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MASTER'S THESIS

Fostering Cultural Awareness Through
Picturebooks in the Norwegian English
Classroom

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Interpreting

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I confirm that the work is self-prepared and that references/source references to all sources used in the work are provided, cf. Regulation relating to academic studies and examinations at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), § 12-1.

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Abstract

The primary focus of this master's thesis is to explore if three chosen picturebooks may potentially contribute to foster cultural awareness in the light of the interdisciplinary topic *Democracy and Citizenship* that were added in the new curriculum put into action in 2020. The three chosen picturebooks used in this research are *The Proudest Blue* created by Ibtihaj Muhammad, S. K. Ali and Hatem Aly, *Ali's Story: A Real-Life Account of His Journey from Afghanistan* created by Andy Glynne and Salvador Maldonado, and *The Invisible* created by Tom Percival. All of these three picturebooks have narratives that tackle societal and cultural issues such as war, migration, religion, poverty, minorities, identity, racism and human rights, as well as the narratives are told from children's points of views.

To analyze the selected picturebooks I have used multimodal discourse analysis based on Painter's framework. To guide what to look for in the analysis, Nikolajeva and Scott's narrative theory and The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) of The Council of Europe were added. Combining Painter, Nikolajeva & Scott and The Council of Europe made it possible to analyze the selected picturebooks in the light of the interdisciplinary topic, *Democracy and Citizenship*.

This thesis found that the picturebooks contain important cultural aspects such as democratic values and attitudes and have narratives that tackle societal and cultural issues and events that may evoke cultural awareness. To help pupils to be aware of people around them, no matter their life situations, cultural background and differences, these picturebooks can be a start to achieve that goal. As in an educational context, it is important to use a material that the pupils find interesting and manageable, on a level that they can comprehend. The format of picturebooks is therefore suitable in the context to learn a new language, as well as learning democratic skills as values and attitudes that benefit democracy and citizenship.

Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven sitt hovedfokus er å undersøke om tre valgte bildebøker kan bidra til å fremme kulturell bevissthet knytte til det tverrfaglige temaet Demokrati og Medborgerskap, som ble lagt til i den nye læreplanen som kom i 2020.

De tre valgte bildebøkene er *The Proudest Blue* skrevet av Ibtihaj Muhammad og S.K. Ali og illustrert av Hatem Aly, *Ali's Story: A Real-Life Account of His Journey from Afghanistan* skrevet og illustrert av Andy Glynne og Salvador Maldonado, og *The Invisible* skrevet og illustrert av Tom Percival. Alle disse tre bildebøkene inneholder fortellinger som omhandler sosiale og kulturelle problemer som krig, migrasjon, religion, fattigdom, minoriteter, identitet, rasisme og menneske rettigheter. I tillegg er alle disse tre forskjellige fortellingene fortalt fra et barns perspektiv.

For å analysere de tre valgte bildebøkene har det blitt brukt en multimodal diskurs analyse basert på et rammeverk laget av Painter. For å veilede hva som skal bli analysert har det blitt brukt fortellerteori hentet fra Nikolajeva & Scott, samt referanserammeverket for kompetanse for demokratisk kultur som er laget av Europarådet. Gjennom å bruke alle disse tre ulike metodene sammen, har det blitt mulig å analysere de valgte bildebøkene i lys av det tverrfaglige temaet demokrati og medborgerskap.

Denne masteroppgaven fant at alle tre bildebøkene inneholder viktige kulturelle og sosiale aspekter som demokratiske verdier og holdninger og inneholder fortellinger som omhandler sosiale og kulturelle problemer og hendelser som kan fremkalle kulturell bevissthet. Bøkene kan også bidra med å være en start på å gjøre elevene bevisste på mennesker rundt dem, uavhengig av menneskenes livssituasjon, kulturelle bakgrunn og ulikheter.

I en undervisningskontekst er det viktig å bruke undervisningsmateriale som elevene blir fengnet av og syntes er håndterlige. Bildebøker er derfor et passende undervisnings format å bruke i konteksten av å lære et nytt språk samtidig som å lære demokratiske ferdigheter som verdier og holdninger som er gunstige for demokratiet og medborgerskapet.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT	II
SAMMENDRAG	III
1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	1
2.0 THEORY	6
2.1 CULTURE.....	6
2.2 CULTURAL AWARENESS.....	6
2.3 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE.....	7
2.4 DEMOCRATIC CULTURE	8
2.4.1 Values.....	9
2.4.2 Attitudes	10
3.0 DATA SELECTION AND COLLECTION.....	13
3.1 THE PROUDEST BLUE.....	13
3.2 ALI’S STORY: A REAL-LIFE ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY FROM AFGHANISTAN	13
3.3 THE INVISIBLE	14
4.0 METHODS	15
4.1 SETTING.....	17
4.2 CHARACTERIZATION.....	18
4.3 NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE.....	19
4.4 MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.....	21
4.5 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS.....	22
<i>Table 4.5.1 Ideational Metafunction</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Table 4.5.2 Interpersonal Metafunction</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Table 4.5.3 textual metafunction.....</i>	<i>26</i>
5.0 ANALYSIS OF THE PICTUREBOOKS	28
5.1 THE PROUDEST BLUE.....	28
5.1.1 Setting.....	28
5.1.2 Characterization.....	30
5.1.3 Narrative Perspective.....	31
5.1.4 Values and Attitudes.....	34
5.2 ALI’S STORY: A REAL-LIFE ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY FROM AFGHANISTAN	37
5.2.1 Setting.....	37
5.2.2 Characterization.....	40

5.2.3 Narrative perspective.....	42
5.2.4 Values and Attitudes.....	45
5.3 THE INVISIBLE	47
5.3.1 Setting.....	47
5.3.2 Characterization.....	49
5.3.3 Narrative Perspective.....	51
5.2.4 Values and Attitudes.....	53
6.0 DISCUSSION	54
6.1 SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION #1.....	54
6.1.1 <i>The Proudest Blue</i>	54
6.1.2 <i>Ali's Story – A real-life account of his journey from Afghanistan</i>	55
6.1.3 <i>The Invisible</i>	57
6.1.4 <i>Comparison of the Three Picturebooks</i>	58
6.2 SUB RESEARCH QUESTION #2	59
7.0 CONCLUSION.....	62
REFERENCES.....	65

1. Introduction and Research Questions

Norway is a country with many different religions, ethnicities, languages and cultures, and this diversity has been continually increasing further. This enriches our society and makes the world smaller in the sense that we get a closer relation to cultures from all around the world. Due to this, we also need to learn about these diverse religions, languages and cultures to gain respect, insight and understanding of why people are different, have different backgrounds, traditions, beliefs and values, to gain more understanding of our society.

In today's society, we are facing a lot of terrible phenomena, such as wars that have led to refugee crises, terrorism, poverty, gender-based violence and inequality, racism, just to mention some. In Norway, we have faced terrorism and wars as well, but when we get to see live news of the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan or the Russian invasion in Ukraine, it is hard to understand and imagine how it is to live in such circumstances. These are two military events that have happened during the last year and that are discussed in the news. The most current is the invasion of Ukraine, which is on the news on a daily basis. These two military events have made thousands of civilians flee their homes and become refugees in foreign countries. As global citizens we should all help our fellow global citizens in need. In Norway, schools for Ukrainian children and youths have been started up and homes were set up for refugees in several cities and towns. Therefore, it can be likely that people all over Norway, and Europe in general, will meet refugees on the streets, in the neighborhood, on the grocery store and so on. To meet these people with dignity and open arms, the community need to stand together and to learn how to best welcome refugees and build empathy, as well as intercultural awareness.

In many ways, we can say that we just had the luck of the draw getting to live in a safe and wealthy country like Norway. Growing up in a country with free education, free healthcare and similar opportunities within the education, is something we should not and cannot take for granted. While we in Norway are teaching our children and youth about democratic processes, children and youth in many places in the world are fleeing from their homes to get away from bombs, guns and violence, afraid for their lives or are suffering hunger and poverty in countries ruled by extremism and dictatorship. The different ways of ruling a country, and how different it may be to be a citizen within different countries is important to reflect on and talk about. As teachers, we should teach our pupils about democracy and

citizenship, and make our pupils aware of differences within form of government, human rights such as freedom of speech, the right to vote and the freedom of education, and how different it may be to be a citizen around the world. The reason why we should teach about these topics is to get our pupils to understand how diverse the world is. By gaining knowledge about different cultures and societal issues, it will also foster cultural awareness, and the pupils may gain a bigger perspective of how culture around the world is contently changing caused by events and issues, such as wars, rule of government, racism and poverty. Even though Norwegian children and youth most likely never have to experience how it is to be a refugee, they still need to learn about it. By learning about how a life situation as a refugee is or how it is to experience racism, they also most likely learn to sympathize for the one's living in that specific situation, and to be a better fellow global citizen, in that sense that they get competence in how to be around people from different situations, and not only from the society themselves are born into. This will also help to integrate those who perhaps experience such things mentioned above.

Another related issue in the world today is the racism that is going on all over the world. This is happening in every country, from just "everyday slang" to injustice because of one's race and ethnicity. The Black Lives Matter movement that began in July 2013 is a political and social movement protesting against incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence against black people. The movement started in the US and was going viral after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020. This sparked the largest racial justice protests in the US, and all over the world, as well as in Norway (Silverstein, 2021).

The third issue I want to highlight in this thesis is poverty. Poverty is within every society, even in wealthy Norway. According to SSB, 115 000 children in Norway were living in a low-income household in 2019, and children with an immigrant background are over-represented in this category. These children might experience to be on the outside in many ways, for instance to not being able to participate in spare time activities, and not having access to the same equipment as other children (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). These children may experience to come to school without food, they may experience not to have the necessary clothes for wintertime, and they may struggle with shame and stigma (Tønset & Bakken, 2019). Addressing the topic of poverty may for many teachers be uncomfortable, and difficult, due to the fact that there may be children in the classroom that are living in a low-

income household. But it is necessary to tackle and to talk about, and to make our pupils aware of what poverty is about.

These are just three of many issues we need to talk about and to teach in school. The reason why I want to focus on these three issues in this thesis, is that they are interrelated in that sense that immigrants often suffer racism and poverty when they are settling in a new country. This is also to be seen in Norway, as the statistics show that six out of ten children living in low-income families are immigrants or children of immigrants (Borgan, 2021). Besides living in poverty, many immigrants experience racism and discrimination in their daily lives. The Institute of Social Research, which is employed by “Integrerings og Mangfoldsdirektoratet” (IMDi) has made the Norwegian integration barometer and develops surveys mapping the population’s attitudes to immigration and integration. In the survey made in 2020 with 3000 participants, the answers showed that eight out of ten believe discrimination appears towards immigrants in Norway (Kvale, 2020). This number is record high in Norway and shows that this is something we need to take action on different levels. On a primary level, we should start with our children and to teach about these issues to foster cultural awareness for our upcoming generation.

In the new curriculum plan of 2020, it is added the interdisciplinary topic of Democracy and Citizenship. This is a topic that: “shall give the pupils knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy, values and rules, as well as prepare them for participating in democratic processes” (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). The interdisciplinary topic was added with the purpose to put focus on important societal challenges that occur around the world, to foster engagement and effort as individuals but also as national and global citizens.

The topic has different aims for different subjects, and for the English subject pupils are to gain insight and understanding of their perception of the world, and that their perception is based on their cultural knowledge and awareness (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

Therefore, it is important to work with current cultural and societal events and issues, such as wars and immigration, racism, and poverty, and make awareness that this is something that are going on at this moment around the world and in Norway.

There are many ways to work with cultural awareness and to teach about current world issues and events in the classroom. To get contemporary content, one may use the internet, movies, YouTube, news channels, and literature. To get pupils attention and interest, it is important to

use a format that they find interesting and manageable, and it is especially important while teaching about cultural topics in the English subject because the content is in English and not Norwegian. To reach the aim to learn about cultural phenomena, a major importance is to understand the content, so that pupils can participate in discussions and activities surrounding the chosen theme. To do so, picturebooks as a teaching format can be one of many appropriate formats to use.

Picturebooks have traditionally been related to children's and toddlers' literature, but today picturebooks exist for all readers at every level. Birketveit argues that picturebooks are excellent to use in the EFL classroom because they enable learners of English to cope with more advanced texts than they usually would (Birketveit, 2015). This is because picturebooks have at least one picture on every double spread which interacts with the text to convey the meaning of the story. This enables the readers to be exposed to authentic stories and language, offering a wider vocabulary than course books or graded readers do. Another advantage Birketveit points out, is that picturebooks help develop visual literacy, which is very beneficial for the pupils growing up due to the massive exposure to visual stimuli in today's society. Visual literacy can be defined as the ability to interpret, negotiate, and understand ideas conveyed through visible actions, such as pictures (Birketveit, 2015).

From my own experience, I find picturebooks very manageable, exciting and interesting in an educational context. Just the fact that the verbal text and the pictures are equally important in conveying the meaning of the story is motivating in that fact that one can understand and make sense of the story without understanding every word. This allows not only the pupils who have a high level of English to understand the story but also the weaker ones, that may find it hard to read an English book itself. As a teacher, one, therefore, get to reach out to all of one's pupils, no matter their English level.

In this thesis, I will analyze three different picturebooks that tackle societal and culture issues. The first picturebook that will be analyzed is *The Proudest Blue*, the second one is *Ali's Story* and the third is *The Invisible*.

As mentioned in the beginning, it is important to tackle and work with different issues that occur around the world, and to make awareness around these events and issues, such as wars,

refugee-crisis, poverty and racism. In this thesis, I aim to research how picturebooks can work as a bridge from the outside world and to bring the stories into the EFL classroom.

In order to do this, I developed the following main research question for this thesis:

What protentional picturebooks have to foster cultural awareness in the light of the interdisciplinary topic Democracy and Citizenship, in the grades 5-10 in the Norwegian school?

To guide my analysis, I will also look for democratic values and attitudes. The selected values and attitudes are chosen from the Council of Europe's framework: *The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC), which will be further explained in the theory chapter below. With these values and attitudes, I aim to answer the following sub-questions:

- 1. How are democratic values, such as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity conveyed through the selected picturebooks?*
- 2. What potential do the selected picturebooks have to contribute to intercultural learning?*

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter one has introduced the background of the thesis, and the research questions that I will try to answer through this thesis. Chapter two is the theory this thesis is based on. In this chapter, I will go through some important theoretical perspectives that are important for my thesis. Especially, The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) made by The Council of Europe. I have chosen the two categories, values and attitudes, to be a basis for what to look for in the chosen picturebooks, and to see if the picturebooks may contribute to cultural awareness in general. Chapter three introduces the process of finding the three selected picturebooks, as well as introducing the picturebooks. Chapter four explains the method used in this thesis to analyze the selected picturebooks and to find answers to the research questions. Chapter five is where the analysis is carried out, followed by chapter six, where the findings in the analysis are discussed. The final chapter, which is chapter seven, is the final conclusion of the thesis.

2.0 Theory

In order to answer my research question, it is important to define and describe certain concepts used in this thesis. In this chapter I will deal with central terms related to culture, as well as the theory this thesis is built on.

2.1 Culture

The first term to define is culture. However, culture is in many ways hard to define, due to the fact it is a broad concept. Jenks (2005) divides culture into four different categories: (1) a cognitive, (2) embodied and collective, (3) descriptive and concrete, and (4) a social category. The first category, entails culture as a state of mind, which is related to the idea of individual human achievement, reflections, etc. The second category, the embodied and collective culture, invokes a state of intellectual and/or moral development in society. This links culture to the idea of humans living in a civilization in a collective life. The third category Jenks outlines is culture as descriptive and concrete. Here, culture is viewed as the collective body of arts and intellectual work within any society. It is mostly in this sense people generally refer to culture in everyday conversation. The fourth and last category is culture as a social category. This is where culture is regarded as the whole way of life of people (Jenks, 2005, p.11-12).

2.2 Cultural Awareness

The second term that is necessary to define is cultural awareness. A definition used by Guilherme (2000) is “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (Byram, 2011). According to David Maina (2021) being culturally aware enables people to communicate with each other more effectively, based on the competence of understanding a person’s culture. Awareness and language go hand in hand, whereas language makes the communication happen, the awareness of culture ensures that we communicate based on our awareness. When we learn a foreign language, it opens a door to a different society and culture. By understanding foreign cultures, it will also increase our cultural competence of the people around us, and all over the world, which will lead to increased tolerance as well as broadening our cultural minds. To be able to communicate and understand people from another country and culture other than ourself

makes us a part of a global citizenship where we break down the cultural barriers and build cultural bridges where we learn to love and appreciate the differences (Maina, 2021). This is one of the main reasons to focus on cultural awareness, and to integrate it in different subjects in school.

As English is a second language in Norway, and a foreign language, it is natural to also focus on the cultural aspects of learning a new language. As mentioned above, foreign languages and cultural awareness go hand in hand because it is important to also learn how to communicate with the ones from the foreign language with respect and tolerance.

2.3 Intercultural Competence

Byram, Nichols and Steven's book *Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice* (2001) is addressing components as knowledge, skills and attitudes complemented by the values as a part of one's belonging to a given society, as intercultural competence. Further, the authors state that the foundation of intercultural competence is within the attitudes.

Intercultural attitudes entail curiosity and openness, as well as willingness to relativize one's own values, beliefs and behaviors, and to see that it is not only one "correct" way of seeing and viewing the world, but there are different perspectives which are made based on the culture we are born and raised in. They use the term to "decentre", which is the ability to see how we might look from the perspective of an "outsider" who has different sets of values, beliefs and behaviors than ourselves (Byram, Nicholas & Stevens, 2001, p.5).

Another important aspect of intercultural competence is *knowledge*. In the term knowledge, the author underlines the importance of not only knowledge of a specific culture, but rather knowledge of how social groups and social identities work, both one's own and others'.

The third aspect they highlight is *skills of interpreting and relating events or documents* from another culture to explain it and relate it to its own culture. This aspect goes hand in hand with the fourth, which is the skills of finding out new knowledge and integrating it with the knowledge one already has. To do so, it is necessary to know how to ask people from other cultures about their beliefs, values and behaviors. This is called the *skills of discovery and interaction*.

To communicate and gain understanding and tolerance of other cultures' beliefs, values and behaviors, it is important to be aware of its own values, beliefs and behaviors. This is to be more tolerant and open to differences and to see other perspectives. This can be seen as to have a critical awareness of themselves and their own values, but also those of other people (Byram, Nicholas & Stevens, 2001, p. 5-7).

2.4 Democratic Culture

The fourth concept I need to clarify, and find important for my thesis, is democratic culture. This term is used by The Council of Europe when discussing education as a key to develop and maintain sustainable societies founded on democratic culture. The council of Europe want to foster attitudes and behaviors that seek to resolve conflicts peacefully, to recognize all people's rights no matter of who they are and where they come from, that the citizens of a democratic culture are respectful of diversity and mindful of our physical environment, and to include all members of the society. The Council of Europe also states that: "By developing competences for democratic culture, education prepares for democratic citizenship, counteracts tendencies towards populism, and helps build resilience to violent extremism" (UNESCO, 2018). Further, they argue that democratic elements, such as parliaments, city councils, constitutions and elections, will not function unless people and society have developed a democratic culture rooted in the principle of the rule of law. Therefore, it is important to implement competence of democratic culture within the education at every level. This is also critical to foster engaged citizens by learning and teaching fundamental values and civic rights and obligations. By teaching young citizens about these values and rights, it will make the youths more aware of their democratic rights and how to cooperate with their fellow citizens, to be able to assess the media critically and strengthen their sense of their belonging in the society. But it is also important to maintain the competence throughout life. This is to be done through formal education such as education systems and institutions at all levels. From one attend school as a pupil, a student, as a parent, as education professionals or as representatives of public authorities, everyone plays an important role in maintaining the democratic values, attitudes and behaviors (UNESCO, 2018).

To develop competences that support a democratic culture, The Council of Europe has developed a framework called *The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC). This framework is based on twenty different competences organized in

four different categories, which are values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding. As The Council of Europe states, a democratically competent individual will be able to demonstrate each competence to some extent.

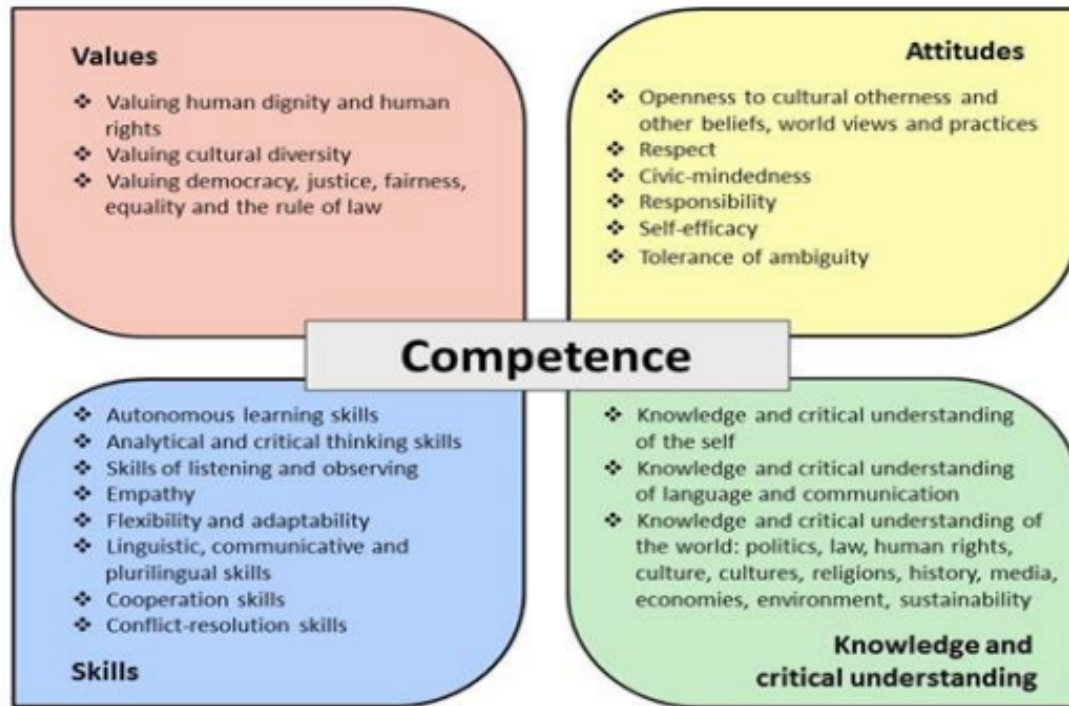


Figure 1: The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)

As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, the focus for my analysis will be on two categories: values and attitudes. This choice is due to that I will not assess students' democratic skills, knowledge and critical understanding based on my literary analysis.

2.4.1 Values

The first category I will focus on is values. This category aims to highlight the most important values in a democratic culture. Three main values are listed in the RFCDC: 1. Valuing human dignity and human rights; 2. Valuing cultural diversity; and 3. Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law. To clarify what all these different values entail, I will shortly define some of the terms that belong to this category.

Human dignity is a term that goes along with human rights, and is based on the general belief that every individual human being is of equal worth, has equal dignity, is entitled to equal respect, and is entitled to the same set of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights are fundamental and universal, and shall apply everyone without distinction, as well as they provide an essential foundation for freedom, equality, justice and peace in the world (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 36).

The second set of values referred to in this category is valuing cultural diversity. Valuing cultural diversity is based on the general belief that other cultural affiliations, cultural variability and diversity, pluralistic perspectives, views and practices ought to be positively regarded, appreciated and cherished. This means that cultural diversity is an asset for society in that way that people can learn and benefit from other people's diverse perspectives, therefore, people should be encouraged to interact with people of a different cultural perspective than its own, to gain a better understanding and to build bridges between the diverse cultures. Another point is that intercultural dialogue should be used to develop a democratic culture of living together as equals in a society (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 37).

The third and last set of values in this category is valuing democracy, justice fairness, equality and the rule of law. This is about formality of the rule of government, and the ways in which people can participate in democratic processes. In a democratic culture, all citizens shall have equal right to participate either directly or indirectly through elected representatives. The rule of law shall also ensure that all citizens are treated justly, fairly, impartially and equally in accordance with laws that are shared by all (Council of Europe, 2016, p.38). This set of values is more about the framework of a democratic culture, and will not be in the main focus of my analysis.

2.4.2 Attitudes

The second category that I will focus on regarding this thesis, is attitudes. In this category The Council of Europe highlights the following points: 1. Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices; 2. Respect; 3. Civic mindedness; 4. Responsibility; 5. Self-efficacy; and 6. Tolerance of ambiguity.

These different bullet points entail a lot of different attitudes, as well as they are making a total of what is important to maintain a democratic culture. Another important factor is that these attitudes are intertwined with the values that were mentioned above.

To be able to live in a democratic culture, these attitudes are necessary to be shared by the citizens living in the culture, to be able to maintain the democracy.

In the following, I will provide a brief explanation of each set of attitudes.

The first one, which is openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices, is about being open towards other people who have different cultural background, or towards world views, beliefs, values and practices that differ from one's own. The Council of Europe underlines openness as being sensitive, curious and willing to learn about, willingness to suspend judgement and disbelief of other people's world views and culture, and not merely an openness to collecting experiences of the "exotic" merely for one's personal enjoyment or benefit (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 39).

The second is respect, which is an attitude towards someone or something, and can come in many various forms, for instance respect for rules, respect for an elders' wisdom, or respect for nature. The Council of Europe define respect in this manner as being positive towards other people and objects, equal human rights, to share a common dignity no matter. It also regard being positive for the beliefs, opinions, lifestyles and practices adopted by other people, as long as these don't undermine or violate the dignity, human rights or freedoms of other (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 40).

The third category is the civic-mindedness, which refers to one's attitude towards a community or social group. This could be groups of people living in a particular geographical area, or a more diffused group such as sexual orientation groups, faith groups, leisure groups, and so on. To be civic-minded involves being part of and feeling a belonging to a group of people. It also involves to be mindful of other people belonging to other community than yourself, and to be able to cooperate and work with them, regardless the differences you may have. A third aspect of being civic-minded is to be engaged and willing to contribute in your community, and a willingness to communicate through dialogues with all types of different communities (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 41).

The next aspect on the list is responsibility. The Council of Europe differentiates two types of responsibility in a cultural context: role responsibility and moral responsibility. Role responsibility is connected to being civic-minded, mentioned above. While the moral responsibility is about attitude towards one's own actions, as well as the identification of one's duties and obligations and how one ought to behave in specific situations, based on a value or set of values. Further, it is important to have a reflective and thoughtful approach towards others' actions as well as one's own, and the possible consequences of those actions (Council of Europe, 2016, p.42).

The second last aspect of the attitudes in the Reference framework is self-efficacy. This is an attitude towards oneself and involves a positive belief in one's own ability to undertake the actions which are required to achieve particular goals. It is about having a belief in one's ability to understand issues, to make judgement and to select appropriate methods to accomplish a particular task, as well as having a feeling of confidence about tackling new challenges (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 42).

The last aspect is tolerance of ambiguity. This aspect is about being able to recognize and acknowledge that there can be different perspectives, solutions and interpretations on different situations or issues. It is about having a positive attitude towards objects, events and situations that may be different from one's own, and to accept and embrace the ambiguity (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 43).

3.0 Data Selection and Collection

To be able to answer my research questions, it is necessary to find picturebooks that include events and issues such as wars, racism, poverty and features of culture such as religion and values. In my introduction, I pointed out events and issues such as war, immigration, racism and economic inequality. These are social realities I want to focus on, and are therefore also the main criteria to look for in a selected picturebook for my project. The other criteria for finding suitable books were elements of values and attitudes connected to democratic culture, as outlined above.

Some other criteria to guide my selection are to look for books that involve the content related to basic human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, identity and power relations.

While searching for suitable picturebooks for this project, I looked at many relevant books that could fit. I landed on three different picturebooks that I found most appealing for my thesis, as well as my criteria.

3.1 The Proudest Blue

The first picturebook selected is *The Proudest Blue*, created by Ibtihaj Muhammad, S. K. Ali and Hatem Aly, and published in 2020. This is a picturebook about religion, sisterhood, identity and racism. This book is different from the other two in that sense that this one is telling a story about how it is to belong to a minority, to have freedom of religion, and to be proud of who you are and your identity. It is told from a sister's perspective, of her sister wearing a hijab.

I have chosen this book to have another angle to my research question, and to have a book that deals with another type of issue than wars and migration, and that tackles what it is like to be a minority in a society.

3.2 Ali's Story: A Real-Life Account of his Journey from Afghanistan

The second picturebook is *Ali's Story: A real-life account of his journey from Afghanistan*, created by Salvador Maldonado and Andy Glynne and published in 2015. This is a

picturebook telling a real story of ten-year-old Ali, who flees his home in Afghanistan to get away from the ongoing war.

I chose this picturebook because it tells the story from Ali's perspective how it is to be a refugee, how it is to flee your home and to move to a new country where everything is different from what you are used to. Therefore, the book meets my selected criteria such as war, migration, human rights and identity.

3.3 The Invisible

The third picturebook I have chosen for this project is *The Invisible*, created by Tom Percival in 2021. This book tackles the important topic of poverty, and what life is like for a child suffering from such a situation. As the description of the book states: "A moving, powerful story that shines a light on those that feel invisible in our world – and shows us that we all belong" (Adlibris, 7.12.21).

I think this book is suitable for 5-10 grade as well as for the younger grades. Probably most suitable from 5-7 grade, but it can be used as a starting point to talk about topics, such as poverty, identity, belonging in a community in 8-10 grade in the Norwegian school as well. From what I have seen while searching for picturebooks, *The Invisible* offers a range of pictures that can be analyzed and interpreted, and therefore, relevant to use while teaching about multimodal literacy in 8-10 grade as well, compared to some other books that are clearly made for the youngest kids. Even though the textual part is on a quite basic level, the story conveys important topics that could bring up important discussions in the classroom no matter the pupils' age.

I believe these three picturebooks can be helpful to answer my research question, in the sense that they tackle societal and cultural issues such as war, migration, religion, poverty, minorities, identity, racism and human rights. Furthermore, these are books that are told from children's point of view, and therefore, may work as excellent learning material to learn about different cultural aspects and to make cultural awareness in the EFL classroom in grades 5-10 in Norway.

4.0 Methods

As the aim of this thesis is to find out how picturebooks may foster cultural awareness, I have chosen three picturebooks about migration, freedom of religion and being a minority in a society, and poverty.

To find out if these picturebooks create cultural awareness for their readers, I need to analyze them through some specific lenses. To make this research relevant, it is necessary to use a method that is suitable for the cause of this research. To do so, I have chosen narrative theory made by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001), as well as a framework made by Painter (2017) to make it possible to conduct a multimodal discourse analysis of the chosen books. These two methods will be further explained in this chapter.

A method that can tell us and let us analyze much of the specific content in the books is to use narrative elements to analyze the verbal text. Narrative elements I will use for my analysis are setting, characters and perspective of the story. These elements can tell us more about how the book narrates, and how it is built up to convey the story. There is important to use a method that let us analyze the visual as well as the verbal, and look at how they work together. This aspect is one of the unique features in picturebooks, because the visual tells as much as the verbal text. For this part, I will use Nikolajeva and Scott (2001)'s book "How picturebooks work" as inspiration and guidance.

As Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) phrases in the beginning of their book: "The unique character of picturebooks as an art form is based on the combination of two levels of communication, the visual and the verbal. Making use of semiotic terminology we can say that picturebooks communicate by means of two separate sets of signs, the iconic and the conventional." (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 1).

Iconic can also be referred to as representational, and consists signs in which the signifier and the signified are related by common qualities, such as a sign which is a direct representation of its signified. An example could be the icon for ladies' and men's restrooms. The icon on the restroom's door represents where you should go. In most cases, there is no need for special knowledge to understand icons (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.1).

Conventional signs, on the other hand, have no direct relationship with the object signified. Words made of letters, such as ‘ladies’, only conveys a meaning if one can possess the code. In other words, one must be able to read to understand the meaning of it. So if one are in a restaurant and want to go to the restrooms, and it is only conventional signs on the doors that say “ladies” and “men”. If one are not able to read and understand these signs, then one do not know which restroom to use. Conventional signs are based on an agreement among the bearers of a particular language, both the spoken language and communications, such as gestures, dress code, or emblems. For anyone outside the given community or anyone who does not share the language, conventional signs do not carry any meaning, or the meaning is ambivalent. This can be experienced as a foreigner in a new country, both on vacation or as immigrants. This has to do with a different cultural and linguistic background and cultural knowledge and awareness.

Both iconic and conventional signs have existed in human culture from its beginning, and have given rise to two parallel types of communication, the visual and the verbal (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 1).

Pictures in picturebooks are complex iconic signs, and words in picturebooks are complex conventional signs, however, the basic relationship between the pictures and words is the same in that sense that they convey the story in a different medium, and both are equally important in conveying the story. The function of pictures, the iconic signs, is to represent the story by giving the reader an idea of how the characters look, what the setting is and how it is portrayed, and it depicts the surroundings with drawings, colors, shapes and pictures. Whereas the function of words, the conventional signs, is primarily to narrate. Conventional signs are often linear, while iconic signs are nonlinear and do not give us direct instruction about how to read them. This is what makes reading picturebooks so special, based on the fact that the tension between the two functions creates unlimited possibilities for interaction between the words and images (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.1-2).

As one go on reading picturebooks, everyone may read a picturebook in different ways. Whether one start with the verbal or the visual, one creates expectations for the other, which in turn provides new experiences and new expectations. Going back and forth between the pictures and the verbal text will lead to a more nuanced understanding of the story, and each time one reread the words and pictures may lead to new interpretations and a new way to see

the story. Children often want to be read the same book over and over again because they find new ways to understand, interpret and get deeper into the story's meaning every time they hear it or see the pictures. Adults, on the other hand, tend to ignore the meaning of the pictures in the story and look at the pictures more as decorative instead of their purpose of understanding the story. This has to do with the dominant position of verbal, especially written, communication in our society. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the visual has an equally important role in conveying the story as the verbal while reading picturebooks (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 2).

4.1 Setting

Hawthorn (2017) defines setting as the relationship between characters and action on the one hand, and the context within which these take place, on the other hand. He also points out that the context does not only mean the geographical setting, but also social and historical factors are important consider. Hawthorn states we need to distinguish between realistic and conventional or stylized settings. He argues that the choice of a suitable setting can help an author to avoid the need to write about things that he or she is not good at or interested in. Such as, a setting in the historical past can often help an author to avoid contemporary issues about which he or she feels confused. Another important thing he points at, is that setting can also be a crucial factor in the creation of mood or moral environment (Hawthorn, 2017, p. 143-144).

As Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) argue, the first thing to analyze in the picturebooks is the setting. "The setting of a picturebook establishes the situation and the nature of the world in which the events of the story take place" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 61). It tells us where the story is happening, at what time it happens and makes the reader aware of the plot, and makes the reader's emotional response in a particular register, such as nostalgic, every day or grotesque. In a picturebook, the setting can be provided by pictures, words or both which make a variety of possibilities. The visual text is often naturally suited to the description of spatial dimensions, including indoor scenes and landscape, characters and so on. Words can only describe, while pictures can show, therefore the setting is often not described as much in words in picturebooks because the reader can interpret and see where the story takes place and at what time it takes place based on the pictures. The most frequent in picturebooks is the fact that pictures will expand on what the text describes. Therefore, the setting is often

conveyed visually instead of verbally, because the reader can look at the details of the setting in the pictures instead of getting them described by text as in textual books.

4.2 Characterization

Hawthorn (2017) defines character as an actor in a literary narrative. A character is unique, both when it comes to the property of a person, but also when it comes to the sign or token of the person (Hawthorn, 2017, p. 126-127).

In picturebooks the inventory of conveying and portraying characters is expanded compared to textual narratives. A narrative description is the most basic technique, involving the external and visual details such as the characters' look, how they move, what they are wearing, as well as emotional, psychological and philosophical characteristics. The description can involve a temporal dimension, tracing changes in appearance, situation, and internal or emotional growth. The narrative may be colored in several ways, depending on the choice of the narrator and the perspective from which the narrator interprets it (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 81). Events in which the character is involved provide information through the action of the character, and the behavior of the character expressed in the certain event is presented much more directly to the reader.

Dialogue between the protagonist and other characters reveals another dimension of character, adding another layer of information to the reader. Readers construct a complete picture of the character based on the relevant information about the character from the text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 82).

The picturebook provides a wide scope of artistic devices for characterization. Pictures allow a variety of external characterization, while words can be used both for external description and internal representation. Most often, verbal external descriptions is used in picturebooks, and only visual description is used, being more efficient. Although some permanent human qualities such as courage, cleverness, innocence are more difficult to communicate visually. To consider what images and words each do best, we can say that psychological descriptions may need the subtleties of words to capture complex emotion and motivation. As pictures can provide physical descriptions and information about the character's appearance. Character's size and place on the spread, such as high or low, to the left or right, may reflect their attitude

toward other characters, a permanent psychological quality, or a temporary mood, as well as changes in the position, reflect changes in the character themselves. We can assume that a character depicted as large has more significance, more power, than the character who is small and cramped in the corner of a page. The specific position on the spread emphasizes the character's central role in the story (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 82-83).

The character's actions can be described verbally or visually, as with the external description, the two descriptions can complement or contradict each other. This particular aspect of characterization allows probably more counterpoint between text and image than any other and allows the author a good deal of irony (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 83).

4.3 Narrative Perspective

Narrative perspective can also be referred to as "point of view" which is the assumed position of the narrator, the character, and the implied reader. There is a distinction between the literal point of view, the figurative point of view and then the transferred point of view. The literal point of view can also be called the perceptual point of view and tells us whose eyes the events are presented through, also called the focalizer of the story. Second, the figurative point of view can be called conceptual, which conveys ideology or/and worldview. Third, we have the transferred point of view, and this one tells us how the narrator benefit from telling the story, and what kind of interest is there in conveying the story to its audience (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 117).

All these three different types of points of view can be fixed or be a variable in a verbal text. However, in the case of pictures, we can speak of perspective in a literal sense. Since the pictures we are exposed to in a picturebook is made by an artist, one as a reader will look at the picture from a certain fixed point of view made by the artist. Even though one can read the picture with different methods, the basic point of view is unchanged. However, it can change within a sequence of pictures, both in direction and in distance, also called zoom. Pictures cannot directly and immediately convey ideology or serve someone's purpose in narration, although they have their indirect means to accomplish this (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.117). Narratology makes an essential distinction between the point of view, in other words, who sees, and the narrative voice, in other words, who speaks. As mentioned, one should treat the

words as primarily conveying the narrative voice, and pictures as primarily conveying the point of view.

As Nikolajeva and Scott (2011) state, the narrative perspective can be referred to as “point of view”, while as Hawthorn (2017) sees this traditional term as a disadvantage because it obscures what recent theorists have identified as the important distinction between perspective and voice. He points at the importance of thinking about who speaks and who sees in a story, while reading. As an example, Hawthorn uses the short story “The Voyage” written by Katherine Mansfield in 1922, where the voice of the story belongs to a third-person, who is outside the story, while the reader gets to see the story through the eyes of the main character, Fenella. As readers of the story, one get to experience through her senses, even though these experiences comes to the reader via a third-person narrative. This tells the reader, in “The Voyage”, the voice of the story is that of the third-person narrator, while the perspective of the story in conveyed through Fenella (Hawthorn, 2017, p. 113 – 114).

Reading a picturebook, there are four prominent features of the narrator’s presence in the story to consider. These are the description of the setting, the description of a character, the summary of events, and the comments on events- or the characters’ actions. While the latter two elements are predominantly verbal in picturebooks, the first two can be both verbal and visual, agreeing or counterpointing in various ways (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.118).

Since pictures cannot convey direct speech, dialogue is generally regarded as a non-narrated form in picturebooks. However, different devices, such as visual speech bobbles, can be an attachment to the character, which may indicate a dialogue between the characters. But in most picturebooks, dialogue alternates with narrated text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 118).

Verbal texts can be non-focalized, which is referred to as omnipresent perspective, externally focalized, which is following one character’s perceptual point of view, or internally focalized, which is an introspective focus that shows the character’s thoughts and feelings. In contrast, pictures lack the possibility of internal focalization in a direct sense since the character’s feelings may naturally be conveyed by facial expression, position in the page, tone, color, and other graphic means.

On the other hand, pictures have unlimited possibilities of conveying an omnipresent perspective by giving a panoramic view of the setting, such as depicting several parallel events or several characters at different places, that is expressing something that the verbal text only can express indirectly, for instance by saying: “At the same time....” (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 119).

The verbal and the visual have their expressive means. The verbal narrative can comment on the events and the characters or address the reader directly, while the visual narrative excludes all forms of intrusive and authoritative narrators, and therefore, pictures can only be didactic indirectly. However, pictures have their expressive means. An example Nikolajeva and Scott uses is; “ a character gazing from the picture straight at the reader/viewer may be apprehended as an “intrusive” visual narrator” (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 119). Other examples they refer to are the use of mirrors, which can create a sense of a first-person perspective, and an example of placing the character below the level of the viewer’s gaze will make the picture create a sense of superior narrative position (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p. 119).

4.4 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

To analyze the chosen picturebooks based on the narrative elements; setting, characterization, and narrative perspective, which are explained above, I will use Painter’s framework to operationalize the key narrative elements from Nikolajeva and Scott in an analysis. Painter’s multimodal discourse analysis will guide my examination of how picturebooks make meaning in both visual and verbal modes. To make the analysis structured and transparent, it is necessary to outline a framework that will guide my process.

One fundamental tenet to think of while analyzing multimodal texts out from a systemic-functional framework is that every text embodies three kinds of meaning simultaneously. The first one is called the “ideational” function or “metafunction” and is about the content of the story which contains the characters, settings and actions. The second one is the “interpersonal” metafunction, which is about the communicative interaction between the writer of the story and the ones who read it and also the interaction between the characters within the story. And finally, we have the “textual” metafunction. This part is about how the story is organized and how it is put into stages or phases, and how the story is linked together

(Painter, 2017). However, to enable multimodal discourse analysis, it is necessary to connect visual analysis with verbal analysis within a systematic relation. Painter has made a framework that I will use as inspiration to outline my own approach. The framework made by Painter involves “lining up the meaning potential of verbal systems with those of visual ones while recognizing that the different nature of the two modes means that correspondences are between comparable areas of meaning rather than identical sets of choices” (Painter, 2017, p. 423). Once areas of meaning potential have been lined up, the analyst can investigate how meaning is either shared out or doubled up between the two modes in any particular text. By working with a framework of meaning potential laid out according to the three metafunctions, it will be more likely possible to carry out a much finer-grained analysis (Painter, 2017).

4.5 Framework for Analysis

For my analysis I will use three different tables based on Painter’s framework, one for each type of meaning mentioned above; the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction. Second, I will connect the Painter’s framework to search for values and attitudes in the reference framework of competences in a democratic culture (RFCDC).

Table 4.5.1 Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metfunction concerns the content of the story, such as characters, actions and settings (Painter, 2017, p.420). In this table made by Painter, I will look at the three narrative elements; setting, characterization, and the narrative perspective, which I have explained above.

Setting:

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Circumstantiation	Depiction of place, time, manner	Specification of place, time, extent, cause, condition, manner etc. using prepositional phrases, adverbs etc.

For the setting, the analysis will look for the circumstances conveyed through the visual and the verbal text. For the visual aspect, there will be focused on how the pictures are portraying

the surroundings such as the location, what time of the day, which decade it is, what season of the year it is, and so on.

For the verbal aspect, I will look for specification of place, time, extent, cause, condition, manner etc. through prepositional phrases, adverbs, adjectives etc. In other words, I will analyze how the text conveys where the story takes place, at what time, to what cause and manner so on, so forth.

Characterization:

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Character attribution	Depiction of character	Identification, classification and description of characters through relational clauses, noun groups, etc.

To analyze the characters through the visual aspect, I will focus on how the characters are portrayed and depicted through the pictures in the book.

For the verbal aspect, I will focus on the how the text identifies, classifies and describes the selected characters through nouns and adjectives.

Narrative perspective / point of view:

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Action	Depicted action with vectors	Clause structure with action verbs
Perception	Gaze vectors between characters	Clause structures with verbs of perception
Cognition	Thought bubbles, face/hand gestures	Clause structures with verbs of thinking
Talking	Speech bubbles, face/hand gestures	Clause structures with verbs of speaking

Inter-event relations	Juxtaposition of images, change of setting or character	Conjunctive links, reported and direct speech.
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For the narrative perspective, there are a more segments than on the setting and characterization. And it may be more difficult to analyze the verbal aspect, due to the fact that the picturebooks that are chosen for this project do not include enough text to analyze all of the segments listed above, as for instance, clause structure with action verbs. Even though if it may not be enough text to analyze for this segment, I will still have the segment included in the framework in case of any of the books include some textual parts that can be analyzed.

For the visual aspect, the analysis will contain how the action is depicted, how the character's gaze tells us something about the perception, if there are any thought bubbles and/or face or hand gestures that can tell us about the cognition of the character, and in the end, if there are any change of setting or character through the story.

Table 4.5.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

The second table made by Painter (2017), illustrates the interpersonal metafunction. This table looks at the communicative interaction between the characters within the story, but also the interaction the author tries to make between the story and the reader of it (Painter, 2017, p. 420). Painter divides this table into two sections, the affiliation of the story and the feeling.

Affiliation:

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Focalization	Character gaze and alignment with reader's gaze	Focalization via sourcing of perceptions and thoughts
Power	Vertical angle of viewing	Reciprocity vs. inequality of linguistic choices between characters
Social distance	Shot size	Nature of naming choices, endearments, etc. by narrator
Proximity	Relative proximity/ touch of depicted characters	Nature of naming choices, endearments, etc. between characters

Involvement	Horizontal viewing angle of reader	Solidarity via specialized vocabulary, slang, range of topic choice by narrator
Orientation	Horizontal angle between characters	Solidarity via specialized vocabulary, slang, range of topic choice between character.

For the visual analysis for this section, I will look for how the characters, the setting and in general how the focus on the spreads are depicted and angled to interact with me as a reader of the story. The table is divided into six segments, such as, focalization, power, social distance, proximity, involvement, and orientation.

As for the verbal analysis, it shares the six segments, but will look for what type of vocabulary, linguistic choices and so on, in the given text.

Feeling:

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Ambience	Color choices of relative, warmth, vibrancy, etc.	Atmosphere created through tone and elaboration of circumstantiation
Affect	Emotions on depicted faces, body language	Attitude via evaluative language
Force	Exaggerated size or angle, repetitions, proportion of frame filled, etc.	Intensification, repetition, etc.

In “the feeling” section of the interpersonal metafunction, the analysis will look at three different segments; ambience, affect and force. For the visual analysis the ambience segment will look at choices of colors, while as the verbal analysis will look at how the atmosphere is created through tone and elaboration of circumstantiation.

On the segment of affect, the visual analysis will look at the character’s emotions and body language, while as the verbal analysis will tackle attitude through evaluative language.

The last segment for this section is force, where the visual analysis will look at how the pictures are angled, the size of them, the proportion of the frame and how the pictures are filling it. The verbal analysis will focus on intensification and/or repetition of the language.

Table 4.5.3 textual metafunction

The last, and final aspect is the textual metafunction. This table addresses how the story is coherently organized, how the story is linked together in its different stages or phases (Painter, 2017, p. 421).

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Framing	Binding of visual elements into units: separation of units via frames, margins, page edges	
Intermodal integration	Image and verbiage placement within layout	
Focus	Compositional arrangement	Information flow via tonic prominence, word order, etc.
Genre stages and phases	Visual dis/continuity	Staging created via internal conjunction, text reference, thematic progression, etc.

There are four different segments that will be analyzed in terms of textual metafunction. For the framing segment, the visual analysis will look at how the visual elements are separated via frames, margins and page edges. For this segment, there are none to analyze in the picturebooks chosen.

Intermodal integration focuses the visual analysis on the placement of the images and the verbal text within the layout on the spreads. As well as for the framing segment, there are none specific to analyze for this segment.

For the third segment, focus, the visual analysis will look at how the visual elements are placed on the spread to create the whole story. As for the verbal analysis, the focus will be on how the information flow through tonic prominence and word order.

The last segment for this table is the genre stages and phases. For this segment, the visual analysis will look at the visual continuity or discontinuity.

For the verbal part, the analysis will look for how the staging is created through internal conjunction, text reference and thematic progression, if there are any.

Even though I will follow Painter's framework, I will make it fit the purpose of the present research. In other words, I will use the parts from the framework that I find relevant for the analysis and the purpose of this research.

5.0 Analysis of the Picturebooks

In this chapter, I will analyze the selected picturebooks focusing on narrative elements, such as setting, characterization and narrative perspective based on the work of Nikolajeva and Scott. In addition, I will use relevant elements of Painter's framework to carry out my own multimodal analysis of the selected picturebooks. The combination of these two methods will be used as a framework to look for values and attitudes selected from The Council of Europe's framework; The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). As a reminder, the sets of values from RFCDC are: valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, and last, valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law. And the sets of attitudes are: openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, and last, tolerance of ambiguity.

5.1 The Proudest Blue

The first book to be analyzed is *The Proudest Blue* written by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali and illustrated by Hatem Aly. The picturebook was published in 2020.

5.1.1 Setting

The story takes place in a typical North American town or city. This is depicted especially from the visual, as there are elements such as the yellow school bus which is known from American schools, the school is a red brick building that can symbolize the western community based on construction history in England and the colonization of much of the world. The house the girls are living in is also a stereotypical home in North America with two stories, built-in wood with a green lawn, green trees and a wooden fence in the garden in front and on the side of the house. The characters are also wearing trousers and sweaters which can tell the reader about the climate: the temperature is not too high.

The first setting in the book is a store that sells hijabs. The girls, Faizah and Asiya, are with their mother to buy Asiya's first hijab. There is a lot of excitement expressed in the picture with bright colors, the gaze in the eyes of the characters and they all have smiley and happy facial expressions, which one can analyze as the ambience and affect in Painter's framework. The text is corresponding to the picture and tells the reader that it is "the first-day hijab", and

tell the reader about the purpose of the setting , also called the circumstantiation in Painter's framework. On the turning page, Asiya is wearing a blue hijab.

The first setting where the reader gets to see several characters is in front of the school. There are other kids walking toward the school building, whereas none of them are wearing hijab. A boy is pointing in direction of Asiya, which tells the reader that the hijab is something that is standing out. That is also confirmed through the text when a girl is asking Faizah: "What's that on your sister's head?"(p.7). The question shows that the majority of the kids attending this school belong to another religion or culture, and that hijab is something they do not have any relation to. As for Faizah and Asiya, it is a big day, the first day of wearing a hijab, as it shows that the girl is getting older and is a milestone in a Muslim girl's life.

Another important setting in the story is when Faizah, Asiya and Asiya's friends are standing in the schoolyard and there are three boys pointing and laughing at Asiya. This is a typical scene of bullying, which is an issue that happens everywhere in the world. Out from the facial expressions of the friends of Asiya, it can tell that they are clearly standing up for Asiya as they are looking back at the boys with angry eyes showing the reader that they are reacting to the boys' action. While as Asiya herself has more of a surprised and unsure facial expression, as she does not know how to react to the situation, but at the same time, one can see on her face that it is an uncomfortable situation. From the text, the reader gets confirmed that the boys are laughing and pointing at Asiya. On the right side of the spread, the only word is "Why?"(p.19). This is an important part, as it is questioning the behavior of the boys and asks the reader why should anyone make fun of someone because they are different from the majority.

There are also three spreads in the book that work as a reaction to the settings where someone is pointing at or asking about the hijab. They work as a thought bubble, as we get to hear and see Faizah's opinions and reactions to the given situation. This is what Painter refers to as cognition in her framework. As the spread after the bullying situation, the double spread is showing Faizah sailing on a boat made out of a sheet of paper, on a blue ocean which is made out of Asiya's hijab. In the upper corner of the left page there is a text telling us that: "Asiya's hijab isn't a laugh"(p.15) and "Asiya's hijab is like the ocean waving to the sky"(p.15), which corresponds to the picture on the spread. Then the text is describing the hijab as it's always there, strong and friendly. As reading the text, it is as you are listening to Faizah's voice. On

the bottom of the right page there is a text written in italics and is a saying from their mother. The text says: “Some people won’t understand your hijab... But if you understand who you are, one day they will too”(p. 21). As a reader of the text, this is a mother giving her daughters advice and strength to be who they want to be, no matter what happens and no matter if they are standing out.

In addition to this spread, there are two more instances of this type of setting. In these, the hijab is compared with being the sky on a sunny day, and the hijab is special and normal. On the first of them, the mother says: “The first day of wearing hijab is important... It means being strong”(p.10). As for the last spread, the mother says: “Don’t carry around the hurtful words that others say. Drop them. They are not yours to keep. They belong only to those who said them” (p. 27).

The three “thought bubble” spreads are working as pedagogical tool to how to react if someone is mean or makes fun of you. Being bullied or made fun of is an universal experience that most people have experienced growing up. No matter what causes the situation, the advice the mother gives is advice everyone can benefit from taking into their hearts and cherish.

The last setting of the story is when the two sisters are walking home from school. In this setting, the reader gets confirmed how strong their sisterhood is. It is also a final conclusion of what the hijab means to them as the text says: “Because Asiya’s hijab is like the ocean and the sky, no line between them, saying hello with a loud wave.” (p. 34). And: “Saying I’ll always be there, like sisters. Like me and Asiya.”(p. 35). The picture is showing the girls looking at each other with a smile, and the background is blue and a bit of purple in different tones and layers.

5.1.2 Characterization

For the analysis of characterization goes underneath the ideational metafunction and the meaning potential is to look at the character attribution through visual depictions, as well as verbal descriptions.

In the story, we are introduced to the sisters Faizah and Asiya and their mother. Faizah is the focalizer of the story and the story is told through her voice and point of view. She is depicted as a young girl with fuzzy, black hair put into two pigtails on the top of her head. She has dark skin and brown eyes and has gold earrings in both of her ears. She is wearing red shoes with yellow soles, dark blue pants, a red and white striped sweater and a blue backpack with a white star.

Asiya, Faizah's older sister is at the beginning of the story portrayed with braided hair put into a high ponytail, with colorful hair ties on. She has also brown eyes and dark skin like her sister. Besides the first setting, we are seeing Faizah wearing a blue hijab, a yellow hoodie, black pants and a black backpack. Through the text, Asiya is called a princess by her little sister, and it is clear that Asiya is a role model for Faizah.

Their mother is only depicted visually in the first setting, when the three of them are in the hijab shop. In this setting, the mother is depicted in a long wide dress in dark purple with some red circles. On her head, she is wearing a hijab in a lighter purple than the dress with some grey pattern. Her skin is dark and she has also brown eyes, the same as her daughters.

The other children we get to see through the story are not mentioned by their names, but from the picture it is obvious what relation the girls have to the other characters.

As mentioned above, none of the other characters are wearing hijab or any religious items. But from the reactions of the other kids, such as making fun of and laughing at Asiya, or asking about what the hijab is, the reader can tell that they are most likely a part of western culture. When it comes to how they look, there is a mix of skin tones, but the majority have a light skin tone. As North America is a multicultural continent the representation of characters does seem to fit a stereotypical North American society, which includes a range of ethnicities.

The bullying boys are depicted as dark shadows, only showing the shape of their bodies and their smiles.

5.1.3 Narrative Perspective

As stated in the method chapter, Nikolajeva and Scott refer to the narrative perspective as a "point of view". The narrative perspective can be divided into three different aspects of point

of view; the literal, the figurative and the transferred point of view. Therefore, I will divide this section of the analysis into three different sections that focus on each one of them.

5.1.3.1 *The Literal Point of View*

In the story, we are following Faizah as a focalizer, and it is her voice and thoughts we get to hear and see through the pictures, which is quite interesting. The first that comes to mind is that we get to know Faizah's thoughts and feelings surrounding the fact that her sister is starting to wear a hijab. From the text, the reader does not get to know Asiya's own thoughts and feelings or opinions surrounding the same, even though it is Asiya that actually is wearing the hijab.

It is through the verbal text that we get to know that both the focalizer and the narrator of the story are Faizah. This is because she tells the story from the first-person point of view. She is referring to herself as I, and referring to the other characters by their names or their relation to her, such as: "We're sisters". The only voice we get to hear directly in the story is Faizah, and when someone else says something, it is quoted. For instance: "What's that on your sister's head?" the girl in front of me whispers"(p.12). Or when the mother is giving advice on the "thought bubble spreads" the text starts with "Mama:" followed by the advice the mother gives her children.

5.1.3.2 *The Figurative Point of View*

The second aspect of point of view is the figurative point of view which can also be called conceptual. This relates to how the story conveys ideology and/or worldviews.

For *The Proudest Blue*, the ideology or message the author wants to share with its readers is the fact that regardless of who you are, what religion you have, what color your skin is, where in the world you are from and live, you are worth the same as everybody else, and you should be proud of who you are. The reason why I believe this is one of the messages this story is trying to convey is based on different elements.

The first element I want to highlight is the title of the book; *The Proudest Blue*. By reading this title, one get informed that this story has something to do with being proud of something. This is what Painter refers to as focus in the textual metafunction. The word blue in the title does not make much sense before looking at the picture and before the reader is introduced to

the fact that Asiya is wearing a blue hijab. The cover of the book also shows an illustration of Asiya wearing the blue hijab, as the hijab is being a part of an ocean that her sister, Faizah, is sailing on in a sailing boat made out of a piece of paper. By seeing the title and the cover photo together, which is called the intermodal integration, the reader can understand and is introduced to the fact that *The Proudest Blue* is about being proud of the blue hijab, which is also a part of who Asiya is.

It is probably no coincidence that the author has chosen the hijab to be in the color blue. Blue is a color representing both the sky and the ocean and is also associated with freedom, inspiration, imagination and sensitivity (Super Color, 2020). This is also something the story conveys through the “thought bubble” spread, where the hijab symbolizes the ocean on one of them, and a blue sky on another one. At the same time, the hijab can be a symbol of the religious freedom a human shall have, and the story can work as an inspiration for the audience to be proud of who they are, even though they may not share the same religion, culture or values as the majority of the society they live in. This is related to the interpersonal metafunction and the section called ambience in Painter’s framework.

The color blue is also associated with sensitivity, which can be defined in many ways, but when I think of sensitivity in this context, I think of the feeling of being different and that it may not always be as easy to stick out from a bigger group, especially not in the years where one are in elementary-, middle- and high school. These years are years when youth are trying to find out who they are, and what person they want to become. Many children and youth want to be a part of the bigger group and do not want to stick out in any way. Therefore, it may be a sensitive process for Asiya to start wearing a hijab, because she is the only one of her friends, and as we can see, she is the only one at school wearing a hijab.

To stand out from a group of people, and to be noticeable because of wearing a hijab, can be a target for bullies. Since 9/11, there has been a lot of discrimination and racism towards Muslims in the US and all over the world. Therefore, the authors of this book tries to convey how it may feel to be a target by bullies based on what one wear and one’s faith and to show the audience that such behavior is wrong and inhumane.

5.1.3.3 *The Transferred Point of View*

The transferred point of view tells why or if the narrator benefits from telling the story to its audience. This means that behind every text there is a message that the narrator wants to address to its readers, and to make them aware of the message. This message may be something the narrator wants to put a light on, even if there is a problem or if there is something positive. Another point the transferred point of view is telling, is why there is an interest in conveying and sharing the specific story.

In this case, it is clear that the story is written in a way that the reader shall be aware of how it is to stand out from the majority, and how it may be to be bullied or made fun of based on cultural and religious differences. Based on how the pictures fill out the spread, and some of the close-ups of facial expressions and body language, the visuals in the book is contributing to evoking sympathy with Faizah and Asiya. As well as for the “thought bubble” spreads, where Faizah responds to the reactions other characters have towards the hijab. This also tells the reader that she feels the need of standing up for her sister, telling the reader that the hijab is something that they are proud of and that the reactions they are experiencing are not acceptable.

By introducing this story to its audience, the audience can gain an understanding of how it may be to be different, and how it may feel to be made fun of because of one’s faith or tradition.

Racism, discrimination and bullying are issues that most societies try to beat and do away with. Sadly, there is still a long way to go, but as long as the society educates the youth and the members of the society on these issues, there is hope that people will gain more understanding and more respect for all types of cultures, religions and differences that are foreign from their own, which will benefit all global citizens.

5.1.4 Values and Attitudes

As already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, I have used narrative elements and Painter’s framework to analyze the picturebook so far. In this part, I will summarize the analysis in the light of the sets of values and attitudes picked from The Council of Europe’s framework, *The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC).

5.1.4.1 Values

The sets of values from RFCDC are; valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, and last, valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law.

For this book, *The Proudest Blue*, the first thing that comes to mind is that the book goes hand in hand with the values of human dignity and rights, as well as cultural diversity.

As mentioned underneath the *figurative point of view*, the author and narrator want to convey the idea of being proud of yourself and your culture. As the text says: “Some people won’t understand your hijab... But if you understand who you are, one day they will too”(p. 16). This example depicts both girls being proud of the hijab, as well as it is a message to the reader that cultural diversity is something that not all people respect or understand, but as long as one is strong in oneself, one will have a bigger chance to tackle the hardship one may face, no matter where one live. Because as long as one understands oneself, it is easier to tackle the circumstances.

Being bullied or discriminated against based on personal faith and belief is against human rights. It is a human right to have freedom of religion and to have beliefs and thoughts, without getting discriminated against or punished for them.

The story brings cultural diversity to the table, by focusing on how a sister experiences her older sister is standing out in a typical North American society. As the characters are depicted, all the kids at school have the same fashion style, and none of the other characters stand out in any sense. This makes the hijab even more special, making it the only diverse element in the story.

5.1.4.2 Attitudes

In this section, I will look at how the chosen sets of attitudes from the RFCDC are related to the story in *The Proudest Blue*. The attitudes that are in the framework are openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, and last, tolerance of ambiguity. These attitudes go hand in hand with the values mentioned above.

The first attitude, which is to be open towards cultural otherness and other beliefs, is the main attitude that the narrator tries to convey to its readers. This is linked together with having respect for cultural otherness as well.

Whereas civic-mindedness is about attitudes toward a group of people that may have a different religious belief, as in this case, and how to manage to cooperate and be on good terms with them. In this case, we can see that Asiya and Faizah have friends that are not Muslims, that respect them for who they are, no matter what their religious beliefs are.

Whereas “the boys” in the story not manage this, through disrespecting Asiya with laughter, pointing, words and threats, such as: “I’m going to pull that tablecloth off your head!”(p.20). This tells the reader that the boys have no respect for Asiya and her personal faith, as well as that there is a need of teaching children from the beginning the importance of having respect, being open to cultural otherness, other beliefs, world views and practice

5.2 Ali's Story: A Real-Life Account of his Journey from Afghanistan

The second picturebook I will analyze is *Ali's Story*, which is a story about a young boy fleeing his home country, Afghanistan, because of the ongoing war. The picturebook is written and illustrated by Andy Glynne and Salvador Maldonado and was published in 2018.

5.2.1 Setting

The setting is a part of the ideational metafunction in Painter's framework. In this section the meaning potential is circumstantiation through the visual and verbal.

Ali's Story has five different settings, which are his home in Afghanistan, the journey from Afghanistan, his new country, new home and his new school. As for this analysis, I will follow the same structure as the analysis of *The Proudest Blue*, which is to go through each setting at a time.

The first setting in the story shows the reader a double spread of a town in between the mountains in Afghanistan. From the visuals, one can tell that the town is not located in the western world, from several mosque minarets, the buildings, a lot of tents, no infrastructure and how the landscape is depicted. The colors that are used are different shades of brown, yellow and red, which make the reader interpret the landscape as dusty and dry. There are no trees, green grass or flowers, and the sky is a shade of yellow, which also tells the reader that the climate of this location is hot. The real reason for the reader to know that the location of this town is in Afghanistan is that the text is confirming it. The text also states that the people living in this town are not rich, as they do not have houses, but are living in tents.

On a hill, in between some of the tents, the reader gets to see Ali and his family, which contains Ali, Ali's mother, father and grandmother.

On the next double spread, there is a more chaotic picture of the village than the previous one. Here the reader can witness people depicted as dark shadows running around, climbing ladders and trying to hide from military tanks and helicopters surrounding the town. One of the tanks is shooting, and there is dark smoke coming up from different parts of the picture. In the right bottom corner, there is a close up of Ali's face, holding his hands to the side of his eyebrows with a worried facial expression. The text is corresponding to the picture, that there is a war going on, and telling the reader that tanks are bombing the town and other cities as well. As for the close up of Ali's face, which is depicted as being sad and scared, the text is

also stating his thoughts and feelings of being scared and sad. This is what Painter calls force, as for the exaggerated size of the picture to convey Ali's feelings to the reader.

The next setting is when the family have packed their belongings in suitcases and bags, and trying to flee from Afghanistan. The room is dark, and through the window in the background, the reader can see tanks, a helicopter and parts of the town. The text also conveys that the war has gotten so bad that they have to flee to a safer place in Europe. On their way to the airplane, Ali's parents get stopped by the officers at the airport. The picture shows that there are two officials, and one of them is holding out his hand in front of Ali's parents. Ali and his grandmother got to pass by the officials, and the picture shows that Ali is trying to reach after his parents while his grandmother is dragging him the other way. The reader can see the sadness and frustration in Ali's eyes, as well as the parents, who look confused and helpless because they cannot pass the officials. The text clarifies the situation by telling the reader that the parents did not have passports, therefore, they were stopped and not allowed to travel.

The third setting of the story is when Ali arrives in the new country with his grandmother. On the double spread, the picture shows the reader a big airplane, and a line of people disembarking. In the background, there are shapes of tall buildings. In the next double spread, Ali and his grandmother are walking hand in hand in a street. From the picture, the reader can tell that the new country is more industrialized, with infrastructure including roads and pavements, electricity, a parabolic antenna hanging on the houses made of bricks and a grocery store. The street is lit up by a lamppost, and the only people walking in the street are Ali and his grandmother. The colors used in this picture are different shades of grey, orange, pink and green. The grandmother and Ali are wearing the same clothes as they did earlier in the story, which are purple and blue.

The next setting is Ali sitting in his new bedroom, dreaming about being with his mother in his new country, while realizing that his parents are still in Afghanistan with all the fighting and war. On the first spread of this setting, there is an inter-event relations seen through the visuals. There is a juxtaposition of the images, where the first picture shows Ali and his mother holding hands and smiling at each other, and the image next to it shows military forces running on the hills a side with military tanks. The third image on the same page is a depiction of what can be interpreted as Ali's home town, in fire. This is based on the mosque,

the helicopter and the colors that are used in the image. Right underneath this image, there is a picture of Ali sitting with his knees into his body looking down. The reader can only see his profile, but out from his body language one can sense the feeling of sadness. This spread shows the contrasts of his dreams and his reality.

Turning the page, the reader can see Ali's back as he is looking out of the window, where the sun is about to rise. The colors are dark, while the sun is yellow. On the left side of the spread, there is a close up of Ali's face looking straight at the reader. This can be analyzed by the interpersonal metafunction, with the meaning potential of affect, force and focalization. As for the verbal on this spread, one gets confirmed the feelings that are depicted through the visuals, by Ali telling the reader: "I cried every night. It felt like the bones in my body were broken. Sometimes I felt angry. Most of the time, I felt really sad" (p.17-18).

The last setting is at Ali's new school. There are a few other characters involved in the setting. There are two boys standing in line behind Ali, and a man standing behind the counter in the cafeteria. There is a speech bubble, saying "yes", and through the text, the reader gets informed that "yes" is the only word Ali knows. On the right side of the spread, there is a close up of Ali's face with a sad expression. The text says: "Sometimes I got embarrassed when I didn't know the right word for something"(p.20). On the turning page, there is an inter-event relation, where there are two parallel pictures of the same playground outside of the school building. On the left side, the colors are dark, and Ali is sitting alone in a tree looking down at the ground with his hands around his knees. The other kids are playing on the football field in the background, depicted in dark shades. On the right side of the spread, the colors change to bright green, a colorful heaven in the colors of yellow, red and purple and the same kids from the line in the cafeteria are playing football with Ali. Ali is smiling and running around with the other kids. This spread shows on the left side how it was in the beginning when Ali was new and did not know anyone, while on the right side shows Ali after a while, and after he has been included in a group of friends.

Ali likes to draw, and there are two spreads that are showing his drawings. The first one is showing airplanes, tanks, two men in military clothes and helmets in military green, holding machine guns, as well as bombs and fires. He also draws pictures of his family, superman and

buildings from his home town. The colors used in the drawings are brown and yellow in the drawings connected to the war, whereas in the drawings of his family bright colors are used, and all the characters are smiling.

In between the two spreads showing Ali's drawings, there is a scene where Ali get a phone call from his family in Afghanistan. The text says four and a half years have passed since Ali and his grandmother moved from Afghanistan, and this phone conversation was the first time Ali got to talk with his parents for years.

The last double spread depicts a summary of Ali's experiences and dreams. His drawings are all over the table he is sitting next to, while he is drawing on a new piece of paper. The reader can also see the new street Ali now lives in, the airplane that he travelled with from Afghanistan and the drawings of his family. The text says: "My biggest wish is that my mom and dad will be able to come to this country.... It feels like it will happen soon. I get upset when I think about them. I wish they could come right now"(p. 27-28).

On the next page, which is a single page, there is a picture of Ali with his grandmother, mother and father standing on a green lawn in Ali's new country and the street he lives in. The colors are bright, and the text is saying: "I can't wait for that day"(p. 29).

5.2.2 Characterization

In this part of the analysis, I will focus on character attribution through how the characters are depicted visually as well as depiction, identification and/or classification through the text.

The characters we are introduced to in the story is Ali, his grandmother, mother, father, the officials at the airport, Ali's cousin and a couple of kids at the new school.

Ali is the focalizer and the protagonist of the story, and the story is told from a first-person perspective. He is depicted as a young boy with dark hair, brown eyes and eyebrows and tan skin color. He is wearing a blue sweater and green shorts throughout the whole story.

Ali's grandmother is wearing a blue-purple colored dress and hijab. She has also tan skin color, and dark eyes. We can see a little bit of her hair color which is also dark.

When it comes to Ali's mother and father, share the skin tone as Ali and his grandmother. The father wears a white shirt and brown trousers. He has also dark hair and dark eyes and a dark mustache. Ali's mother wears a hijab and a dress in pink-red color. Her dress is shorter than the grandmother's, so one can see she is wearing blue leggings as well. She has also dark hair and dark eyes.

The family seem to be close to each other through what one can tell out from the pictures, and the text confirms the senses one get by looking at the pictures. Due to the circumstances, the family is for the most of the time depicted with serious and sad facial expressions. This is also confirmed in the text, where Ali's voice tells the reader that it is sad that he had to leave his mother and father back in Afghanistan. The only time through the story where one can tell that Ali and the parents are truly happy, is when Ali get the phone call from Afghanistan and they get to speak to each other for the first time in many years, as well as when Ali gets to play soccer with the other kids at school. Besides that, the family members and Ali are all smiling on the drawings Ali makes, as well as the pictures that portrays Ali's dreams. The colors used on the pictures from the particular scenes and to underline the feelings Ali, Ali's grandmother and his parents have, are for the most of the time dark. There are also a lot of affect and force used to convey Ali's feelings, as there are several close ups of his face.

Some other characters that are involved in the story are the officials at the airport, some kids at Ali's new school as well as a man working in the cafeteria at the new school, and a textual representation of Ali's cousin.

The officials are only seen on the spread at the airport. They are depicted as dark shadows and we can only see their shape of them. They are wearing a hat and have white eyes and pointy noses. One of them is holding out one hand as a stop sign in front of Ali's parents, which can tell the reader that they are not letting Ali's parents move on to the airplane.

When it comes to the kids at school, there are only two boys that are depicted. They have light skin, one of them is blond and the other one is having brown hair. The blond boy is wearing a striped sweater in the colors green and blue, while the other boy with brown hair is wearing a brown sweater. They both have pointy noses, small mouths and small eyes. The other kids are only depicted as dark shadows, and we can only see their shapes of them. Through what we can see, Ali is sticking out compared to the two other boys. But through the text, the reader

get to know that the kids involve Ali on the soccer field as they asked if he wanted to play soccer with them.

Ali's cousin is not visualized and is only mentioned through the text when he is calling Ali from Afghanistan to tell him that he has seen Ali's father at the mosque.

5.2.3 Narrative perspective

For this part of analysis, I will follow the same structure as I did for *The Proudest Blue*, and divide the narrative perspective into three different points of view, which are the literal-, the figurative- and the transferred point of view.

5.2.3.1 *The Literal Point of View*

As already mentioned in the character analysis, Ali is the focalizer of the story, and he is telling the reader his story from a first-person perspective, where he uses the pronouns I and we, throughout the story. There are no other voices heard in the story, and if Ali is communicating with someone the text says: "My cousin said" or "Grandma decided".

Letting Ali tell his own story directly to the reader, make the reader to feel closer to the events and to sympathize with Ali and his situation. The name of the book is "Ali's Story", therefore it is an obvious reason for the author to convey the story from a first-person perspective and to have Ali as the focalizer. I believe this choice makes all the readers more attached to the story and it evokes feelings in everyone reading it.

5.2.3.2 *The Figurative Point of View*

There are several issues this story deals with. The main issue is the war which is the reason why Ali and his family need to flee their homes. Because of the war, the family members get separated and Ali and his grandmother are fleeing to a country where they do not know the language, the culture or anyone at all. They have to start all over, which is hard for a young boy, especially when he does not know if his mother and father are still alive, and if they ever are going to meet again.

The worldview that is expressed through the visual is for instance how different the countries are. Not only caused by the war, but also in general. In Ali's home town in Afghanistan, people live in tents, there is no infrastructure like roads, sidewalks or pavements, and the town

has several mosque minarets. There are mountains around the town and as it is described in the text, there is a lot of dust. The colors used on these spreads are shades of brown, red and beige, and it gives the reader a dessert vibe. Added to the natural elements, there are tanks, helicopters, fire and smoke in the second spread to tell the reader that there is a war going on as well. Not only are the people living in this town poor, but they also need to suffer war and experience having to flee from their homes for their safety.

In a contrast to this, the new country that is, told from the text, to be located in Europe, is depicted with grey buildings, roads and pavements. The first meeting with Europe is at the airport where the big plane has landed on the ground, and the passengers are walking in a line out of the plane with no rush. In the background, there is a long line of tall buildings, which are quite different from the buildings depicted in Ali's home town in Afghanistan. The landscape is flat, and outside of the school Ali attends, there is a big green lawn where the kids can play soccer. Every house has electricity, and many of the windows are covered with curtains. As a reader of the story, one get the feeling that the people living here are minding their own business, and that there is a calm neighborhood, as Ali and his grandmother are walking all by themselves in the street.

The contrast between the two countries can also be seen in Ali's dreams. The page shows a picture of Ali and his mother standing hand in hand on the grass in front of Ali's school. The colors are bright, the sky is blue with white clouds on it and it looks like the sun is about to go down. Ali is looking at his mother with a smile on his face, and the mother is smiling back. The text on the page says: "Sometimes I'd dream that my mom would pick me up from school and walk me home"(p.15). On the page on the right side of the spread, there are people running around, tanks and military personnel holding guns and black smoke coming up from the ground. Through what can be interpreted as a window, there is the home town in Afghanistan in the color of red, as it is burning. And in the corner of all these chaotical images, the reader can see Ali sitting and holding around his knees into his body, looking down at his bed. On this page, there is no sky, and the text says: "Then I would wake up, and my grandma would be there instead. Then I'd realize it was all a dream"(p.16).

The second text on the same page mentioned describes Ali's feelings and emotions, and says: "It made me sad to think that my parents were back in Afghanistan with all the fighting and war"(p.16).

The author and illustrator of the book have made it clear to the reader how different these two countries are when it comes to living in them. As the kids in the European country are playing soccer, with no worries or being afraid of their circumstances.

5.2.3.3 The Transferred Point of View

There are several important points in conveying this story to its audience. Regarding the situation going on in Ukraine at the moment, and the situation that has been going on for several years in The Middle East, it is necessary to educate and teach our pupils and children about how refugees are living, and how it may be to live in such circumstances. As we have already experienced for years, refugees have been arriving to Norway and they need all help they can get. The refugees need a new home, they need to learn a new language, they need to make new friends and they need to start a new life in a foreign country. This is not easy, and especially not easy for a child.

Making a young boy the focalizer and the protagonist of the story makes the story more real in the sense that one feel directly attached to the story. It is Ali telling the audience how he is experiencing some of the worst situations a human can experience.

A society can also benefit from having citizens that are engaged in the values of humanity and have compassion for their fellow world citizens. By reading stories about how it is to be a refugee, the readers will most likely develop a deeper understanding of how it may be to be that person experiencing a situation like that. The earlier a person starts to learn about different cultures, events and world issues, the more likely there is for a person to develop these qualities and values.

The qualities I have talked about in this chapter will be further explained below.

5.2.4 Values and Attitudes

5.2.4.1 Values

Ali's Story is a picturebook dealing with and touching on several of the values presented in the RFCDC. The first set, which is valuing human dignity and human rights, is a set of values that this picturebook is basically about. An example is article 3 in The Declaration of Human Rights, which is "Right to life", and entails the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety. When war destroys one's home and is threatening one's safety, the people have the right to asylum, which is to go to another country to seek protection. This is what Ali and his grandmother do, but Ali's parents do not get the same opportunity because they do not have passports. This is in many ways a situation the reader can put a question mark on. This is based on the fairness and the justice of holding the parents back in Afghanistan where the war is going on, and not letting them flee with their son and the son's grandmother. In other words, they are not treated equally, based on what the reader gets introduced to.

When Ali and his grandmother arrive in the new country, they are meeting a society where Ali gets to attend school and feels belonging in the community. As the story shows in the beginning, he was sitting alone watching the other kids play soccer, but after a while, they asked if he wanted to join in. This part tells the reader that he gets included in the group of kids, which can tell the reader that even though Ali is foreign and maybe not know much of the language, they include him as one of their own. This can be tied up to the value of cultural diversity, which in this context is about including Ali regardless of his past and his culture.

5.2.4.2 Attitudes

In the sets of attitudes from The RFCDC, there are attitudes as openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, and last, tolerance of ambiguity. These attitudes go hand in hand with the values mentioned above.

As mentioned, the boys at the soccer field are having the attitudes that The RFCDC lists in its framework. And as for the reader of the story, the attitudes listed in The RFCDC can be used to reflect over and think through what these attitudes entail and how they can be adapted to the reader's own life. Such as openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices. This entail to meet people that are different from oneself with being open and

without prejudices based on one's cultural background. By letting Ali be a part of the group that play soccer, shows the reader that the kids are open minded and welcoming, and that they see Ali as a fellow classmate even though he is foreign. The action of including Ali is also showing that the boys have respect, are civic-minded and takes responsibility of including everyone. Especially since there are the boys that ask Ali, and not Ali that asks the boys to join in. This shows that the boys take responsibility, and that they have noticed Ali. As the spread where this scene is happening, one can see that the colors and the atmosphere changes from the page where Ali is sitting alone watching the other kids play, to the one where Ali has joined the soccer field. On the page where Ali is playing with the other kids, the colors are bright and Ali is smiling. This can tell the reader that there is a positive situation, and that Ali is happy because he feels included in the group. Another positive element on this page, is that the text refers to the group of kids as Ali's friends.

By introducing these points listed to pupils in the Norwegian school can make the pupils be aware of the importance of including everyone, and may foster cultural awareness.

5.3 The Invisible

The third and last picturebook to analyze is *The Invisible* written by Tom Percival and was published in 2021. The story is about a girl named Isabel that tells what her life living in a low-income family is like.

5.3.1 Setting

The story takes place in an urban city in the Western world. This is depicted through the pictures that show tall buildings and houses, the infrastructure, the climate and the clothes people wear.

In the story, the reader gets to follow Isabel through different experiences of living in a low-income family. The first setting is at her home and in her neighborhood. In the first spread, she is standing in her bedroom, looking out of the window and getting dressed for the day. Through the window, the reader can tell that it is winter because of the snow and the ice that is covering the top of the window. This is also visible on the right side of the spread, where the reader gets another angle, seeing the house from the outside and seeing Isabel looking out the window. She is now also wearing a hoodie and she has a smile on her face. In this spread, the text confirms that it is very cold outside.

On the next spread, the spread is divided into three different settings, which Painter refers to as an inter-event relation. On the left side page, there are three different settings: The first one shows Isabel sitting on a couch in-between her mother and father, with her dog on her lap, all of them reading a book. Isabel and her mother are both wearing hoodies and scarves. Through the text, the reader gets to know that Isabel's family cannot afford to have the heating on. The next two settings on the same page, are showing other things the family cannot afford. In one of the images are Isabel standing on the outside of a cinema with her dog, looking at two other kids and a woman entering through the door. The third picture shows Isabel and her dog looking at a woman and a man walking with shopping bags in their hands, and a boy rushing in between them on a scooter. The text tells the reader: "Isabel's family couldn't afford a lot of things. Things that some people take for granted" (p.3). In both of these pictures, Isabel has a sad facial expression.

On the right side of the spread, the picture covers the whole page and is showing Isabel, her dog and her parents sitting on the floor in front of a fireplace, all of them smiling. Behind them, there is a bunch of letters, and on one of them it is written *reminder*.

Even though the family does not have much money, they are smiling when they are together. And as the text says on the next spread: “After all, she and her family had everything they needed. They had each other” (p.5-6). In this spread the family is outside in a park, Isabel is playing with her dog, and the parents are sitting on a green bench, looking at their daughter. Even though it is snowing, they are wearing the same clothes that they wore inside.

Turning the page, the family is sitting around a table. On the table, there is some money and sheets of paper that have the writing: “Pay now”, “Overdue”, and “Reminder” on them. The parents are looking down at the table with sad facial expressions, and Isabel is standing in the middle looking at her father, also with a sad expression. This image is a turning point in the story. The reader can tell that the family cannot pay their bills on time due to the debt. By reading the text, the reader gets confirmed that they cannot pay their bills and rent on time. Therefore, the family has to move. As the text says: “Isabel and her family had to leave their home, the house which held all their happy memories” (p.7).

From this point, the story changes. The ambience, such as the color choices on the spreads become grey and dark, it is snowing more and Isabel is no longer smiling. Her body language and facial expression convey that she is sad and she is always by herself. The reader can tell that she is not happy with the circumstances she is living in and dealing with. She does not feel any belonging, and as the text says: “A family drove past in a shiny car, but they looked straight through Isabel, as though she wasn’t even there” (p. 11). She is starting to feel invisible, which also is portrayed through the pictures on the following pages. She is still wearing the same clothes as she has from the beginning of the story, but now the reader can look straight through her, as she is transparent, and as the text says: “And nobody saw her at all” (p. 16).

Suddenly, Isabel starts to notice other invisible people as well, when she is walking around. There is an old lady planting flowers, a man who sleeps on a bench feeding the birds in the park, a boy fixing a broken bicycle, all of them helping the community without being seen. Isabel decides to join in and fix things up. From this point, the pictures are getting back their

colors, and more people are getting together to help each other. Suddenly, all of the people are visible again, and the community gets the colors back. The weather also gets better, the sky turns blue, and spring has come. On the second last spread, we get to see Isabel and her parents smile again. Both of her parents holding each other's tools boxes, the sky is blue, and the houses got a brown color. In the background, some other people are painting colorful figures on a brick wall. The text says: "Soon, Isabel wasn't just visible – she was vibrant... And so was her new home!" (p. 25).

On the last double spread of the story, there is a colorful picture of all the people that used to be invisible, but now they all are in colorful clothes, smiles on their faces and communicating with other people. There are flowers, a man is grilling burgers, another one is playing music, a couple is dancing and people seem to enjoy a beautiful summer day in their community. The final text of the story is: "Isabel had made a difference" (p. 27).

5.3.2 Characterization

There are not many characters in *The Invisible*, but the ones that the reader gets introduced to are Isabel, her parents, the old lady planting flowers, the man who slept on the bench, and the boy that fixed the bicycle. The other characters that are to be seen are not mentioned by the text and have no direct purpose in the story, other than to show the contrast between the "visible" people and the ones that are "invisible".

The main character of the story is Isabel, who is depicted as a young, tiny girl, with black hair and pale skin. She is wearing the same clothes throughout the whole story, which is a green sweater, beige trousers, a grey hoodie with some blue and white pattern and a blue scarf. She is for the most of the time by herself or with her parents, until she notices the other "invisible" people. In the beginning of the story she is depicted with a smile on her face, and seems to be satisfied with her life. This changes when she gets to know that the family have to move to a new place because they cannot afford living in their home anymore. From this point, the reader can tell that she is sad based on her body language and face expressions. This is also confirmed through the text, such as: "This part of the city looked exactly how she felt – cold, sad and lonely"(p.10). As she starts to feel "invisible" the colors used on the spread are helping the reader to understand the message of her being invisible. She is portrayed as a grey transparent figure the reader can look straight through. This is how the other "invisible" characters are depicted as, as well, until they create the vibrant community together and they

all get “visible”. This is what makes Isabel happy again, and she starts to feel a belonging in the community and that she can make a difference. This is to be seen in the pictures as the reader can see her body language and the smile on her face, as well as the text is confirming her emotions.

Isabel’s parents have black hair and pale skin color as well. The mother wears a beige jacket, a green skirt and grey tights with white stripes on. She has also an orange scarf and a brown hoodie. The father wears grey trousers, a white shirt with a blue sweater over it and orange socks. Both of them are wearing the same set of clothes throughout the story as well.

All of the “invisible” characters are also wearing the same sets of clothes throughout the whole story. But they all go from being grey and “invisible” to become “visible” with bright colors as mentioned above. The old lady has grey hair and wears a pink dress with a white belt and a white collar. The man who slept on the bench is tall with a long brown beard. He wears a green jacket, brown trousers, blue sweater and hoodie in the same color as the sweater. At last, it is the boy fixing the bicycle. He has brown hair, blue jacket and grey trousers. As a common feature for all of them, is that they are by themselves. As the text states: “But they all seemed so alone...” (p.20). This is until Isabel starts to help each one of them with the different things they do. On page 23-24 there is an inter-event relation by using juxtaposition of images to convey how more and more people join in to help each other make a community. On the first image on the left, there is only Isabel and her dog, as on the image on the right side Isabel is standing with all the other “invisible” characters as they all are smiling and seem to enjoy each other’s company. Another aspect to point at, is that on the left side Isabel is still in grey colors, but on the further right she and the other characters in the images get more and more colors. The text says: “And the more people came together.. the more they could all be seen” (p. 23-24).

5.3.3 Narrative Perspective

Similarly to the previous two analyses the narrative perspective will be divided into three different aspects: the literal-, the figurative- and the transferred point of view.

5.2.3.1 *The Literal Point of View*

The story is told from a third-person perspective, as the story uses Isabel's name, as well as third-person pronouns such as "they", "she" and "her". However, even though the story is not told from a first-person perspective, the reader is introduced to the story from Isabel's point of view. This makes Isabel the focalizer of the story.

Reading the story from a third-person perspective gives the reader an overview of the situation and the opportunity to interpret the character's feelings based on the pictures and the text.

5.2.3.2 *The Figurative Point of View*

The figurative point of view looks at how the story conveys ideology and/or worldviews. In *The Invisible*, the story conveys how it is to live in a low-income family in an urban city where the economy is good in general. To live in poverty may be taboo and there is a stigma around having less money than other people. This is something the story conveys through Isabel and her family. The reader can tell that Isabel is sad because she has to move from her home to a new place where she does not know anyone. She starts to feel invisible like she does not exist in the community. As the pictures shows her watching other kids her same age walking with their parents to the cinema, shopping or driving in a fancy car, she is standing alone with her dog. This conveys the feelings of loneliness and sadness.

Already at the beginning of the picturebook, the text makes it clear that Isabel's family does not have much money. Even though they do not have much, Isabel seems happy because she has her family and that is all she needs, as the text stated. The sadness comes when the family has to move from their home because they cannot afford to live there anymore. Even though she starts to feel invisible, she starts to notice that there are more people that are "invisible". The "invisible" people are other people in the community that also are living in poverty, and that are doing good things for the community without being seen. This can be reflected, that in an usual community, people are too busy thinking about themselves and what they have

and do, that they do not see or think about the people who may suffer or are different from them.

Isabel is starting to help the other “invisible” people, and as soon she starts helping them, her mood gets better and the people and Isabel start to be visible. After a while, they have made their community colorful and tidy, and they all seem to be satisfied living there. What the figurative point of view of the story is trying to convey by this, is that as long as people see each other and help each other, it will be a better place and environment for everyone living in the community.

5.2.3.3 The Transferred Point of View

The transferred point of view is about why or if the narrator of the story benefits from telling the story to its audience or not. There is always a message behind a story, and a reason for the narrator to want to convey the specific message.

In this case, the narrator probably wants to highlight how it may be to experience the feelings of being not noticed in a society because of poverty. By conveying this experience to its audience, the audience will get the chance to reflect and to think through how it may be to be a person living in poverty and how it may feel to be invisible to other people. This can be an eyeopener for many and can make people change how they look at people who seem to be different from themselves. Especially people who do not have as much as an average person. Another beneficial aspect is to use this type of story in an educational context. Due to the fact that there are many children living in low-income families, it needs to be addressed to children and youths that having a lot is something that should not be taken for granted. The story can also be used to create an awareness of the fact that even in Norway, children are suffering of poverty. This is something that not everyone is aware of because the majority is having more than enough to live average lives and to do such things as going to the cinema, going shopping or the family they live in has a car.

5.2.4 Values and Attitudes

5.2.4.1 Values

Valuing human dignity and human rights go many ways hand in hand. Human dignity can be seen as the heart of human rights. The concept of human dignity is the belief that all people hold a special value that is tied to their humanity, regardless of their class, gender, race, religion, abilities or other factors (Soken-Huberty, 2022). This is an important value that can be discussed in this story. When Isabel starts to feel invisible, it is like she does not belong anymore. This is critical and it is not in line with how people should be treated in a democratic society. Everyone should feel a belonging in their community and that they are worthy. This is to be seen when Isabel starts to help the other invisible people, and they are making a new community together. They all get visible, which can be a symbol of belonging and the feeling of being valued.

5.2.4.2 Attitudes

The attitudes that are most relevant for this analysis are respect, responsibility and civic-mindedness. For the two, respect and responsibility, go hand in hand with the values of human dignity and human rights. As world citizens and citizens of a community, the people shall show respect and responsibility for each other. People in a community got a responsibility to include one another, and to see one another so that people feel seen and that they have a belonging.

The attitude of being civic-minded entails actions and activities that are motivated by or that show concern for the public good or humanity as a whole (Yourdictionary, 2022). This is an aspect that comes clearly in the light of this story through Isabel starting to help the other invisible people, and that they all start working together for the community. From the starting point where all of the characters operated by themselves, and where “invisible”, to the end when they all are seen smiling in a colorful neighborhood is a big change of living. This conveys the message of how great things can be, if people comes together, works together, helping each other and operates as one unit instead of being by themselves. This point can be related to many situations in a daily life, and the idea of helping each other is not a sign of weakness, as many are afraid of. To ask for help, or to reach out a helping hand, is what makes a community an unit for everyone living in it, no matter of the people’s economic status, their religious beliefs or where they come from.

6.0 Discussion

As mentioned in the theory chapter, the reference framework of competencies in a democratic culture (RFCDC) has been used to guide my analysis. Therefore, using Nikolajeva and Scott's narrative approach along with Painter's framework, I have been looking for values and attitudes outlined in RFCDC.

In this section, I will discuss the findings in the light of the two sub-research questions. Then, I will discuss and address the main question of this thesis in the conclusion.

6.1 Sub-Research Question #1

How are democratic values, such as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity conveyed through the selected picturebooks?

In the three selected picturebooks, there are elements in the stories that deal with democratic values. Even though all the three picturebooks have different stories and may be relatable to different democratic values, they can all be analyzed in the light of the reference framework of competencies in a democratic culture (RFCDC), as shown in the analysis.

I will now discuss these differences and similarities, and how the three selected picturebooks deal with democratic values, such as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity.

6.1.1 *The Proudest Blue*

The Proudest Blue is a book that tackles cultural aspects such as cultural diversity, and minorities vs. majorities, as well it has religious aspects. Asiya and Faizah are Muslims and are living in a North-American society where the reader is not introduced to the average pupil's religious beliefs. This is a major point in the story because Asiya is starting to wear a hijab to school, which tells the reader that she is a Muslim. Throughout the story, based both on the visual and verbal texts, the reader can tell that the other pupils are not used to seeing people wearing hijabs or having another culture or religious appearance. This is conveyed through the reactions some of the pupils show, such as questions about what the hijab is, and the boys that make fun of Asiya and the hijab. Such reactions can tell the reader that they do

not show respect and lack the cultural competence due to the fact that they do not understand that people should be treated equal no matter their personal beliefs and/or values.

The story of *The Proudest Blue* is focused on conveying diversity. Through the visuals, one can see that there is some diversity when it comes to skin colors and ethnicities, but there are no diverse religious clothing, which makes Asiya stick out from the other pupils.

As for other democratic values, such as human dignity and rights, the story conveys how Asiya and Faizah are reacting to the bullies and to the characters who are questioning the hijab. Based on the reactions and Faizah's thoughts, the reader can tell that it is not easy to be the one that is sticking out from the rest. As for children and youths in school, many experiences the fear of being different and being bullied or made fun of. Growing up can be tough due to the fact that the years are filled with changes both mentally, but also physically. This can cause insecurity and a lot of questions and fears of sticking out from the ones you are around. Therefore, it is not always easy to be true to oneself when it comes to faith and personal beliefs.

The pedagogical points to take out and discuss, are definitely the point of being true to oneself and being who you are, no matter if you are different from the people around you. As we can see in the story, Asiya has good friends who are standing by her side and support and stand up for her when people are making fun of her. This shows how important good friends are, and to stand up for your friends if they are being bullied or made fun of. It is the lesson of seeing the human in others, no matter the differences. This lesson is a lesson every child needs to learn and cherish for the rest of their life.

6.1.2 Ali's Story – A real-life account of his journey from Afghanistan

Ali's Story is a story told by a boy and his experiences of being a refugee. The story tells the reader how it is to flee your home, get separated from your family and move to an unknown country where you do not know the language or the culture. The reader gets to follow Ali's thoughts and feelings, and how he is living in uncertainty for several years without having any contact with his parents or family back in Afghanistan. The only person he has with him on his journey is his grandmother that fled with him. Through this experience, the reader gets involved in the feelings and dreams Ali has, and that his real dream is that his parents get to flee from the war in Afghanistan and be with him in the new and safe country.

The democratic values that are highly relevant in this story are human dignity and rights. All people, no matter where they live and where they are from, have the right to live in a safe home without being scared of their life. Being from a country in war, one as a citizen have the right to flee and to be a refugee as well.

Learning about how it is to be a refugee and understanding their feelings, there will most likely evoke feelings such as sympathy and humanity in the ones reading the story. It is necessary to learn about, the current circumstances both in Afghanistan, but also in Ukraine, that have caused and made thousands of people flee their homes.

Children growing up in Norway may feel a distance from such events and issues because they are living in a safe and wealthy country. I believe that the war in Ukraine is an eyeopener for many youths in Norway because it feels much closer when there is a war going on in Europe. Even though there is no difference between being a refuge from Afghanistan or from Ukraine, many people in Norway and Europe, in general, have opened their eyes and offered more help than there have been offered in many years. This shows that it is necessary to learn more about world issues, such as war and what war causes, no matter where in the world the war is located. The people that have to flee, are no different from the people in your own country. I believe the audience of this book will be emotionally attached by reading *Ali's Story*, and the story will most likely evoke feelings such as empathy and human compassion.

By teaching people and giving them democratic competence, as well as values that protect human rights and dignity, will help the refugees that are coming and to take care of the people in need. This is important to maintain the democratic world and to keep the rest of the world in peace.

It is also important to learn about why people have to flee their homes, and that the refugees that are coming most likely do not have other choices than to flee. Racism and discrimination also occur when talking about refugees and about helping the ones in need. People that are not educated enough in such matters often have problems seeing humans in need, and they see it as problematic that people from different cultures are coming to the country. These are attitudes we as global citizens and especially educators need to work against. As teachers, we have an important job to educate our pupils in democratic values and attitudes, and to foster

engaged pupils in the questions of refugees and people in need. Putting a light on these type of stories, can be an eye-opener for the pupils and can help to prevent racism and discrimination in society.

6.1.3 *The Invisible*

The Invisible is the third chosen book that has been analyzed in this project. The story is about a girl named Isabel, and how she experiences the life of living in a low-income family. Because of the family's situation, she and her parents need to move from their home to the opposite side of the city. The story takes us through her feelings about moving, and that she feels invisible to other people. When she starts feeling invisible, she also starts to recognize other "invisible" people. She begins to help each of them, and the community in general, and suddenly the characters together have made a colorful and beautiful neighborhood. The message in this story is to help each other out, no matter their life situations and their status, and that if people work together they will achieve good results.

This story sticks out from the two other picturebooks analyzed in this thesis, due to the fact that this story can relate to everyone who reads it. No matter where the readers of this book are from, they have probably heard of or seen someone struggling from poverty. Poverty is a stigma in society, and according to SSB, 115 000 children in Norway were living in low-income households in 2019 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). This number tells us that there is a big chance to meet pupils that live in low-income households, which also underlines the importance of talking about poverty and what it is like. To live in a low-income household does not necessarily mean that you are living on the street and do not have a home. But it can mean that you do not have enough money to buy new clothes, go to the cinema, celebrate your birthday at a bowling hall or attend spare time activities. Many children take these different things for granted and think that everyone can afford the different things themselves get. But that is not the reality.

The democratic values that are relevant within this story are especially human dignity and human rights. Even though a person is living in poverty, or the person is rich, it does not matter how you should be treated as a human being. The feeling of being invisible in society only because of your economic status is telling the reader that there is a problem the society needs to work on. People struggling with low income should be seen and helped, not be

invisible and forgotten, especially when it is thrown loads of clothes, food, furniture and things that other people could have got for free, or bought for a cheaper price.

This aspect has been up for debate due to the climate changes and crisis, that people in the Western World have over-consumption of resources. The climate debates made people open their eyes to start buying used clothes, furniture and equipment. This kind of change in people's habits can be seen as a good thing because it does not make a stigma to buy used things anymore. Rather, it is seen as a good thing because it shows that you care about the climate. As a result of people changing their habits, people are also donating clothes and furniture to stores such as Fretex and the Salvation Army. Which can be beneficial for low-income households.

But there is a paradox that people start to donate things because of the climate, and not because of their compassion for other people. Therefore, it can tell the reader and oneself that it is necessary to teach and learn about how people actually experience living in poverty. A way to do so is to listen to stories such as *The Invisible* and to start educating our children and youths so that they can foster democratic values that involve human dignity and rights.

6.1.4 Comparison of the Three Picturebooks

In this chapter, I have focused on the question: *How are democratic values, such as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity conveyed through the selected picturebooks?*

There are three different picturebooks with different stories, that have different angles on democratic values. All three picturebooks touch on democratic values such as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity.

The two picturebooks, *The Proudest Blue* and *Ali's Story* convey the story of protagonists coming from a different culture, and being a minority when it comes to ethnicity and religion. They both share that the main characters are coming from Islamic culture, but are living in a Western culture, where most people are accustomed to the norms of Christianity. This is not stated in the stories, but both of them convey that the main characters are different from the majority.

The last picturebook, *The Invisible*, conveys how it is to be different within the same culture the character is from. Isabel, which is the main character, has the same appearance as the

other characters seen in the book. The way she and her family stick out is that they cannot afford the same things as the other people living in the same community, and they have to move. This makes Isabel feel invisible, and that she does not belong in the community the same way as the other kids the same age as her, even though they share the same ethnicity and culture. This differs from the other two picturebooks, where the characters are surrounded by friends even though they do not share the same cultural background.

As for picturebooks, democratic values are conveyed through the visual and verbal texts. As the reader of the story, one can understand the message of the story by looking at the pictures as well as reading the text. An interesting difference between the two first picturebooks, and the last, is that *The Proudest Blue* and *Ali's Story* are told from a first-person perspective, whereas *The Invisible* is told from a third-person perspective. This makes the experiences of the stories a bit different, where the stories told from a first-person perspective feel like been told directly by the main character, whereas the third-person perspective has an indirect storytelling.

Reading the story from a third-person perspective gives the reader an overview of the situation and the opportunity to interpret the character's feelings based on the pictures and the text. Further, the interpretation can be used in a group discussion, and to put down the reader's own thoughts on the situation. The settings can also be interpreted in different ways, which can be interesting to discuss.

Regardless of how the stories are told, they all tell stories about human dignity, rights and cultural diversity, and can be used to teach and learn about democratic values to foster cultural competence and cultural awareness.

6.2 Sub Research Question #2

What potential do the selected picturebooks possible contribute to intercultural learning?

Intercultural learning is defined as the process of becoming more aware of and better understanding of one's own culture as well as other cultures around the world. An aim for intercultural learning is to increase international and cross-cultural understanding and tolerance (Rose, 2021). As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the new curriculum

plan put into action in 2020 has an interdisciplinary topic named *Democracy and Citizenship*. Within the English subject, Democracy and Citizenship, shall help pupils to develop understanding of how their view of the world is based on their cultural knowledge. By learning English, pupils can experience and communicate with people from different cultures and countries all over the world. This can be an opening for new interpretations of the world and cultures, and promote curiosity and engagement, as well as prevent prejudices (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). This is closely related to intercultural learning, which will increase the understanding of other cultures as well as its own culture.

The question therefore is, what potential do the three selected picturebooks in this thesis possible contribute to intercultural learning?

As I summed up in the end of the previous section, the three books chosen for this thesis, address democratic values as human dignity and rights, and cultural diversity. In all of the three books the reader gets introduced to all of these three values. In *The Proudest Blue*, the reader gets introduced to a religious practice that may be different from what one is used to if the reader is not a Muslim. For people believing in another religion than Islam, wearing a hijab is something that may be unusual and different from their own practice. By reading *Ali's Story*, the reader gets to read how it is to experience war and the result of having to flee from your country and home. By reading Ali's story, the reader can try to put oneself into Ali's shoes and imagine how it may be in his situation, which is a situation most of the people in the Western world never have experienced. The third, and last book, *The Invisible*, takes the reader through how it is to feel invisible in the society and feeling the lack of belonging caused by poverty. This story may relate to some of the readers of the story, due to the fact that there are 115 000 children in Norway that live in a low-income household (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). But here as well, as the other two books, most of its readers will most likely not relate to the story the same way as the main character experiences it.

These three picturebooks that address these cultural and societal issues that not occur the readers, may work as an eyeopener and to educate the readers about the issues. In a classroom setting, a picturebook tackling such issues can be used as a starting point to the topic, or a classroom discussion, which can lead to intercultural competence.

The world is constantly changing, therefore it is important to educate the upcoming generation about the societal issues that they may face growing up. An example is the ongoing war in Ukraine, and all the refugees that are spread out in Europe. Many refugees have come to Norway, and it is a big chance that many of the youths in Norway will meet or see them. Without knowledge about the crisis, and what the refugees have experienced, it may be difficult to meet them with dignity and compassion, or to understand their life situation. By learning through literature, and a child's point of view, can make children and youth relate to the situation on a different level, than only listening to the news on TV or on radio, which for many children and youths can be too advanced or too distanced.

In an educational context, many will benefit from reading literature that involves real societal and cultural issues that the readers can interpret or feel sympathy with the characters in the book. If the goal is to educate pupils in five till ten grade in Norway, the three picturebooks chosen, may be suitable to use, due to the fact that the characters in the book are around the same age as the audience. Even though the audience may be some years older, they can still relate because they remember how it was being a child.

7.0 Conclusion

The main research question for this thesis is: *What protentional have the selected picturebooks to foster cultural awareness in the light of the interdisciplinary topic, Democracy and Citizenship, in the grades 5-10 in the Norwegian school?* In this chapter, I will focus on answering the research question based on the analysis and the discussion.

To analyze the selected picturebooks I used multimodal discourse analysis based on Painter's framework. To guide the analysis, I used narrative theory by Nikolajeva and Scott as well as The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) of The Council of Europe. In the RFCDC I chose democratic values, such as human dignity, human rights and cultural diversity, as well as democratic attitudes, such as 1. Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices, 2. Respect, 3. Civic mindedness, 4. Responsibility, 5. Self-efficacy, and 6. Tolerance of ambiguity. The values and attitudes from the RFCDC were picked based on the topic of this thesis, which is cultural awareness.

Combining Painter, Nikolajeva & Scott and The Council of Europe has made it possible to analyze the selected picturebooks in the light of the interdisciplinary topic, Democracy and Citizenship.

In the English subject in the Norwegian school, Democracy and Citizenship aim to help pupils to develop an understanding of how their view of the world is based on their cultural competence. By learning English, pupils can experience and communicate with people from different cultures and countries all over the world. This can be an opening for new interpretations of the world and cultures, promote curiosity and engagement, as well as prevent prejudices (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). By reading English books about societal and cultural issues, the pupils will not only learn English but also about differences within cultures and living conditions around the world. By using picturebooks written in English, the pupils will be introduced to authentic literary texts. As picturebooks are based on the concept that the visuals and verbal are equally important to convey the story, pupils at a young age will most likely be able to understand the content and message of the story, even if they are on a lower English level. Pupils will most likely learn new words and improve their English skills while engaging with these picturebooks.

By combining reading English picturebooks and introducing the pupils to societal and cultural issues within the picturebooks, the educator will reach the goal of learning one's pupils the language of English, as well as introducing the pupils to different cultures and countries around the world.

In this thesis, I picked out three different picturebooks based on the thought that they should include some societal and cultural issues and events, such as war, immigration, racism and economic inequality. The choice landed on *The Proudest Blue*, *Ali's Story: A Real-Life Account of his Journey from Afghanistan* and *The Invisible*. These three picturebooks involve elements of all of the criteria I looked for when it comes to content and democratic values and attitudes.

As discussed in relation to the sub-research questions, all the three picturebooks share that they include elements of democratic values and attitudes. Therefore, my conclusion is that these picturebooks may contribute to intercultural learning. Then, the question remains whether the picturebooks may potentially foster cultural awareness in the light of the interdisciplinary topic, democracy and citizenship. Due to the fact that this is a literary study and not an experimental study, it is impossible to answer if the picturebooks actually can foster cultural awareness. But as an answer for if there is a possibility to foster cultural awareness through the selected picturebooks, the answer would be yes.

The analysis above confirms that the picturebooks contain important cultural aspects such as democratic values and attitudes, and have stories that tackle societal and cultural issues and events that evokes awareness. To help the pupils to be aware of people around them, no matter their life situations, cultural background and differences, these picturebooks can be a start to achieve that goal. As in an educational context, it is important to use a material that the pupils find interesting and manageable, and which is on a level that they can comprehend. The format of picturebooks is therefore suitable in the context to learn a new language, as well as learning democratic skills as values and attitudes that benefit democracy and citizenship.

As mentioned in the introduction, it is important to address current societal and cultural issues in the classroom, and make the pupils aware of these issues. I have chosen to focus on current societal and cultural issues such as war and immigration, racism and poverty, because we are

exposed to these issues through the news or in our daily lives every day. All these different issues are happening all over the world, therefore, as global citizens we have to educate ourself about them and to prevent these issues to expand even more than they already have.

As it says in the core curriculum, the education shall provide insight into cultural diversity, and promote democracy, equality and show respect for individual's convictions (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020). This is a part of the primary goal for education in Norway, and something we have to work with within every subject. Therefore, I believe working with these issues through picturebooks will help pupils to understand and emphasize with the characters in the story. It may also be an eyeopener, and maybe easier to really understand what these issues entails, and to understand what democracy and citizenship really are about.

This research is a literal study where it has been used Nikolajeva and Scott's narrative approach along with Painter's framework, along with values and attitudes outlined in The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture RFCDC of The Council of Europe.

It has been interesting to analyze how the picturebooks potentially may contribute to cultural awareness tied up to current cultural issues, such as racism, refugee-crisis, minorities, economic-inequality and war. From the analysis, the findings tell that they potentially may contribute to cultural awareness and foster intercultural learning. Therefore, the next step for further research would be to carry out this analysis in an experimental research and to actually test the hypothesis that the picturebooks can potentially foster cultural awareness and intercultural learning.

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