in each book.

Table 9 *Most Frequently Mentioned Tourist Attractions Across the Coursebooks (Text and Visuals combined)*

Tourist attractions	Frequency (total)	In which books		
		<i>More</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Prime Time</i>
Great Barrier Reef (incl. snorkelling / diving)	10	✓	✓	✓
Uluru	9	✓	✓	✓
Sydney Harbour Bridge (climb)	8	✓	✓	✓
Sydney Opera House	7	✓	✓	✓
Cable Beach (Broome)	5	✓	✓	

Tourist attractions	Frequency (total)	In which books	
Sydney Harbour cruise	3	✓	✓
Surfing	2	✓	✓
Swimming	2	✓	✓
Relaxing on the beach	2		✓

Note. Values represent absolute numbers of appearances both in text and images across the three textbooks.

Within cultural *products*, *tourist attractions* are featured most frequently. Hence, the question arises which tourist attractions the coursebooks include, and whether there is a great variety across the coursebooks or not. Table 9 presents all of the tourist attractions that were mentioned at least once. The data indicates that the Great Barrier Reef and references to snorkelling and diving was the most frequent tourist attraction, followed by Uluru and the Sydney Harbour Bridge (including doing the bridge climb). Some typical tourist activities that are also mentioned more than once are doing the Sydney Harbour cruise, surfing, swimming, and relaxing on the beach. It becomes apparent that tourist attractions in Sydney are very prominent, specifically sights around Sydney Harbour are in focus (Opera House, Harbour Bridge, doing a harbour cruise). Nevertheless, the most frequently featured tourist attraction is Australia's underwater world, specifically the Great Barrier Reef. There are six explicit references to the Great Barrier Reef, three references to snorkelling and one to taking a diving lesson. *Easy* has got the most mentions of *tourist attractions* (34), covering 26 different ones. In contrast, *More* has got a total of 25 mentions, but covering only 17 different ones, meaning that *More* repeats tourist attractions more often than *Easy*. Consequently, *Easy* shows a more diverse selection of tourist attractions. This also applies to the subcategory *animals*, where once again, *Easy* offers the greatest variety of different animals.

The third subcode of cultural *products* that was included to a significant degree in all three coursebooks is *famous cities, towns and islands*. Table 10 shows the total amount of occurrences of the cities, towns and islands both in the text and in visuals, and also indicates in which coursebooks the places were included.

Table 10 *Frequency of Famous Cities, Towns and Islands Across All Three Coursebooks*

City, town, island	Frequency (total)	In which books		
		More	Easy	Prime Time
Sydney	10	✓	✓	✓
Perth	6	✓	✓	✓
The Outback	6	✓	✓	✓
Broome	4	✓	✓	
Melbourne	3		✓	✓
Rottneest Island	3	✓		
Canberra	3	✓	✓	
Brisbane	2		✓	
Alice Springs	2	✓		
Magnetic Island	2		✓	
Exmouth	2		✓	
Fraser Island	2		✓	
Adelaide	1		✓	
Hobart	1		✓	
Cairns	1		✓	

Note. Values represent absolute numbers of appearances both in text and images across the three textbooks.

The data indicates that Sydney was mentioned most frequently, followed by Perth and *The Outback*. The Outback as such is not a specific town, city, or island, it is included in this subcode because it functions as a widely recognized geographical space of Australia. Table 10 demonstrates that it is one of only three places that were included in all three coursebooks, which emphasises its importance. Interestingly, the capital of Australia, Canberra, was only mentioned in the two lower secondary coursebooks, there is a general lack of cities, towns and islands in the *Prime Time* chapter. Geographically, Australia is represented most diversely in *Easy*, as this book includes the highest number of different cities, towns and islands. It is also the only coursebook that contains mentions of Tasmania (Hobart) and different islands

(Magnetic Island, Fraser Island). Furthermore, it is the only book that goes beyond the most famous places and also mentions lesser-known locations such as Mutitjulu and Kalbarrie-Boulder.

Within cultural *products*, there are thus three dominant subcodes, accounting for around 80% of all the cultural *products* in all three coursebooks, namely *tourist attractions*, *animals*, and *famous cities, towns and islands*. However, these three were represented to varying degrees in the coursebooks. If one does not look at the overall distribution of the subcodes of *products* in all three coursebooks in total, but rather at the individual frequencies per textbook, and then calculates an average of these, one gets slightly different results. Then it becomes apparent that on average, *animals*, is the most frequently incorporated subcode of products, with an average of 29,5%. However, it is closely followed by *tourist attractions*, making up 28,1% of cultural *products* on average, and *famous cities, towns and islands* which account for 22,6% of *products* on average. The remaining distribution of subcodes shows that *More* includes the most subcodes, all except two, which means that, generally speaking, *products* is represented in the most multifaceted way in *More*. Nevertheless, looking at the coded segments of the individual subcodes, the data revealed that within the subcodes, *Easy* is the most diverse in all of the three big subcodes *tourist attractions*, *animals*, and *famous cities, towns and islands*. For all of them, *Easy* has the highest number of different entries. Lastly, the most represented entities of the three subcodes were determined. For *animals*, kangaroo, koala, and shark were the most frequently named entries, however shark, dingo and koala were included in all three coursebooks. The most represented tourist attractions are the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru, and attractions in Sydney Harbour (Harbour Bridge, Opera House). This connects to the most included cities of Australia, namely Sydney, Perth and the Outback as a general geographic space.

6.4 Practices

In both the overall distribution across all three coursebooks and the average proportion per book, practices account for approximately 22% of all cultural content (including both text and images). Within this category, six different subcodes were found across the textbooks, their distribution can be found in Figure 9. Here it quickly becomes apparent that two subcodes make up more than half of the cultural *practices*, namely *society* (29%) and *daily life* (26%). *Lifestyles* (18%) and *historical events* (15%) still seem to be somewhat present; however *environmental and wildlife protection* (7%) and *customs* (5%) take up a very small space of cultural *practices*.

Figure 9 *Distribution of Subcodes of Practices in All Three Coursebooks (Text and Images Combined)*

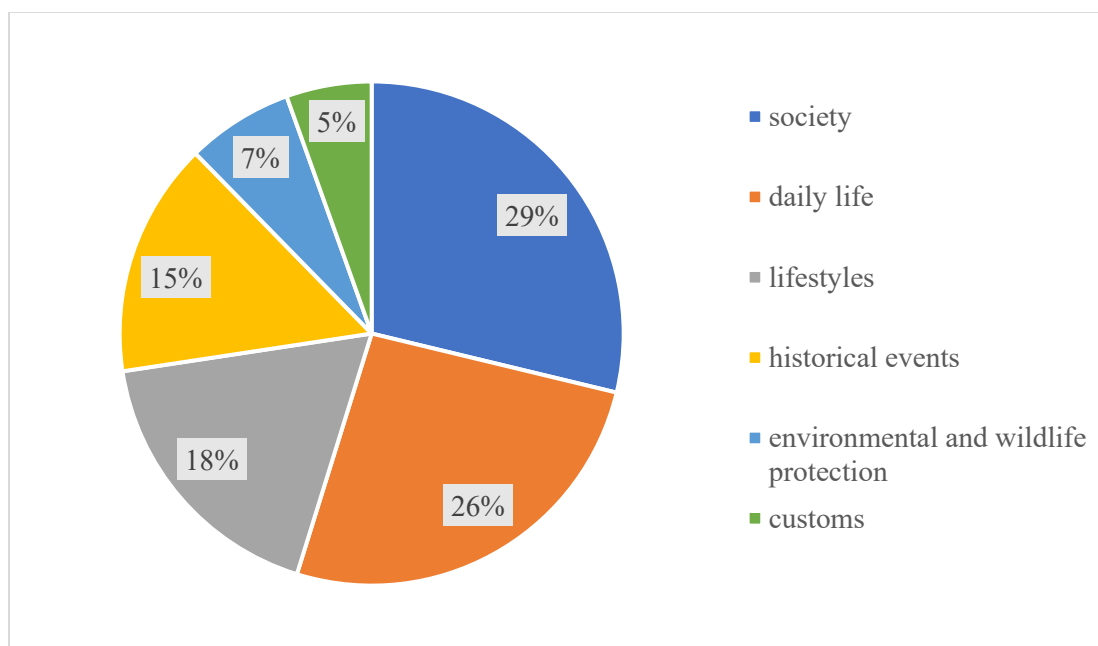
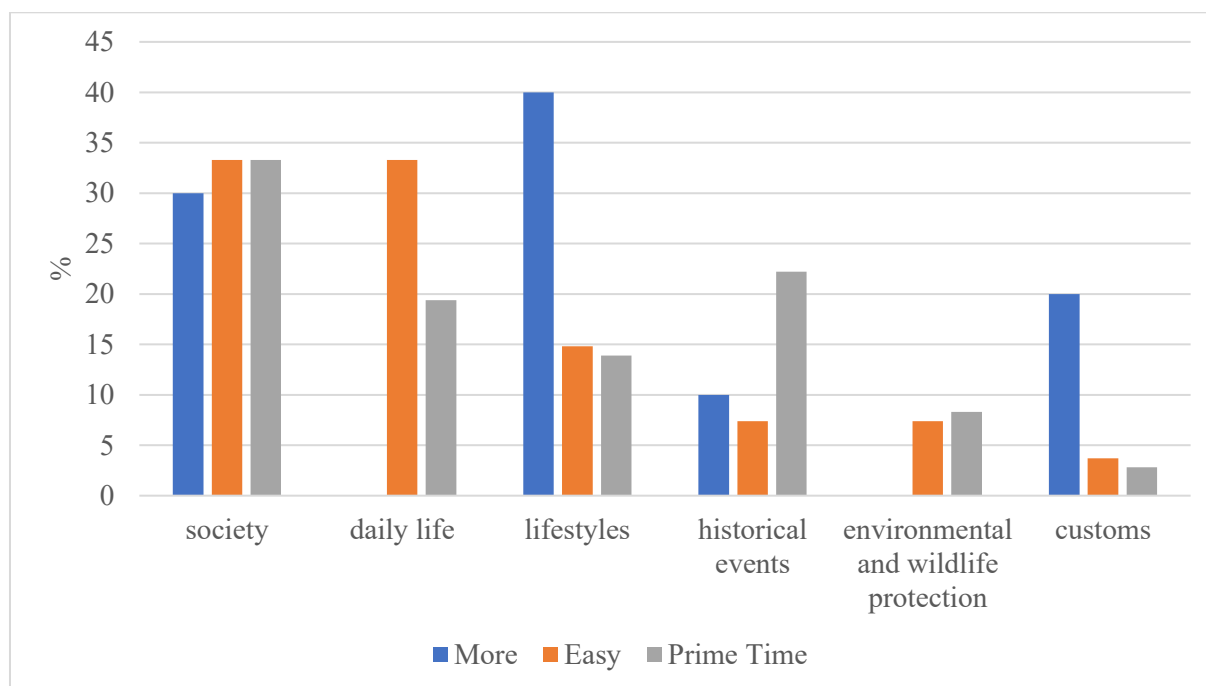


Figure 10 presents the percentage distribution of the subcodes per coursebook. The results indicate that in all three coursebooks *society* occupies a fairly equal share, around a third of all cultural *practices*. However, in *More*, *lifestyles* are even more prevalent, covering 40% of cultural *practices*. The proportion of *customs* is also strikingly high; whereas this subcode accounts for less than 5% in other books, *More* uses 20% of its cultural *practices* for *customs*. This means that the remaining categories are very poorly represented or not represented at all. As a consequence, *More* has got a very uneven distribution within the *practices* dimension. The other two books, *Easy* and *Prime Time*, include each subcode to at least some degree, for example *historical events*, *environmental and wildlife protection*, and *customs*, are represented, even if only at less than 10% each. One last salient aspect is that in *Easy*, *society* and *daily life* both occupy the highest frequency.

Figure 10 *Distribution of Subcodes of Practices Per Coursebook*



As already done with the subcodes of *products*, also the subcodes of *practices* will now be analysed in some more detail. First of all, *society*, as the most predominant category, presents a lot of different information about Australia's society. This ranges from information about population demographics and immigration (e.g. "Even though about 90% of Australians are from families that once came from Europe, most immigrants who come today are from Asia and the Pacific" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.126)), to settlement ("Now 85% of us Aussies live in cities" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.114)), and health system ("Royal Flying Doctor Service" (*More*, 2022, p.63)).

The subcode *daily life* also focussed on various aspects such as food habits ("For breakfast, | have a cuppa and a toast with avo" (*Easy*, 2302, p.68)), sports ("Bastard, you missed a lot of rippers today at the beach. It was ace!" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.123)), or driving standards ("We also drive on the left like the good old Brits" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.126)). In these examples it can be observed that in this subcode, many slang words were used. Hence, slang words and phrases that were treated as a linguistic expression of Australian daily life were also included here. Examples are "There was a mozzie on your shoulder!" (*Easy*, 2023, p.68), "G'day from down under" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.126) or "tacke a sicki" (*Easy*, 2023, p.73). The three images that were coded under *daily life* showed some people sailing on a sailboat, a dirt road (interpreted as *daily life* because the coursebook assumes Australians drive a lot on dirt roads

in their daily life), and some young Australians having a barbecue. Having a barbecue, or *barbie* was a salient feature of *daily life*, because it was mentioned both in *Easy*, and *Prime Time* in the text, combined with the image in *Prime Time*.

For the subcode *lifestyles*, four different themes could be found, namely living and working in the Outback, working in a mine, working as an opal hunter, and “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ lifestyles”¹. Thus, the only working conditions mentioned are the ones of rather traditional physical labour such as mining or working on a cattle farm. No references to modern jobs could be found. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ lifestyles were also only limited to traditional lifestyles; one striking example was found in *More* (2022):

We also saw how they made traps to catch big goannas. [...] The women stopped to gather some large leaves. [...] They could find water where there was absolutely no sign of it. [...] They could tell what creatures were nearby from footprints on the ground. (p.62)

There was no reference to lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in cities, in a modern society. Additionally, the only two pictures coded in *lifestyles* show Aboriginal people. One shows a boy holding a worm (for food) and the other one shows two people standing on top of a rock, one is playing the didgeridoo, one is holding a spear, the sun is setting behind them – another reference to the traditional way of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Another subcode of cultural *practices* are *historical events*. Here two salient themes emerged: the European invasion and the stolen generations. *Prime Time* and *Easy* both treat, in varying depth, the invasion of Australia when European settlers arrived on the continent. References to the “penal colony” can also be found. The other big theme is aspects surrounding the issue of the stolen generations, which is only treated in *Prime Time*, however in a some more detail. This also includes the official Apology by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2018, whose portrait is also printed in the coursebook. The only historical event that *More* mentions is the question “When did people first come to Australia?”.

The last two subcodes, *environmental and wildlife protection* and *customs* are very small, the former only accounting for five instances, the latter only for four. *Easy* and *Prime Time* both mention some programs that focus on wildlife protection such as “koala catcher” (*Easy*, 2023,

¹ This term is placed in quotation marks because it does not correspond to the appropriate terminology, and the researcher is also aware that there is no such thing as an Aboriginal lifestyle per se, as this view is very essentialist, stereotypical and does not differentiate between different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ mobs. However, it is used here because this simplified impression is conveyed in the coursebooks. More on this in the Discussion.

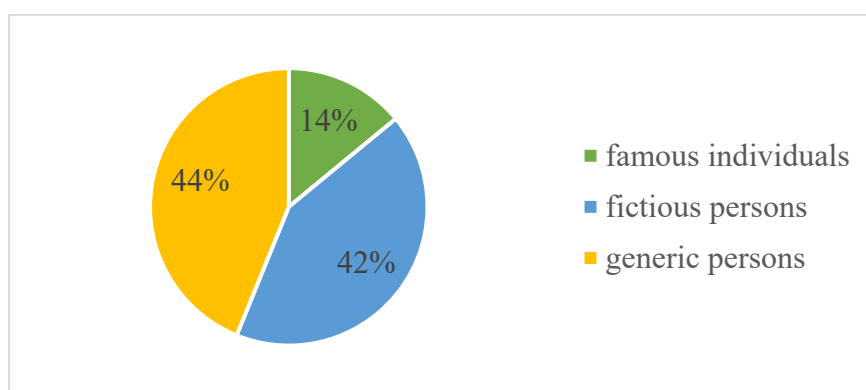
p.69) or a law to protect sharks (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.127). Also, the fact that the Great Barrier Reef is a World Heritage Site is presented in *Prime Time* (2017, p.116). *Customs* that are represented in the coursebooks were National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week (*Easy*, 2023, p.69), Australia Day (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.114), and “Aboriginal customs” such as walkabout (*More*, 2022, p.61).

To sum up, the dimension *practices* consists of two very prominent subcodes, namely *society* and *daily life*, that make up more than half of the cultural content in this dimension. Information included in *society* covered different aspects about the population’s demographics, immigration, the health system, etc. In *daily life*, a salience of slang words was found, especially the aspect of “having a barbie” was emphasized. *Lifestyles*, the third most prominent subcode of *practices*, mainly focussed on different working conditions and traditional lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. With a proportion of 15% of cultural *practices*, *historical events* contained representations of the European invasion and the stolen generations with varying levels of detail and depth. Lastly, small proportions of this 4P dimension to go *environmental and wildlife protection*, and *customs*.

6.5 Persons

As a third dimension of the 4P framework, *persons* make up 16% of all cultural content in all three coursebook chapters. *Persons* has got three subcodes, whose distribution in text and images can be seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11 *Distribution of Persons in Text and Images in All Textbooks*



It quickly becomes apparent that *generic persons* and *fictitious persons*, that is unreal persons, dominate this category, whereas *famous individuals* only make up 14% of all *persons*. Figure 12 gives a more detailed insight into the distribution of the three subcodes per coursebook. Interestingly, even though overall the subcode *generic persons* has got the biggest proportion,

it only comes in second in *More* and *Prime Time*, and only because of its predominance in *Easy* is it overall the most represented subcode. Still, with an average proportion of 47% across all the three coursebooks, *generic persons* seem to dominate the *persons* category. Overall, the *generic persons* included can be grouped into roughly three categories: generic persons referring to Australians, referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and others. Examples of *generic persons* for each category are illustrated in Table 11.

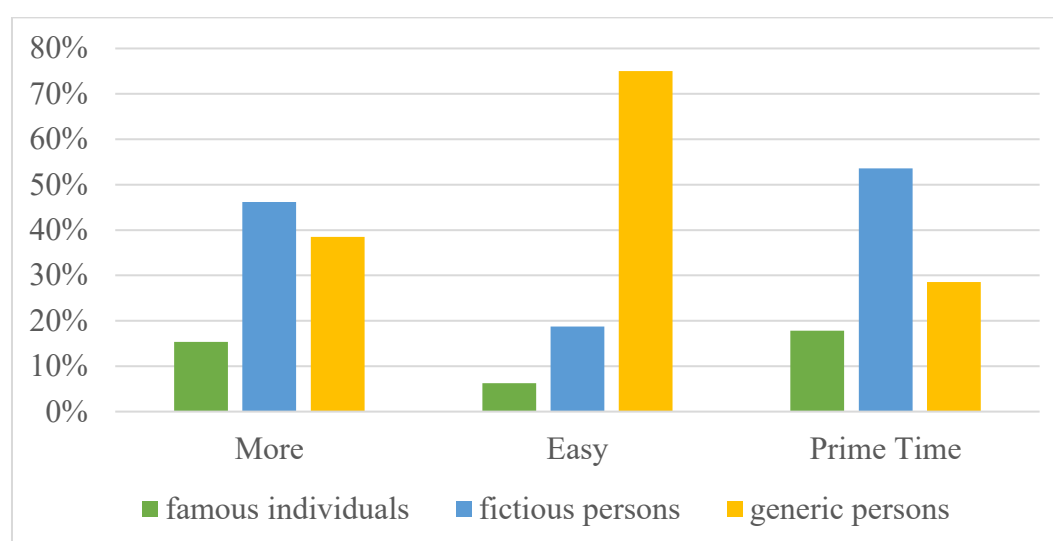
Table 11 *Overview of Segments of Generic Persons in Text*

Referring to Australians in general	Referring specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People	Others
People down under	Aboriginal peoples	opal hunters
a bogan	the Aborigines	the first Europeans
the white people	Aboriginal man	the British
the whites	Indigenous Australians	swimmers
	shiploads of prisoners	farmers
	the Aboriginal	lots of people with cameras
	politically active Aboriginal	surfer
	friends	
	Aborigine	
	the Wulgurukaba people	

Almost as often represented are *fictitious persons*, overall, they make up 42%, on average this dimension comes to 39%. As can be seen in Figure 12, both in *More* and *Prime Time*, it is the subcode with the highest proportion, making up around half of the cultural content allocated to *persons*. There are many different fictitious persons that appear in the text, reaching from the opal hunter Jack Smith (*Easy*, 2023, p.69) to “Angela [is] from a rich white family in Brisbane” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.117), or “two tourists, Eve and Jeremy” (*More*, 2022, p. 60). These people are introduced to tell stories and personify the learning content. Least represented are *famous individuals*, those make up only a small percentage of the *persons* category (14%), in total numbers this means that across all three coursebooks, only eight instances of *famous individuals* could be found. The majority of the named famous individuals is male, such as “Australian artist Ben Quilty” (*Easy*, 2023, p.72) or “Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.122). Only two *famous individuals* were female, namely “Australian film star Cate

Blanchett” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.123) and “American doctor called Marlo Morgan” (*More*, 2022, p. 62). Thus, only one famous Australian woman was mentioned across all three coursebooks, whereas at least a few men were included. Additionally, the females were “only” an actress and a doctor, whereas the male people were more influential (politician, author, explorer, artist). If one looks at the distribution per textbook again, it is evident that none of the textbooks has a very balanced distribution within this category. Interestingly, *Easy* clearly has the most unbalanced representation this time, even though, it has often stood out as a book with high variety and balance until now.

Figure 12 *Distribution of Subcodes of Persons per Coursebook*



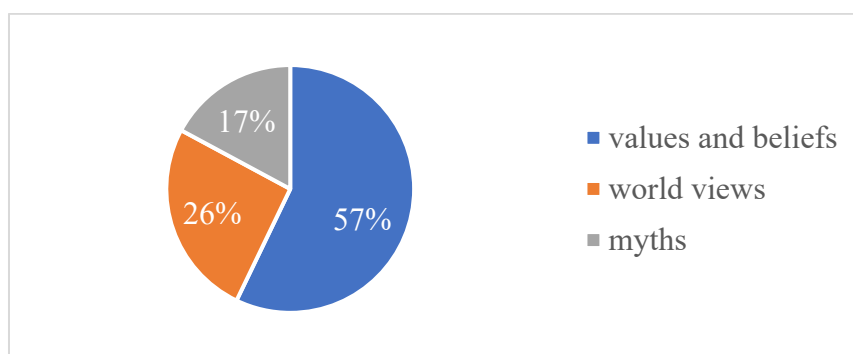
Another striking aspect is the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in images. First of all, all four images construct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity through visual markers such as clothing, setting and skin tone. All four images that depict individuals identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, show males of different ages, from a young boy to an elderly man. Three pictures only show one individual, whereas the fourth shows a group of men. None of the persons is wearing a T-Shirt, they are all depicted barely dressed. Whereas in three pictures only the upper bodies of the men are visible, in the fourth picture the reader can see the group of men from a distance, depicting most of their body, shot from a high angle. All images portray the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a traditional setting: one boy is holding a spear, one is holding a worm (supposedly about to eat it), one is wearing face paint and the group of men is also wearing traditional clothes and jewellery. This traditional setting is the only setting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people are portrayed in. A more detailed analysis of the portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will follow in chapter 7.

6.6 Perspectives

Lastly, with an overall share of only 10% of all cultural content featured in the three coursebook chapters, which makes a total number of only 29 instances, come *perspectives*. *Perspectives* is the least represented cultural category in all three coursebooks.

Figure 13 *Distribution of Perspectives in All Textbooks (Only in Text)*

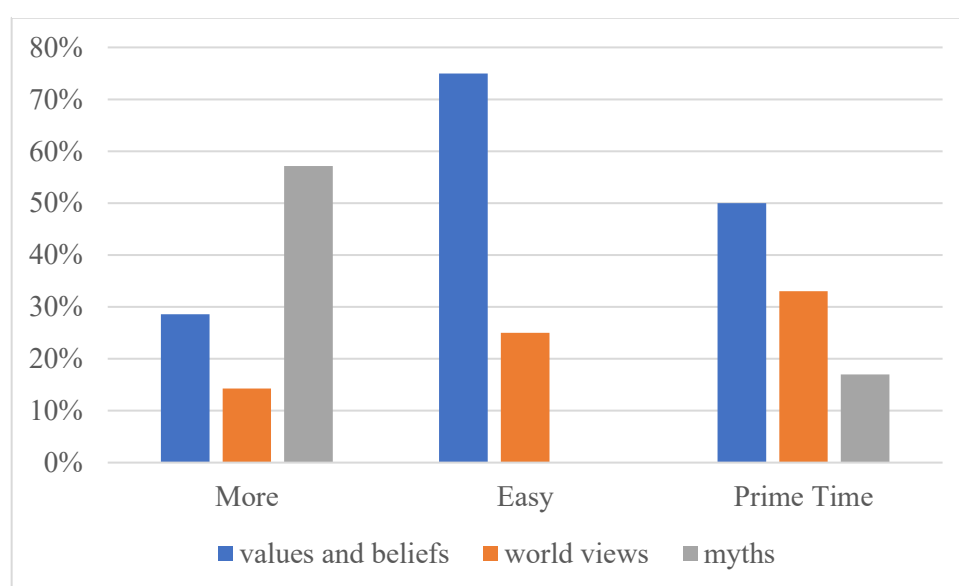


It has got three subcodes, namely *values and beliefs*, *world views* and *myths*. *Values and beliefs* accounts for more than half of the cultural content in this category, as Figure 13 illustrates. In Figure 15 however, it becomes apparent that *values and beliefs* is only the most represented subcode in *Easy* and *Prime Time*, while *myths* dominate in *More*. Then, *world views* make up a around a quarter of the cultural content of *perspectives*, and *myths* takes up the smallest share, namely 17%. Even though *myths* are the most dominant category in *More* (four instances), they are completely absent from *Easy* and only account for two instances in *Prime Time*. Figure 15 shows that each coursebook has got a very different and varied distribution of the subcodes of *perspectives*. Nevertheless, *More* and *Prime Time* include at least one instance for each of the three dimensions, whereas *Easy* only includes *values and beliefs* (12 instances) and *world views* (four instances). There was only one image that was coded under *perspectives* – *world views*, but it was a rather abstract picture (Figure 15) (more on Normativity and Othering, see chapter 7.5). Apart from that, cultural *perspectives* were only transmitted through text and not images.

Figure 14 *Image coded in perspectives - world views (Prime Time, 2017, p.118)*



Figure 15 *Distribution of Subcodes of Perspectives per Coursebook (Only in Text)*



Values and beliefs were transmitted through passages like “Aboriginal peoples have always cared for nature, water and living things / creatures” (*Easy*, 2023, p.69), or “Ayers Rock is very important to the Aborigines” (*More*, 2022, p.59). Generally, *values and beliefs* concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were either about them caring for nature and living things, conflicts between coloniser and colonised, and Uluru as a sacred place. Other passages that could not be considered as part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ values and beliefs were either about opal hunting or that being in the Outback can be dangerous.

Some examples of *world views* are “Australians love to shorten words” (*Easy*, 2023, p.68) or “Almost all Aborigines are very good at hunting” (*More*, 2022, p.61). The included *myths* were mostly about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ myths, such as “They call it Uluru and they believe that the ghosts of their ancestors live there” (*More*, p. 59). Only one mention

of “drop bears” (*Prime Time*, 2022, p.114) had no direct connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ myths but to Australian myths in general. This means that representation of superstitions, tales, cultural mentalities, political and social values, morals, etc. was scarce. What was also striking, particularly in this dimension, was that a clear dividing line between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and “Australians”, who, according to the coursebooks, the former group is not automatically a part of, was drawn. Cultural perspectives were mostly centred around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ beliefs, world views and myths, while “Australia” as a single society was rarely discussed (more on this, see chapter 7.5).

6.7 Overall representation per coursebook

The results above were presented per dimension of the 4P framework. Below, a short overview will summarize the main findings per coursebook. Specifically, it will be analysed how equally distributed the cultural content was among the 4P categories and amongst the subcodes within each dimension. Table 12 presents the Coefficient of Variation within each subcode and for the 4P framework overall for each coursebook.

Table 12 *Coefficient of Variation Within Each Subcode and the 4P Framework per Coursebook*

Coefficient of variation	Products	Practices	Persons	Perspectives	4P
More	1,31	0,89	0,39	0,53	0,90
Easy	1,23	0,73	0,90	0,94	0,67
Prime Time	1,54	0,59	0,45	0,40	0,29

The coefficient of variation measures the relative dispersion of codes and subcodes within each coursebook, showing how evenly or unevenly different (sub)codes are distributed. A lower coefficient of variation indicates a more balanced distribution within a book, meaning the different (sub)codes appear with similar frequency. A higher coefficient of variation indicates greater imbalance, where some (sub)codes are much more dominant than others. Values above 1 suggest a highly uneven internal distribution, meaning the coursebooks strongly emphasize certain subcodes while other are comparatively underrepresented. In the following, the results per coursebook get analysed in more detail.

More

Out of all the three textbooks, *More* is the one with the highest coefficient of variation, meaning that the distribution of dimensions is the most uneven. *Products* take up almost two thirds of all the cultural content provided in this coursebook chapter, and this with only eight out of the ten possible subcodes of *products* included. Within *products*, the coefficient of variation of the subcodes is quite similar to the other two books. In all three, it is above 1, which means that the standard deviation is higher than the mean value, suggesting a very high dispersion of proportions within the *products* subcodes. This is in *More* not significantly higher than in the other two books. However, it presents the biggest coefficient of variation within the *practices* dimension, only four out of the six subcodes could be found and their proportions were all quite unequal. Interestingly, in comparison to the other two coursebooks, *More* presents the lowest coefficient of variation within *persons*, here all three subcodes could be found in quite equal proportions. Lastly, in *perspectives* all three subcodes were detected as well, however more than half of them belonged to *myths*. However, it should be remembered that *More* only includes ten or fewer segments for all dimensions except *products*, as the majority of cultural content is represented through *products*.

Easy

The second lower secondary book *Easy* presents a lower coefficient of variation than *More*, however, still a quite high one (0,66). Thus, the balance between the four dimensions of the 4P is less unequal than in *More*, but still not completely even. Again, *products* take up the biggest proportion, amounting for little more than half of the cultural content. Even though the subcodes *print*, *entertainment* and *famous organisations* are missing, *Easy* demonstrates the highest variety within *animals*, *tourist attractions* and *famous cities, towns and islands*. Therefore, the included segments within each subcode of *products* are quite varied. The most striking observation was that *Easy* exhibits the highest coefficient of variation for both *persons* and *perspectives*. 75% of the cultural content within *persons* could be allocated into the *generic persons* subcode, and *perspectives* was completely lacking any mention of *myths*. To sum up, *Easy* appears to be very balanced at first glance, as it provides many different examples within one subcode (e.g. *animals* or *tourist attractions*) and rarely repeats segments. This high frequency of different items also leads to the overall highest proportion of coded segments, namely 126. Compared to the other two coursebooks (*More* 72, *Prime Time* 92), this is significantly more. However, if a closer look is taken as Table 12, it gets apparent that *Easy* is only moderately balanced and that some areas are very predominant in contrast to others.

Prime Time

Lastly, the one upper-secondary book *Prime Time* presented the most unexpected result, as it has got the lowest coefficient of variation. Even though the coursebook chapter was double the length of the *Easy* and *More*, it only included 92 coded segments of cultural representation. Nevertheless, these segments were fairly equalled balanced between the four dimensions of the 4P model. Whereas *products* (33%), *practices* (28%) and *persons* (26%) exhibit relatively similar proportions, only *perspectives* are less represented with only 13%. Compared to the lower secondary books, this is still significantly more balanced. However, within some subcodes *Prime Time* shows little variation. Within *products*, it is the least balanced, having the highest coefficient of variation, overall, four out of the ten subcodes were not included. Additionally, within *tourist attractions* and *famous cities, towns and islands* it showed the least variety of coded segments. On the other hand, it was the most balanced coursebook within the *practices* and the *perspectives* dimension. Lastly, within the *persons* dimension, it *Prime Time* showed the highest number of famous Australians.

To conclude, it can be said that neither of the three coursebooks demonstrated a perfect balance between the 4 main dimension nor between the subcodes within a dimension. However, overall, *More* was the least and *Prime Time* the most balanced coursebook based on the coefficients of variation.

7. Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The following sections present the findings from the critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the respective units of the three Austrian EFL coursebooks, *More* (2022), *Easy* (2023), and *Prime Time* (2017). As explained in the Methodology chapter (5.2) two main texts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from each coursebook been analysed based on five guiding questions and multiple sub-questions (cf. Table 6, p. 49).

7.1 Voice and speaker position

The first question analyses the text in terms of who produces the discourse and how. More concretely, it is looked at if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are directly represented or only spoken about, and which perspectives are represented as neutral, authoritative or factual. Two main instances of who speaks and who gets a voice were found: a non-Indigenous narrator speaking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and an authorial textbook voice. The former was divided into two more subcategories, namely whether the non-Indigenous

narrator only presented factual information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or already interpreted the Indigenous perspective for the reader.

7.1.1 Non-Indigenous narrative frame

The most striking finding with regard to speaker position and voice is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are rarely given a direct speaking role. Although their beliefs and practices are included, they seldom speak for themselves. Instead, their culture is predominantly described by non-Indigenous narrators, often tourists, who speak *about* rather than *with* them. As a results, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are largely mediated, indirect, or backgrounded.

This pattern is evident in examples such as "Ayers Rock is very important to the Aborigines. They call it Uluru and they believe the ghosts of their ancestors live there. This is why it is forbidden to climb the mountain" (*More*, 2022, p.59) and "Guide: Uluru is a holy place, nobody is allowed to climb it" (*Easy*, 2023, p.70). In these instances, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are implicitly positioned as the legitimate holders of cultural knowledge, as the prohibition against climbing Uluru is grounded in their spiritual beliefs. The legitimacy of these utterances derives from the authorization of tradition (van Leeuwen, 2008). On the other hand, however, this Indigenous authority remains implicit rather than explicit. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons are not quoted directly, nor are they clearly identified as speakers. Instead, their perspectives are conveyed through non-Indigenous voices, they are only spoken about. The personal pronoun *they* clearly indicates that an outsider voice talks *about* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Another illustrative example is the following: "A guy called Simon led us around a bush trail telling us about how his ancestors used the land for everything we needed. We saw examples of tents made of small trees, tree bark and leaves [...]" (*More*, 2022, p.60). The reader gets introduced to a seemingly Aboriginal person, because reference is made to his ancestors. However, the focus is still on the commentary of the tourist and not on Simon directly. His voice is again mediated through indirect reporting, which limits its discursive power. Afterwards, the focus immediately shifts on what the tourists saw, and away from what Simon told them. Hence, while Indigenous authority is acknowledged, it remains constrained by the surrounding non-Indigenous narrative frame.

The textbooks do not only include short stories or comic strips, but also excerpts of novels such as *Mutant Message Down Under* (Morgan, 1995) or *Walkabout* (Marshall, 1959). The two

examples below are taken from an extract of *Mutant Message Down Under* included in *More* (2022):

Mutant Message Down Under was written in 1990 by an American doctor called Marlo Morgan. In this book she describes her fictional ‘walkabout’ with a group of Aborigines. [...] At the end of the book the Aborigines tell Marlo about the difference between mutants and real people. The Aborigines believe that mutants are all those people who have no idea how to live in the world [...]. (p.62)

Throughout the excerpt, representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture is only through the perspective of the American doctor. Again, an outsider’s perspective is reporting on the life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Indigenous voice is mediated through the indirect quotation, the story remains framed through the outsider’s perspective. In this case, it is not simply any tourist, it is an American doctor, which gives her statements legitimacy through expert authority. Due to it being stated that the author is an American doctor, a person of high social esteem, the reader is induced to believe what she writes; she is a credible informant, even though she is an outsider. The “outsiders”’ narration becomes central, the Indigenous voice is mediated and remains on the sideline.

7.1.2 Non-Indigenous interpretive frame

Another way in which outsiders talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is not only reporting about them but already interpreting their perspective and thoughts. One striking example is the following:

Mary and her young brother Peter – two Americans – are the only survivors of a plane crash in the Australian outback. [...] That was what she’d do to the black boy; she’d stare at him until he felt the shame of his nakedness and slunk off. (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120)

In this example, the story is told from the perspective of the American children, according to the perception of the girl, the “black boy” would feel ashamed because of his nakedness. He is framed through the eyes of the American children; his point of view / thoughts / inner monologue is completely absent. There is no confirmation nor denial about how he feels about his nakedness, what it means to him, the only interpretation the reader gets is the outsider’s. In a subsequent exercise however, the coursebook acknowledges the lack of the boy’s perspective. Students are asked to adopt it and retell the story from the boy’s perspective. However, the textbook already framed the Aboriginal boy in a certain way again, telling students to start with “I was out hunting all day and I was lucky to kill a rock wallaby. On the way back ...” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.121). Thus, in a try to give the Aboriginal boy a voice, it is still heavily pre-scripted and controlled. Again, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not speak for

themselves, their voice is reconstructed, simplified, mediated and restricted to a stereotypical activity (hunting).

7.1.3 Authorial textbook voice

The third recurring speaker position identified in the material is an authorial textbook voice, which functions both as a factual-historical narrator, and as an evaluative and interpretative authority, guiding students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This voice primarily presents information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through factual and historical statements and is characterized by an impersonal tone, declarative sentence structures, and the absence of explicit attribution, which presents the information as objective and uncontested knowledge. It becomes evident in statements such as "The first native Australians arrived on the continent about 50,000 years ago. [...] Their numbers declined until the 1930s" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.122), where dates, population trends, and linear historical narration frame Indigenous history as settled facts. While some of these statements are supported by evidence, even seemingly neutral facts carry a particular perspective and ideological framing, shaping what is (not) told and from whose perspective. Indigenous peoples are consistently referred to in the third person, their histories and experiences are narrated by an external, institutional voice. As such, this authorial voice should be read critically and its claims not accepted blindly.

At the same time, this ostensibly neutral and factual voice also evaluates and interprets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences for the learner. In the example, "The plan was to bring them up like white Australians. However, this programme was not successful and just led to endless misery and despair among the native population" (*Prime*, 2017, p.122), the textbook does not merely report historical events but offers a moral and interpretative judgment without attributing it to any speaker or perspective. Another prominent example is "The fact that the two boys in the story laugh shows that they are human beings just like everybody else" (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.121), where the textbook explicitly instructs students on how to interpret the characters. The formulation *The fact that ... shows that...* presents one interpretation as self-evident and closes down alternative readings, thereby legitimising the textbook's perspective. Moreover, the need to explicitly argue for the Indigenous characters' humanity reveals an underlying presupposition that this status might not be taken for granted and, therefore, requires explanation or proof. Consequently, while the textbook voice appears neutral and informative, it maintains discursive control over both historical knowledge and interpretative meaning, reinforcing its authority while marginalising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

In conclusion, it became evident that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are absent from the texts. When they are included, there is no conversation led by them or with them, only about them. All of the analysed texts speak about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, only one instance was found where an Indigenous person directly spoke. Interestingly, also the included excerpts from novels such as *Walkabout* and *Mutant Message Down Under* are not authored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but both times by US-Americans.

7.2 Naming, Labelling and Description

After having established that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are mostly talked *about*, it becomes interesting to take a look at *how* they are talked about. The second question therefore focuses on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are described and labelled.

7.2.1 Categorisation

Across the material, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are rarely represented as individual social actors (at least not in the text). Only one instance includes a personal name, while in most cases, individuals remain unnamed and are instead constructed through various forms of categorisation. In contrast to nomination, where a person gets a unique identity through a name, they are described “in terms of identities and functions they share with others (categorisation)” (van Leeuwen, 1996, p.52).

For instance, in the following extract of *Mutant Message Down Under* (Morgan, 1995) included in *More*, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are characterised by what they do (functionalisation) – gather food and cook it on a fire.

The women stopped to gather some large leaves. Then they started looking under dead trees. Every now and then they found something and wrapped it in a leaf, [...] they cooked the food on a fire and served it, it didn't look like a worm any longer. (*More*, 2022, p.62)

Another example shows even more evidence of categorisation:

It was very different with the Aboriginal. He knew what reality was. Among the secret water holes of the Australian desert his people had lived and died, unchanging. They walked from one water hole to the next. Their lives were simple because they were devoted to one purpose, dedicated to fighting one battle - the battle with death. (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120)

First of all, *the Aboriginal* does not get a name. He is characterised through his relational identity: *his people*. Secondly, his identity is also described through what he does (fighting the battle to survive). This limited and simplified construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander identities becomes particularly salient when they are directly contrasted with tourists or White Australians, who are represented in more individualized ways. The most prominent example was found in the extract of *Walkabout* (Marshall, 1959) where two tourists are stranded and meet a boy: “Mary and her young brother Peter – two Americans – are the only survivors of a plane crash in the Australian outback” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120). Throughout the whole text, the children are referred to by their names, whereas, the Aboriginal boy was only called “the stranger”, “the Aboriginal”, “the bush boy”. Especially in the sentence “The bush boy’s attention went from Mary to Peter” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120) this juxtaposition becomes clearly visible.

Another striking example was found in *Easy* (2023),

When Australian artist Ben Quilty was young, he took a road trip during which he hoped to 'learn' Aboriginal along the way, picking up a book on the *Pitjantjatjara* language. It wasn't until he met a young Aboriginal man that he learned an important lesson. (p.72)

The identity of the *young Aboriginal man* is primarily positioned through a single category, his ethnicity. At the same time, the protagonist gets a name, a job, and his nationality (Australian) is also mentioned. Interestingly, across all textbooks, *Australian* is treated as a synonym for White Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are rarely considered Australian, they are always *the Aboriginal man*, as in this example. This juxtaposes Australian and Aboriginal, suggesting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not Australian (more on this in chapter 7.5 Normativity and Othering).

7.2.2 Collectivisation

This lack of individualisation is further reinforced through the labels used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which group them into homogeneous collective categories. Most often the term *Aborigines* was used, especially in *More* (2022), from which the following examples are taken: “Ayers Rock is very important to the Aborigines” (p.59), “The Aborigines believe that mutants are those people who have no idea how to live in the wild” (p.62). However, also the other books used this term, such as *Easy* (2023) in “They aren't smiling for the photo... Show some respect, Earl! Aborigines have been living here for thousands of years” (p.70). Other collective labels used are *Australian natives*, *Australian indigenous population*, and *first native Australians*. In contrast to the argument above, where I stated that they are rarely considered Australian, they are here. However, always in connection with *native*, or *indigenous*, they are never solely *Australian*. This representation of social actors as a mass is collectivisation, treating Indigenous peoples as a homogenous group rather than individual

social actors (van Leeuwen, 2008). Following official guidelines about labelling and referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, these phrases should also be treated as proper nouns and capitalized (Bunda et al., 2023; Reconciliation Australia, n.d.).

Representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only as collectivised groups instead of specific individuals was also detected in the images. For example, pictures accompanying the travel blog from Ryan and Amy gave some insight into this. Whereas Ryan and Amy get named underneath their picture, as are Eve and Jeremy, two other tourists that are part of a later story included in the travel blog, an Aboriginal man is depicted next to a passage referring to “Aborigines”. He is neither directly mentioned in the text, nor does he get a name, which means his picture serves only as a reference point, in terms of “Look, this is how an ‘Aboriginal man’ looks like”. The caption underneath his portrait only says “Aboriginal man” (*More*, 2022, pp.59-60).

7.2.3 Primitiveness

Throughout the texts, different strategies were also found that frame Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the imagery of primitiveness and savagery. First, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are frequently represented in relation to their tribes and communities. While, on the one hand, tribal communities present some form of internal diversity amongst “the Aborigines”, Moore (2020) states that “references to tribes or clans [which] evoke primitiveness implicitly” (p.119). The word “tribe” was used once explicitly, “They were the first white people a member of his tribe had ever seen” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120) but other references such as “the leader of the group” (*More*, 2022, p.62), or a direct reference to a language group, “picking up a book on the *Pitjantjatjara* language” (*Easy*, 2023, p.72), were found. Even though it may allude to primitiveness and savagery, it seems important to not only critique the inclusion of specific language groups names because this does present some internal diversity. As Bunda et al. (2023) point out, referring directly to a certain language group is a preferred way of identification by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

However, in combination with the mentioning of tribes, other aspects reinforce the image of primitiveness further, such as references to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle:

The women stopped to gather some large leaves. Then they started looking under dead trees. Every now and then they found something and wrapped it in a leaf, [...] they cooked the food on a fire and served it, it didn't look like a worm any longer. (*More*, 2022, p.62)

The Aboriginal was in no hurry. Time meant nothing to him. His next meal - the rock wallaby he had killed - was a sure thing. (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120)

Such descriptions foreground survival-based activities and reinforce associations with pre-modernity. By focusing on these functions, the texts implicitly contrast Indigenous lifestyles with modern ways of living. There is only a single instance that represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in modern society, namely “Simon told us that most Aborigines live in or near cities now and that a lot of them have forgotten how to hunt” (*More*, 2022, p.60). Apart from this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented only as stuck in the past, living a simple, “primitive” life. Moore (2020) pointed out that research has shown that in the past Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples spent only part of their day gathering food “which left ample time for leisure, art and spiritual life” (p.120). Connected to this strategy of primitivization is also a reference to instincts, constructing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as animal-like (Moore, 2020).

Marlo was amazed by the group's survival skills. They could find water where there was absolutely no sign of it. Marlo says they could actually hear the water under the sand and then they would suck water from the ground with long hollow reeds. [...] They could tell what creatures were nearby from footprints on the ground. They could even tell how fast the animals were travelling. (*More*, 2022, p.59)

There is even one instance with a direct comparison to an animal:

She remembered a story about a man who had come face to face with a lion and had stared it down until it had quietly slunk away. That was what she'd do to the black boy; she'd stare at him until he felt the shame of his nakedness and slunk off. (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120)

Here the tourist narrator explicitly equates “the black boy” with a lion. This does not only allude to danger but also degrades the human to an animal. Simplicity and primitiveness were also visually constructed throughout the material. Interestingly, most images that were found depicting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only showed men, women are notably absent. The men are shown eating worms (Figure 16) or playing the didgeridoo (Figure 17). They are either (half) naked or wear traditional clothing and/or body paint.

Figure 16 *Prime Time*, 2017, p.124



Figure 17 *More*, 2022, p.60



Lastly, instances of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as primitive were identified through allusions to a timeless, simple life. The sentence “The Aboriginal was in no hurry. Time meant nothing to him” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120) constructs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as timeless, in contrast to a modern, time-disciplined society. In another extract, there is an explicit reference to the simplicity of life, “Their lives were simple because they were devoted to one purpose, dedicated to fighting one battle - the battle with death” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120). Their lives are described through basic needs and natural cycles.

In conclusion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are predominantly constructed as collective groups rather than individual internally different social actors. A wide range of labels is used to refer to them, the most common one being *Aborigines*; not once is the wording of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* used. Descriptions frequently rely on collectivisation and categorisation. Literary texts in particular portray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander characters as representatives of an ancient, unchanging culture, emphasising timelessness, simplicity, primitiveness and closeness to nature. Such descriptions essentialise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and contrast it implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) with modern ways of life. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are predominantly described as a homogeneous group: perspectives, practices, rituals are always described as being part of everyone’s life, almost no internal diversity is visible. Discourses of primitiveness get especially evident in comparison with the descriptions of outsiders / tourists / White Australians.

7.3 Agency and Role Allocation

The third step of the analysis was to find out which roles Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented in. With regard to this, I examined whether they are given active agency or only passive presence.

7.3.1 Passive agents – historic victimhood

One dominant role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are represented in is the one of historic recipients of harm and bearers of trauma. The two prime examples for this are the two paragraphs about the Stolen Generations found in *Prime Time* (2017):

On 13 February 2008 the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd officially apologised to the stolen generations of Australian natives. Between 1910 and 1971 more than 100,000 children were taken from their Aboriginal families and handed over to white foster parents or state-run institutions to bring them up - with the aim of completely assimilating these "Stolen Generations" into white society. Many of these children were abused and mistreated in their new homes. Many were even told that they had no parents any more. Today the Australian public tries to admit that these policies were wrong and have led to misery and despair among the Australian indigenous population. (p.122)

Between 1910 and 1971 many indigenous Australian children were taken from their families to separate them from their background and culture. The plan was to bring them up like white Australians. However, this programme was not successful and just lead to endless misery and despair among the native population. (p.122)

Here the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are constructed as passive recipients and victims; they are objects of policy and intervention. This representation is empathetic and morally clear, but also one-dimensional. In neither of the two texts are references made to resistance or Indigenous-led responses to this. They are not constructed as active participants in their own history, but only as passive recipients.

At the same time, perpetrators are excluded from the discourse, they are concealed through *backgrounding* and *suppression* (van Leeuwen, 1996). These are two different processes: suppression means that the excluded social actor is completely absent from the whole text, whereas in backgrounding they are mentioned somewhere else, so the involvement in the particular activity can be inferred. In an extract of the first passage above, *children were abused and mistreated in their new homes*, it can be seen how through passivation blame is softened and not overtly put on the White Australian population or the government. The social actors, in this case the *white foster parents or state-run institutions* are backgrounded, they are mentioned in the sentence before the passive construction of children being abused and mistreated.

However, the second passage, which includes the phrase *children were taken*, is an example of suppression, there is absolutely no reference in the whole text as to who took those children. The second paragraph is part of a different activity, however on the same page as the first passage, so if treated consecutively in class, the reader is still able to infer who took those children, based on the information from the first text, nevertheless, this cannot be assumed. In conclusion, the perpetrators are excluded and the victims are foregrounded. The focus is on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the role of passive objects of the deeds of others and subject of their own suffering.

The phrase *in their new homes* is also abstract, as it links the abuse to White households, but still does not speak of White Australians, nor names the institutional agents who put these children there (such as the state, the church, etc.). Human perpetrators are also excluded in the second example that speaks of a *plan* and a *programme* which was not successful. This is called *objectivation*, a social actor is represented through a non-human entity (a plan / programme), hence, the focus shifts from who it did to what was done, making policies seem impersonal and inevitable. This passive and abstract formulation obscures state responsibility and avoids assigning agency to colonial authorities. Besides, the wording *this programme was not successful* is wildly problematic, as it frames a colonial practice as a failed administrative measure instead of a human rights violation. It also implicitly legitimizes the colonial aim of assimilation by suggesting that failure lay in the implementation rather than in the ideology itself.

However, the lack of overt responsibility is not only present in *Prime Time*, also in *Easy* (2023) the text called “Learning Aboriginal” gives some insight. In the following passage, “I was 19 years old and I was ashamed. I was also furious that my whole education had missed the entire existence of Indigenous Australia” (p.72), agency is only allocated to the speaker (the White Australian), *Indigenous Australia* only appears as an erased object of knowledge. Again, accountability and responsibility are obscured, *education* is personified, no teachers, institutions, or state actors are named. The discourse also does not explicitly explain this gap in knowledge as a result of deliberate exclusion.

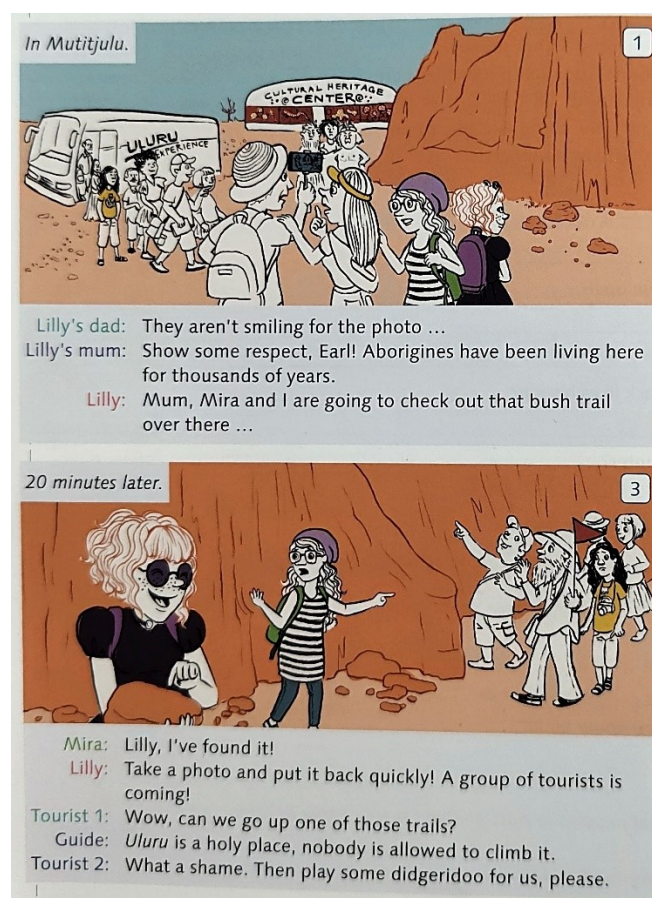
7.3.2 Active agents of tradition

The second main role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are assigned, is the one of active agents of tradition. As already illustrated in some excerpts in earlier sections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people almost only get active participation in the role of nomads and hunter-gatherers, having lived (and supposedly mostly still living) a survival-based lifestyle.

Some prime examples are: “We saw examples of tents made of small trees, tree bark and leaves” (*More*, 2022, p.60), “Every now and then they found something and wrapped it in a leaf [...] they cooked the food on a fire and served it” (*More*, 2022, p.62), “They walked from one water hole to the next” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.120).

In combination with this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are often put into the role of cultural informants or even entertainers. Their history and culture are not only what defines them and gives them identity, they are also expected to explain and perform these aspects to tourists. The following example is an extract of a comic from *Easy* (see Figure 18). Torres Strait Islander people are again only passive agents; first of all, they are expected to smile and be objects of admiration, then the focus is put on them inhabiting the land (which is also something passive) and lastly, the only active action that they are allowed is entertaining the tourists by playing the didgeridoo. While one statement is actively questioned in this comic (“They aren't smiling for the photo... Show some respect, Earl!”), the second is not (“Aborigines have been living here for thousands of years. What a shame. Then play some didgeridoo for us, please”), implicitly making it seem more appropriate than the first one (*Easy*, 2023, p.70).

Figure 18 Extract from comic (*Easy*, 2023, p.70)



In another text in *Easy* (2023), Ben Quilty wants to “learn Aboriginal” and only realises that there is no such thing as one Aboriginal language when he meets “a young Aboriginal man”:

“We showed him the book”, recalls Quilty, and he said, “Why are you learning that mob's language?” We said, “What - where are you from?”. And that’s the first time I realised we'd travelled through 62 language groups on that drive. (p.72)

This is one of the rare instances where an Indigenous person is an active speaker, even more while challenging a dominant misconception. However, he only appears briefly and mainly exists to trigger Quilty’s realization and enable his moral growth. The man is represented as an agent of correction, as being the only source of “truth”. He is not awarded further storytelling, even though this text is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, the focus stays on Quilty’s shame, anger and education. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still not assigned the role of storytellers or historians of their own experience; they are rather a moral reference point within a non-Indigenous learning narrative.

Lastly, only one instance was found across the whole material that constructs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as active participants in modern society. The sentence “Simon told us that most Aborigines live in or near cities now and that a lot of them have forgotten how to hunt” (*More*, 2022, p.60) thus carries a lot of weight in this analysis. It is the only passage that states that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also live in cities and are taking part in “civilized”, modern-day life. While this is the reality of the majority of them (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the mere inclusion of this one sentence in one coursebook shows the distorted, stereotyped and historicised version of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be prevalent in coursebooks.

In conclusion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are predominantly positioned in passive, collective, and historically fixed roles, with limited opportunities for sustained agency of contemporary action. They are often constructed as victims of state policies and colonial intervention. Linguistically, this is realised through frequent use of passive constructions and exclusion of agents, which foregrounds Indigenous suffering while obscuring the responsible actors. Apart from that, Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander characters are assigned roles that emphasise simplicity, survival and being stuck in the past. When they are active participants, they are portrayed as existing outside modernity, devoted to basic survival and closely connected to nature. Such role constructions essentialise Indigenous identity and contrast it implicitly with Western modernity, reinforcing a binary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of life. In several texts, Indigenous persons function as symbolic figures

within non-Indigenous narratives. They serve as catalysts for learning, moral reflection, or enlightenment of non-Indigenous protagonists, while their own perspectives remain marginal or underdeveloped. Even when Indigenous speakers appear briefly, their agency is often limited to initiating insight rather than sustaining narrative control.

7.4 Temporality and Historical Framing

The next layer of analysis directly connects to the previous one: whereas the former one was more concerned with how agency and roles are distributed, this one takes a closer look on how culture is framed (historically, contemporarily, changing, static) and how colonial history plays a role in this. Two aspects are dominant: a historical framing of culture, and colonial history being only discussed as something that happened in the past, not something that still has consequences today.

As it became clear by an abundance of excerpts in the previous sections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is primarily framed through history and historical practices. References to nomadism, hunter-gatherer lifestyles and ancestors depict a backwards-looking culture consisting only of traditions and practices from the past, being completely detached from modern society. As discussed earlier, only a few instances construct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural practices as contemporary and addressing change (e.g., "a lot of them have forgotten how to hunt") (*More*, 2022, p.60). One excerpt from *Walkabout* (Marshall, 1959, included in *Prime Time*, 2017, p.120) that has not been fully included so far, explicitly points toward this dramatic temporal contrast between "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture" and "Modern culture". In the following extract, two American siblings unexpectedly meet an Aboriginal boy in the Outback.

Between them the distance was less than the length of an arm, but more than 100,000 years. Brother and sister had been fed pre-digested foods, provided with continuous push-button entertainment. The basic realities of life were something they'd never had to worry about. It was very different with the Aboriginal. He knew what reality was. Among the secret water holes of the Australian desert his people had lived and died, unchanging. (Marshall, 1959, adapted and reproduced in *Prime Time*, 2017, p.120)

Already the first sentence overtly assigns extreme antiquity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. It is depicted as *unchanging*, static, resistant to historical change, isolated from modernity. This is harshly contrasted with contemporary children who live in a highly technological and modern environment, whereas the Indigenous boy experiences life in a direct, natural and survival-focused way. While the brother and sister live in the present, the boy still

lives in the past. Hence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is framed in a historical way.

With regard to historical framing, European invasion and colonisation play a central role. The term *invasion* is used explicitly in the extract taken from *Easy* (2023) “Before invasion, at least 250 Aboriginal languages existed, each possibly having a different word for a single English word. Today fewer than half of them are left” (p.72). Several interesting aspects can be taken from this extract. First, the fact that once 250 Aboriginal languages existed is positioned in relation to colonial time, not Indigenous temporalities, the highlighted aspect on the timeline is invasion. Another option could have been to say “For centuries, at least 250 Aboriginal languages existed, each possibly having a different word for a single English word. Since invasion, fewer than half of them are left”. Secondly, even though this statement marks a change in culture, continuity is framed as reduction, not vitality. The focus is on loss, because the present is framed as deficient in relation to the past. Thirdly, the present is also framed as passive, there are no mentions of active speakers, of ongoing linguistic practices. An option to counteract this could be to add a sentence like “Nowadays, there are still 150 language groups with more than 76 000 active speakers” (data taken from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022)). Lastly, colonialism is only indirectly mentioned as the implicit cause, but is it neither explained nor agented. Thus, colonial responsibility gets backgrounded, the formulation *fewer than half of them are left* naturalises the loss and states it as a historical inevitability as opposed to a process that was actively induced and driven forward. Additionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are presented as fixed entities that either exist or disappear, there is no indication of change, adaptation or resistance included in this passage. The analysis of this short abstract has shown how word choices and passivization can frame historical events in a certain way.

The two passages about the Stolen Generations included in *Prime Time* (2017, p.122) that are given in a chapter 7.3.1 are also crucial when looking closer at historical framing. These passages have a strong past orientation and represent colonialism as something that only influenced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the past, but not anymore. For example, the mention of Kevin Rudd’s apology in 2008 functions as a moral turning point and appears as a benevolent state action. However, Indigenous agency and activism is completely excluded, reinforcing a state-centred narrative rather than an Indigenous-centred one. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were therefore only victims in the past, but are neither represented as a continuously affected population in the present nor active political

subjects. The sentence “Today the Australian public tries to admit that these policies were wrong and have led to misery and despair among the Australian indigenous population” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.122) is worth analysing in more detail. First of all, the question arises as to why the Australian public only *tries* to admit this. It suggests a moral hesitation, a sense of not feeling fully accountable and therefore struggling to apologize. A taste that was already similarly evoked by the statement analysed prior about the re-education programme not being successful. Secondly, consequences (*misery and despair*) are framed as emotional outcomes rather than structural ones, which creates a present that shows no indication of continuing colonial systems and structural inequalities. *Misery and despair* are abstract categories, no reference is made to ongoing discrimination, therefore, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were victims of colonial actions in the past but are not anymore. This is also made apparent in the verb forms which mainly appear in past tense. The lack of present tense constructions avoids linking past actions to current structures and functions to historicize the injustice and depoliticize the present.

To summarise, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are constructed as objects of state policy, victims of past injustice and not as contemporary social actors, agents of resistance, bearers of living cultures, or future-oriented communities. They are primarily located in a traumatic past instead of a dynamic present or future.

7.5 Normativity and Othering

This last section focusses on how whiteness functions as an unmarked reference point and how normativity, belonging and Othering are discursively constructed. In addition, this last section explores how power relations are made visible through these constructions.

“Marlo was invited to meet a group of Aborigines. Dressed in high heels and normal clothes she was picked up [...]” (*More*, 2022, p.62). This extract overtly positions the White American woman as the norm from which the *group of Aborigines* deviates from, because she is dressed in *normal clothes* and they are not. This use of the word *normal* provides a framing for what counts as “normal” and “abnormal” from the very beginning. Whiteness is the standard, dressing like her is “normal”, thus, dressing somehow different needs to be “abnormal”; Marlo is normal, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are different, the others.

Another highly interesting aspect that was found across the material, was differentiating between “Australians” and “Aboriginals”, as if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not Australians. The extract “Learning Aboriginal” included in *Easy* (2023) shows how

this difference is made subtly but profoundly, “When Australian artist Ben Quilty [...], he met a young Aboriginal man [...]” (p.72). A clear distinction is drawn between *Australian* and *Aboriginal*, Australian is treated as a synonym for White settler and it always means White Australian. Not once are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people only referred to as Australians, a binary of Aboriginal and Australian, of us (the Australians) and them (the Aboriginals) is constructed.

This binary of constructing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as something different, something “less”, someone “other”, also plays a crucial role in representing power relations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are often constructed as people in a weaker position of power. For example, they are constructed as someone that a tourist can ask to play some didgeridoo for them or to smile in a picture (cf. *Easy*, 2023, p.70). The passage where the girl compares the “black boy” to a lion can be read as ambivalent in its portrayal of power relations. While she positions herself as human and him as animal, suggesting a hierarchical distinction, the comparison also invokes the lion as a powerful and potentially dangerous creature, therefore complicating a straightforward reading of superiority and inferiority. However, a prime example follows later in the same text, where the children end up laughing together and a follow-up activity in the book states, “The fact that the two boys in the story laugh shows that they are human beings just like everybody else” (*Prime Time*, 2017, p.121). This statement carries an implicit ideological assumption: by explicitly arguing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are *human beings just like everybody else* the text presupposes that this status might otherwise be in doubt and therefore requires explanation or proof. Initially the text assumes that the Aboriginal boy is “less”, he is comparable to an animal, he lives in nature, is primitive, and can consequently not be on the same power level as a White person. Only through his actions can he prove that he is a human being just as the two American children.

Power relations are also visually constructed. In the images included in the coursebooks, the reader sees Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people eating worms, holding spears, playing the didgeridoo and taking part in other traditional rituals and ceremonies. They are mostly (half) naked or dressed in traditional clothing and/or body paint. As van Leeuwen (2008a) states, depicting them in these “wild” and “uncivilized” activities, “symbolically oppresses them, symbolically excludes them from certain roles and confines them to others” (p.143). One image (Figure 19) that very explicitly illustrates a power imbalance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and tourists was found in *Easy* (2023, p.70). It depicts a family visiting Uluru, together with a group that has just left the bus. The father wants to take a picture of a

group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, presumably three men. They look displeased and the father is complaining because they are not smiling. This shows how not only in the text but also in the visuals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people get objectified, possessing less power than tourists or White Australians. Van Leeuwen (2008) mentions 5 strategies that are used to visually represent people as others. Some of them were found throughout the material, such as being represented as agents of low actions or as a homogeneous group.

Figure 19 Extract from comic from *Easy*, 2023, p.70



In conclusion, the extracts illustrate how normativity, whiteness and power relations operate through subtle asymmetries in labelling and positioning. Whiteness is naturalized as the default embodiment of Australia and situates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity as secondary, and outside the normative centre. This reproduces broader power relation in which whiteness remains invisible and normative, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity is made visible primarily through difference.

7.6 Summary

With regard to voice and speaker position, the analysis has shown that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are absent from the texts. If they are included, they are only reproduced by someone else. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not get to speak for themselves, they are only spoken about. Secondly, they are mainly represented as a collective homogeneous group. The most common label used to refer to them is *Aborigines*, not once was the accepted version *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* encountered. They are constructed as representatives of an ancient, unchanging culture, living a simple, primitive and backward-looking life. The same was confirmed at the third layer of analysis about agency and role allocation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are either victims of colonial powers in the past or representatives of a primitive, survival-based lifestyle that is detached

from modernity. In connection with this, it was also found that they are represented as social actors (or recipients) in the past, with a focus on their colonial suffering and injustice. A reference to contemporary lifestyles, political agency or resistance remains completely excluded from these representations. Lastly, the analysis showed how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are continually contrasted with white normativity and put into positions of lesser power.

8. Discussion

This study examined how Australian culture is represented in Austrian EFL coursebooks through a combination of quantitative content analysis and qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings reveal several patterns regarding the distribution of cultural content and the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

8.1 Representation of Australia based on the 4P model

The content analysis revealed a clear predominance of cultural *products* over all other categories. Both in *More* and *Easy*, cultural *products* made up more than half of the cultural content, only in *Prime Time* were they included about as often as *practices* and *persons*. A closer examination of images also showed that *products* made up almost three quarters of the visual representations. Three subcodes stood out in frequency overall, namely *tourist attractions*, *animals* and *famous cities, towns and islands*. These forms of representation present culture primarily through tangible aspects rather than through underlying values or social practices.

The result that *products* dominate so much in the two lower-level books, aligns with findings of previous studies. Yuen (2011) in his analysis of lower-secondary books used in Hong Kong already found that *products* made up the largest proportion. Similar results were also found in the study by Vodopija Krstanović & Weber (2020) who looked at lower-secondary books used in Croatia and globally. J. Lee & Li (2020) could also show this predominance in primary-level coursebooks used across China and Hong Kong.

The dominance of *products* may contribute to learners' general knowledge about the country but it often portrays Australia through a simplified and promotional lens. Many of the cultural elements highlight recognisable aspects associated with the country such as landscapes, wildlife or cultural artefacts. Australia and its culture are represented as something to be consumed by a tourist. It is not designed in such a way that students gain a deeper understanding of society and its culture, critically examine or even question historical backgrounds, or engage with

current socio-political issues in the region. The coursebooks rather try to emphasise what there is to explore and how it is marketed internationally. This finding concurs with previous studies who have also found a prevailing tourism discourse in foreign language textbooks (e.g., Bori, 2018; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010; Uzum et al., 2021). Interestingly, the cities and towns mentioned in the subcode *famous cities, towns and islands* are not necessarily the largest cities in the country, as I had originally assumed. Sydney is the most-often mentioned city, which correlates with it being the largest city in Australia, based on population. However, Melbourne, which is almost as populated, only ranks fifth in the frequency of this subcode, whereas Perth, which comes second, is only the fifth biggest city in the country. Brisbane, the third biggest city in the country, is only mentioned twice in *Easy*, and nowhere else (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2026). I would argue that the frequency of the cities is also linked to the prevailing tourism discourse, as places such as the Outback, Perth or even Rottnest Island provide many incentives for tourists, even though they are not exactly the largest, and therefore perhaps the most important, urban centres in the country. From my point of view, this also illustrates that there is no accurate reflection of the world in textbooks, and that the perspective of the creators of that representation is crucial. If one were to assume that the most frequently mentioned cities represent the “most important” ones, the results here would probably differ from those obtained if one were to ask residents of Australia which cities they consider the most important. There will probably be a discernible difference depending on whether the representation of this cultural *product* stems from an outsider’s perspective (that of a textbook produced in Austria) or an insider’s perspective (that of an Australian citizen). Neither is more or less “true”, it is simply that the perspective, and thus the interpretation of “important”, is different.

In *Prime Time* however, the proportion of *products* decreases drastically, it seems as though as the book raises its level to upper secondary, *products* receive less attention and cultural *practices* are foregrounded. This finding concurs with a prevalence of *small c* cultural items, that are mostly equivalent to cultural *practices* and *perspectives* from the 4P model. These observations were made in previous studies analysing higher-level books, used at tertiary-level and/or targeted at adult language learners. For example, Liu & Laohawiriyanon (2013) and Sadeghi & Sepahi (2018) analysed global EFL coursebooks used at universities and language institutes. They were able to show that small c cultural items prevailed whereas big C was not as present. The same was found by Lasekan et al. (2024), who again looked at a recognised global EFL book. Hence, it could be concluded that locally authored textbooks used in lower-level education tend to focus more on cultural *products*, whereas internationally used textbooks aiming at higher-level education and especially at older students, put greater focus on cultural

practices, or small c culture. This pattern is consistent with the findings from this study. Whereas in the two lower-secondary books tangible aspects of culture such as animals, tourist attractions and famous cities and towns prevail, *Prime Time* offers the learner a somewhat deeper understanding of cultural *practices*. A possible explanation for this was given by Lasekan et al. (2024), speculating that this might be a “pedagogical strategy to expose learners to more abstract cultural concepts as their linguistic abilities develop” (p.4945). In addition, as learners get older, they also get more cognitively mature and are able to deal with these abstract concepts.

Whereas *Prime Time* showed a decline in *products* and an increase in *practices*, this is not the case for *perspectives*. One might assume that *perspectives* are more central in the higher-level book, but this could not be found. With regard to the studies that found a dominance of small c items in globally published books for higher-levels, this could only be demonstrated in part in this study, namely only in relation to cultural *practices* and not to *perspectives*. As already mentioned in chapter 4.1.1, small c cultural items are defined slightly different in each study, but are usually a mixture of cultural *practices* and *perspectives*, when compared to the 4P framework. The findings of this study revealed that the distribution of *perspectives* does not fully correspond to a straightforward progression across educational levels, as it did with an increase of *practices* in *Prime Time*.

This ties in with an overall notable absence of cultural *perspectives* across the analysed coursebooks. With a share of only 10% of all cultural content featured in the three coursebooks, *perspectives* were the least represented. Its three subcodes *values and beliefs*, *world views* and *myths* had varied distributions per coursebooks, but overall *values and beliefs* made up more than half of the instances. *Perspectives* centred mostly around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, beliefs and myths and those mostly focussed on traditional and historical aspects of life. This resulted in a lack of representation of cultural mentalities, political and social values, morals, etc. These findings are consistent with previous research in which *perspectives* play a marginal role in the representation of culture (Ariawan et al., 2022; Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020; J. Lee & Li, 2020; Zhang, Li, & Chang, 2024).

This absence of *perspectives* suggests that culture is predominantly represented at a surface level, with little emphasis on how cultural practices and products are embedded in broader social and ideological frameworks. As a result, learners may gain factual knowledge about Australia but remain less aware of how underlying belief systems shape and influence ways of thinking and acting within a society.

While it was expected that the upper secondary materials include more cultural *perspectives*, the lower-secondary coursebook *Easy* in fact contained the highest number of instances overall. One possible explanation for this pattern could be the recency of the textbook. As the most recently developed coursebook, *Easy* may reflect current trends in language education which increasingly emphasize intercultural competence and the importance of engaging with diverse cultural viewpoints. In contrast to more traditional materials, the newer textbook may place greater emphasis on encouraging learners to reflect on cultural perspectives rather than simply acquiring factual knowledge about which places to visit when going there on holiday. The comparatively higher number of *perspectives* in *Easy* may therefore signal a shift towards more contemporary pedagogical approaches in ELT material design. At the same time, this interpretation should be approached with caution, as the present study does not systematically investigate the relationship between publication date and cultural representation. Other factors, such as authorial choices may also play a role. Nevertheless, the variation observed across the coursebooks suggests that the integration of *perspectives* remains marginal, rather than being a stable feature of materials.

From a pedagogical perspective, the emphasis on cultural *products* may reflect practical considerations in textbook design. Tangible cultural elements are easier to illustrate visually and integrate into short reading texts. At the same time, focussing only on emblematic aspects of culture facilitates a positive image leaving aside harsher, not so beautiful topics. Therefore, questions about the depth of cultural learning opportunities offered by the materials are raised. When culture is mainly presented through objects and landmarks, learners may develop a form of cultural knowledge that is largely descriptive rather than analytical. In contrast, the greater inclusion of *practices* and *perspectives* could encourage learners to reflect more critically on how culture shapes everyday life, social interactions, and ways of thinking. The findings of this study also correspond to the conclusions from the study by Gómez Rodríguez (2015), who found that “textbooks contain only static and congratulatory topics of surface culture and omit complex and transformative forms of culture” (p.167).

One could argue that the cultural representation in Austrian EFL coursebooks is intended for subsequent volumes to build on one another, and that the cultural *products* covered in lower secondary should be supplemented in upper secondary by a greater focus on *practices* and *perspectives*. *Products* offer a general starting point that is later dealt with in more depth. However, *Prime Time* was the only upper secondary coursebook found which covered Australia as a whole unit; as it is not published by the same publisher as any of the lower secondary

books, one cannot assume that they are designed to build on one another. It may simply be a coincidence if students use this book in upper secondary and revisit topics of Australia. If they have another coursebook, their knowledge of Australia stays restricted to what was included in the lower secondary books, namely largely product-based representations. Therefore, it would be desirable to include a more balanced representation from the very beginning. It does not only have to take place at higher level education but could be incorporated in lower secondary already. Although cultural *products* can serve as accessible entry points for cultural learning, a more balanced integration of the different cultural dimensions of the 4Ps framework could support a more nuanced understanding of Australian culture. A more consistent and explicit integration of cultural perspectives across all levels would be necessary to support a deeper and more critically informed approach to cultural learning in the EFL classroom.

Products and *perspectives* are thus the two extremes of cultural representation found in this study – the most represented versus the least represented, the most tangible versus the most abstract. Their quantitative results tell us a lot about the representation of Australia already, however the two themes “in the middle”, namely *practices* and *persons* also provide interesting insights. In comparison to cultural *products*, *practices* were represented moderately across the analysed coursebooks, occupying an intermediate position within the 4P framework. *Practices* typically included references to *society*, *daily life*, and *lifestyles* among others. In principle, this offers opportunities for learners to engage with how culture is enacted in social contexts. However, given the quantitative nature of the content analysis, the findings primarily reflect the presence and distribution of practices rather than the extent to which they are explored or contextualised within the materials. Nevertheless, the relative positioning of *practice* between *products* and *perspectives* holds some space for interpretation. While learners are exposed to certain aspects of everyday life, the low frequency of *perspectives* suggest that these *practices* are not consistently accompanied by explicit references to underlying cultural values or belief systems. As a result, the connection between what people do (*practices*) and why they do it (*perspectives*) remains less visible across the materials. *Practices* included in the textbooks tend to focus on relatively neutral and non-controversial aspects of life, such as leisure activities, food, traditional ways of working. For example, with regard to jobs, only physical labour was included (e.g. working on cattle farms or in a mine), there was no reference made to modern industrial or service sector jobs. While these topics are accessible and engaging for learners, they may also contribute to a somewhat simplified, outdated and uncritical representation of culture.

Lastly, the analysis showed that cultural *persons* account for approximately 16% of all cultural references across the coursebooks, making this category a noticeable, though not dominant, component of cultural representation of Australia. Individuals are regularly used as means of conveying cultural content, but do not constitute the primary focus when compared to other categories.

A close look at the distribution within this category reveals that *fictional* and *generic persons* make up the majority of the references. These characters are frequently used to present or contextualise cultural information, suggesting that they serve a pedagogical function in structuring learning content. By embedding cultural information in short dialogues or stories, fictional and generic characters may help make content more accessible and engaging for learners. At the same time, this means that cultural representation is often mediated through selected and constructed voices rather than through a wide range of real-life perspectives. Within the *persons* dimension, the analysis also identified variation in the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are referred to across the coursebooks, including forms such as *Aborigines*, *Aboriginal peoples*, or *the Aboriginal*. This variation points to a lack of consistency in naming practices, which may reflect differing levels of awareness in the materials. This issue was dealt with in more detail in the CDA, the discussion of which follows below.

At the end of the discussion of the 4P analysis, I briefly want to revisit the differences between the individual coursebooks. *Prime Time* represented the cultural content in the most balanced way overall; the four categories are the most evenly distributed here. However, *Prime Time* also has the lowest total number of coded segments, despite having the highest page count. This means that, while the upper secondary coursebook includes less content overall, it focuses on greater balance, which, as argued above, could be linked to a progression in level and age. *More* finds itself at the other end of the scale, with the highest coefficient of variation, in other words, the least balance among the 4P dimensions. Overall, *Easy* is situated in the middle, but shows a high degree of diversity within some subcodes, such as within *tourist attractions* or *famous cities, towns and islands* including also lesser-known places. *Easy* also has the highest total number of coded textual segments, suggesting that it offers a wide variety within the representation, even if this is not entirely balanced. As the most recent textbook, *Easy* could therefore be a sign that an attempt is being made to include a greater variety of cultural representations. That is also something I expected to find before the analysis: a difference in the representation in *More* compared to *Easy*, and then again compared to *Prime Time*. Thus,

my assumption was largely confirmed, although I would have expected a greater balance in *Easy*.

8.2 A Critical Discourse Analysis of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The CDA analysis based on the frameworks of (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008b) shows that a central issue concerns the general absence of Indigenous voice and agency. The analysis shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not positioned as speakers within the materials, but are instead consistently spoken about, through what appears to be a “neutral” and informative voice. Concurring with what Ho (2021) has pointed out in her analysis, the discourse was controlled by the non-Indigenous, giving them narrative power without considering Indigenous viewpoints. On the one hand, this marginalises them in general; on the other, it denies them any opportunity to participate actively in the discourse. What goes hand in hand with this is the portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as passive subjects. This study has shown that in various contexts, be it historical events such as colonisation and the Stolen Generations, or contemporary daily life, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain mostly passive, which is consistent with findings of prior studies (C. W. Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Véliz-Campos et al., 2024).

Another aspect that ties in with this, is in those instances where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are part of the discourse, they are collectivised, do not get unique identities and remain unnamed. While on one other hand, White Australians and tourists get personified, Indigenous persons are represented as a homogenous group rather than individual social actors. This lack of proper names and tendency to collectivise them was also found in the study by Murray (2023).

The only time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do get active agency is in the role of keepers of tradition. In agreement with various prior studies (C. W. Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017; Ho, 2021; Véliz-Campos et al., 2024) a discourse of modernity versus tradition is prominent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are treated as “representative of heritage, focusing on their adherence to traditional beliefs and values that hold subjective historical significance in today’s world” (Véliz-Campos et al., 2024, p. 15). Continuous references to survival-based activities, such as hunting and gathering or spirituality, reinforce associations with the past and construct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as primitive and traditional. These portrayals contribute to an image of Indigenous people as

belonging to the past instead of being a part of contemporary Australian society. This is further supported by the fact that only one instance explicitly refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban contexts, despite the reality that approximately 85% of them live in non-remote areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The omission of contemporary, urban Indigenous experiences reinforces this perception of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being incompatible with modernity. This portrayal was also supported by the visuals that depict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people only in traditional clothing, partaking in traditional interactions. Across the material, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were represented as primitive and uncivilized. Véliz-Campos et al. (2024) concur, stating that in their analysed Chilean coursebooks “the visual representation fails to demonstrate the diverse ways in which indigenous communities in Australia have integrated into established Westernized systems and practices” (p.15). The visuals analysed by C. W. Brown & Habegger-Conti (2017) have also shown this stark contrast between depicting Indigenous peoples only in traditional settings and contrasting it with non-Indigenous people living in a modern society. From my point of view, the fact that such a representation remains so prevalent shows just how dominant colonial narratives still are. These discourses reflect what the colonisers used as justifications; terra nullius, the empty land that could be taken by Westerners, and poor children who needed protection from such an uncivilized upbringing and where better off being raised by White families. It is saddening that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still largely portrayed in this way, as it continues to implicitly sanction the actions of the past.

Closely related to this is the representation as passive victims of history. The findings show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are frequently depicted in the context of past injustices, yet without reference to resistance, agency, or ongoing political engagement. Moreover, the use of passive and abstract linguistic formulations obscures responsibility and avoids assigning guilt and responsibility for these injustices. This “absence of conflict” has also been found by Véliz-Campos et al. (2024) who state that in contrast to historical accounts of the Mapuche people being warriors, they are shown as engaging in conflict-free interactions. Ho (2021) concurs, finding that textbooks are characterised by a settler colonial gaze, for example by “pretending the land [it] is empty for settler exploitation” (p. 872). In connection with this one has to also consider the exploitation of Indigenous culture for tourism. A general tourism discourse has already been found in the content analysis and it emerges again in the critical discourse analysis of the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Multiple instances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons and cultures serving as

objects for sightseeing were detected. Examples are visits to Uluru, expecting Aboriginal people to smile or play the didgeridoo, and narratives such as *Mutant Down Under* that centre around superficial and eroticised encounters. This “is problematic because it aligns with historical colonial misrepresentations of the Indigenous land” (Ho, 2021, p. 870). Especially against the historical background of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as outlined in chapter 4.2.1, such representations risk commodifying Indigenous cultures by reducing them to symbolic or performative aspects, while overlooking their social, political, and contemporary dimensions.

Finally, these patterns are reinforced through processes of Othering, most notably in the recurring distinction between *Australians* and *Aboriginals*. Such binary constructions implicitly position Indigenous peoples as external to national identity and culture, as opposed to integral to it. This dichotomy contributes to the reproduction of unequal power relations by maintaining a symbolic boundary between the dominant “norm” and a marginalised “other”.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the analysed materials reproduce a range of discursive strategies identified in previous research, including collectivisation, essentialisation, the denial of agency, etc. In line with Paulo Freire’s argument that education should critically interrogate power structures rather than reproduce them (Taylor-Mendes, 2009, p. 66) the representations identified here raise important questions about whose perspectives are included, whose voices are excluded, and who ultimately benefits from the perpetuation of these portrayals. Instead of representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as dynamic, diverse and contemporary, the materials largely construct them as static, homogenous, and situated in the past, thereby limiting opportunities for learners to develop a more critical and nuanced understanding of Indigenous realities. This form of representation ultimately serves the interests of dominant cultural perspectives, as it reproduces familiar and non-confrontational narratives that are easily consumable within educational contexts. By situating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in an emblematic past, the materials sidestep contemporary issues such as inequality, resistance, and political agency. As a result, textbook producers and educational institutions benefit from a depoliticized and simplified portrayal, while learners are denied access to more complex and critical understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander realities. I do not want to downplay the importance of representing traditional cultural practices and history here, it is valuable to portray this diversity of humanity, but it should be just one aspect in a mosaic of representational aspects, not the only one.

8.3 Connection with educational frameworks

Beyond a comparison of results with previous studies, it is useful to briefly consider how the findings relate to broader curricular expectations regarding cultural learning, particularly those outlined in the influential publications mentioned earlier: *Developing intercultural competence through education* (Barrett et al., 2014), FREPA (Candelier et al., 2012) and ultimately the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). While this study did not explicitly investigate policy alignment as a research objective, such a reflection helps contextualise the pedagogical relevance of the findings.

Barrett et al. (2014) conceptualise culture as a composite of three interrelated dimensions; material, social, and subjective culture. Material culture could be equated to cultural products, while social culture encompasses practices and persons. Subjective culture hence relates to cultural perspectives. In light of this framework, the findings of this study suggest an uneven representation of these dimensions. As pointed out above, the analysed materials predominantly foreground elements of material culture, and to some extent social culture, however, subjective culture – particularly in the form of perspectives – appears to be underrepresented. From the perspective of Barrett et al. (2014), such representations risk reducing culture to observable and consumable elements, while neglecting the deeper, meaning-making dimensions that are central to intercultural understanding.

This imbalance stands in tension with the descriptors and competences outlined in FREPA (2012), which explicitly promote an understanding of culture as a complex and dynamic system. It points out that cultures are internally diverse and continually evolving, two aspects that have not been found at all in the coursebooks. On the contrary, the materials represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as static, stuck-in-the past communities, which does not align with these guiding principles at all. Whereas FREPA (2012) states that students should “[k]now[s] that cultural diversity and social diversity are closely linked” and “[k]now[s] that cultures are continually evolving” it was particularly noticeable that this is not represented in the materials at all. A lot more could be said about whether the materials align with what the CEFR (2001, 2020) and its guiding documents expect from language teaching materials, but as this is not the focus of this thesis, this short comment should suffice.

Overall, the findings of this study reveal a consistent pattern across both the 4P framework and the critical discourse analysis, pointing to a limited and uneven representation Australian culture in the analysed materials. The combined findings suggest that the representation of

Australia emphasises surface-level cultural knowledge and tourism imagery, with limited engagement with deep cultural complexity, diversity, and contemporary Indigenous perspectives. Culture is predominantly presented as static, observable, and consumable rather than as a dynamic and contested system of meanings. The analysis therefore highlights a gap between the multidimensional and critical understanding of culture advocated in educational frameworks and its implementation in teaching materials. Thus, there is a need for more nuanced, inclusive and critically informed approaches to Australian representation – and cultural representations more widely – in Austrian EFL coursebooks.

9. Conclusion

This study examined how Australia is represented in Austrian EFL coursebooks through a combination of quantitative content analysis and qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings reveal several patterns regarding the distribution of cultural content and the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The first research question asked what cultural content was used to represent Australian culture in Austrian coursebooks. The content analysis showed that the majority of cultural references related to cultural products; overall, more than half of the cultural content was part of this category. In contrast, deeper cultural dimensions, such as perspectives, were significantly less frequent across all coursebooks. Although the proportions of the 4P categories were not the same, a trend towards predominant cultural products and few perspectives can be seen. This distribution suggests that cultural learning opportunities in the coursebooks primarily focus on visible and tangible elements of culture rather than on underlying cultural meanings of social practices. Having a closer look within these themes, it became apparent that Australia was frequently represented through tourism-related imagery, including iconic sites, wildlife or famous cities. While such representations contribute to learners' general knowledge about the country, they often portray Australia through a simplified and promotional lens. Australia and its culture were represented as something to be consumed by a tourist. The cultural representation is not designed in such a way that students gain a deeper understanding of society and its culture, critically examine and even question historical backgrounds, or engage with current socio-political issues in the region.

The second research question was targeted at how these representations differ across different coursebooks and grade levels. This study showed that neither of the three coursebooks demonstrated a perfect balance of cultural representations. Unexpectedly, the most recent textbook (*Easy*) was not the most balanced one, but the upper-secondary book *Prime Time* was. It was argued that this is largely due to the learners' progression in age and language level, which enables them to deal with deeper cultural representations.

Lastly, the third research question investigated the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The critical discourse analysis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' representation revealed that they were present, however limited in scope and depth. When included, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples often appeared in sections about history, cultural heritage, or traditional practices. This was particularly visible in the imagery

that portrayed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples only in their traditional roles. In the text, they were not allowed to speak from themselves, no Indigenous perspectives are directly included, it is always spoken about them, very often using implicitly derogatory language such as comparing them to animals, highlighting their primitive lifestyles and clearly separating them from White Australians. The CDA further showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not positioned as active participants in Australian society but rather simplified as a homogeneous and static group still living in the past.

In conclusion, the combined findings suggest that the representation of Australia emphasises surface-level cultural knowledge and tourism imagery, with limited engagement with cultural complexity, diversity, and contemporary Indigenous perspectives. These results were largely expected; however, it was quite shocking to see how stereotypical the representations still remain. I was particularly struck by how the majority of the representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still reflect deeply rooted racist and postcolonial perspectives.

One limitation of this study is that it focusses on the materials alone and not on their implementation in classroom practice. Consequently, this would be an interesting extension, to determine how cultural content is taught and how teachers supplement or critically discuss problematic representations. At the end of my thesis, I also find myself wondering whether the representation of other countries and cultures within the inner, outer and expanding circle looks similar. It would be highly interesting to compare representations of different countries and cultures to see if these surface-level-based, outdated representations prevail. Future research could build on this study by drawing such comparisons.

Finally, I hope that this work can serve as an impulse for textbook authors and publishers, so that superficial, stereotypical and postcolonial representations give way to more diverse and reflective ones.

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11. Appendix

11.1 Abstract

This thesis explores the representation of Australia in Austrian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) coursebooks, with a particular focus on the portrayal of Australian Indigenous cultures. It investigates the cultural content presented in three Austrian EFL textbooks and examines which cultural themes are most prominent, as well as similarities and differences across the materials. First, a content analysis based on the 4P model of culture (Yuen, 2011) is used to categorize and quantify cultural content into the four categories *products*, *practices*, *persons* and *perspectives*. This allows for a systematic comparison of dominant cultural themes. Second, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), drawing on van Leeuwen's (1996) framework of social actor representation, is applied to selected textual and visual data in order to examine how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented in greater depth. The findings indicate that representations of Australia in Austrian EFL coursebooks are largely characterised by surface-level cultural references, with a strong emphasis on tourism-related imagery. In contrast, more complex and diverse cultural perspectives are often underrepresented or absent. The analysis further reveals that the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples frequently relies on limited and simplified representations, reducing them to only living a traditional way of life. These results should serve as a valuable input for textbook authors and publishers in order to reduce stereotypical and postcolonial narratives in cultural representations.

11.2 Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit untersucht die Repräsentation Australiens in österreichischen Englischschulbüchern. Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Darstellung der Indigenen Kulturen Australiens. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht die kulturellen Inhalte dreier Schulbücher, und beleuchtet, welche kulturellen Themen am vorherrschendsten sind, sowie die Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen den Materialien. Zunächst wird eine Inhaltsanalyse auf der Grundlage des 4P Modells von Kultur (Yuen, 2011) durchgeführt, um kulturelle Inhalte in die vier Kategorien *products*, *practices*, *persons* und *perspectives* zu kategorisieren. Diese quantitative Analyse ermöglicht einen systematischen Vergleich der vorherrschenden kulturellen Themen. Zusätzlich wird eine Kritische Diskursanalyse basierend auf van Leeuwens (1996) *framework of social actor representation* durchgeführt. Anhand dieses Konzepts werden Texte und Bilder der Schulbücher analysiert, um zu untersuchen wie die Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples dargestellt werden. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Darstellungen Australiens in österreichischen Englischschulbüchern weitgehend durch oberflächliche kulturelle Inhalte charakterisiert sind, wobei der Schwerpunkt stark auf tourismusbezogenen Bildern liegt. Im Gegensatz dazu sind komplexere und vielfältigere kulturelle Perspektiven oft unterrepräsentiert oder fehlen gänzlich. Die Analyse zeigt ferner, dass die Darstellung der Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples auf vereinfachte Darstellungen von traditionellen Lebensweisen begrenzt ist. Diese Ergebnisse sollen Lehrbuchautor:innen und Verlagen als wertvolle Grundlage dienen, um stereotype und postkoloniale Darstellungen in kultureller Repräsentation zu reduzieren.

11.3 Coding Manual 4P analysis

Code	Sub-code	Definition	Coding guideline (inclusion criteria)	Anchor-example1	Anchor example 2	Exclusion criteria
Product	animals	mention of native Australian animals	Australian native animals	kangaroos	"Dingoes are wild dogs that live in the outback"	animals that are not native Australian
	food	typical Australian cuisine	meals, beverages, fruit & vegetables	a toast with avo	a cuppa	something that is not edible
	merchandise	products and commercial items associated with Australia	Australian brands / products, local crafts, minerals	opal		something that is not for sale / not a commercial item
	print	forms of literature	novels, newspaper articles	The Australian novel "Walkabout"	the novel "Angela"	online material
	tourist attractions	sights, places, things to do for tourists	places, landmarks, or activities attracting visitors in Australia	Sydney Opera house	Great Barrier Reef	overall mention of cities --> famous cities and towns / natural environment not specifically mentioned as attraction
	famous cities, towns and islands	cities, towns, islands that are included as such	cities, towns, islands	Sydney	also: the Outback as a place rather than a tourist attraction	no places that are tourist attractions such as Uluru or GB Reef
	art forms and artistic works	art forms, instruments, Indigenous or not	instruments, crafts, paintings, music	"Then play some didgeridoo for us"	rock art and shell middens	literature -> print

Code	Sub-code	Definition	Coding guideline (inclusion criteria)	Anchor-example1	Anchor example 2	Exclusion criteria
Practices	customs	"a way of behaving or a belief that has been established for a long time" (Cambridge Dictionary)	rituals, ceremonies, celebrations, traditional way of life	walkabout	"Every year Australia celebrates National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week"	modern way of life -> daily life
	daily life	daily routines, hobbies, linguistic habits (slang)	slang, routines, hobbies, schedules, eating habits	For breakfast, I have a cuppa and a toast with avo	When is the game on, mate?	traditional practices -> customs
	society	social organisation	education, health system, migration, infrastructure, demographics of the population	While most immigrants used to come from Europe, now they almost all come from Asia	250 Aboriginal languages existed	cultural norms -> values & beliefs
	lifestyles	general descriptions of lifestyles, working conditions	(regional) differences in the lives of people, different working conditions	working in a mine means working underground	They could find water where there was absolutely no sign of it.	specific individual daily situations -> daily life
	historical events	historical events that have shaped the population	historical events, political events, colonialism	Australia used to be a penal colony	In 2008 the Australian government apologised...	
	environmental and wildlife protection	what Australia does to preserve the environment and animals	animal welfare, species protection, environmental politics	A law was introduced in 1997 gives protection to sharks	koala catcher	description of animals without the aspect of protection --> animals

Code	Sub-code	Definition	Coding guideline (inclusion criteria)	Anchor-example1	Anchor example 2	Exclusion criteria
Persons	famous individuals	famous Australian individuals	writers, poets, scientists, educators, politicians, entrepreneurs, artists, musicians, actors, athletes, astronauts	Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd	Australian artist Ben Quilty	"normal" citizens or fictitious people
	fictitious persons	invented characters for narration in stories or exercises -> referring to a specific person, mostly with a name	Fictitious characters that appear in stories / exercises	Jack Smith, the opal hunter	Ben Pascoe, an Aboriginal who helps the police find lost drivers in the outback	people that are not Australian / famous fictitious characters -> products
	generic persons	Generic mention of persons	no name or individual identity, used to represent a group of people / a "type" of person	Aboriginal peoples VS the white people	surfers	No characters in stories -> fictitious persons
Perspectives	myths	legends, superstitions, tales that are part of the cultural imagination	fictional tales, legends, spiritual narratives that have a symbolic value	Aboriginals do not get colds	drop bears	historical events, religious practices --> values & beliefs (e.g. Uluru is a holy place)
	values & beliefs	normative, moral beliefs that inform about what is seen as "good" "bad" "correct"	political values, social values, morals	"Uluru is a holy place, nobody is allowed to climb it"	"Today the Australian public tries to admit that these policies were wrong"	world views without a normative dimension

Code	Sub-code	Definition	Coding guideline (inclusion criteria)	Anchor- example1	Anchor example 2	Exclusion criteria
	world views	General attitudes towards the world, society, or humanity	perception of time, space life; mentalities & cultural characteristics (without judgement!)	Is Australia becoming less European?	Australians love to shorten words	normative statements -> values & beliefs / routines or actions -> daily life

11.4 Full scale “Building on pluricultural repertoire” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 125)

C2	Can initiate and control their actions and forms of expression according to context, showing awareness of cultural differences and making subtle adjustments in order to prevent and/or repair misunderstandings and cultural incidents.
C1	Can identify differences in sociolinguistic/-pragmatic conventions, critically reflect on them and adjust their communication accordingly. Can sensitively explain the background to and interpret and discuss aspects of cultural values and practices drawing on intercultural encounters, reading, film, etc. Can deal with ambiguity in cross-cultural communication and express their reactions constructively and culturally appropriately in order to bring clarity.
B2	**Can describe and evaluate the viewpoints and practices of their own and other social groups, showing awareness of the implicit values on which judgments and prejudices are frequently based. **Can explain their interpretation of the cultural assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices of their own community and of other communities that they are familiar with. **Can interpret and explain a document or event from another culture and relate it to documents or events from their own culture(s) and/or from cultures with which they are familiar. **Can discuss the objectivity and balance of information and opinions expressed in the media about their own and other communities. Can identify and reflect on similarities and differences in culturally determined behavioural patterns (e.g. gestures and speech volume or, for sign languages, sign size) and discuss their significance in order to negotiate mutual understanding.

	Can, in an intercultural encounter, recognise that what one normally takes for granted in a particular situation is not necessarily shared by others, and can react and express themselves appropriately. Can generally interpret cultural cues appropriately in the culture concerned. Can reflect on and explain particular ways of communicating in their own and other cultures, and the risks of misunderstanding they generate.
B1	Can generally act according to conventions regarding posture, eye contact and distance from others. Can generally respond appropriately to the most commonly used cultural cues. Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture. Can explain in simple terms how their own values and behaviours influence their views of other people's values and behaviours. Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look "strange" to them in another sociocultural context may well be "normal" for the other people concerned. Can discuss in simple terms the way their own culturally determined actions may be perceived differently by people from other cultures.
A2	Can recognise and apply basic cultural conventions associated with everyday social exchanges (e.g. different greetings, rituals). Can act appropriately in everyday greetings, farewells and expressions of thanks and apology, although they have difficulty coping with any departure from the routine. Can recognise that their behaviour in an everyday transaction may convey a message different from the one they intend, and can try to explain this simply. Can recognise when difficulties occur in interaction with members of other cultures, even though they may

	not be sure how to behave in the situation.
A1	Can recognise differing ways of numbering, measuring distance, telling the time, etc. even though they may have difficulty applying this in even simple everyday transactions of a concrete type.
Pre-A1	No descriptors available

Note. Descriptors marked with asterisks (**) represent a high level for B2. They may also be suitable for the C levels.