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MASTER'S THESIS

Fostering Intercultural Competence through Picturebooks:

Exploring narratives of Immigration and Identity and their potential to
invite Perspective-taking

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Master's in education with English Didactics

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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,
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Sunniva Heen Jacobsen

Abstract

The primary focus of this master thesis is to explore of the narratives of identity in three selected immigration-themed picturebooks: *The Arabic Quilt* by Aya Khalil and Semirdzhyan, *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi and *The Colour of Home* by Mary Hoffman and Karin Littlewood. The thesis seeks to assess whether the portrayal of the newcomer immigrants can invite perspective-taking in the English subject. A qualitative narrative analysis was applied. Findings were viewed in the light of theories about identity, representation, and perspective-taking. Findings of this study suggests that the picturebooks have potential to invite perspective-taking in the English subject. They all provide opportunities for readers to learn about the complex relationship between culture, identity, and immigration. These topics are crucial to address to create inclusive and respectful classroom environments where diversity is embraced and viewed as a resource. As English is a subject focused on culture, language and communication, the topics could be seen as particularly suited to address in English language teaching.

Keywords: Picturebooks, intercultural competence, perspective-taking, identity, representation, immigration, narrative analysis

Sammendrag

Masteroppgavens hovedfokus er å utforske narrativene om identitet i tre utvalgte bildebøker med immigrasjonstema: *The Arabic Quilt* av Aya Khalil og Semirdzhyan, *The Name Jar* av Yangsook Choi and *The Colour of Home* av Mary Hoffman og Karin Littlewood. Oppgavens mål er å vurdere om disse fremstillingene kan invitere til perspektiv-taking i Engelskfaget. En narrativ analyse ble gjennomført. Funnene ble diskutert i lys av teorier om identitet, representasjon og perspektiv-taking. Resultatene viser at de nevnte bildebøkene har potensiale til å invitere perspektiv-taking i Engelskfaget. Alle bøkene gir leserne muligheter til å lære om det komplekse forholdet mellom kultur, identitet og innvandring. Disse temaene er avgjørende å ta opp for å skape inkluderende og respektfulle klassemiljøer der mangfold omfavnes og ses på som en ressurs. Fordi Engelskfaget fokuserer på kultur, språk og kommunikasjon kan temaene ses på som spesielt egnet til å tas opp i engelskundervisning.

Nøkkelord: bildebøker, interkulturell kompetanse, perspektivtaking, identitet, representasjon, innvandring, narrativ analyse

List of Abbreviations

COE: Council of Europe

CLRSIG: Children's Literature & Reading Special Interest Group by the International Literacy Association

ELT: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign Language

IC: Intercultural competence

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

LK20: Læreplanverket Kunnskapsløftet 2020

NAFO: Nasjonalt senter For Flerkulturell Opplæring

NBGS: Notable Books for a Global Society

SSB: Statistisk Sentralbyrå

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1. Introduction

Immigration-themed picturebooks are worth analyzing to explore whether the picturebook can be used to ease a newcomer's transition into the classroom environment. A study by Ward & Warren (2019) closely analyzed 45 children's books featuring characters with refugee backgrounds that had been published since 2013. The study concluded that a majority of the texts analyzed focus on the journey in search of a safe place to live, whereas only 9 focused on the complexity of making a life in a new place (Ward & Warren, 2019, p.148). One could argue that the journey is not over when one has arrived in a new country. Whether a pupil have immigrated to Norway for refuge or for other reasons, they could still find the transition challenging. The experiences of refugee children who have undergone trauma differs greatly from for instance children of work immigrants. Still, some of the experiences of children who are immigrants and refugees can overlap, like being a pupil in a new school, speaking a new language or adapting to a new social environment. The unique familiarity these pupils have with meeting new languages and cultures can be seen as particularly relevant in work with cultural understanding, communication, and identity development in the English subject. In efforts to reflect the extended journey of pupils who have immigrated to a new country in the classroom, I analyzed three immigration-themed picturebooks where the narrative takes place in a new country and in a new school. I analyzed how the identities of each newcomer immigrant in these picturebooks are portrayed and discussed the picturebooks' potential to invite perspective-taking in the English subject. One of the three picturebook portrays a refugee experience to shed light on how pupils with refuge as reason for immigration could need to process trauma in addition to adjusting to a new social environment.

Norwegian statistics, Statistisk sentralbyrå (SSB), show that 16% of Norway's current population are immigrants. Out of these, 4,5% have refugee backgrounds (SSB, 2023e). When I write this thesis, the refugee crisis in Europe has lasted for close to ten years. Additionally, people from all over the world come to Norway to seek work, get education, or to reunite with their families (SSB, 2023c). Consequently, 3,9% of the population are children of immigrant parents, born in Norway (SSB, 2023b). SSB also remark that children who constitute a third generation of immigrants are also found in playgrounds and primary schools (SSB, 2023f). These numbers are increasing, and it is thus increasingly important for

teachers to gain knowledge of how to address immigration and identity in the classroom. Pupils with immigrant backgrounds risk facing discrimination regardless of why they and their families live in Norway. A 2020 report show increasingly more positive attitudes towards immigrants (SSB, 2023a). Still, a report published the same year show that three out of ten immigrants have experienced discrimination, and more than four out of ten Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. These experiences are associated with increased loneliness, problems of mental health and a weaker sense of belonging to Norway (SSB, 2023d). Other research has revealed that people with names who are perceived as foreign are less likely to get job interviews (Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021). These statistics gives reason to bring up the topic of immigration in the classroom in a way that fosters understanding of how immigrants, with and without refugee experiences, are resources to our society. The inspiration for this project spurs from a wish to address immigration in the classroom in a way that encourages understanding and inclusion of pupils with immigrant backgrounds. In Norway, newcomer immigrants with a different mother tongue than Norwegian go to “Innføringsklasse”, which is an introductory offer as a transition to regular schooling. The National Center for Multicultural Education, Nasjonalt senter for flerkulturell opplæring (NAFO), points out that these introductory offers can be short in duration, and that this can be a source of insecurity for the pupil. NAFO also points to integration and inclusion being a joint project at the school (NAFO, 2023). Thus, I view it as beneficial to explore whether immigration-themed picturebooks could serve a purpose for pupils and teachers to co-create inclusion in the regular classes through practicing perspective-taking. When pupils from introductory classes enter ordinary classes, they have the right to differentiated instruction whilst being with their peers. Differentiated instruction applies to all pupils and shall mostly take place through variation and adaptation to the diversity in the pupil group within the learning community (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). The format of the picturebook allows for the content to be adapted to the diversity in the classroom regardless of reading level or language abilities. Additionally, picturebooks can address any or all age groups, as they have crossover potential (Beckett, 2018). My hope is that this thesis also contributes to highlighting the opportunities that lie within using immigration-themed picturebooks in classes with mixed age groups, such as introductory classes.

1.1 Identity and perspective-taking in the core curriculum

In Norway, teachers are obligated to enact on the Education Act and the current national curriculum, Kunnskapsløftet (LK20). These are political, and not research based, documents that aim to concretize the educational needs of the Norwegian society. The Education Act states that the training should provide insight in cultural diversity (Opplæringsloven, 1997, §1-1). The core curriculum of LK20 elaborates the values of the Education Act's purpose clause, as well as providing overall principles for basic education in Norway. Perspective-taking in immigration-themed picturebooks could be a way to act on values from the core curriculum in the English subject. The core curriculum states that when developing an inclusive and inspiring learning environment, diversity must be acknowledged as a resource. It also states that pupils should experience that being proficient in more than one language is a resource both in school and society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). Immigration-themed picturebooks where characters are portrayed as a resource to their school could exemplify to pupils why diversity is valuable. Furthermore, the school shall help pupils preserve and develop their identities (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). This includes the identities of pupils with immigrant backgrounds, and their identities should be reflected in the teaching. Immigration-themed picturebooks could reflect parts of their identities. Lastly, pupils should be able to understand that their own experiences, positions, and beliefs may be incomplete or wrong (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). Perspective-taking in immigration-themed picturebooks could be a way for all pupils to understand that others' perspectives can be valuable contributions to their knowledge.

1.2 Picturebooks in the English subject curriculum

Immigration-themed picturebooks could present opportunities for pupils to have their identities reflected in contexts where multiple cultures and languages are represented. LK20 states that the students must be given a basis for seeing their own identity and that of others in a multilingual and multicultural context through meeting English texts (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). The curriculum for English has a wide text definition, stating that texts can be multimodal and contain for instance written text, pictures, and graphics (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Picturebooks are specifically mentioned in the competence aims for English after 2nd grade, where pupils are to listen to, read and discuss content in simple texts, including picturebooks (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). I must make the remark that not all picturebooks are simple texts, as they can present rich

opportunities for interpretation. I elaborate on this in chapter 2.5 (p.24). The competence aims for after 2nd grade also state that pupils should acquire vocabulary and cultural knowledge through English-language children's literature and children's culture. This is repeated in the aim for after 4th grade. Furthermore, after 4th grade, pupils should read and talk about content of various types of texts, including picturebooks (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Picturebooks are not mentioned explicitly in the competence aims for after 7th grade. This may be because they, as previously pointed out, are perceived as "simple texts". Still, these competence aims state that pupils are to listen to, discuss and write about English child- and youth literature (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Following the wide text definition in the English subject, child- and youth literature may include picturebooks. After 7th grade, the competence aim for exploring culture expands from learning about culture to reflecting on cultural belonging (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Because immigrants have a unique familiarity with developing a sense of belonging in a new place where the dominant culture could differ from their previous homes, immigration-themed picturebooks could be beneficial to use when working with this aim.

1.3 The aims of the study

Pupils learn in numerous ways, and thus exploring numerous paths to intercultural competence may be beneficial to explore. Although LK20 encourages exploring culture, communication, and identity and opens for the use of picturebooks as teaching materials in the English subject, they are not specific on which texts to use and which cultures and identities to represent. The content of the picturebooks should be evaluated prior to use in the classroom to assess whether they have the potential to contribute to fostering intercultural competencies. This project was aimed towards a primary school level, which is grade 1-7 in the Norwegian context. The project focused on one aspect of intercultural competence, namely perspective-taking. I analyzed three immigration themed picture books to assess whether, or how, these picturebooks can invite perspective-taking. The basic framework for my analysis was Nikolajeva & Scott (2006) picturebook theory and Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communication, supplemented by theories presented in theoretical considerations, chapter 2 (p.14).

1.4 Research questions

The following research question guided my research:

How can narrative perspectives of newcomer immigrants in picturebooks potentially invite perspective taking in the English subject?

To help answer the main question, I formulated some additional research questions:

- How are narrative perspectives portrayed in the picturebooks?
- How can setting and plot invite perspective-taking?
- How can characterization invite perspective-taking?
- How is identity portrayed in the picturebooks?
- How can the depictions of identity invite perspective-taking?

1.5 Terms and terminology

This section presents central terms applied and my reasons for using these terms.

1.5.1 Identity

Although LK20 frequently mentions identity, it does not provide a clear definition of what identity is. Identity can be understood as who we are, or more specifically, our own perception of who we are. Because this can fluctuate throughout a person's life, I consider identity to be fluid rather than static. The Council of Europe (COE) defines the term identity as "a person's sense of who they are and the self-descriptions to which they attribute significance and value" (COE, 2018, p.29). I use this definition because it gives the individual power to define their own identity.

1.5.2 Othering

I use the term *Othering* when discussing identity and representation in my analysis. In this thesis, Othering refers to what Dervin (2016) describes as "turning the other into another, thus creating a boundary between different and same, insiders and outsiders" (Dervin, 2016, p.45). I use this term to bring attention to the fact that how we perceive others, and are perceived by others, contributes to how we perceive ourselves. The origin of term and its relevance to this thesis is further explained in chapter 2.4 (p.20).

1.5.3 Culture and intercultural competence

I discussed *culture* in relation to identity and representation in my thesis. Thus, I needed a

culture term. Following Spernes (2020), culture can be understood as both external and internal characteristics. External values can be for instance dress codes, whereas internal values can refer to attitudes and values. Through various forms of communication, these create our understanding of the world. Additionally, they both create community and distance between people. Lastly, she points to how culture is not a static state because it is in continuous change when individuals socialize in their homes and in society (Spernes, 2020, p.99). I chose to use Spernes (2020) definition because it captures the diverse characteristics, qualities and functions culture has, and conveys how culture shapes us and is shaped through us. Dypedahl (2019) defines *intercultural competence* as “the ability to relate constructively to people who have mindsets and/or communication styles that are different from one’s own” (Dypedahl 2019, p.102). I chose this definition because it entails a relational aspect whilst focusing on constructive communication. I view constructive communication as communication with a goal of building understanding rather than having to reach an agreement. Like Dervin (2016) and Byram (1997), I view intercultural competence as skills that are developed over time rather than acquired.

1.5.4 Perspective-taking

I used Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural communication (ICC) as a theoretical framework for perspective-taking. The model highlights the interrelationship of language and culture. My analysis is focused on one of Byram’s five *savoirs*, namely *savoir être*. I present and discuss Byram’s ICC model in my theoretical considerations, chapter 2.2 (p.16).

1.5.5 Home culture

Teachers must consider that a pupil’s cultural identity is multifaceted. Pupils can participate in multiple cultures during and after school hours. However, a pupil can also identify with multiple cultures without participating in all in daily life. I have chosen to use the term *home culture* to help bring this forward in my analysis and discussion. By home culture I refer to any culture(s) pupils take part in or identify with outside of school. This is not done to create a distinction between a pupil’s home culture and other culture(s). I have, however, chosen this term to be able to refer to cultures in pupils’ lives that the school is not a part of and/or does not necessarily know of. I use the term home culture as an alternative to the much-discussed term *multicultural*. To be considered multicultural, there must be someone not considered multicultural. Using the term multicultural about pupils with an immigrant background then suggest that they are “more” cultural or “less” Norwegian than others.

Thus, I refrain from using this term.

1.5.6 Pupils with an immigrant background

Pupils who have personal familiarity with immigration could see their experiences reflected in the picturebooks chosen for this thesis. Like the characters in the picturebooks, they could have experienced a contrast between their home cultures and the cultures represented in their schools. To refer to pupils who have personal familiarity with immigration, I chose the term *pupils with an immigrant background*. Pupils with immigrant backgrounds and/or their families come to Norway for varied reasons. In this respect, I wish to clarify the difference between the term *immigrant* and the term *refugee*. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (The UN Refugee Agency, 2023). SSB define immigrants as “persons who have immigrated to Norway themselves, and who were born abroad to foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents” (SSB, 2023f). They do not include children who are born in Norway in this definition. People who come to Norway as refugees are included in statistics about immigrant (SSB, 2023c). In this thesis, pupils with an immigrant background refers to pupils who either are immigrants themselves, or who have parents or primary carers that are immigrants. The term can refer to pupils Norwegian-born pupils, or pupils born in a country outside of Norway. Regardless, the term requires the pupil to have one or two parents or primary carers born in a different country. I wish to point out that while the term merges pupils who are immigrants themselves with pupils of immigrant parents or primary carers that are immigrants, this is not done to generalize. The term was made in efforts to highlight these pupils’ unique familiarity with the complexity of cultural identities.

1.5.7 Picturebook terminology

The term *picturebook* refers to books where visual images and verbal text work together to convey meaning. In academic discourse, it is common to make a clear distinction between illustrated books and picturebooks. In illustrated books, the text is more dominant than the illustrations. In picturebooks, there is usually a balance between text and visuals (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2018, p.3). Different spellings of the term picturebook can be found within the field of picturebook research. English dictionaries clearly state that the notion should be written with two words as “picture book”. However, scholars working in the realm

of picturebook research suggest writing the term as one word to emphasize the inseparable unit of pictures and text (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2018, p.3). To highlight the unique interplay between verbal text and visual images in picturebooks, I write the term in one word. To avoid confusion with the English subject's wide text definition (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019), words and sentences in the picturebooks as referred to as *verbal text*. The term *visual image* covers all types of illustrations to avoid confusion between a concrete picture or image, and metaphorical imagery in the picturebooks. Lastly, *spread* refers to where a picturebook opens to a double page.

2.0 Theoretical considerations

This section presents theories I draw on in my analysis. First, I present a historical background and central theories about intercultural competence. I move on to discuss Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, perspective-taking and identity. I then shed light on the concept of Othering in relation to representation of identities in schools. Lastly, I present picturebook theory together with previous research on the use of picturebooks in education.

2.1 Intercultural competence in Education

In 2018, The Council of Europe (CEO) published the Reference Framework of Competencies for Democratic Culture, calling for an intercultural dialogue through education. The competencies in the framework are values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. These include responsibility, tolerance, conflict resolution, listening skills, linguistic and communication skills, critical thinking, empathy and openness, and autonomous learning skills (Council of Europe, 2018). The document is described by the COE as targeting teachers and students in the development of competences for democratic culture at grassroots level, while at the same time being a policy tool that ministries of education and relevant national authorities can use when making changes to their education systems (Council of Europe, 2023). Several of the competencies listed in the framework can be recognized in the core curriculum of LK20, as well as in the curriculum for English.

Despite increased emphasis on *culture* and *intercultural competence* over the years, neither of these terms are defined in LK20 or in the Norwegian Education Act. This may be due to culture being a phenomenon that is challenging to delineate. Distinguishing cultures from

one another would mean not considering how people are influenced by society and influence society. Additionally, it does not reflect how dualities like us/them have become more complex due to economic globalization, large-scale migrations and digital communication (Kramsch & Uryu, 2012, p.213). Dervin states that trying to define a culture or its borders often leads to closing and segregating it from a world that has interacted with and influenced it (Dervin, 2016, p.9). He points out that to describe our own culture we need to compare it to other cultures, which can lead to dichotomies like “good” and “bad” cultures, people of cultures being “civilized” and “uncivilized”, or the “same” and the “other”. This, in turn, may lead to ethnocentrism which is believing that some cultures are better than others (Dervin, 2016). Additionally, a person's understanding of culture is not necessarily the same as their interlocutors. Because of this, Dervin refuses to use the term culture, deeming it as an empty concept that can “rid the ‘other’ of his/her plurality” (Dervin, 2016, p. 13). Finding more precise descriptions when discussing cultural matters could help avoid generalization of people. Eriksen (2001) suggests that instead of evoking culture, if one talks about local arts, one could simply say “local arts”; if one means language, ideology, patriarchy, children’s rights, food habits, ritual practices or local political structures, one could use those or equivalent terms (Eriksen 2001, p.141). In my analysis and discussion, I used the culture term to be able to refer to aspects of Byram’s (1997) ICC model. Still, I aimed for a nuanced discussion of the cultures represented in the picturebooks in efforts to avoid generalization.

Like culture, intercultural and intercultural competence can prove challenging to define. Hoff (2019, p.444) argues that intercultural competence cannot be tied down to one, authoritative definition. To understand what interculturality entails, it can be useful to first look at the concrete meaning of "inter". “Inter” refers to something that lies “between, among or in the midst” (Merriam-Webbster, 2022). Intercultural, or interculturality, thus refers to something between, or among cultures. This is, however, a vague description. To know what is between cultures one must delineate them. The fluidity of culture makes this a challenging task. Furthermore, competence can also prove challenging to define. LK20 defines competence as “the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to master challenges and solve tasks in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations”, and state that competence includes understanding and the ability to reflect and think critically

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). According to this definition, competence is something you acquire. However, it is not specific on the level of knowledge and skills a person needs to have to be considered competent. Thus, the value of the process during development of competence is not brought forward. In the context of developing intercultural competence, arriving at a goal of being fully competent is not possible as it is a lifelong process.

Intercultural competence skills are developed rather than acquired (Bøhn & Dypedahl 2020, p.86). I shed light on these processes in the following section.

2.2 Byram's ICC model

Because intercultural competence has been, and is, frequently discussed, multiple models have been created to explain the processes involved during the development of intercultural competence skills. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is one of the most influential models of intercultural competence within the field of foreign language (FL) didactics (Hoff, 2014, p.501). Byram's ICC model describes how successful intercultural communication can be achieved through an understanding of how cultural contexts affect our written and oral communication. He uses the term *intercultural speaker* to refer to interlocutors involved in intercultural communication and interaction (Byram, 1997, p.32). The ICC model denotes the qualities of a quintessential intercultural speaker, a person who is genuinely concerned with "establishing and maintaining relationships" across cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997, p.3). Furthermore, the ICC model denotes five interrelated aspects of learning that contribute to fostering such competence.

Byram's ICC model consists of five interrelated *savoirs*, which translates to five knowledges. The five knowledges are *savoir*, *savoir être*, *savoir comprendre*, *savoir apprendre/faire* and *savoir s'engager*. *Savoir* is defined as the knowledge of self and other, and of interaction between individuals and society. *Savoir être* deals with attitudes and refers to the skill of relativizing self and valuing the other. *Savoir comprendre* refers to the skills of interpreting and relating. *Savoir apprendre/savoir faire* involves knowledge of discovering and/or interacting. Finally, *savoir s'engager* refers to critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997, p.34). *Savoir* requires the intercultural speaker to gain knowledge about various cultures on an individual and societal level. *Savoir être* requires her to be open and curious towards cultural and linguistic otherness. *Savoir comprendre* requires her to have the skill of interpreting

different perspectives in their cultural contexts. *Savoir apprendre/faire* requires her to develop efficient strategies for use in intercultural communication processes. Lastly, *Savoir s'engager* requires the intercultural speaker to be able to detect ideological and stereotypical ways of thinking (Byram, 1997).

Hoff (2014) stresses that it is important to study models of intercultural competence because such models constitute the foundation for how intercultural competence is understood as an educational goal (Hoff, 2014, p. 501). She is critical to the role of the intercultural speaker as being a mediator between incompatible interpretations and world views to create shared understandings (Hoff, 2014, p.512) She writes that Byram's definition implies that the parameters for dialogue are set solely by The Other, and that this creates an imbalance in power between Self and Other (Hoff, 2014, p.512). Hoff refers to Gadamer (1996) when she points out that intercultural communication should be to overcome our own particularity but also the one of the other, and that this distinction is lacking in Byram's ICC model (Hoff, 2014, p.512). My interpretation of Hoff's critique of Byram's ICC model is that it fails to acknowledge and appreciate the discomfort that may arise in intercultural communication, despite disagreements having the potential to become fruitful learning opportunities. Dervin (2016) proposes a different model for acquiring Intercultural Competence than Byram. He suggests that a realistic approach to IC entails, among other things, getting used to discomfort or entering risky territories, and to contradictions (Dervin, 2016, p.82-85). Despite their different approaches, Dervin and Byram agree that Intercultural Competence is a dynamic, lifelong learning process.

Although the ICC model has been criticized for not being able to capture the complexity of identity and culture, I view it as a useful starting point for my analysis. My analysis is focused on the ICC skill *savoir être*, also known as *the ability to decenter, or decentering*. A central aspect within *savoir être* is broadening one's perspective. Byram (1997) wrote that it is probably easier to relativize one's own meanings, beliefs and behaviors through comparison with others' than to attempt to decenter and distance oneself from what the processes of socialization have suggested is natural and unchangeable (Byram, 1997, p.35). In other words, getting one's perspective contrasted could help pupils realize that their view of the world is culturally dependent. This could potentially make it easier for them to accept that multiple viewpoints can coexist, and that all viewpoints contribute to completing their

knowledge of the world. Byram later wrote that a person with some degree of intercultural competence has critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures - someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural (Byram, 2000, p.10). Immigration-themed picturebooks that invite perspective-taking could potentially heighten pupils' consciousness of their own perspective, how it is culturally determined, and how this influences their understanding of others.

I have chosen to use Byram's model of ICC in my analysis to identify and refer to places where opportunities for perspective-taking present themselves in the picturebooks. When I look for opportunities for perspective-taking in the picturebooks, I look for where pupils can get the opportunity to relativize their meanings, beliefs and behaviors through comparisons with the characters in the picturebooks. Still, merely identifying opportunities for perspective-taking was not sufficient to enable an in-depth discussion of what these opportunities can lead to. I found Hoff (2014) and Dervin (2016) to be valuable to address the discomfort that can arise when our beliefs are contrasted. This also enabled a more nuanced discussion of whether the opportunities for perspective-taking in the picturebooks encouraged readers to explore what they could learn from such discomfort rather than them settling with the awareness that people have different viewpoints.

2.3 Identity

Byram (1997) argues that we should become aware and proud of who we are. Dervin, however, claims that this is an illusion, as who we are is "unstable, contextual and must be negotiated with others" (Dervin, 2016, p.15). He points to how people can acquire another national identity, adopt new names, or change their appearances. The possibility of making changes such as these makes a person's identity unstable according to Dervin. He also claimed that education often contributes to making us believe that our identities are stable and constant (Dervin, 2016, p.14). Compare-and-contrast competence aims that require a static view of identity or culture can exemplify his claim. Such aims would not serve the full purpose of learning about identity, as people can step into different identities that are relevant depending on the context and their interlocutors. A person with traits that are considered undesirable or viewed negatively by others may choose not to reveal these.

Additionally, a person's mood and readiness to speak can affect which parts of their identity they show their interlocutor.

Geography and place are important concepts to the notion of identity formation. People can both identify with, and be associated with, certain nationalities and areas. Pupils with immigrant backgrounds could experience identifying with multiple geographical places. In contexts of migration, ideas of national identity and home are created, imagined, and passed on from parents to children (Benjamin & Dervin 2015, p.7). Put differently, a pupil may identify with their parents' background even though they have never lived in the country they immigrated from. Consequently, pupils with immigrant backgrounds may view themselves as having multiple nationalities and homes despite being Norwegian-born and/or having a Norwegian passport. Burney writes that location, or where you are and where you come from, matters because positionality and place is linked to status (Burney, 2012, p.44). Positionality refers to how differences in social position and power shape identities and people's access in society. When I search for opportunities for perspective-taking in the picturebooks, it is with the hope that these could be opportunities for pupils to better understand that ideas of some people having a higher status than others are social constructs rather than truth.

How other people view us can influence how we view our own identities. If pupils experience being viewed as different by others, they could eventually define themselves as different. Dervin brings attention to self-othering, which can be a way for people to defend themselves by describing themselves as different from others (Dervin, 2016, p.46). Natural acquisition and formal teaching create, strengthen or weaken the links between languages and identities (Byram, 2006, p.5). Teachers should work against stereotypical associations of the language(s) pupils with immigrant backgrounds speak, so that the link between language and identity can be strengthened. Immigration-themed picturebooks could be a way to do so. Furthermore, people who appear to be different from the 'majority' (different skin color, foreign accent), getting asked where you are from can be very political and answering them can thus be difficult, annoying, or embarrassing for the person being asked because some people always have to explain their identities while others don't. Dervin points this out and adds that although we might feel that it is good to put other people's origins on the table to flatter or empower them, our assumptions about the other can be hurtful (Dervin,

2016, p.16). Moreover, asking these questions can create an imbalance between “insiders” and “outsiders”. For instance, if a Norwegian born pupil with polish parents is asked to share where he/she is from, sharing their background puts them at risk of being perceived as “less Norwegian” than others. This can be viewed as Othering, a term Dervin (2016) describes as “turning the other into an other, thus creating a boundary between different and same, insiders and outsiders” (Dervin, 2016, p.45). Dervin describes how Othering “allows people to (re)invent and make sense of the self through imagining the other” (Dervin, 2016, p.48). The origin of this term is further explained in the following section.

2.4 Othering

Conscious choices in representation of immigrants are necessary to avoid stereotyping or viewing immigrants as “the Other”. In the context of culture studies, the concept of the Other is often associated with Said’s book “Orientalism” (1978). In his groundbreaking work, Said problematizes how Western Orientalists have presented the Orient. Perceptions of people and cultures in Asian and middle eastern countries were generalized, forming an ideological concept of the Orient as being fundamentally different from the West. The West was referred to as the Occident. According to Said, “the Orient”, as depicted and mediated by the West, can be seen as an imaginary construct created by “expert” Western Orientalists through their repetitions and stereotypical images (Burney, 2012, p.4). The term *Orientalism* is used to describe the presentation of the Orient as a contrast to an ideal West. Through representation in various texts and art forms, the West presented the Orient as “less than” their ideal. Constructing a notion of “us” and “them”, the Orient was perceived as the opposite to the West. Consequently, the Orient was placed in the role of the Other by the West. This resulted in stereotypical representations of the Orient, and the cultures, languages and people associated with the ideology.

In the perspective of Said, stereotypical views of the Other originate from representations that depend on acceptance and continuation to have effect. Said points to the responsibility the West has had in the making and upkeep of the Orient as the Other: “...that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various techniques of representation that make the Orient visible” (Said, 1978, p.21-22). Said pointed out that commonly accepted representations rely upon institutions,

traditions, conventions, and agreed-upon codes of understanding for their effect. Viewing his statement in a school context, the school as an institution has the power to name and the privilege to represent the Other. This power opens for teachers to either reinforce or deconstruct stereotypes in their classrooms. Not accepting or continuing stereotypical representations may lead to such stereotypes losing their effect. Shedding light on the power dynamics between the Occident and the Orient opened for new debates about representation in literature. Through his work, Said made visible that no text is neutral because no author can be neutral. He highlighted how political, institutional, and ideological constraints can influence an author and in turn the text. Additionally, Said illuminated the importance of awareness of who has the power to name and the privilege to represent (Burney, 2012, p.31-32).

Said stated the importance of viewing different representations of culture(s) as just that – representations: “I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within culture that what is commonly circulated is not ‘truth’ but representations...” (Said, 1978, p.21-22). When I explore representations of identity and immigration in my selected picturebooks, I view it as an opportunity to explore what is being conveyed as ‘truth’ about immigrants and their identities. Viewing these representations can provide information on whether the picturebooks present, create, confirm, or prevent Otherness. The process of deconstructing how the Other is stereotyped can be referred to as investigating the means of “Othering”, a term coined by Gayatri Spivak (Burney, 2012, p.42). My analysis enabled me to assess whether, or where, Othering occurs in the picturebooks. Said’s work has given credence to critical, political, and subversive readings of individual literary texts. It has also made cultural and critical theory a key aspect of criticism in literary studies (Burney, 2012, p.5-6). Today, representation of culture is a much-discussed topic in literary studies, including the field of Picturebooks. When I explore representation of immigration and identity in picturebooks, it is in the spirit of Said. Thus, it is with awareness of the potential consequence a lack of authentic and diverse representation of culture(s) may lead to. Said also demonstrated the importance of reading about culture(s) from multiple perspectives, valuing the perspective of the Other. As I explore the potential for perspective taking in my selected picture books, it is with hope that these picture books can be used to bring more perspectives to the classroom.

2.4.1 Classrooms are not neutral spaces

Freire (1974) pointed out that classrooms are not neutral spaces (Freire, 1974, p.52). Freire was an influential educator whose activist work challenged the face of education globally by declaring that education is a political act (Burney, 2012, p.7). Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) attempted to raise the consciousness of individuals so that they could understand the means of their own oppression (Burney, 2012, p.8). In his work, Freire advocates for a pedagogy that uplifts students into a "liberation education" (Freire, 1970, p. 118). Embracing Freire's notion that classrooms are not neutral spaces, and Said's notion that authors and texts are not neutral, selecting texts for use in the classroom becomes a complex matter. Like authors, texts, and classrooms, teachers are influenced by their context (Sincer et.al, 2019). Thus, it would be impossible for a teacher to be purely neutral in their pedagogical choices. Passive choices are not an option, as even a passive continuation of frequently used texts would be an active choice. Through relating to the realities of life that are familiar to students and give them voice, teachers can contribute to raising their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970, p.80-85). Furthermore, Skyggebjerg (2021) notes how picturebooks about the journeys of refugees can give voice to and testify on behalf of, actual refugee children. These children are often unable to tell their stories themselves since they are either too small, displaced in language, traumatized or dead (Skyggebjerg, 2021, p.315-316). When I explore perspective-taking in selected immigration-themed picturebooks, it is to give voice to pupils with immigrant backgrounds, including those who have endured challenging journeys.

Burney (2012) writes that using and referring to other knowledge, perspectives, facts, and ideas, one can complete knowledge and literally bring the world into the classroom (Burney, 2012, p.18). This implies that one's knowledge is incomplete without multiple perspectives. Providing pupils with multiple perspectives creates opportunities for pupils to get a more holistic view of the world and the people in it. The philosopher Arendt once wrote that the world is made visible to us only through multiple perspectives. She described how the world can be viewed differently depending on our perspective: "if we want to see and experience the world as it 'really' is, we can do so only by understanding it as something that is shared by many people, lies between them, separates and links them, showing itself differently to each" (Arendt, 2005, p.128). One could go as far as to say that if pupils are only shown one

perspective, their image of the world would be incomplete. Multiple diverse representations of immigrants, their culture(s) and their identities could help teachers and pupils to complete their knowledge of immigrants as a diverse group with diverse experiences. Immigration-themed picturebooks can be a way to make immigrant perspectives available for the pupils.

2.4.2 Deconstructing stereotypes in the classroom

In her famous TED talk *The danger of a single story*, Adichie (2009) problematizes viewing culture(s) from a single perspective. Adichie points out how doing so can create one-sided narratives that she refers to as “The single story”. She explains how the single story can create stereotypes, and that the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but incomplete. Stereotypes make one story become the only story (Adichie, 2009). Providing a generalized or one-sided narrative of Immigrants is to contribute to a single story about Immigrants, and to the continuation of stereotypes. Adichie states that it is impossible to talk about the single story without addressing the power aspect: “how they are told, who tells them, when they are told and how many stories are told are really dependent on power” (Adichie, 2009). Teachers have the power to ensure that there are diverse and nuanced representations of cultures and identities in the classroom, including those of pupils with immigrant backgrounds. It is important to demonstrate to pupils that both uniting views and opposite views can be found in both similar and different groups of people (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2020, p.83). Thus, when teaching intercultural competence, it is important to present a theme from different perspectives to avoid stereotyping (Bøhn & Dypedahl 2020, p.87). Still, diverse perspectives alone are not sufficient to avoid stereotyping in the future. Hoff (2020) writes that examination of culture and exploration of cultural issues must be done to challenge rather than merely confirm existing views (Hoff 2020, p.81). In the joint effort to deconstruct stereotypes in the classroom, teachers and pupils must gain knowledge of how stereotypes are constructed. When searched for opportunities for perspective-taking in the picturebook selected for this thesis, it was in the hope that they both presented and challenged stereotypical views of immigrants. This wish is in line with Hoff, who writes that cultural biases and preconceived opinions must be brought out in the open so that they can be examined and challenged (Hoff, 2014, p.512).

2.4.4 The relationship between Self and Other in communication

Byram (1997) stresses the danger of viewing culture as static: “We have to be aware of the dangers of presenting ‘a culture’ as if it were unchanging over time or as if there were only one set of beliefs, meanings and behaviors in any given country. When individuals interact, they bring to the situation their own identities and cultures and if they are not members of a dominant group, subscribing to the dominant culture, their interlocutor’s knowledge of that culture will be dysfunctional” (Byram, 1997, p.39). Put differently, if we assume someone’s identity or culture it can lead to misinterpretation in communication. Hoff (2014) addresses the complex encounter between Self and Other in intercultural communication. She problematizes having to put aside one’s own values to avoid conflict in communication, like Byram’s (1997) ICC model proposes. Hoff points out that conflicting views occur naturally in dialogue, and that this should be acknowledged:

“Entering dialogue with the Other may at times be a challenging, even uncomfortable, experience. Without a conscious acknowledgement of this fact, learners may be allowed to keep the Other safely at arm’s length instead of dealing with aspects which may be difficult to comprehend or appreciate”

(Hoff, 2014, p.515).

Following Hoff, entering dialogue with the Other does not ensure a shared understanding, nor does it need to. In Hoff’s perspective, entering dialogue with the Other can be a valuable learning experience for pupils. It is also a needed learning experience, as conflicting views occur in real-life dialogue. When I explored opportunities for perspective-taking in immigration themed picturebooks, it was with hope that these picturebooks could serve to enter dialogue with the Other and learn from their perspectives.

2.5 Picturebooks

2.5.1 Relating to the Other through Picturebooks

Literature can introduce learners to other worlds and the experience of otherness (Byram, 1997, p.3). Immigration-themed picturebooks could also present readers with opportunities to relate to the Other. Fenner (2001) argues that FL literature represents “the personal voice of a culture” as the text carries the culture of a specific language community and can give

readers valuable insight into the foreign culture, and into the language and form used to express that culture (Fenner, 2001, p.16). In the context of my project, immigration-themed picturebooks could present elements of the character's languages and home cultures whilst simultaneously opening for readers to relate to the main characters as individuals. Fenner (2001) points to how in literature, the general can be represented through the particular. It is easier for young learners to relate to and identify with particular individuals and situations than with the general (Fenner, 2001, p.19). Thus, using immigration-themed picturebooks that present individual experiences could be beneficial to teach matters of identity and immigration in primary school. Fenner also argues that FL learners must learn to communicate, and that merely performing constructed dialogues does not serve this purpose. To solve differences, the participants must become aware of them, whether between individuals, cultures or between reader and text (Fenner, 2001, p. 23). Immigration-themed picturebooks could potentially contribute to develop readers' intercultural competence through presenting them with opportunities to relate to individuals and explore how their cultures, languages and perspectives influence communication.

Picturebooks can be opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own identity, and the identities of others, within the safety of fiction. Hoff (2013) examined the role that fictional text may take when developing intercultural competence in the English classroom. She described the process of developing intercultural competence as central to learning about and through English language and culture, and that it could also have profound impact on learners' own perception of themselves and how they view the world around them. Consequently, it could play a significant role in expanding their intercultural perspectives and fostering their sense of identity (Hoff, 2013, p.28). Hoff argues that fiction, rather than factual text, may be particularly suited to cultivate the process of personal growth learners may experience as a result of their interaction with an FL text (Hoff, 2013, p.28). Following this notion, fictional immigration-themed picturebooks may be better suited to motivate pupils' involvement and independent reflection than factual texts about immigrants. Immigration-themed picturebooks could present opportunities for pupils to actively part-take in and reflect on the experiences and perspectives of pupils with immigrant backgrounds.

Gaining a holistic view of people's identities and culture(s) through relating to characters in picturebooks could help pupils interpret communication. Hoff (2019) notes how people can have different identities that come into play at different times, and that this adds to the complexity of communication. She writes that with this in mind, the primary goal of intercultural competence as an educational goal may not be to help learners adapt certain behaviors and attitudes to establish effective communication, but to lay the ground for learning processes that allow them to go below the surface of discourse and appearances and to explore questions to which there are no clear-cut answers (Hoff, 2019, p.444). The word discourse can have multiple meanings and is sometimes used about a debate or discussion. In this context, going below discourse means looking beyond what is being uttered in speech or writing and reflecting upon why it is being uttered. Following Hoff (2016), interculturality requires the ability to look beyond actions and words and reflect upon the effects of subject positions and to analyze cultural assumptions from different vantage points to bring about new understandings (Hoff, 2016, p.52). Revisiting passages gives readers the opportunity to take different vantage positions. Literary language, more than everyday language, provides the 'space' where the learners can experience the multiplicity of meaning (Fenner, 2001, p.16). Real-life communication often requires a more immediate form of response than processes of text interpretation. Text interpretation gives readers the opportunity to stop and reflect on the content, to re-read passages and to adjust their responses accordingly. Reading and reflecting upon the culture and communication in immigration-themed picturebooks could give pupils the time needed to discover how different worldviews can affect communication.

Two conflicting perspectives have influenced historical and contemporary conceptions of childhood. The first perspective concerns the notion that adults are responsible to protect the innocence of children. This perspective views children as sensitive and impressionable and must be protected from potentially harmful events (Bintz & Ciecierski-Madara, 2022, p.25). In the context of my project, a complex topic such as immigration may be perceived by some as something children should be protected from. However, today this is a near impossible task. The second perspective is based on adults being responsible to recognize, broaden and deepen children's competence (Bintz & Ciecierski-Madara, 2022, p.25). Teachers are responsible for recognizing and broadening their pupils' competence.

Immigration-themed picturebooks could be a way for teachers to challenge their pupils through impactful reading experiences. Skyggebjerg (2021) notes how picturebooks about war and flight risk being deemed either unrealistic or too dark for their intended child readers (Skyggebjerg, 2021, p.323-324). This does not mean that the topic of immigration, including refugee experiences, should be avoided. Children, like adults, need reading experiences that allow them to explore dark, disturbing and painful subjects because such subjects can touch them personally and constitute part of their life experience (Beckett, 2018, p.215). Although immigration is not exclusively dark and disturbing, it can be associated with painful experiences. Thus, it could be deemed a sensitive topic. Consequently, uncertainty in how to discuss immigration in the classroom may arise. Still, teachers can be seen to have a moral responsibility to address the topic.

2.5.2 The crossover potential of picturebooks

Crossover picturebooks encourage a focus on children as competent beings with agency rather than someone in need of shielding from complex topics. Picturebooks have traditionally been considered a genre for children. Today, picturebooks are increasingly seen as a narrative form that can address any or all age groups (Beckett, 2018, p.210). Beckett (2018) points to the unique qualities of the picturebook genre:

“More than any other literary genre, picturebooks can genuinely be books for all ages. The unique interplay of text and image in the picturebook makes it one of the most exciting and innovative contemporary literary genres. Creative graphics and complex dialogue between the verbal and visual text generate multiple levels of meaning that invite readings on different levels”

(Beckett, 2018, p.209)

Providing multiple levels of meaning, the picturebook opens for multiple interpretations. Teachers can utilize this in their teaching. Picturebooks offer children and adults a unique opportunity for collaborative reading, empowering the two audiences more equally than any other narrative form. Furthermore, Picturebooks have crossover potential, meaning a picturebook can appeal to different age groups (Beckett, 2012, p.2). In children’s literature scholarship, ‘crossover’ refers to literature transcending traditional boundaries between

child and adult readers (Beckett, 2018, p.209). Cross-over authors address both child and adult audiences in the same work. Still, it is not sufficient to see crossover books in terms of dual address or dual audience. Cross-over authors address a diverse, cross-generational audience that can include readers of all ages: children, adolescents, and adults (Beckett, 2018, p.209). Crossover picturebooks allow children and adults to share a common reading experience whilst adding their own perspectives and interpretations. Promoting decoding skills and encouraging critical thinking, crossover picturebook can challenge both children and adults (Beckett, 2018, p.210). This enables teachers and pupils to share a common reading experience whilst being challenged to both offer and take perspectives.

The crossover potential of the picturebook can be seen as particularly useful in a school context, where there can be great variation in reading levels within the same age group. The visual support of the images in picturebooks enable most pupils to grasp meaning independent of language abilities. Picturebooks support vocabulary growth and development because they offer visual clues to unfamiliar terms and vocabulary. Moreover, picturebooks contain single-page and/or double-page illustrations, reducing the language load for readers. (Bintz & Ciecierski-Madara, 2022, p.24). Also, Crossover picturebooks invite different forms of reading depending on the age and experience of the reader (Beckett, 2018, p.210). This makes the picturebooks suitable for classes with mixed age groups, like the introductory classes for newcomer immigrants.

2.6 Picturebook theory

To understand how a picturebook communicates its content to the reader, we must look at the function of the verbal text and the visual images and how they work together to convey meaning. In picturebooks, the function of pictures, iconic signs, is to describe or represent. The function of words, conventional signs, is primarily to narrate (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.1). Verbal text and visual images are equally important in communicating and contributing to the reader's perception of the narrative. Picturebooks can convey clear, ambiguous, or contradictory messages. Teachers should be aware of this when selecting picturebooks for their pupils. Words and images can fill each other's gaps, wholly or partially. But they can also leave gaps for the reader/viewer to fill. Words and images can be evocative in their own ways and independent of each other (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.2). An analysis of *iconotext*

can reveal whether the pictures and verbal text work together or contradict each other in a picturebook. The term iconotext was first coined by Kristin Hallberg in 1982 (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.6). Analyzing iconotext in immigration-themed picturebooks could reveal whether visual images and verbal text work together or contradict each other when conveying messages about immigrants.

Looking for signs of *intertextuality* in the picturebooks could lead to discoveries of implicit information or messages conveyed by verbal text or visual images. Intertextuality refers to all kinds of links between two or more texts. Exploring intertextuality can bring our attention to the existence of other “realities” outside the text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.227-228). Put differently, no text is neutral as it will always be influenced by other texts, by society and by history. It is also possible to look for influence of society in the character’s utterances. Bakhtin (1981) described how any utterance bears traces of other voices and discourses: “Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.293). Following Bakhtin, no utterance is neutral. Pupils could potentially discover this by taking a character’s perspective in a picturebook and study how a character’s utterances have been influenced by others. I look for such opportunities in my analysis.

2.6.1 Narration and focalization

In picturebooks, words *primarily* convey the narrative voice, whereas images *primarily* convey the point of view. However, verbal text can use various types of focalizations, and pictures can to some extent be narrated (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117-118). Focalization refers to the perspective the narrative is presented through. Verbal text can be nonfocalized, often referred to as “omniscient, omnipresent perspective”. The verbal text can also be externally focalized, following one character’s perceptual point of view only. Moreover, verbal text can be internally focalized, penetrating the character’s thoughts and feelings (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.118). The narrative voice can influence the reader’s perception of the newcomer immigrants in the picturebooks. In narrative theory, a description is one of the signs of the narrator’s presence in the text. The verbal narrator invites the reader to pay attention to certain details of the setting whilst ignoring others (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). Analyzing what the narrative voice wants the reader to pay special attention to in the

setting can reveal what is presented as valuable information about immigrants in the picturebook. Similarly, analyzing how the narrative voice describe a character, how they act or what their values are can give insight into what the author wishes to portray about pupils who are newcomer immigrants.

The type of focalization in the picturebook can convey where the reader is positioned in relation to the character. The omniscient, omnipresent perspective is common in picturebooks, like when a character's feelings are described using a 3rd person singular voice. An example of this can be found in *The Arabic Quilt*, where the narrative voice tells the reader how Kanzi is feeling: "She doesn't want to be different" (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.5-6). The distance between the character and the reader would be smaller if the character spoke directly to the reader, saying "I don't want to be different". Still, Nikolajeva & Scott (2006) point to how a first-person perspective can confuse young readers. Sharing the visual perspective of an "I" would mean seeing events through the eyes of this character. Thus, readers would not see the character in the visual image (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.125). However, there are certain ways to let the reader share the first-person narrator's point of view and yet portray the character in the picture. For instance, a child "I" could be positioned below adults (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.125-126). This could contribute to avoiding confusion.

2.6.2 Plot and setting

The plot in a picturebook is the series of events, and their cause and effect, that create the story. The setting in a picturebook establishes the situation and presents the world in which the story takes place (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). The plot and the setting work together in picturebooks. For instance, the setting can influence the reader's emotional response in a particular register, or instigate a plot development (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). Setting can also contribute to clarifying the conflict in a story. One way to do so is through analepses, or flashback, which is a secondary narrative that precedes the primary one. A flashback can be prompted by the sight of an object, causing a character to remember something important to the story (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.165). Put differently, the setting can evoke emotions and help make the narrative move forward. Descriptions of setting can be both verbal and visual, agreeing or counterpointing in various ways

(Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.118). Visual images of the setting can influence readers' perception of a character. This can demonstrate the difference between diegesis (telling) and mimesis (showing). While words can only describe space, pictures can actually show it, doing so more effectively and often more efficiently. (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006, p.61). For instance, visual images of a setting can give readers clues about a character. Descriptions of a character's room can provide clues on what kind of person we are dealing with (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.105).

2.6.3 Characterization

Readers construct their impression of a character by extracting relevant information about the character from the text, by making inferences from the character's behavior, by synthesizing snippets of information included in the text, and by amplifying these from their own imagination (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Readers bring to the text their own experiences. This means that their estimation of the main character in the immigration-themed picturebooks could build on their existing knowledge about immigration.

Information about characters can for instance be found in visual images of the character depicting their appearance (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Visual images of a character can also provide information about their attitudes, emotions, and relationships with others. The size and placing of a character on the double spread (high or low, left or right) may reflect their attitude toward other characters, a permanent psychological quality, or a temporary mood; changes in the position of the characters reflect changes in the characters themselves. Furthermore, we assume characters that are depicted as large or centered on the page have more significance (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.83). Such conventions can be used as guidelines in interpretation of characterization.

Picturebooks enable pupils to view the characters from multiple perspectives, as both external description or depiction and internal representation is provided (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006, p.82). Readers could extract information about how a character view themselves, others or their surroundings through dialogue and inner monologue in the picturebook. Dialogue between the protagonist and other characters reveals another dimension of character. Inner monologues offer another mode of understanding the character dynamics (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 81). In the context of my thesis, this can contribute to readers'

understanding of the thoughts and emotions of newcomer immigrants. Combined, this information can help readers estimate what the character is like, and how they may choose to act. A character in action involves the reader more intensely in estimation of character than simple narration (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). The character's actions can confirm or disprove the expectations pupils have and renew their understanding of the character. However, words and images can present characters in contradictory manners, creating irony and/or ambiguity (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.25). This contradiction can be contrast in appearance, but also in behavior or emotions. Additionally, the verbal text can mention characters who are not portrayed in the pictures (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001, p.25). Characters that are not visually depicted can still convey information about another character through their relationship.

2.6.4 Point of View

Analyzing the point of view in immigration-themed picturebooks can provide information about what is being conveyed about pupils who are newcomer immigrants, whose perspectives they are presented through, and how. In picturebooks, the narrative voice has power over the narrative and what is presented to the viewer/reader. In narratology, the term "point of view" is used to denote the assumed position of the narrator, character, and the implied reader (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). In narratology, there is a distinction between the literal, or perceptual, point of view (through whose eyes the events are presented), the figurative, or conceptional point of view (conveying ideology or worldview), and the transferred, or interest point of view (who does the narrative benefit from telling this story). All three can be fixed or variable in a verbal text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). Different points of view can either confirm or contradict each other. Additionally, words and pictures can express different ideological attitudes. For instance, most picturebooks use or pretend to use a child's perceptual point of view (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.25). This can create a discrepancy between the visual point of view and an adult, didactic or ironic narrative voice (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.119). Using a child's perspective in the visual narrative can impose progressive ideology on the reader through the adult extradiegetic voice (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.137). Analyzing the different point of view in the immigration-themed picturebooks could reveal whether ideology conveyed through similar means can empower pupils with an immigrant background.

In picturebooks, a distinction is made between who is speaking (primarily expressed by words in picturebooks) and who is seeing (expressed metaphorically by words, or literally by picture) (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.25). With visual images, we can speak of perspective in a literal sense: the reader/viewer beholds the image from a certain fixed point imposed by the artist. Although pictures cannot directly and immediately convey ideology or serve someone's purpose in narration, they can do so by indirect means (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). These means can be how the illustrator has positioned the characters, or how the reader is positioned in relation to the characters. For instance, the use of mirrors can create a sense of a first-person perspective. Moreover, a character gazing from the picture straight at the reader/viewer may be apprehended as an "intrusive" visual narrator (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.119). The fixed point of view can also give the reader an impression of viewing the story from the inside or as an outside spectator. Frames contribute to this notion. Frames normally create a sense of detachment between the picture and the reader, while the absence of frames (when a picture covers a whole page or double spread) invites the reader into the picture (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.62). The fixed point of view could also influence how readers perceive the verbal text. For instance, close-ups can amplify the direct speech of the verbal text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.16).

2.7 Previous research

This section contains previous research on the use of picturebooks to foster intercultural competencies. I present research on potential benefits of working with immigration-themed picturebooks specifically, as well as research on selecting picturebooks that reflect pupils' identities.

2.7.1 Picturebooks as a medium to foster Intercultural Competence

Hoff (2019) explores opportunities and challenges in fostering competent "intercultural readers" in FL education contexts. Hoff (2019) suggests that potential practical consequences of increased focus on testability in education may result in literature being treated as means to an end rather than leaving room for the kind of personal involvement and critical thinking intercultural learning requires (Hoff, 2019, p.443). Selecting suitable literature for the pupils and spending time exploring the content could potentially heighten pupils' personal involvement with the story and create opportunities for further developing

pupils' intercultural competence. Opportunities for using picturebooks and graphic narratives to promote intercultural competences in English language teaching (ELT) in a European context are well-documented in research (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.52). Dolan (2014) suggested that picturebooks about refugees offer opportunities for exploring complex power structures with young learners through an accessible form. She writes that pupils need to be assisted, encouraged and challenged to engage with the issues raised by picturebooks in an affirmative, effective and age-appropriate manner through highlighting issues such as perspective, power and voice (Dolan, 2014, p.108). Furthermore, Ellis (2018) demonstrated the potential of picturebooks developing cultural literacy. She writes that picturebooks are full of cultural information, and that noticing and understanding similarities and differences to a child's own cultural surroundings helps them develop cultural literacy, a first step in intercultural learning (Ellis, 2018, p.85). Cultural literacy helps develop intercultural competence through readers recognizing similarities and differences with one's own culture and to see themselves as part of a connected world (Ellis, 2018, p.95).

When looking into the connection between intercultural competence and its potential effect on the classroom environment, studies have shown that picturebooks may help pupils integrate into the classroom. The connection between intercultural competence, integration and friendship is pointed out in a study by Sindland and Birketveit's (2020) which employed a picturebook in 5th grade to teach intercultural competencies. The results showed that actively exploring intercultural communication and perspective-taking through literature played a central role in understanding other cultures, as well as helping children from other cultures to better integrate into Norwegian classrooms (Sindland & Birketveit, 2020, p.115). Furthermore, a study on intercultural experiences showed that pupils discovered a connection between integration and friendship after working with picturebooks. The study, which employed pupil interviews, showed that the pupils saw themselves as a key instrument for the integration of newcomers and considered friendship as a fundamental piece of that and for interchanging intercultural knowledge. They also became conscious of the sadness that can be generated by changing customs, food, and friends and the fact of not being fluent in the new country's language (Tomé-Fernández et al., 2019, p.211). Lastly, Hope's (2018) study of young children's responses to the immigration-themed picturebook *The Colour of Home*, found that the story can be relatable both for pupils with and without

immigrant backgrounds. Children as young as 5 or 6 demonstrated keen empathy with newcomers, such as refugees, to their class. They also showed an awareness of social action they could take to welcome newcomers and help them make friends (Hope, 2018, p.319). These studies show that there can be a connection between teaching intercultural competence through picturebooks and integration and friendship. I view this as a potential extended value to my thesis.

2.7.2 Selecting picturebooks

Teachers should select picturebooks with consciousness to facilitate that they serve their intended purpose. Enriquez (2021) writes that teachers must make a conscious selection of diverse texts, and that the books teachers choose should be able to reflect the pupil's identities to avoid stereotyping (Enriquez, 2021, p.104). When choosing stories that reflect refugee experiences, Strekalova-Huges & Peterman (2020, p.326) suggest that teachers should engage in critical self-reflection to develop awareness of their own biases about refugees prior to selecting stories for the classroom. They also point to how teachers should avoid (re)traumatizing stories by considering pupils' possible reactions to the stories (Strekalova-Huges & Peterman, 2020, p.326). A possible approach to discussing experiences of immigrants and refugees could be to make a themed text to work with a specific IC skill. Using a themed text set in a classroom may be a fruitful approach to intercultural competence such as empathy (Newstreet et al., 2019, p.566-567). They point out that potential texts for the text set should be analyzed for cultural authenticity and literary quality before being included (Newstreet et al., 2019, p.561).

Picturebooks can be a powerful doorway into complex and sensitive topics. Bishop's (1990) article "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors" has impacted the current academic discussion about picturebooks. Bishop wrote:

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author.... A window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading

then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.

(Bishop, 1990, p.ix).

Considering that readers often seek their mirrors in books, the picturebooks teachers select can give their pupil's self-affirmation. Johnson et al. (2018) explores how Bishop's representation of literature as mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors can guide teachers to empower readers in their classrooms. They stress the key role of teachers in both selecting books and keeping pupils invested in the stories. Moreover, for students to connect to characters and be changed by them, teachers need to select books with rich potential to become sliding glass doors, to link books thematically, and to guide readers in ways to respond deeply to these books (Johnson et al., 2017, p.573). Immigration-themed picturebooks could give pupils, with and without immigrant backgrounds, access to perspectives and experiences that reflect or contrast their own. When books are windows, readers learn something about the world beyond the one they know (Johnson et al., 2017, p.572). Such books can open for readers to see people, experiences or worlds removed from their own and offer unique perspectives. Literature can also serve as mirrors for students who see their experiences reflected and validated. This could entail physical recognition, reflection of cultural identity or a reflection of our emotions (Johnson et al., 2017, p.571). Immigration-themed picturebooks could be a mirror for pupils with immigrant backgrounds. They could also serve as a mirror for other pupils who recognize their own feelings or identities in the picturebook. A book that is a mirror is somewhat similar to books that function as a sliding door. However, there is a key difference: books that are sliding doors invite readers to step through, into an experience that may change them (Johnson et al., 2017, p.572-573). Immigration-themed picturebooks could potentially become sliding glass doors for readers through the means of perspective-taking.

When selecting picturebooks, teachers must assess whether the perspectives offered provide an authentic and positive view of the culture(s) represented. Evaluating the cultural authenticity of picturebooks is a complex, but necessary matter. Yoo-Lee et al. (2014) performed an empirical analysis of forty-five multicultural picturebooks to reframe issues surrounding cultural authenticity. They defined cultural authenticity as "not only the

absence of stereotypes, but also the presence of values consistent with a particular culture and the accuracy of cultural details in text and illustrations” (Yoo-Lee et al., 2014, p.326). The selected picturebooks represented African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans (Yoo-Lee et al., 2014, p.324). Most picturebooks selected for the study were culturally authentic overall, but various levels of stereotypical elements existed in some text and illustrations. Some of these elements in Hispanic American and Asian American picturebooks were deemed culturally authentic by coders within the respective cultures. In the African American picturebooks, stereotypical elements were depicted along with negative stereotypical elements of the culture. Thus, positive theme or message of a picturebook could be overpowered by a negative hidden message in the text or illustrations (Yoo-Lee et al., 2014, p.342). Knowing that hidden or opposing messages can occur within a picturebook gives reason for exploring their content further to avoid unintended stereotyping.

2.7.3 Perspective-taking in immigration-themed picturebooks

Habegger-Conti points to how refugee graphic narratives can help dismantle the us/them binaries of some intercultural education approaches (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.52). She discusses how refugee narratives and migrant literature can shine a necessary light on some of the limitations of intercultural education, such as tending to view concepts like culture, nation, and identity as stable and unified whilst upholding an our culture/their culture binary (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.53). Habegger-Conti exemplifies this by pointing out that even decentering, a reflective practice, is premised on an outside/inside, centre/periphery system. Drawing attention to how migrants and refugees emphasize the “inter” of intercultural and the fluidity of culture and identity through their national and cultural liminality, Habegger-Conti displays how the journeys of migrants and refugees dismantle the over there/over here divide. She describes how acknowledging the interconnectedness and vulnerability of all humans can open for learning to stand with others as opposed to merely learning about others (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.53-54). Furthermore, she points to how the philosopher Butler (2012) has explored why we care about what happens to someone we do not know, and who lives far away from us. Butler concludes that to see ourselves as sharing in the lives of other people on the planet we need to embrace an ethics of cohabitation that depends on the “reversibility of proximity and

distance” (Butler, 2012, p.137). Embracing this can enable us to see that “what happens there also happens here” (Butler, 2012, p.150). Viewing this in the framework of intercultural education, to recognize the sharing of the world is being able to see those who live far from us a part of a “we” rather than a “them”. My analysis of narrative perspectives in immigration-themed picturebooks may reveal if readers are invited to see immigrants as a part of a “we” rather than a “them”. This could point to whether these picturebooks encourage inclusion of pupils with immigrant backgrounds.

A study that explored the idea of names as identity in picturebooks depicting minority children, showed that many teacher characters in these picturebooks did not support their pupils in name negotiation (Keller & Franzak, 2016, p.187). Although the ten picturebooks analyzed sought to empower minority and migrant children, findings showed that they often inadvertently reinforced the systems of power and pressure of assimilation they set out to critique (Keller & Franzak, 2016, p.189). This demonstrates that picturebooks can have conflicting messages about whether readers should stand with the characters in the picturebooks. A way to discover such conflicting messages could be to assess how the visual images seek to position readers. Habegger-Conti (2021) sheds light on the opportunity of the reader being offered to stand with immigrants through positioning in visual images. Images can work to position readers in several ways, such as through the choice of camera angle, frame, lighting, choice of color and layout (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.57). Furthermore, analyzing framing devices can help analyze how readers are positioned. Habegger-Conti exemplifies this by showing how an unframed spread can blend the fictional world with the real world. This way, the absence of a frame act can act like a sliding door, positioning the reader as someone experiencing the story from the inside (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.60-61). I view her insights as a valuable contribution to my understanding of perspective-taking in visual images in my analysis.

3.0 Methodological considerations

The following sections regard methodological considerations. Central aspects discussed include the rationale behind data selection and data collection. A presentation of my selected research material and the method of analysis follows. Lastly, I address ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Data selection and data collection

I put together a conscious selection of three immigration-themed picturebooks. My process of data selection was inspired by an article about building children's books text sets from the Notable Books for a Global Society Lists (Kurkjian et al., 2003). The Notable Books for a Global Society (NBGS) list was developed by the International Literacy Association's committee Children's Literature & Reading Special Interest Group (CLRSIG) to help students, teachers, and families identify books that promote understanding of and appreciation for the world's full range of diverse cultures and ethnic and racial groups (CLRSIG, 2022). Every year, each of the ten NBGS committee members read around 400 books of all genres for young readers and select 25 outstanding books (CLRSIG, 2023a). The books are assessed the year they are published and can make the NBGS list the following year. Newly published books will therefore not be on the list. The number of relevant books published each year varies, as does the competition for a spot on the list. There is no public overview of the books assessed for the NBGS lists. Therefore, I remark that books not found on these lists do not necessarily lack diversity, literary quality, or potential to teach perspective-taking. The NBGS lists were a good starting point to search for texts that qualified for my selection. My selection was guided by a combination of my own criteria and the following two NBGS criteria of selection:

1. An approach that honors and celebrates diversity as well as the common bonds of humanity.
2. Thought-provoking content that invites reflection, critical analysis, and response.
(CLRSIG, 2022)

I chose these two NBGS criteria because they are in line with goals of the core curriculum in LK20, 1.2 *Identity and diversity* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017) and 1.3 *Critical thinking and ethical consciousness* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). The criteria are also in line with central values of the LK20 curriculum for English (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). The first NBGS criterion is in line with Identity and diversity, which states that a good society is founded on an inclusive and diverse community (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). Still, honoring and celebrating diversity through representation in the picturebooks is not sufficient to invite perspective-taking. Therefore, I chose an additional NBGS criteria.

The second NBGS criterion states that the texts must be thought-provoking and invite reflection, critical analysis, and response. This resonates with the core critical thinking and ethical consciousness in the core curriculum. The pupils must be able to assess different sources of knowledge, think critically about how knowledge is developed and understand that their own experiences, positions, and beliefs may be incomplete or erroneous (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). I chose the criteria to select picturebooks that invite pupils to engage with the perspectives of newcomer immigrants and think critically about how their knowledge about immigrants are developed. The curriculum for English also calls for such critical reflection, stating that the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge about culture and society through reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing various types of English-language texts (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).

Additional criteria for data selection were needed for my picturebook selection to reflect experiences of newcomer immigrants specifically. These were the additional criteria:

3. The main character is a child.
4. The newcomer immigrant's experience takes place in a school setting.
5. The picturebook depicts a newcomer immigrant's individual experience.
6. The picturebook is written in English and be suitable for use in primary school, i.e., grades 1-7 in the Norwegian primary school context. The picturebooks should also have crossover potential to open for use in classes with pupils of different ages, like in introductory classes.

Criterion number three could bridge the distance between these pupils' experiences, as pupils who are unfamiliar with experiences of newcomer immigrants may still relate to the experiences of another child. This could increase the chances of pupils connecting with the newcomer immigrants in the stories. If a reader makes a connection, it is likely to be an emotional one to a character. Contrastingly, if a book feels distant to the reader, they are less likely to make a connection (Johnson et al., 2017, p.572).

Criterion number four was also chosen to facilitate pupils' connection to the characters. Despite the stories being set abroad, the setting still reflects the diversity found in Norwegian schools. Relating the topic of immigration to a familiar setting pupils have in common is done to encourage pupils to link the known to the new and apply their renewed

knowledge in school. Furthermore, pupils can recognize and connect with the school setting through the visual images regardless of whether they understand the words. This could make the stories feel relevant for all pupils.

Criterion number five was chosen to highlight the uniqueness of each newcomer immigrant experience. Additionally, it is easier for young learners to relate to and identify with particular individuals and situations than with the general (Fenner, 2001, p.19). The focus on the individual was done to avoid stereotyping newcomer immigrants by presenting them as part of a generalized group. When teaching intercultural competence, themes should be presented from different perspectives to avoid stereotyping (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2020, p.87). As for the picturebook selection as a whole, I therefore decided there should be variation in terms of identity, language, and cultures.

Criterion six require the picturebooks to be written in English. This is due to them being assessed for their potential to invite perspective-taking in the English subject. I decided the original language should be English to ensure the authors' intentions were not lost in translation. The picturebooks must be suited to the pupil's age in terms of their length, language use and themes. Hence, the picturebooks should be suitable for pupils in grades 1-7. They should have crossover potential to facilitate use in classes with pupils of different ages, like introductory classes. I therefore chose not to limit the picturebook selection to be aimed at a specific grade or age. I also decided that there should be variation in reading level within the picturebook selection, which is in line with the pupil's right to adapted teaching (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017; Opplæringsloven, 1997, §1-3).

3.2 Research material

The picturebook selection aspires to represent a pupil's experiences of meeting and taking part in another culture after having immigrated to a country. It is a conscious selection made with the aim of representing immigrants from various parts of the world and their unique individual experiences with their peers in school. All the picturebooks have been on the NBGS list (CLRSIG, 2023b). The picturebooks are presented in chronological order, starting with the one published most recently. They were analyzed in this order.

Immigration-themed picturebook selection			
Topic	A newcomer immigrant's experience in the classroom		
Title	Author	Illustrator	Year published
<i>The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story</i>	Aya Khalil	Anait Semirdzhyan	2020
<i>The Name Jar</i>	Yangsook Choi	Yangsook Choi	2001
<i>The Colour of Home</i>	Mary Hoffman	Karin Littlewood	1993

Table 1: Immigration-themed picturebook selection.

A brief presentation of the authors and illustrators follows.

Aya Khalil, author of *The Arabic Quilt* (2020) has first-hand experience with immigration. Like the main character Kanzi, Khalil immigrated to the United States from Egypt as a child. A glossary of Arabic words in Khalil's Egyptian dialect is provided in the picturebook (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.32-33). Illustrator Anait Semirdzhyan, grew up in a multicultural family and has lived in several countries with diverse cultures before settling in the United States (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.33). The author and illustrator's first-hand experience with immigration make them credible sources for the experiences represented in the story.

Author and illustrator of *The Name Jar* (2001), Yangsook Choi, grew up in Korea and moved to New York as an adult (Choi, 2023). In *The Name Jar*, elements of Korean culture in Korea and in New York come together. Choi's first-hand experience with immigration from Korea to the United States make her a credible source for the experiences of Unhei in *The Name Jar*, who is a newcomer immigrant from Korea arriving in the United States. Being Korean, Choi is likely to ensure authentic representation of Korean culture, language and values in the picturebook. In *The Name Jar*, Choi conveys education as an important Korean value (Choi, 2001, p.11).

Author Mary Hoffman is born in England and does not have first-hand experience with immigration, like the main character Hassan in *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993). She mixed with refugee women and asylum seekers as research for the picturebook (Hope, 2018, p.309). Illustrator of *The Colour of Home*, Karin Littlewood, is well known for

her diverse picturebook illustrations (Davila illustrations, 2023). *The Colour of Home* has been on the Diverse Voices list of the top 50 best culturally diverse books (The Guardian, 2023). It has also been translated to Norwegian, *Et bilde til mor* (Hoffman et.al, 2012). A translation could prove useful in introductory classes and in adapted teaching in English.

3.3 Method of Analysis

I did a narrative analysis of each picturebook, with the awareness that picturebooks with crossover potential address readers of all ages. I analyzed all verbal text, visual images and iconotext in every spread of the picturebooks. The narrative analysis enabled me to discuss where opportunities for perspective-taking occurred in the picturebooks and through which means they were created. To better bring these opportunities forward, I combined analysis and discussion of each picturebook. I viewed the findings from my narrative analysis in connection with Byram's (1997) ICC model, supplemented by theories presented in chapter 2.2-2.5 (p.16-28). I also drew on insights from previous research. I assessed if, and how, readers were invited to decenter from their personal attitudes through perspective-taking. The analysis and discussion enabled me to holistically assess to what extent the picturebooks invite perspective-taking, and through which means. This gave insight to how narrative perspectives of newcomer immigrants in picturebooks potentially can invite perspective-taking in the English subject.

3.4 Categories for narrative analysis

The categories for my analysis were chosen to gather information about the representation of the main character's identities in the picturebooks. Additionally, having categories enhanced the replicability of the study. I viewed the main character's identity in relation to plot and setting, main character and characterization and point of view in the picturebooks. Detailed descriptions of the theory applied can be found in chapter 2.6 (p.28). My analysis and discussion moved between these interrelated categories.

3.4.1 Plot and setting

The analysis of the plot enabled me to discover where the plot opened for perspective-taking, and whether the newcomer immigrants were active contributors to the solution of challenges determined by the plot. I also analyzed in which setting(s) opportunities for perspective-taking occurred, and whether verbal text and the visual images worked together

to make this happen. This added layers to my analysis of the main character and characterization.

3.4.2 Main character and characterization

Analyzing characterization shed light on the portrayal of the identities of the newcomer immigrants. This enabled me to view whether the representation of the characters identity in the plot, setting and point of view opened for or prevented perspective-taking. I analyzed how the characters were portrayed in action, dialogue, and inner monologue. This revealed the characters' emotions and thoughts about themselves, others, their surroundings, and different situations. Combined, this enabled me to assess where the picturebooks confirm, continue, or prevent Othering. This opened for an interpretation of how the representation of the main characters and the characterization contribute to invite or prevent perspective-taking. For instance, if the character was portrayed as distant to, or Other, to readers it could potentially prevent them from seeing the relevance of taking the character's perspective. If the character was portrayed as relatable, this could potentially invite perspective-taking.

3.4.3 Point of view

The analysis of point of view in the picturebooks revealed whose perspectives the characters identities were portrayed through. I analyzed the perceptual point of view, conceptional point of view, and the interest point of view (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). Combined, this enabled me to assess whether the newcomer immigrants were presented through multiple perspectives, and if these perspectives contradicted each other or not. It also allowed me to uncover hidden ideology and assess whether the perspectives offered create, confirm, or prevent Otherness. Analyzing the fixed point of view in the images enabled me to assess where readers whether readers were encouraged to stand with the newcomer immigrant.

3.5 Ethical considerations and limitations

I consider my personal bias to be a potential source of error in my analysis. In their analysis of hidden messages of picturebooks with black characters, Smith-D'Arezzo & Musgrove (2011) found that their cultural backgrounds affected how they responded to several of the books. This led to a recommendation that evaluation of books should incorporate

perspectives of colleagues and children from various groups (Smith-D'Arezzo & Musgrove, 2011). My analysis may have shown different results if multiple perspectives were included, particularly perspectives of people with other cultural backgrounds. I do not have personal bonds to the cultures represented in the picturebooks. Still, having been a student and work immigrant in other countries has caused me to relate closer to experiences of starting over in a new place.

My analysis provides a single perspective on opportunities for perspective-taking in a selection of immigration-themed picturebooks. The results cannot be generalized to be valid for all immigration-themed picturebooks. I also remark that no reader is neutral, which makes complete objectivity in a literary analysis an impossible task. While I analyze the picturebooks from a particular position, I seek to honor each of the different perspectives in these picturebooks. Multiple text interpretations can coexist. I contribute to the research field of literary analysis by adding an interpretation.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

4.1 The Arabic Quilt

The Arabic Quilt (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020) tells the story of Kanzi who has moved from Egypt to the United States with her family, where she attends 3rd grade in a new school. Kanzi has a father (baba), a mother (mama), a little brother named Zacharia and a grandmother (teita) who still lives in Egypt. The cover explicitly states that it is an immigrant story, hence, Kanzi is an immigrant. Still, the word “immigrant” is not used in the story. The focus is on Kanzi as an individual, which avoids generalization of immigrants and their experiences. Her experiences, thoughts and feelings are described through a 3rd person narrator.

Settings can instigate plot development (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). The plot develops in when Kanzi's mother calls her *habibti* (dear one) at school. Molly makes fun of the Arabic word, and her classmates laugh with her. There attempts are made to solve Kanzi's problem of facing discriminating views because she speaks Arabic. Molly, on Mrs. Haugen's request, approaches Kanzi to apologize and explain herself during recess. Kanzi tries to explain why

Arabic may sound funny to her, but Molly responds with “OK, whatever” (p.14). Thus, the conflict remains unresolved. When Molly says: “Who cares about Arabic?” in class, Mrs. Haugen educates the pupils on the value of being bilingual. Kanzi’s Egyptian quilt inspires a class project where Kanzi and her mother sign the pupils’ names in Arabic. After, Molly approaches Kanzi and apologizes for making fun of her. Kanzi agrees to go swimming with her, and Molly hugs her (p.28).

The plot shows that Kanzi can deal with challenges, share her knowledge and impact her surroundings. She has a progressively more active role in the plot. In the beginning, Kanzi does not respond to Molly’s teasing. Although Kanzi tells Mrs. Haugen what is wrong, she only does so after being encouraged to. Readers could interpret this as Kanzi being too scared to respond and seek help, as visual images in previous spreads depict her as nervous and sad. Kanzi acts against the discrimination she faces when she tries to reach mutual understanding with Molly. Furthermore, it is Kanzi’s own initiative to bring her quilt to school that leads to the class project, driving the action forward to reach a happy conclusion. This can show readers that newcomer immigrants can take action to improve their circumstances. For readers facing similar challenges in real life, Kanzi can remind them of their resilience and give them a sense of agency.

The picturebook exemplifies how newcomer immigrants can be role models and inspire their classmates. Kanzi helps her classmates sign their own names in Arabic. Kanzi’s regained confidence in her identity is visible to readers in a visual image of her reading names in Arabic aloud. Her proud posture contrasts with her previous reluctance to speak Arabic in school. Visual images and verbal text work together to convey Kanzi’s classmates’ positive reinforcement of her contribution to their learning. Pupils pat her on the shoulder and give her a thumbs up (figure 1). They view Kanzi from a slightly below angle, reinforcing the notion that they look up to her. The verbal text conveys that the pupils have learned something new and are putting it into practice when Kanzi’s classmates thank her in Arabic: “Shukran” (p.27). This poses an example for readers of how they can use Arabic words to acknowledge the identities of pupils who know Arabic.

Molly’s change in attitude exemplifies the ICC skill *Savoir être*, relativizing self and valuing the Other (Byram, 1997). Molly and Kanzi end up seeing eye-to-eye, both symbolically and in a literal sense in the visual images. Molly’s hug and initiative to spend time with Kanzi confirms that she accepts her and would like to get to know her. The hug is shown from

Molly's visual perspective, inviting readers to take her new perspective. Kanzi is visually depicted as smiling, which indicates that Kanzi now feels Molly's newfound acceptance and appreciation for her. Moreover, Molly asks if Kanzi can write her mother's name in Arabic so she can give it to her as a gift. This shows readers that she wants to pass her new knowledge on to her parents. In the light of Molly's discriminating views came from her parents, this action is particularly meaningful. If Molly's parents change their views, Kanzi's experiences would indirectly impact people beyond her school environment.

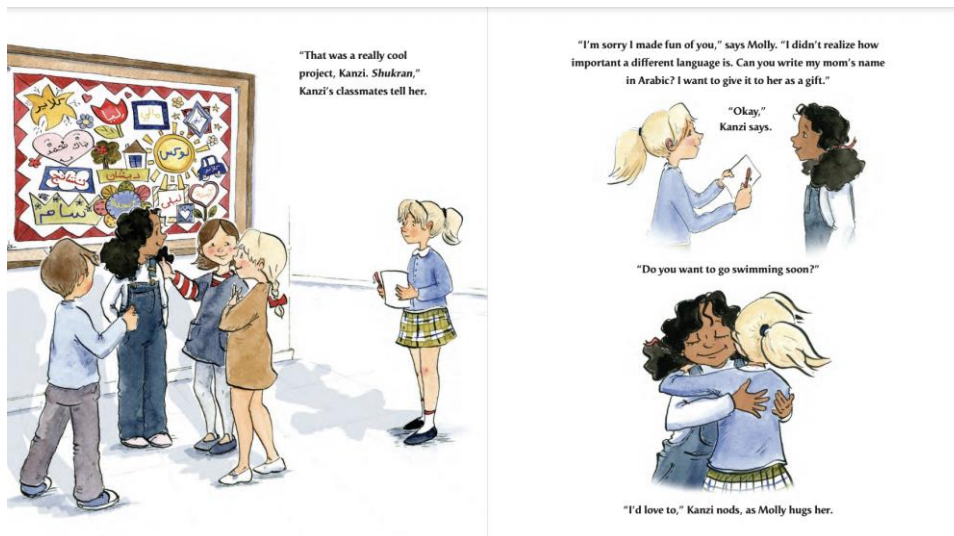


Figure 1: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.27-28)

Kanzi's efforts to be accepted and to educate others later extends to outside her class. The verbal text highlights how Kanzi is a necessary source of knowledge after the quilt is finished, when teachers and older students look at the names, "trying to figure out whose name is whose" (p.25). Kanzi receives positive reinforcement from Kura, who speaks Japanese. This is the only time the verbal text explicitly conveys that there are other bilingual pupils in Kanzi's school. Kanzi and Kura share a common experience despite being in separate classes and having differing linguistic backgrounds. Kura's teacher was inspired by the quilt project and had asked her to help write her classmates' names in Japanese. Thus, Kanzi's efforts to be accepted benefit other bilingual pupils through making their knowledge visible to other people in their school. Kura says that languages "can truly unite us" (p.29-30), indicating that she has experienced the project's benefits. Kanzi displaying her bilingualism led to Kura displaying hers, and to these two pupils connecting. Figuratively, this sends a message that improving one aspect of a person's circumstances can create ripples benefiting others in their community.

The initial presentation of Kanzi's school environment poses a risk that readers perceive Kanzi as different to others (figure 2). In the visual image, a curb separates Kanzi and her mother from others in the schoolyard. The flag informs readers that the story takes place in The United States. Readers can also discover that Kanzi will be attending 3rd grade in Forest View Elementary School. The school's name indicates it is close to nature, for instance in a suburban area or in a smaller town. The spread gives the reader a first impression that Kanzi is the only pupil of color in her school. This does not reflect the diversity of people living in the US. However, it may be a realistic representation of parts of the US. For instance, there is a significant amount of people in the state of Minnesota whose ancestors were immigrants from Scandinavian countries. Kanzi's teacher, Mrs. Haugen, has a Scandinavian surname. If the story is set here, the depiction of diversity in Kanzi's school could be accurately portrayed. Still, readers could interpret these visual images as a sign that Kanzi is different from others. Kanzi's reluctance to share parts of her identity contributes to this. The verbal text describes how her mother sings along with the Arabic radio channel, and that Kanzi turns down the volume when they pull up to school. Her mother's "confused look" indicates that this is not something Kanzi usually does (p.7). When her mother says "Bahebek" (I love you), Kanzi responds with "I love you too" in English (p.7). Kanzi's behavior implies that she tries to hide that she speaks Arabic.

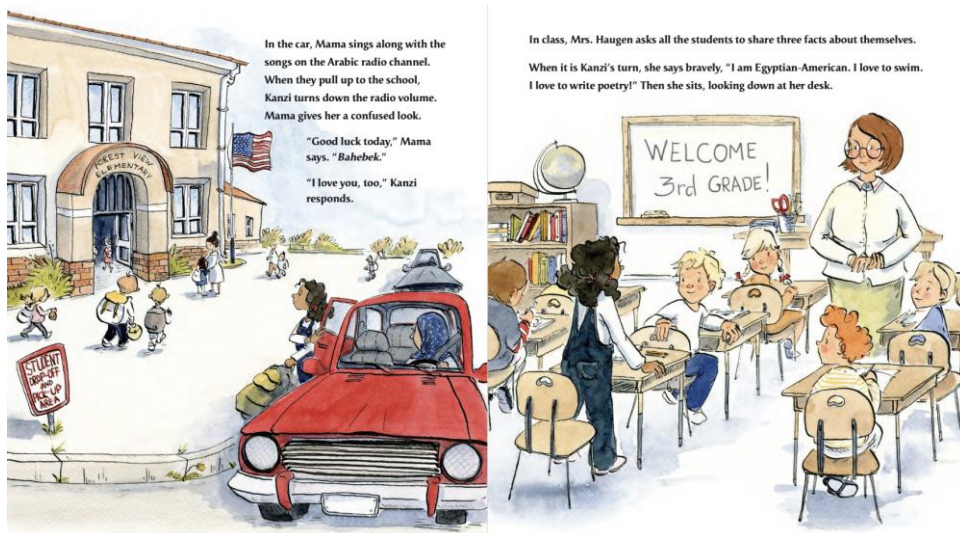


Figure 2: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.7-8)

When Kanzi is teased, the verbal text works together with the visual images to construct an us/them binary (figure 3). A visual image shows Kanzi's Mama delivering her lunch while two blonde, light-skinned girls are laughing. Readers could perceive Kanzi as the Other compared

to these girls. Molly says “*Habibti?* Like The Hobbit? Isn’t your name Kanzi?” (p.9). Readers are positioned close to the girls in the visual image. They could perceive the comment as loud, as close-ups can amplify the direct speech of the verbal text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.16). This adds to Kanzi’s discomfort. The verbal text describes that Molly’s classmates laugh with her. Readers might assume these pupils have similar appearances due to the previous visual images of the pupil population. Other spreads where pupils have friendly facial expressions become important in completing readers knowledge of the pupil population and their main attitudes. In later visual images, another pupil of color appears in Kanzi’s class. The diversity and inclusion later represented contributes to deconstructing the us/them binary.

Readers are encouraged to feel compassion towards Kanzi when she is upset after being teased. The verbal text draws attention to her crying and intensifies it by drawing attention to the tears “rolling down her cheeks” (p.10). Mrs. Haugen shows compassion by lowering herself down towards Kanzi’s eye level and putting her hands on Kanzi’s shoulders. Her facial expression shows that she is affected by what she sees. She says: “being bilingual is beautiful”, and “don’t let anyone make you feel ashamed. You are special” (p.10). Mrs. Haugen does right comforting Kanzi. However, she both assumes that Kanzi feels ashamed and invalidates these potential feelings of shame. Additionally, Mrs. Haugen’s wording insinuates that the feeling of shame stems from Kanzi letting what Molly said affect her. Thus, Mrs. Haugen’s words focus on what Kanzi can do to avoid feeling shame as opposed to Molly’s comment. Viewing the interaction between Mrs. Haugen and Kanzi on this page, readers may get an impression that although Mrs. Haugen shows interest in comforting her, Kanzi is implicitly told to ignore similar comments in the future. When Molly later reveals that Mrs. Haugen has told her that she hurt Kanzi’s feelings, this pushes back the notion that Mrs. Haugen does not take the issue seriously enough.



Figure 3: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.9-10)

Hoff notes the importance of acknowledging that entering dialogue with the Other can be challenging and uncomfortable (Hoff, 2014, p.515). The discomfort that can arise when entering dialogue with the Other is demonstrated when Molly and Kanzi attempt to resolve their conflicting views during recess (figure 4). The visual image covers the spread, with Kanzi and Molly on opposite pages. The separation contributes to underlining their opposing views. A fence separates Kanzi from other pupils who are playing, and Kanzi looks sad. Molly holds a ball, indicating that she had someone to play with. She is smiling. Combined, the visual images encourage readers to feel sorry for Kanzi. Picturebooks can leave gaps for the reader/viewer to fill (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.2). Due to previous spreads where Kanzi is the victim, readers could fill the gap as to why Molly leaves by writing the situation off as her not caring. If so, they would not get a holistic understanding of the situation. Kanzi points out that Molly does not know Arabic, and that her parents say that learning a different language “makes a person smarter and kinder” (p.14). This could have been perceived by Molly as Kanzi saying she is smarter and kinder than her because she speaks multiple languages. Thus, Molly too could have had her feelings hurt.

If readers extract information from the verbal text alone, they may write Molly off as “bad” by nature. In that case, readers would categorize Molly as the Other compared to Kanzi. Additionally, if they associate Molly with villain characteristics such as being inherently mean, there is a risk that readers will not assess whether other factors could be influencing her rejecting behavior towards Kanzi. This could cause them to overlook that Molly, like Kanzi, has been influenced by her parents’ views. Readers construct their impression of a

character by extracting relevant information about the character from the text, by making inferences from the character's behavior, by synthesizing snippets of information included in the text, and by amplifying these from their own imagination (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Teachers must be aware of the possibility that pupils do not necessarily extract all the information provided in the picturebook, and that their imagination may fill in gaps that prevent them from interpreting the communication between the characters holistically. A close reading of the picturebook could help pupils to understand the underlying factors that influence communication, such as the culture(s) and views people grow up with.

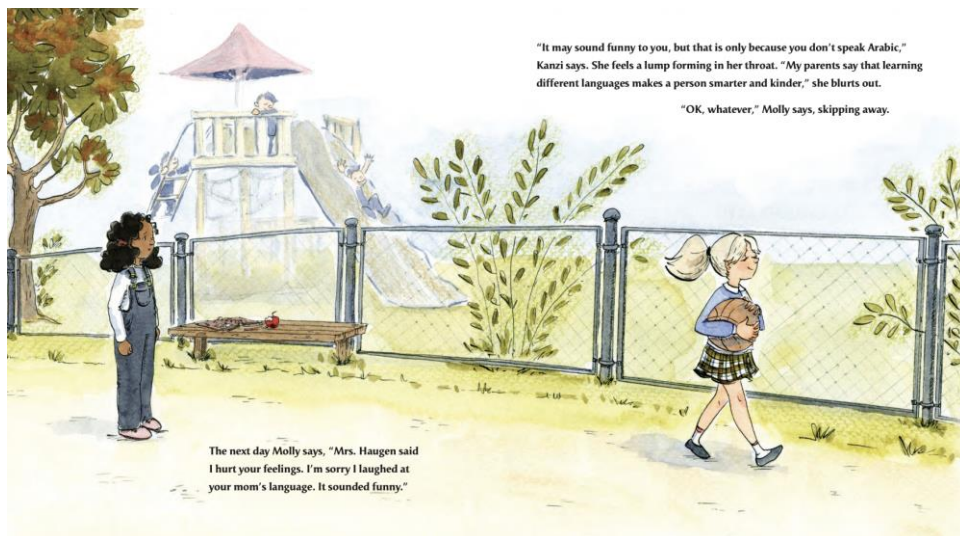


Figure 4: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.13-14)

The Arabic Quilt both presents and challenge stereotypical views of people who speak non-English languages. As demonstrated, Kanzi is initially presented as the Other compared to her fellow pupils. This demonstrates how *The Arabic Quilt* constructs us/them binaries. The picturebook dismantles these binaries through verbal text and visual images following this spread, when the pupils in Kanzi's class gain more knowledge about Arabic. The story exemplifies how stereotypical views can be examined and deconstructed in education through Mrs. Haugen. Mrs. Haugen goes against the negative views of immigrants Molly's parents represent. She educates her pupils about Arabic and say "we can speak non-English languages and still be American" (p.19-20). This quote empowers pupils with an immigrant background. Such empowerment is in line with Freire's (1970) "liberation education", encouraging a pedagogy that uplifts pupils. Mrs. Haugen's lesson can thus be seen as an example of how teachers can empower their bilingual pupils.

Said's (1978) work pointed to that not accepting or continuing stereotypical representations

may lead to such stereotypes losing their effect. The stereotypical views of Molly's parents lose their effect when Mrs. Haugen teaches the class about Arabic. *The Arabic Quilt* provides a concrete example of how teachers can take responsibility to prevent stereotypical representations by challenging them in the classroom, and how this can lead to stereotypes losing their effect. Mrs. Haugen uses the power of education to go against ignorant views that causes stereotypes. Examination of culture and exploration of cultural issues must be done to challenge rather than merely confirm existing views (Hoff 2020, p.81). Choosing to address conflicting views in the classroom is in line with the perspective of childhood where the adult is responsible to recognize, broaden and deepen children's competence rather than protecting them from sensitive topics (Bintz & Ciecierski-Madara, 2022, p.25). It is also in line with Hoff stating that cultural biases and preconceived opinions must be brought out in the open so that they can be examined and challenged (Hoff, 2014, p.512). It is realistic that a newcomer immigrant could face discriminating views or ignorance in their new classroom. Kanzi's experiences as a newcomer immigrant facing stereotypical views could contribute to giving pupils with similar experiences voice. It is important that teachers relate to the realities of life that are familiar to students and give them voice (Freire, 1970, p.80-85).

The Arabic Quilt encourages acceptance and inclusion of pupils with immigrant backgrounds through the concrete example of Mrs. Haugen as the ideal teacher. Figuratively, Mrs. Haugen is connected to the power of education. Like teachers in Norway, Mrs. Haugen has the power to choose what is being represented her classroom. This character exemplifies how teachers can use their power to encourage inclusion of pupils with immigrant backgrounds, as well as their parents or caregivers. Mrs. Haugen shows how parents of newcomer immigrants can contribute to the education of pupils. This act going against assimilation of immigrants. The character can also exemplify for teachers how being open to pupil involvement can contribute to an inclusive classroom environment. Mrs. Haugen allows Kanzi to bring her quilt to class and follows up on another pupil's initiative of the class making their own quilt. This sends a message to readers that home cultures can be a valuable contribution to the pupils' education. For readers who wish to share their home cultures with their class, Mrs. Haugen's openness can be encouraging.

Mrs. Haugen's perspective conveys a worldview that values bilingualism. Although pictures cannot directly and immediately convey ideology or serve someone's purpose in narration,

they can do so by indirect means (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). These means can be how the illustrator has positioned the characters, or how the reader is positioned in relation to the characters. The visual image of Mrs. Haugen teaching exemplifies how point of view can influence readers' impression of bilingual pupils (figure 5). In narratology, there is a distinction between the literal, or perceptual, point of view (through whose eyes the events are presented), the figurative, or conceptional point of view (conveying ideology or worldview), and the transferred, or interest point of view (who does the narrative benefit from telling this story) (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). The visual image depicts the pupils seen from Mrs. Haugen's angle, giving the impression that the perceptual point of view hers. Readers view the pupils through her as opposed to with her eyes. Still, they are invited to take Mrs. Haugen's perspective on being bilingual. The conceptional view is brought forward in the verbal text when she says "Learning other languages besides the one we grow up with helps make the world a friendlier place. We can speak non-English languages and still be American" (p.20). The interest point of view is real-life pupils. This perspective benefits pupils with an immigrant background because it empowers them by acknowledging that speaking different languages is an asset to the world.

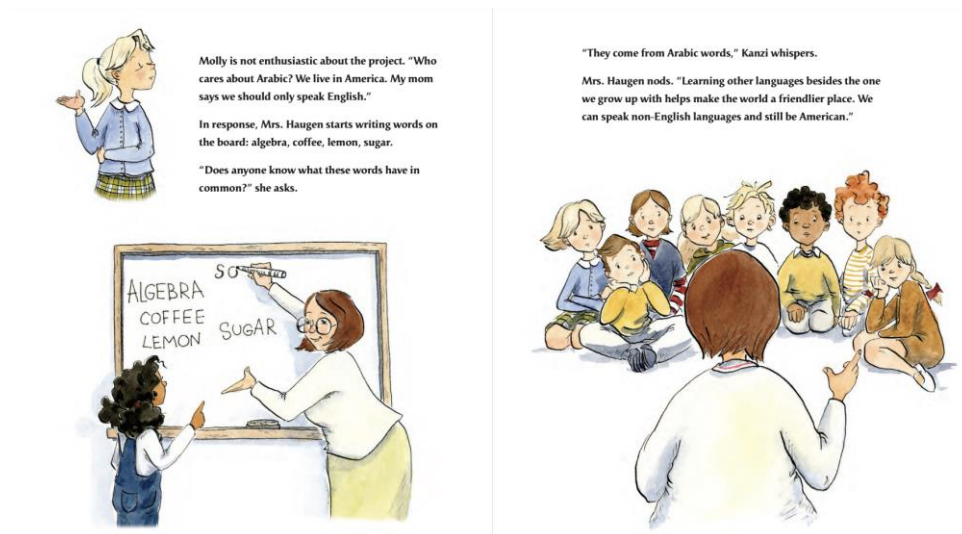


Figure 5: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.19-20)

The solution to conflict offered in *The Arabic Quilt* is to give Molly access to knowledge. Through having her preconceptions challenged, Molly adopts Mrs. Haugen's views and sees the value of bilingualism. This demonstrates the power education can have and its potential impact on pupil's social environment. Still, conflicts are not necessarily resolved this way in real life. Although conflicting views can be of value and result in learning, this is not always

the case. Firstly, gaining new knowledge through perspective-taking requires openness and curiosity (Byram, 1997). Secondly, not all people are open to making use of new knowledge if it contrasts their world view. Thus, some people make misinformed statements about other cultures or languages. *The Arabic Quilt* exemplifies this through Molly, who is not making a fully informed statement but rather repeating her parents' words. Teachers can help pupils realize that people can exist together while having different views, whilst being clear that not all views are accepted in schools. The picturebook could be used as a basis for discussion about how certain views can be harmful to the classroom environment. It would not be helpful for the classroom environment if Mrs. Haugen were to validate Molly's views, when these stem from lack of knowledge about Arabic and bilingualism.

The layers of information conveyed through the interactions between Kanzi and Molly in *The Arabic Quilt* demonstrates how a crossover picturebook can challenge both children and adults, and invite readings on multiple levels (Beckett, 2018). The picturebook offers pupils opportunities to go below the surface of discourse and appearances (Hoff, 2019) and explore why Molly says and acts the way she does. People can have different identities that come into play at different times, adding to the complexity of communication (Hoff, 2019). The representation of Molly and Kanzi's roles as both pupils and daughters call for interpreting the communication between them on multiple levels. When Molly conveys her parents' views in the verbal text, she comes off as closed-off to learning. This contradicts visual images in other spreads, where she seems curious about the project as she is glancing at the quilt and at Kanzi writing. Molly is also visually depicted as curious when Kanzi presents herself to the class. The discrepancy between Molly saying, "who cares about Arabic?" and the visual images displaying her interest shows how words and pictures can express different ideological attitudes (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.25). Furthermore, the utterances of Molly displaying her parents' views show how there can be a discrepancy between characters who are speaking in a picturebook and the attitudes they convey. This bares similarity to real-life communication, where people can be influenced by others' views and repeat their words as their own. An exploration of the communication between Kanzi and Molly could guide pupils to view communication more holistically, which could be of help for them and for their future interlocutors.

The Arabic Quilt provides an example of how curiosity and openness can contribute to accepting and including bilingual pupils. These skills can be found in Byram's ICC model

(Byram, 1997). Kanzi's classmates show openness through their facial expressions, and their interest in learning about Arabic. In class, pupils are visually depicted sitting on the floor, looking up at Kanzi. This indicates curiosity and displays willingness to learn. Other spreads visually depict curious and smiling pupils getting their names written in Arabic by Kanzi and her mother. Their curiosity is conveyed through the verbal text: "I wonder what *my* name looks like in Arabic, says Tamika" (p.21). Kanzi's classmates are displayed as active listeners in the visual images of Mrs. Haugen teaching them about Arabic, and about being bilingual. This is except for Molly, who is "not enthusiastic about the project" (p.19). Education leads to Molly decentering from her personal attitudes and renewing her knowledge about bilingualism. The information about Arabic and bilingualism that is provided could lead to readers decentering and renewing their knowledge, like Molly in the story. Molly opening for new perspectives ends up benefiting her and Kanzi, as they both gain a new friend. This exemplifies to readers that openness and willingness to learn could benefit their social life in addition to their class environment.

The Arabic Quilt shows potential to become a sliding glass door for pupils and invite them to "step through into an experience that may change them" (Johnson et al., 2017, p.572-573). A central aspect of *Savoir être* is broadening one's perspective through decentering from personal attitudes. Comparing one's own meanings, beliefs and behaviors with those of others may facilitate decentering (Byram, 1997, p.35). The picturebook demonstrate to readers that both uniting views and opposite views can be found in both similar and dissimilar groups of people Mrs. Haugen and Kanzi have differing cultural backgrounds, but similar views of people who are bilingual. Kanzi and Molly are similar in age and interests but have opposing views to start out with. Readers get the opportunity to compare the different characters' meanings, beliefs, and behaviors with their own. Readers can get their beliefs confirmed or contrasted through the perspectives offered through the characters. For instance, readers can take the perspective of Molly's parents, through Molly. For readers who see the value of being bilingual, this perspective could function as a contrast and confirm their beliefs. For readers who agree with Molly's parents, Mrs. Haugen's perspective could function as a contrast. This contrast could cause them to decenter and view their beliefs from the perspective of the Other. In such cases, the experience of decentering could change how they view bilingual pupils with an immigrant background.

Like Kanzi's classmates, readers of *The Arabic Quilt* are encouraged to be open, curious, and

further develop their knowledge about Arabic. This way, readers could potentially further develop the ICC skill *savoir être*, which requires to be open and curious towards cultural and linguistic otherness (Byram, 1997). Readers unfamiliar with Arabic are invited to gain the same knowledge as the pupils in the story by being positioned to view the Arabic words written on the board in Kanzi's classroom. Arabic words also are used in dialogue between Kanzi and her parents, often in combination with English words. For instance, Kanzi's mother says "Kanzi, *habibti* (p.3). Arabic words are in italic, facilitating readers discovery of which words are Arabic. Readers also get examples of what Arabic looks like when it is written with Arabic letters. Kanzi's father holds a newspaper written in Arabic. This shows that Arabic is a part of the family's everyday life, both in spoken and written form. When Kanzi writes names in Arabic, readers also see that Arabic letters are equivalent to English in how it is used to form words. Readers get an opportunity to compare the two languages words through the picturebooks' informative pages about Arabic. The words are written in both languages, and it is specified that the Arabic words are in Egyptian dialect. This encourages readers to discover that not all Arabic speakers have the same dialect.

The Arabic Quilt opens for readers, with and without immigrant backgrounds, to learn about a language and a culture that may differ from their own. This way, the picturebook shows potential to function as a window for readers. When books are windows, readers learn something about the world beyond the one they know (Johnson et al., 2017, p.572). Readers who are unfamiliar with Kanzi's home culture have opportunities to look through the window of Kanzi's story and learn something new. The knowledge readers get access to could potentially contribute to developing the ICC skill *savoir*, which is gaining knowledge about various cultures on an individual and societal level (Byram, 1997). Throughout the picturebook, there are elements in the visual images connected to Kanzi's home culture. A breakfast scene in Kanzi's home setting invites readers to learn more about Egypt and Egyptian culture. Elements from the family's home depicted in the visual images can be tied to Egyptian culture, such as the patterned dishware and tablecloth.

The breakfast scene exemplifies how visual image and verbal text can work together to invite perspective-taking (figure 6). With images, we can speak of perspective in a literal sense: the reader/viewer beholds the image from a certain fixed point imposed by the artist (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). The fixed point of view in the spread invites perspective-taking in multiple ways. The positioning of the family members along the sides of the table

allows the reader/viewer to view the room from the outside in. Readers can imagine themselves sitting on the empty chair, at eye level with the family. Because the visual image is not framed, readers could get the feeling of being in their home (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.62). Kanzi's sad posture and facial expression contrast those of her family. Furthermore, the empty chair could remind readers that her grandmother is missing from their table. These aspects of the visual image enhance her sadness while the verbal text allows the reader to access Kanzi's inner thoughts and take her perspective: "She doesn't want to be different." (p.6).

A picture on the family's wall invites readers to reflect on why Kanzi's family left Egypt. If a reader were to imagine themselves sitting on the empty chair by their table, they would be looking directly at the picture of a protest. As *The Arabic Quilt* was published in 2020, this could picture the 2019 or the 2020 political protests in Egypt. The intertextuality of the visual image could bring attention to the existence of other "realities" outside the text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.227-228). It is not explicitly stated why Kanzi's family left Egypt, but the picture of the protest could form a starting point for class discussions about the varied reasons an immigrant family can have for leaving their home. The quilt Kanzi's grandmother made poses an opportunity to learn that the family still has a relative living in Egypt. The quilt physically and figuratively connects Kanzi to her grandmother in Egypt, and to Egyptian culture. At home, Kanzi writes a poem while she "hugs her quilt, which smells like Teita's home" (p.11-12). Kanzi finds comfort in the memories of visiting her grandmother, which shows that she has happy memories from Egypt.

Breakfast is delicious: Egyptian fava beans, homemade French toast, and watermelon with feta cheese and mint. Zacharia has watermelon juice dripping down his chin. He looks happy.

"Shukran, Baba," Kanzi says, but secretly she wishes her baba would pack her a peanut butter and jelly sandwich instead. Her family has just moved to this town, and she doesn't know anyone. She doesn't want to be different.

"I packed your favorite lunch for you: a kofya sandwich!" Baba exclaims.



Figure 6: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.5-6)

Food is intricately connected to Kanzi's home culture, and an element that makes the action move forward. Readers who are unfamiliar with the type of food on the family's breakfast table are invited to learn through descriptions in the verbal text: "Breakfast is delicious: Egyptian fava beans, homemade French toast, and watermelon with feta cheese and mint" (p.5-6). This exemplifies how the verbal narrator can invite readers to pay attention to certain details of the setting whilst ignoring others (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). The focus on the food in the verbal text insinuates its importance to the story. On her first day of school, Kanzi secretly wishes that baba would pack her a peanut butter jelly sandwich instead of a kofta (spiced meatball) sandwich, because "she doesn't want to be different" (p.6). This indicates that Kanzi believes that there might be a difference in the type of food her family eats compared to other pupils' families. The day after, her mother puts leftover shurbet'ads (lentils soup) in Kanzi's lunchbox. The fear Kanzi has of being viewed as different due to her lunch is reconfirmed when she asks her mother to pack her a turkey sandwich instead. These examples show how Kanzi views food as a cultural identifier. Kanzi's reluctance to bring Egyptian food to school is related to her insecurity regarding displaying parts of her home culture in class. When Kanzi brings her Arabic quilt to school, this contrasts with her previous reluctance to display elements of her home culture openly. In Norway, most pupils bring their own lunches to school. Discussing Kanzi's fears in the classroom could help pupils who share Kanzi's experiences. For pupils who have not had similar experiences, Kanzi's story could provide insight into the experiences of other pupils. Combined, this could help prevent any social stigma associated with lunchtime.

The Arabic Quilt both presents and challenge stereotypical representations of immigrants. Readers are invited to discover that both traditional and non-traditional clothing can be worn by immigrants. The visual image of the family eating breakfast instantly gives readers a first impression of who they are as people, without the verbal text describing it. Readers can extract information about characters from visual images of the character, such as their appearance (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Kanzi's physical appearance gives readers an impression of who she is. Her outfit works against immigrants being solely associated with traditional clothing connected to their home cultures. She wears dungarees and a white long-sleeve throughout the picturebook. This connects her to an age group rather than a particular culture or gender norms. Unlike Kanzi and her little brother, her mother and father are depicted with traditional Egyptian clothing. The customs of a hijabi woman are

subtly displayed through when Kanzi's mother chooses to wear her hijab. Kanzi's mother wears her hijab in public, but not when she is at home with her family. Neither is commented on in verbal text, as it is custom within Kanzi's family. The only time Kanzi explicitly thinks about her Mama's outer appearance is when she enters her classroom: "As Mama steps forward, Kanzi thinks how beautiful she looks" (p.18). This can tell readers that Kanzi is proud of the culture or values her mother represents. Another aspect worth paying attention to is that Kanzi's parents both take on caring roles in their home. Both pack her lunch, which subtly sets an example for readers that caring father figures and gender equality can exist within all families.

Kanzi is portrayed as a relatable character for all pupils, regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. The picturebook could function as a mirror for readers who see their experiences reflected and validated through physical recognition, reflection of cultural identity or a reflection of the readers emotions (Johnson et al., 2017). For readers who look similar to Kanzi or see elements of their home cultures reflected, the picturebook can serve as a mirror. Several other connection points can be found in how Kanzi is portrayed. Clues found in Kanzi's bedroom exemplify how the setting in a picturebook can provide information about the character (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.105). A child's bedroom can be considered a personal space that reflects their interests. Details in the visual representation of Kanzi's bedroom provide the reader with information about who she is. The book under the bed indicates that Kanzi likes reading. Additionally, there is a framed poster of a black female tennis player. This could be the Egyptian tennis player Mayar Sherif or the American tennis player Serena Williams. Regardless, the poster being displayed on her wall tells readers that Kanzi looks up to this woman. Furthermore, the mention of the quilt in the verbal text reveals that Kanzi has a connection to Egypt. This is confirmed when Kanzi shares three facts about herself in class: "I am Egyptian-American. I love to swim. I love to write poetry!" (p.8). Stating that she is Egyptian-American could point to Kanzi deeming her Egyptian background as important for her identity, in addition to her hobbies. The mention of Kanzi's hobbies in the verbal text can show readers that newcomer immigrants can share the hobbies of any other 3rd grader. The potential connection points between Kanzi and readers encourage them to view Kanzi as a part of a "we" rather than a "them".

The Arabic Quilt encourages readers to relate to Kanzi through the portrayal of her emotions. Kanzi is portrayed as a complex character with nuanced emotions. Readers'

experiences can be mirrored and validated through the picturebook reflecting their emotions (Johnson et al., 2017). All readers can relate to feeling nervous on the first day of school, be sad when their feelings are hurt and be happy when they get a new friend. This displays how migrant narratives can display the interconnectedness and vulnerability of all humans, opening for learning to stand with others as opposed to merely learning about others (Habegger-Conti, 2021). Visual images and verbal text work together to communicate Kanzi's emotions to readers. The scene before the class project is about to be revealed exemplifies this (figure 7). Kanzi is nervous because the quilt will be seen by a lot of unfamiliar pupils and teachers walking past her classroom. The visual image of smiling, relaxed pupils in the space contrasts and accentuates Kanzi's emotions. The visual image shows Kanzi with an insecure facial expression, looking upwards, as if thinking. Readers are viewing her from a slightly above angle, which enhances Kanzi's feeling of vulnerability. The verbal text gives readers access to Kanzi's inner monologue: *What if the quilt didn't turn out nicely?* (p.23). This way, readers could take her perspective and imagine themselves in her shoes.



Figure 7: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.23-24)

Readers are invited to relate to Kanzi's experiences through means used to create proximity between readers and the character. When the story begins, the frame of the cover page dissolves. This means there are no set boundaries separating readers from what happens in the story. The visual image on the first page is zoomed in on life-sized details, pencils and a framed picture of Kanzi's grandmother. Readers view the details up close, as if they were in the room. The moment is interrupted in the next spread, when Kanzi's mother initiates the

story by saying: “Kanzi, *habibti*, you’re going to be late to the first day of school” (p.3). The verbal text causes readers to zoom out from the details and pay attention to other elements in Kanzi’s bedroom, and notice Kanzi sitting on the floor. The fixed perspective position readers to view her from the floor, which reinforces the feeling of being close to her. The dissolved frames throughout *The Arabic Quilt* contribute to open for readers to step through the sliding glass door, blending the fictional world with the real world and positioning the reader as someone experiencing the story from the inside (Habegger-Conti, p.60-61).

In addition to point of view, the type of focalization in the verbal text implies where readers are positioned in relation to the character. Kanzi’s thoughts are described through a 3rd person singular voice: “She doesn’t want to be different” (p.6). The narrative voice tells readers how Kanzi is feeling, meaning Kanzi does not tell her own story. This shows that the verbal text is nonfocalized, also referred to as an omniscient, omnipresent perspective (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.118). An omniscient, omnipresent perspective creates more distance between the character and the reader than if the character were to speak directly to the reader, saying for instance: “I don’t want to be different”. In *The Arabic Quilt*, the distance between the reader and the main character is bridged through readers getting access to Kanzi’s thoughts through dialogue inner monologue. Dialogue and inner monologue can provide additional layers of information about a character (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Readers get access to Kanzi’s perspective through her poetry writing, which contributes to bridging the distance between the character and the readers. Through the fixed perspective in the visual image, readers are invited to stand close to Kanzi as she writes. Kanzi’s physical position in the visual image allows the reader to read some of the words that come to her mind: “Quilts, colorful, mismatching, unity, held together, community, beautiful” (p.12). The words are written in English and communicate Kanzi’s thoughts to readers who does not know Arabic.

At the end of the story, readers are invited to get even closer to Kanzi when she writes. When Kanzi writes a second poem, readers are positioned to view the poem as if holding it in their hands (figure 8). Thus, readers are not only invited to stand with Kanzi, but as Kanzi, in the visual image. When readers read the poem, they give voice to Kanzi in a literal sense. In the poem, Kanzi thanks her mama and baba for encouraging her to be proud of speaking a different language and speaking it aloud. The poem also shows Kanzi’s own reflection on the school project: “Languages can unite us together like a quilt, so I will always speak my

languages without guilt. I will never be ashamed to speak in this language that is so unique” (p.31). Kanzi’s poem can be seen as a promise to her parents and to herself. Readers will say the same promise when reading the poem. Kanzi writes that she will speak “my languages” without guilt, as opposed to Arabic. This indicates that she is proud of speaking both languages. Furthermore, the poem has a drawing of a house with a tree next to it. This drawing can be recognized at the center of the quilt Kanzi’s class made. The house can symbolize home, signifying that Kanzi feels at home in her new class and at ease with her identity.

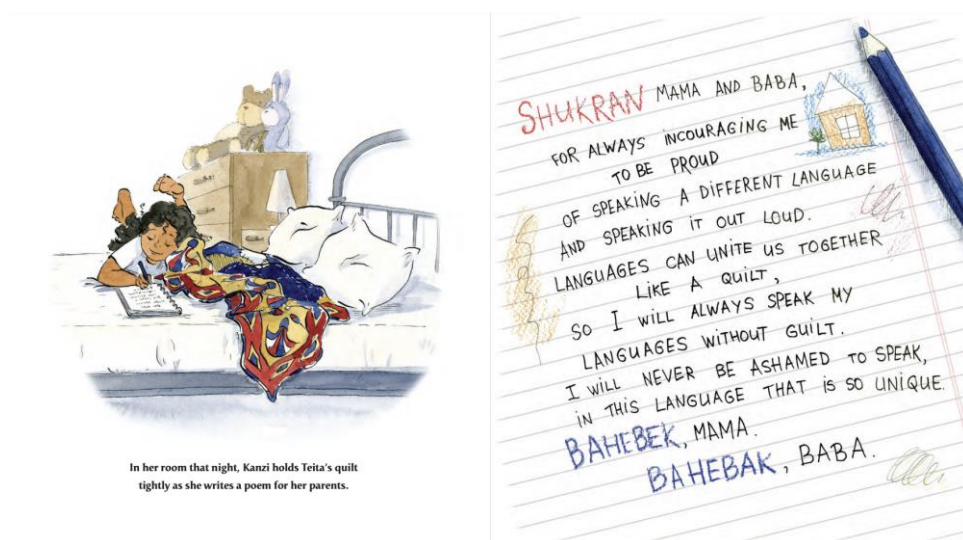


Figure 8: *The Arabic Quilt* (Khalil & Semirdzhyan, 2020, p.30-31)

4.2 The Name Jar

Like Kanzi in *The Arabic Quilt*, Unhei in *The Name Jar* is portrayed as feeling conflicted about her identity because of her new environment. The solutions to their challenges are similar, as these pupils both educate others in their school. However, in *The Name Jar*, the choice to educate others is left to Unhei. The analysis shows how the portrayal of Unhei’s identity can potentially invite perspective-taking and encourage readers to participate in, and learn from, the character’s experiences.

The Name Jar tells the story of a nervous and conflicted girl who, with the support of a new friend, finds her own solution to the challenges she faces in her new school. Unhei comes out from these challenges confident in her own identity. Her experiences are described through a 3rd person narrator. Unhei has moved to the United States of America with her family. The question “what is your name?” is often the first point of contact between a pupil

who enters a new school and their new peers. For Unhei, this becomes a hurtful experience as her response triggers pupils on the school bus to make fun of her name by mispronouncing it on purpose. The plot reveals three attempts to solve Unhei's problem of having a name that others can't seem to pronounce. First, Unhei comes up with the idea of picking an American name. Second, her classmates attempt to help her by making name suggestions and putting them in a name jar for her to choose from. The final, and successful, attempt is when Unhei decides to keep her Korean name. She presents herself to her class by signing her name on the board in both Korean and English. The action falls after school, when Joey visits Unhei and shows her a piece of paper with "chinku" (friend) stamped next to her name.

Unhei's actions in *The Name Jar* signal to readers that they do not need to change their names or identities when adapting to new circumstances. Unhei takes a progressively more active role in the story, before reconciling with her identity at the end. In the story's beginning, she is portrayed as shy and reserved in visual images and verbal text. After the incident on the school bus, this role is amplified. By starting the process of choosing an American name for herself and accepting suggestions from her classmates, she opens for others to name her. Consequently, she forces a passive role upon herself. At the end of the story, she reclaims her power to name by taking on an active role in the name negotiation. She chooses to keep her Korean name because, as she says, "I liked my name best" and "Korean names mean something" (p.29-30). Her statement informs her class that Korean names are important, implicitly stating that keeping your own identity is important. *The Name Jar* could inspire readers who have experienced negative views of their names to stand up for themselves.

Readers are invited to get progressively closer to Unhei in the story until they stand as her at the end. Unhei's inner monologue is described in a 3rd person singular voice. The verbal text is thus nonfocalized, also referred to as an omniscient, omnipresent perspective (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.118). This creates more distance between the character and readers than if the character were to tell the story in a 1st person voice. Still, readers get insight into Unhei's thoughts through dialogue and inner monologue. Readers' proximity to Unhei contributes to bridge the distance between the narrative voice and the character. In the first scene, readers view Unhei through a window (figure 9). By zooming in on Unhei, the illustrator invites the reader to pay special attention to this character. The window separates readers from Unhei,

allowing them to observe her from a distance before entering her world. In the spread that follows, readers are viewing the bus and the action in the story from the inside. The absence of frames contributes to positioning the reader as someone experiencing the story from the inside (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006; Habegger-Conti, 2021). Another visual image is zoomed in on Unhei while she holds the name jar up close (p.18). This time, readers are even closer to Unhei. She is looking at the names in the jar, and her gaze invites readers to do the same. At the end of the story, readers are positioned to view the note with the Korean word “chinku” (friend) as if holding it in their hands (figure 10). Readers are positioned to take her visual perspective, and part-take in her experience of being acknowledged and gaining a new friend.

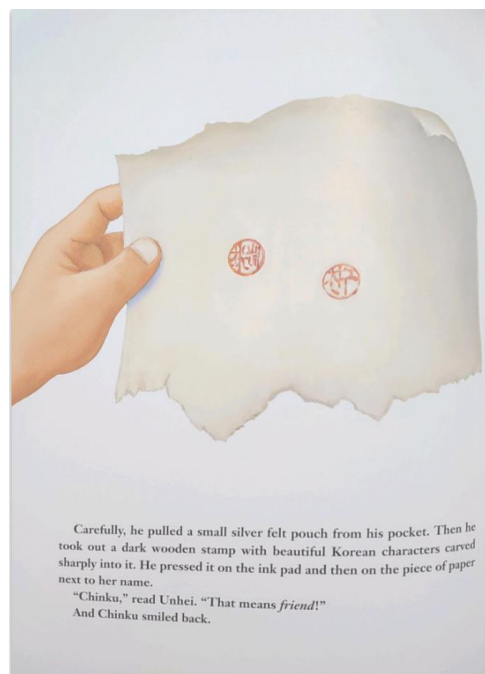


Figure 9: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.4) Figure 10: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.33)

The incident on the bus impacts Unhei emotionally and evokes an inner conflict related to her identity. On her first day of school, the verbal text describes Unhei as “both nervous and excited” (p.4). After being teased, the verbal text describes how Unhei “smiled broadly and tried to not to show her nervousness” (p.9-10). Her previous excitement has disappeared and seems to have been replaced by a concern for how she is perceived by others. The verbal text shed light on how she “pictured the kids on the bus” when entering the classroom and that she “felt many round, curious eyes on her” (p.9-10). This indicates that Unhei is scared that the curiosity of her new classmates will result in teasing, like the pupils on the bus. Unhei conceals her name from her classmates until she feels accepted. This can

be interpreted as her protecting her own identity. Unhei's worries are most prominent to readers in her home setting, where she reflects on her identity. Unhei's personal view of her identity is displayed through a conversation with her mother, where Unhei says "I don't want to be different from all of the American kids," (p.11). Through the dialogue with her mother, readers get access to Unhei's reflections. This shows how dialogue between the protagonist and other characters can reveal another dimension of character (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). When her mother says "You are different, Unhei. That's a good thing!", Unhei responds with wrinkling her nose (p.11). Unhei's reaction indicates that she disagrees with her mother stating that being different is good, and that she has negative associations to being different.

The Name Jar invites readers to experience what it is like to stand in front of a mirror, wishing you had a different name to fit in at school (figure 11). This spread exemplifies how visual image and verbal text can work together to invite perspective-taking. In picturebooks, readers behold images from a certain fixed point imposed by the artist (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). The fixed perspective in the visual image invites readers to take her visual perspective and her perspective on her own identity. Readers are positioned to view Unhei as if standing behind her. However, her reflection in the mirror gives the impression that they are looking at Unhei, as Unhei. This exemplifies how the use of mirrors can create a sense of a first-person perspective (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.119). Unhei's inner monologue gives readers another mode of understanding the character (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 81). Unhei's inner monologue reveals that she feels like the Other compared to other pupils. She compares herself to American kids as a group. This can be viewed as self-othering, which can be a way for people to defend themselves by describing themselves as different from others (Dervin, 2016, p.46). Unhei's inner monologue implicitly informs readers that she does not define herself as an American kid when she says, "*I don't think American kids will like me*" (p.16).

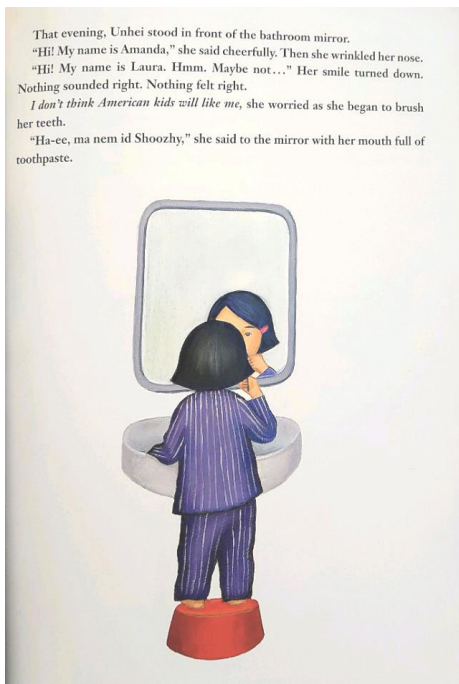


Figure 11: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.16)

Unhei must weigh her desire for acceptance against what fitting in will cost her in terms of a name change. Unhei is torn between choosing an American name or keeping her Korean name. Names can symbolize a child's cultural identity. Thus, Unhei's inner confliction can be seen as her trying to figure out if she can preserve her Korean identity in her new social environment. Dervin claims that identity and who we are is "unstable, contextual and must be negotiated with others" (Dervin, 2016, p.15). Choosing a new name could be an attempt to renegotiate how her identity is viewed by others in her school by conforming to American norms. Influenced by other pupils' views, Unhei states that her name is "so difficult to pronounce" (p.11). When Unhei says she "thinks" she would like a new name (p.11), this indicates that the others' views conflict with her own. This is later confirmed through when Unhei's smile "turned down" and "nothing felt right" when trying out American names in the mirror (p.16). Although adapting to the views of the Other by making a name change can seem like an easy solution to Unhei's inner conflict, it is not ethically right. The denial or change of a child's given name can be an attempt to force assimilation, even when the child seemingly chooses this new name (Keller & Franzak, 2016, p.178). Unhei discarding her name would implicitly mean discarding the parts of her identity connected to Korean culture. Additionally, it would give others the power to name her (Said, 1978). Unhei taking back this privilege thus has great symbolic meaning in terms of stating immigrants' right to preserve their identities.

The name stamp represents Unhei's name and her identity. The name stamp is introduced in visual image on the title page, where it is close to life sized. The bottom of the stamp is visible, inviting readers to discover the connection between the item and the stamps on the inside of the cover. The verbal text draws attention to the stamp throughout the picturebook. This shows how the verbal narrator can make the reader pay attention to certain details of the setting whilst ignoring others (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). When Unhei receives the name stamp from her grandmother, it gains focus from the verbal text describing the ink pad, and the red satin pouch with her name inside. Additionally, readers are invited to both see and feel the name stamp. The texture of the stamp is described through the verbal text describing how Unhei "ran her fingers along the groves and ridges of the Korean characters" (p.6). Throughout the story, the stamp is connected to how Unhei feels about her name and identity. For instance, when she hides the stamp from the pupils on the bus, she is insecure about her identity. When she later shows the name stamp to Joey, she feels safe enough with him to reveal her name.

The name stamp functions as a connection point between Unhei's previous home in Korea and her current home in the US. The stamp has personal meaning for Unhei, as it connects her with her grandmother in Korea. This is shown through Unhei's actions in the story. Unhei tells Joey that when she misses her grandmother, she uses a name stamp to fill a piece of paper (p.20). After reading a letter from her grandmother, the verbal text describes how Unhei "took out her wooden stamp and filled a paper with it" (p.24). This confirms to readers that Unhei values the connection with grandmother, and Korea, and misses her. Later in the story, Unhei receives a letter from her grandmother in Korea, saying "...no matter how different America is from Korea, you'll always be my Unhei" (p.24). The letter reminds Unhei, and readers, of how her name connects her to her grandmother in Korea, and to Korean culture. The name stamp is a key element in driving the action in the story forward. When the name jar is missing, Joey has left a single note on Unhei's desk with her name stamped in Korean. The note encourages her to keep her own name. Because elements connected to Unhei's home culture are otherwise only shown in her home setting, the name stamp becomes important in bridging the divide between Unhei's school setting and her home setting.

Unhei receives positive reinforcement on her name and identity in her home setting, which contributes to her gaining a sense of belonging. A name connects a person's identity with

their family, and sometimes with their naming traditions. Korean naming traditions are shown through the verbal text. Her mother tells Unhei the story of how she got her name: “Your grandmother and I went to a name master for it” (p.11). A comment from the cashier at the Korean grocery store, Mr. Kim, adds to the significance of this tradition. He says, “A graceful name for a graceful girl” (p.15). This confirms to Unhei that the name master chose a name that suits her. Unhei reflects on the connection between her previous home and her new one in inner monologue: *“It’s the same rain, but in a different place”* (p.19). The verbal text also describes how Unhei “felt like she was back in her old neighborhood in Korea” while being in the Korean grocery store (p.26). This signifies that Unhei not only sees, but starts to feel, her Korean culture reflected in her new home setting.

The depiction of Unhei as passive in vulnerable situations poses a risk that reader perceive Unhei as consistently dependent on help from others to act. In a visual image from the school bus, five pupils surround Unhei (figure 12). The verbal text draws attention to how kids are leaning over towards her. Readers are positioned to view Unhei from above, adding to the impression that all eyes are on her. Some pupils are depicted with unfriendly facial expressions, and a girl is pointing at Unhei. Despite not all their faces being fully visible, a worried girl in the left corner enhances the notion that these pupils are not nice towards Unhei. This is confirmed in the verbal text describing how the girl is “scrunching up her face” after mispronouncing Unhei, while others make fun of her name by chanting “ooh, ooh, ooh-ney!” instead of Unhei (p.7). Unhei and the worried girl are the only pupils who are visually depicted as passive in the situation. The visual depiction of Unhei as passive in vulnerable situations later repeats itself when pupils are searching for the name jar. Unhei and two other pupils look perplexed, standing still as if they are paralyzed by action. From their visual appearances, the three pupils could be interpreted as having immigrant backgrounds. Readers construct their impression of a character by extracting information from the picturebook, information that could potentially be amplified by their imagination (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81) There is thus a risk that readers could make generalizations based on previous depictions and descriptions of Unhei and perceive these characters as a group who are passive or unable to act in stressful or uncomfortable situations. Unhei’s action to stand up for herself thus gains importance as it disproves this notion.



Figure 12: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.7-8)

Visual depictions of Unhei’s school setting create ambiguity in how her classmates view her. A visual image from Unhei’s classroom shows pupils leaning over towards her, a situation comparable to the incident on the school bus (figure 13). A boy is standing behind Unhei with his arms crossed, a posture indicating that he is closed off towards her. Furthermore, the two girls in the back are turned away from Unhei and appears to be talking about her. The blond-haired boy who is leaning towards her has an ambiguous facial expression. Readers construct their impression of a character by extracting relevant information about the character, such as making inferences from the character’s behavior and amplifying these from their own imagination (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Readers could make assumptions about the boys’ behavior by linking the situation to Unhei’s experience on the school bus. The blond boy’s facial expression could then be interpreted as mean. Because images can be misleading or perceived differently than they are intended to, the verbal text becomes important in completing the reader’s understanding of how Unhei’s classmates view her compared to the pupils on the bus. The verbal text informs readers that the pupils are talking about names, but not in a mean way. It also provides an explanation of the boy’s facial expression: “Ralph frowned. “That’s silly. What if she doesn’t like the name she draws?” (p.21). This exemplifies how words and images can present characters in contradictory manners, creating irony and/or ambiguity (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.25). The verbal text fills the gap left by the visual image (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.2) by clarifying to

readers that Unhei's classmates do not have bad intentions. They give her name suggestions and help search for the name jar when it is missing. Still, the pupils make speculations about why Unhei does not have a name rather than asking her about it, such as "Maybe she robbed a bank in Korea and needs a new identity" (p.10). Although their intentions are good, their approach shows little understanding of Unhei's situation.

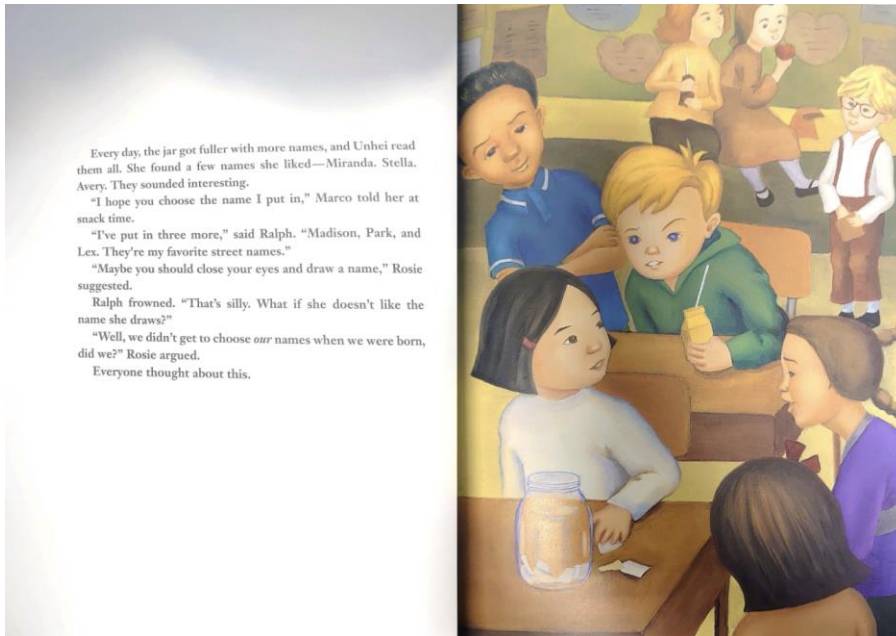


Figure 13: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.21-22)

The Name Jar encourage acceptance and inclusion of pupils with an immigrant background through the character Joey. The character functions as a prime example of how openness and curiosity can contribute to forming new friendships. He is portrayed as open and curious in interactions with Unhei, both in visual images and verbal text. In Byram's ICC model (1997), these skills can contribute to gaining intercultural awareness. Joey is the only pupil in Unhei's class who seems invested in her keeping her Korean name, and in learning about Korean culture. The name stamp becomes a connection point between Unhei and Joey, and between readers and Unhei's culture. Joey asks about Unhei's name, and she shows it to him by stamping it on a piece of paper (figure 14). The visual images in the spread work together to invite readers to see the stamp from his visual perspective. The left image shows Joey looking down at the paper, whereas the right image zooms in on what he sees. Joey says "Wow. That's beautiful. Can I keep the paper?" (p.20). This indicates that he sees value and beauty in Unhei's Korean name. The close-up of the stamp invites readers to see the same. Joey later reveals to Unhei that he hid the name jar because he wanted her to keep her own name, which confirms that he values her identity as is. He is also depicted looking up at her

in two spreads. The size and placing of a character on the double spread (high or low, left or right) may reflect their attitude toward other characters (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.83). The transferred meaning of his positioning could be that he looks up to Unhei and values her identity. Before Joey is depicted in the story, the characters' views of Unhei's identity appeared to be context dependent. He is the only character portrayed meeting her both in and out of school. Like Unhei, Joey is a natural part of the diverse neighborhood. This contributes to blurring the divide between Unhei's home setting and her school setting.



Figure 14: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.19-20)

The passiveness of Unhei's teacher, Mr. Cocotos, contradicts the story's message that all names are important. Mr. Cocotos stands behind Unhei in a supportive manner when introducing her to the class, but this support quickly dissolves. He does not get involved when Unhei says she will choose a new name. When the name jar is missing, he simply asks Unhei if she got a chance to read all the names, with "a look of concern" (p.28). Mr. Cocotos ignores his responsibility to educate his pupils and act against stereotyping. Mr. Cocotos' only contribution to deepen his pupil's knowledge about names is to respond, "lots of American names have meanings, too" (p.30) when a pupil saying she is named after a flower. By not addressing the preconceptions of Korean names, he implicitly allows discrimination in his classroom. This is the opposite of what Hoff (2014) writes about cultural biases and preconceived opinions having to be brought out in the open so that they can be examined and challenged (Hoff, 2014, p.512). Unhei must take on the role of the teacher and explain

that she already has a name worth keeping. This goes against the view of adults being responsible to recognize, broaden and deepen children's competence (Bintz & Ciecierski-Madara, 2022, p.25). The underlying message in the picturebook then becomes that for Unhei to move past her conflicting feelings associated with her name, she must take control over the situation herself. After presenting herself, Unhei's classmates pronounced her name better, "even Mr. Cocotos" (p.30). This could give readers the impression that Mr. Cocotos does not care enough about Unhei's name to have practiced it. Combined, the portrayal of Mr. Cocotos could lead readers to believe that pupils who face discrimination because of their name will not receive support from their teachers.

Unhei's role as an educator for her fellow pupils contributes to displaying her as a role model for others. She teaches her classmates to pronounce her name and that it has meaning. A pupil named Rosie then discovers a connection: both their names have meanings. This brings readers' attention to the fact that everyone has a name, and all names are meaningful. This shows how migrant narratives can display the interconnectedness between all humans (Habegger-Conti, 2021). Unhei reconciles with her name and her identity when she signs her name on the board in both Korean and English (figure 15). The fixed perspective in the visual image position readers to look at Unhei, as if they were in the classroom. Both the pupils and readers are positioned to look up to Unhei. This positioning shows that Unhei, and what she is doing, is important and requires attention. This indicates that she is resourceful. Unhei's posture is open and confident, and she smiles. Combined, this exemplifies how changes in the positioning of the character can reflect changes in the character themselves (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.83). Unhei is speaking directly to her classmates saying her name "slowly and clearly" (p.30). This confident act gains importance as it contrasts with Unhei's previous insecurity.

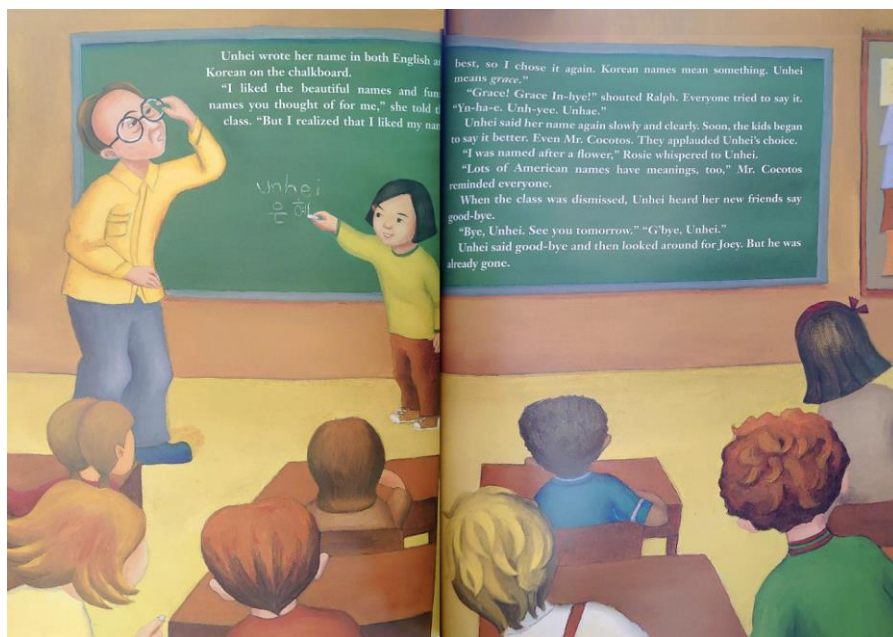


Figure 15: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.29-30)

Readers are presented with several opportunities to gain intercultural awareness by studying Korean culture, language and values in the picturebook. Scenes from Unhei's home setting invite readers to view details and values connected to Korean culture. Unhei's home setting is first presented through a view of the family's kitchen. The dishware, the chopsticks, Mandu (Korean dumplings). The details in the kitchen connecting Unhei to Korean culture show how setting can shed light on the layers of a character, giving the reader clues through the character's surroundings (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.105). Readers can also learn about Korean values through the verbal text. Unhei's mother says to her: "I'm glad that you are learning English well. You must study hard, behave nicely, and get good grades to show that you're a good Korean" (p.11). This statement puts education forward as a value within Unhei's Korean family. Unhei's mother also says, "Just because we move to America doesn't mean we stop eating Korean food" (p.14). This indicates that she views Korean food as important to her family. Unhei's grandmother writes to Unhei that she must "be sure to help your mother and your little brother" (p.24). Helping family can be interpreted as a Korean value. For readers unfamiliar with Unhei's home culture, the picturebook poses opportunities to practice the ICC skill *savoir être* by being open and curious towards cultural otherness. *The Name Jar* thus shows potential to function as a window, enabling readers to learn something about the world beyond the one they know (Bishop 1990, Johnson et al., 2017).

The letter from Unhei's grandmother opens for readers to compare Korean with English (figure 16). The fixed perspective allows readers to view the letter from above, while the verbal text provides an English translation of the letter. Having bilingual text can emphasize that Unhei comes from a rich culture with past experiences and a language that has value. Another opportunity to compare the two languages is when readers are positioned outside Kim's market. The shop has signs in both languages, which is commented on in the verbal text: "The sign was both in English and Korean" (p.13). The sign being in both languages indicates that the shop is used by people who know Korean, and people who do not. This shows readers that Korean has a natural place in a diverse society.

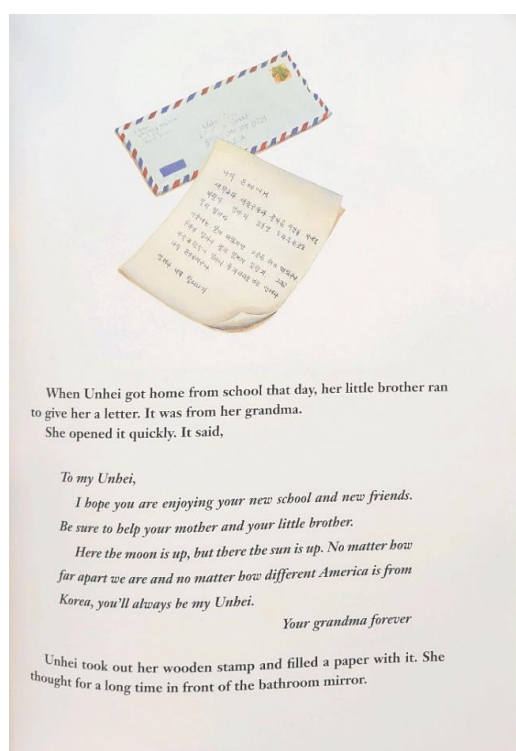


Figure 16: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001, p.24)

The visual representation of Unhei's diverse neighborhood demonstrates that cultures can coexist, and that people can have complex cultural identities. This realization can be connected to the ICC skill *Savoir* (Byram, 1997), which requires the intercultural speaker to gain knowledge about various cultures on an individual and societal level. Readers gain insight into Korean culture on an individual level through Unhei, whilst gaining knowledge about its place in society through viewing Unhei's neighborhood. The visual image is zoomed out to present the diverse context Kim's market is placed in. Readers view the presentation of Unhei's neighborhood from across the street. Pupils could potentially recognize parts of their own home cultures in the visual image. The variation in the food's origin reflects the

diversity of people in the neighborhood and shows readers that Korean culture is a natural part of this environment. This signals to readers that Unhei too has a natural place in her new neighborhood. The entrance of Kim's marked separate readers from Unhei and her mother, causing readers to have a full overview of the neighborhood before they enter the store. Readers are invited into Kim's marked through the verbal text describing what they buy: cabbage to make Kimchi, Korean-style spicy pickled cabbage, vegetables, meat, and seaweed for soup (p.14). For readers familiar with Korean language, food and culture, *The Name Jar* can function as a mirror (Bishop, 1990; Johnson et.al 2017).

The Name Jar poses several opportunities for readers to decenter through practicing the skill of *Savoir être* (Byram, 1997). Readers can revisit incidents in *The Name Jar* and reflect upon the perspectives offered. Hoff points to how revisiting passages in a book gives readers the opportunity to take different vantage positions (Hoff, 2016). Through taking Unhei's perspective, readers can compare her observations of her new environment with their own perceptions of what the US is like. This way, the picturebook could help pupils realize that how people view the world is culturally dependent. For instance, Unhei is looking out the bus window "at the strange buildings and houses" on her first day of school (p.4). Here, the verbal text leaves gaps for the reader/viewer to fill (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.2). Readers could potentially fill this gap by imagining what they themselves consider strange houses and buildings to be. Taking Unhei's perspective could help readers realize that whether the buildings and houses Unhei sees are perceived as strange depends on what the context the viewer is used to seeing. This gives the pupils an opportunity to look beyond words and reflect upon the effects of subject positions and to analyze cultural assumptions from different vantage points, which could bring about new understandings (Hoff, 2016). Readers get another opportunity to realize that our view of the world is culture-dependent presents through how different characters perceive names differently. While the pupils on the bus said Unhei was difficult to pronounce, Unhei thinks that some of the American name suggestions "sounded interesting", indicating that Unhei is not used to American names (p.21). By comparing these views of names to their own, pupils could have their perceptions of pronouncing Korean names confirmed or contradicted in the story. Readers who share the views of the pupils on the school bus can get them contrasted when Joey and the rest of Unhei's classmates can pronounce Unhei. This can help readers realize that an interlocutor's unfamiliarity with the pronunciation of a name does not justify it being categorized as

difficult for everyone. Opportunities like these are in line with what Hoff refers to as the primary goal of intercultural competence as an educational “to lay the ground for learning processes that allow them to go below the surface of discourse and appearances and to explore questions to which there are no clear-cut answers” (Hoff, 2019, p.444). *The Name Jar* opens for readers to go below the surface of what the characters are stating about names and explore why they have this perception.

4.3 The Colour of Home

Unlike *The Name Jar* and *The Arabic Quilt*, *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993) informs readers of why the main character attends school in a new country. Hassan has fled from Somalia to England with his mother, father and little sister. The picturebook sheds light on what it can be like to attend a new school in a new country, while processing trauma from war and a long journey. This analysis explores how Hassan’s identity is portrayed and how readers are invited to take his perspective.

The plot portrays Hassan as a resilient boy who has overcome many challenges. He and his family fled from Somalia when soldiers came to his house and killed his uncle. Exhausted after his journey and knowing only a few words in English, Hassan does not interact with other pupils in his new school. His new teacher, Miss Kelly, encourages him to paint. He paints a colorful picture of his previous home, a setting that instigates plot development (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). Then, he covers the picture with stick figures with guns. Miss Kelly brings in a Somali interpreter, Fela, to help Hassan explain what the drawing means. Hassan goes from being passive to taking on an active role when telling his story. Afterwards, Hassan’s role in the plot is consistently active. He starts to play, takes initiative to paint a new picture for his mother, asks his father for a cat and wants to learn more English.

The portrayal of Hassan’s identity can contribute to preventing stereotypical notions of refugees. Although *The Colour of Home* is about a refugee experience, the main character and his family members are not called refugees in the picturebook. The word “refugee” is also left out when Hassan describes the refugee camp they lived in. Hassan merely says, “we lived in a camp”. Additionally, readers are presented with some potential connection points between Hassan’s identity and their own identities through visual images. For instance, readers could also have a little sister or a cat, like Hassan. This shows that Hassan is like any

other child, despite being forced to endure challenging circumstances. Hassan's appearance can also contribute to readers' perception of what he is like, as readers can extract information about characters from visual images depicting them (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.81). Hassan wears pants and a long-sleeved jumper, an outfit similar to what his classmates are wearing. This could facilitate readers viewing him as a pupil in class rather than a refugee.

The picturebook could be a mirror for readers who see their emotions reflected. Readers can relate to Hassan's feelings of fear, sadness and happiness. Hassan's nuanced emotions are well reflected through detailed and expressive visual images. An example of this is the visual image depicting Hassan and some of the changes he made to his picture (figure 17). By zooming in on Hassan, readers are invited to pay special attention to this character. Readers assume characters that are depicted as large or centered on the page have more significance (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.83). The fixed perspective in the visual image position readers close to Hassan. This invites them to notice the intricate details in his facial expression. His eyebrows are curled upwards in a worried manner, and the corners of his lips have a slight downward bend. Such details could help readers interpret his emotions. His posture in visual images also contributes to conveying his emotions, like when he lowers his head and slouches his shoulders when he is sad. The sad facial expressions and postures contrast with how Hassan is depicted later in the story. His shoulders are then relaxed, and he is smiling. Colors is another means used to convey Hassan's emotions in the picturebook. This comes across well when Hassan is painting. The first picture Hassan paints shows his life before his family became refugees. He paints a colorful picture of his home in Somalia, with a "blue, blue sky without any clouds" (p.6). The cloud-free sky can symbolize that he had no worries at the time. The happy and peaceful situation contrasts with the dramatic move Hassan makes next. He paints flames on the roof and changes the blue sky to a murky purple. Then, he draws another stick figure and "made black bullets come out of it" before he splatters the red paint on the white walls of the house (p.8). The splattering of the red paint gives associations to blood splatter, an imagery that becomes vivid against the white walls. A splatter happens quick, similar to how Hassan's life suddenly changed. Finally, he smudges his uncle out of the picture. This act can symbolize how Hassan's uncle was suddenly erased from his life. The descriptions of the painting process mimic the dramatic moment that changed Hassan's life. The verbal text zooms in on details like the flames and bullets, and

quickly moves from one to another. This opens for readers to picture what it must be like for Hassan to stand amidst the chaos and witness these events.



Figure 17: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.8-9)

The title *The Colour of Home* reflects how Hassan associates colors with feeling at home. Hassan describes how England seems grey compared to Somalia: “Our new country seemed all cold and grey. And the flat we live in is grey too, with brown furniture. We seem to have left all the colours behind in Somalia” (p.19). Hassan's descriptions of his grey surroundings imply that he feels depressed, and that he misses his home in Somalia. Eventually Hassan starts to notice colors in his new home, like “a green cushion, an orange tablecloth and a pink dress” (p.24). At the end of the story, the verbal text describes how “just then the sun came out, and there was blue sky outside their window” (p.24). The sun coming out can symbolize how Hassan’s mind is less clouded, and which enables him to see hope. The colors on the inside of the cover symbolize Hassan’s emotional journey. When opening the picturebook, there is a warm orange color on the left and a colder blue color on the right. The warm color can be associated with joy and the cold color with sadness. The order of the colors symbolizes how Hassan went from being happy to sad in Somalia. At the end of the story, these colors have switched places, symbolizing that Hassan went from sad to happy in England.

The Colour of Home opens for readers to recognize the perseverance and inner strength of refugees. Hassan’s story exemplifies how refugees can have long, challenging journeys that include stays in refugee camps before reaching their new homes. Hassan says “We went on a

big ship from Mogadishu to Mombasa. Then we lived in a camp for a long time” (p.18). The picturebook also demonstrates to readers how refugee camps can turn into temporary homes while families wait for an opportunity to continue their journeys. The verbal text works together with visual images of Naima to show how time has passed since they arrived in the camp. Hassan's sister Naima is first described when he paints “a bundle that was his baby sister” (p.6). In a visual image of the family fleeing, Hassan’s mother is carrying her on her back. The verbal text later draws attention to how Naima learned to walk in the camp. The extensiveness of their journey is also implied through the length of Hassan’s story. The verbal text describes how “Hassan talked for an hour and then he ran out of words, even in Somali” (p.20). Hassan had a lot to tell Miss Kelly and Fela because he had been on a long journey. Hassan running out of words “even in Somali” could symbolize that there are not enough words, in any language, that could sufficiently describe what he has been through. Hassan’s descriptions of the challenging conditions on his journey can show readers how refugee families often sacrifice a lot economically, but also emotionally, to find a new home in a new country. People in refugee camps can struggle to cover the basic needs of their families, such as providing food and warmth. This is brought to readers’ attention through Hassan describing the camp they stayed in as “cold at night”, and that his mother had to queue for their food (p.18). A refugee camp can be an unstable, and sometimes unsafe, environment for children. Hassan says “people stole things” (p.18), which brings forward the desperation that can occur in a camp if people do not have what they need for themselves or their families. The verbal text also informs readers about how leaving a refugee camp can be expensive, which can force refugee families to make difficult sacrifices after leaving their homes as well. When talking about the camp, Hassan says: “...all my mother’s gold jewellery disappeared, but I think that was because we bought tickets to England. My cousins and grandparents stayed behind.” (p.18). This implies that the family could not afford tickets for all of them. Because this is not explicitly stated in the verbal text or shown in the visual image, readers must fill in the gap (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006) and interpret why some of Hassan’s family members stayed behind. This exemplifies how picturebooks can invite readings on multiple levels (Beckett, 2018, p.209). This passage could lead pupils to discover how money factors into the opportunities and decisions of refugees and raise awareness of why a lot of people with refugee backgrounds have families spread across the world. The picturebook opens for readers to discover the underlying reasons for Hassan’s emotions.

On his first day of school, Hassan is depicted with a sad facial expression (figure 18). Because the verbal text does not explicitly state why Hassan is sad, readers must fill in the gap (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.2) with reasons for his sadness. Readers could extract information from the verbal text to do so, such as Hassan not eating lunch because “he didn’t know what it was” or that he has never painted a picture before (p.5). This could lead readers to believe Hassan is sad because he is hungry, or because he does not know how to paint. If readers revisit this passage after Hassan’s experiences are presented, they can see that there were underlying causes for Hassan’s sadness. Hoff points to how revisiting passages in a book gives readers the opportunity to take different vantage positions (Hoff, 2016). Taking different vantage positions to figure out why Hassan is sad could guide readers to realize that a pupil’s emotional reaction in school can stem from events outside their school environment. *The Colour of Home* sheds light on how traumatic experiences can cause physical and emotional reactions long after they have occurred. Readers get insight into how incidents in someone’s past can affect them in the present when Hassan says “I was frightened when I saw the plane we were going to fly in, because I thought it might have bombs in it” (p.19). This implies that Hassan associates planes with war because of his experiences.

Readers also get an example of how a journey can take a physical toll on refugees. For Hassan, “It was tiring remembering even a few English words” (p.4). Some children in refugee camps go into survival mode and enter a silent period as a response to their challenging circumstances. Hassan shows signs of this in school. A visual image depicts him sitting on a bench, surrounded by three pupils. Hassan has a sad posture, looking down as if avoiding eye contact. He does not respond to the girl who offers him an apple, or the boy who kicks a football towards him. The verbal text describes that “the children were friendly” (p.4). Still, Hassan does not respond to their friendliness and initiative to play. This could be a sign of him still being in survival mode and not yet feeling safe. Additionally, children in refugee camps sometimes stop to play as a reaction to their unstable environment or traumatic experiences. After talking about his experiences, Hassan starts to play again. This signals to readers that processing traumatic experiences can help relieve some of the emotional reactions connected to them.

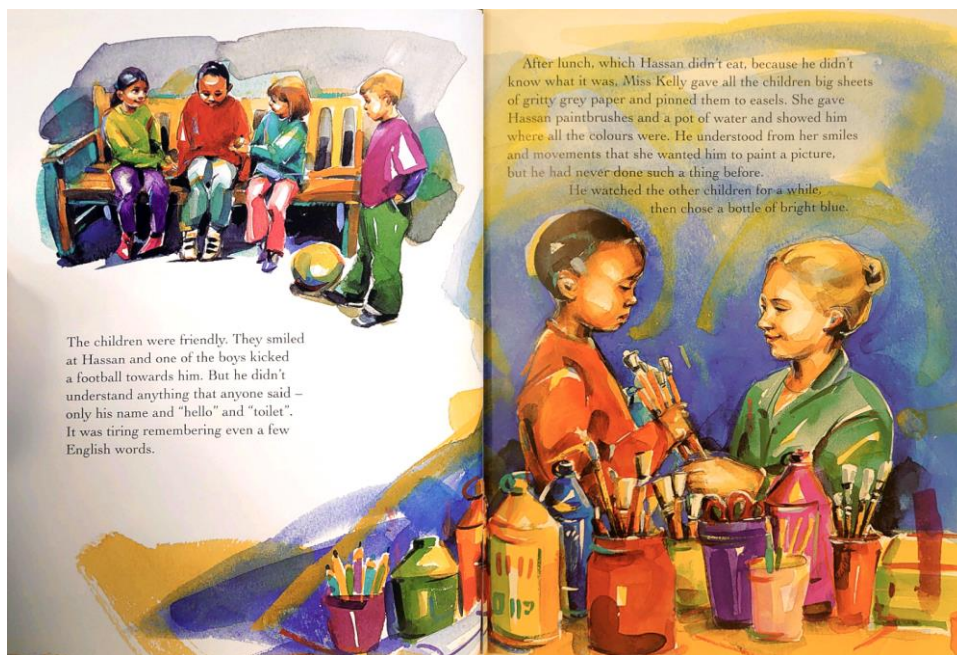


Figure 18: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.4-5)

The Colour of Home can show readers that for some refugees, a new start does not necessarily equal a happy ending. The verbal text draws readers' attention to this when Hassan says "The journey was so long, but I wasn't happy when it was over" (p.19). A visual image of Hassan on a sofa depicts him as tired and in need of comfort when arriving in England. He is holding his arms around his knees, as if comforting himself (figure 19). Hassan is alone in the visual image, and it looks as if he does not receive help to process his emotions. Readers are reminded that his memories are not simply pictures in his head when Hassan tells his story "...about the noise, the flames, the bullets and the awful smell of burning and blood" (p.15). This draws attention to how remembering a traumatic experience can mean re-experiencing and re-sensing that moment in time. Hassan shows awareness of this when he makes up an excuse to avoid showing his picture to his mother because "he didn't want his mother to be sad" (p.10). This informs readers that Hassan is aware that memories of the traumatic events can trigger his mother's sadness. Parents in refugee families must deal with their own trauma in addition to that of their children, which could potentially result in them being less present than they would like to be. Losing a loved one and being forced to leave family members behind has affected his mother. Hassan suppresses his needs to process his trauma to avoid reminding his mother of what they have been through. By choosing to shield his mother from certain memories, Hassan puts her needs before his own and takes on the role of an adult. The conversation with Miss Kelly and

Fela allows Hassan to process his emotions without the fear of retraumatizing his mother.



Figure 19: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.18-19)

The picturebook shows how teachers and pupils can support and include newcomer immigrants. Miss Kelly is first introduced holding Hassan's hand while presenting him to class. She says "I want you to make him feel at home" (p.2). Hassan's classmates try to include him. A visual image shows how they sit next to him during recess and invite him to play. Their efforts are also described in the verbal text, like when Hassan plays football with "the friendly boy, who pointed at himself and said 'Jake'" (p.21). This can function as a concrete example of how readers can communicate their name and invite someone to play despite not speaking the same languages yet. Miss Kelly also uses body language to communicate her good intentions towards Hassan, like when she encourages him to paint. The verbal text describes how Hassan "...understood from her smiles and movements that she wanted him to paint a picture" (p.5). The visual depictions of Miss Kelly can exemplify to readers how body language, like someone's posture or smile, can communicate support and compassion. When listening to Hassan's story, Miss Kelly is visually depicted leaning her head on her hand while she looks at Hassan and puts a comforting hand on his shoulder (figure 20). Additionally, the verbal text brings attention to Miss Kelly having tears in her eyes after hearing Hassan's story. This shows how Miss Kelly cares about Hassan and feels for him, even though it is only his second day as her pupil. This signals to readers that all pupils are important.

Although communication through smiles and gestures were previously successful, words are needed for Miss Kelly to understand Hassan's choice to add stick figures with guns in his picture. When Hassan is painting, readers are transported from his mind to the present when Miss Kelly says "Oh, Hassan," "It's all spoilt. What a shame!" (p.9). The expression "what a shame" means "what a pity", expressing that it is unfortunate that his beautiful picture was spoilt. If readers are unfamiliar with the expression there is a risk that they could interpret it in a literal sense, as if Miss Kelly is shaming Hassan. The close-up of Hassan's sad facial expression contributes to this. Miss Kelly's comment could seem harsh because close-ups can amplify the direct speech of the verbal text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.16). The verbal text conveys the tone of her voice through describing how Hassan "...didn't know what her words meant, but he heard the sadness in her voice and knew that she understood his picture" (p.9). This clarifies to readers that Miss Kelly feels compassion towards him. Hassan interprets the sadness of Miss Kelly's voice as her being able to understand his picture. However, Miss Kelly does not understand. Still, she facilitates understanding by bringing in an interpreter. The choice allows Miss Kelly, and readers, to gain a deeper understanding of Hassan's actions and emotions. This can show readers how miscommunication can occur due to language barriers. Additionally, the picturebook provides a solution for how to bridge the language barriers and facilitate mutual understanding. This solution shows readers that Hassan can tell his story in Somali.



Figure 20: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.20-21)

The Colour of Home demonstrates how the word “home” is not only connected to a place, like a house or a country, but also to a sense of belonging. This is brought forward in the verbal text describing how the classroom “didn’t feel like home to Hassan at all” (p.2). Hassan still thinks of Somalia as his “real home” (p.2). When describing his second picture, Hassan says: “It’s our home in Somalia”. This shows how Hassan still thinks of the house as their home, but he adds “in Somalia”. This indicates that he feels they have two homes; one in Somalia and a new one in England. Hassan’s mother confirms that both places can be considered home when she says “We’ll put it on the wall of our home here in England” (p.23). After, Hassan “walked home” (p.23). Hassan walking home indicates that he feels a sense of belonging in England. The last visual image depicts the family in their new home (figure 21). Hassan’s mother is sewing, literally making the family a new home. Readers can spot a flower in the family’s windowsill, which can symbolize the family putting down roots in England. The story ends with Hassan thinking he will ask Miss Kelly to tell him the word for “home” (p.24). This can signify that he is ready to settle in his new home and learn more English.

The second picture Hassan paints could contribute to show readers the effect of processing traumatic experiences. After Hassan has painted a new picture for his mother, the verbal text points out how this time, there were “no flames or bullets” (p.22). This contrasts with his first picture. Furthermore, Hassan's first picture of his home in Somalia depicts the family’s animals: sheep, goats and a cat. Hassan tells Miss Kelly and Fela that he wanted to bring his cat when they fled, but that his mother said, “we must save ourselves and not the animals” (p.17). When painting a new picture of his home in Somalia, Hassan leaves out the people. The verbal text brings attention to this by describing how “this time, there were no people – just sheep and goats and Musa the cat with his long spindly legs” (p.22). The absence of people could symbolize that Hassan’s family no longer lives there. Hassan’s picture on the wall reminds readers of where their journey started. The picture of his previous home is peaceful, like before the soldiers came. Now, the family have a peaceful home again in England. Hassan asks his father for a cat. His wish indicates that he realizes his family has saved themselves and can now think of animals.

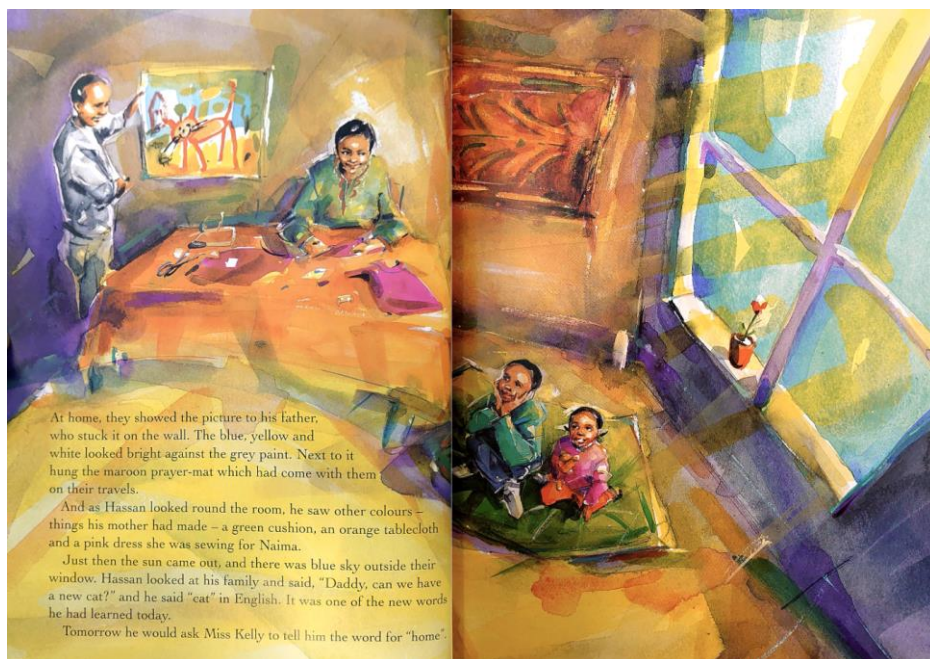


Figure 21: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.24-25)

Gaining knowledge about Somali culture on both an individual and societal level could potentially contribute to pupils' development of the ICC skill *savoir* (Byram, 1997). Readers gain knowledge about Somali culture on an individual level through Hassan, and on a societal level through depiction and descriptions Somalia. The depiction of Hassan's home setting can be seen to represent the lifestyle in this area, such as the clothing his family wore and the types of animals they kept. While words can only describe space, pictures can show it, doing so more effectively and often more efficiently (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006, p.61). The verbal text describes how all his nine family members lived in the same house. This poses an opportunity for pupils to compare different living situations, such as Hassan's home in Somalia and his home in England. Readers can get their views of what their idea of a normal living situation looks like confirmed or contrasted. A contrast in beliefs could facilitate decentering (Byram, 1997). Decentering could lead readers to realize that for Hassan, nine people living together was common in his area. Still, teachers should be avoid using Hassan's depiction of his home as the only representation of how people in Somalia dress and live. Although it is an accurate depiction of some peoples' realities, it would be beneficial to supply the story with multiple real-life pictures to avoid the single story (Adichie, 2009). *The Colour of Home* open for readers to gain knowledge of what it is like to be a newcomer immigrant attending a new school. The picturebook can function as a mirror for readers who see their experiences reflected and validated, and a window for readers who do not have

similar experiences (Johnson et al., 2017). Furthermore, the descriptions of Hassan's experiences on his first day of school could function as a mirror for pupils who have attended a new school where they did new activities, had unfamiliar foods or spoke a language they did not know yet. The picturebook could also be a window for readers who have not experienced this. Readers get an opportunity to compare Hassan's new school in England with his previous school in Somalia. The verbal text states that in Somalia, "he had lessons out of doors from early in the morning until the sun got too hot in the middle of the day" (p.2). In England, the pupils stay indoors "except for midday, when he shivered outside in the damp playground" (p.2). These descriptions could inspire pupils to learn more about the everyday school life of pupils worldwide. Gaining cultural knowledge could contribute to pupils' development of *savoir* (Byram, 1997).

Taking Hassan's perspective in the picturebook can help pupils view refugees as individuals as opposed to a generalized group. When Hassan paints, visual images and verbal text work together to invite readers to see his family from his perspective (figure 22). The visual images show how Hassan is transported back in time while he paints, as if he is standing outside his previous home. The fixed perspective position readers close to Hassan, inviting them to take his visual perspective. The verbal text introduces readers to the family members in the picture: his father, mother, baby sister, grandparents, uncle and two cousins, and his cat. This exemplifies how the verbal text can draw readers attention to certain details of the setting (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.61). When Hassan later explains his picture to Fela and Miss Kelly, the verbal text describes that he names his nine family members. Still, readers only get to know his late uncle's name: Ahmed (p.15). Seeing Hassan's family from his perspective and knowing his uncle's name could remind readers that they are first and foremost individuals with names and families. Perspective-taking in the picturebook could thus help pupils realize that each life lost in war and conflict is a tragedy.

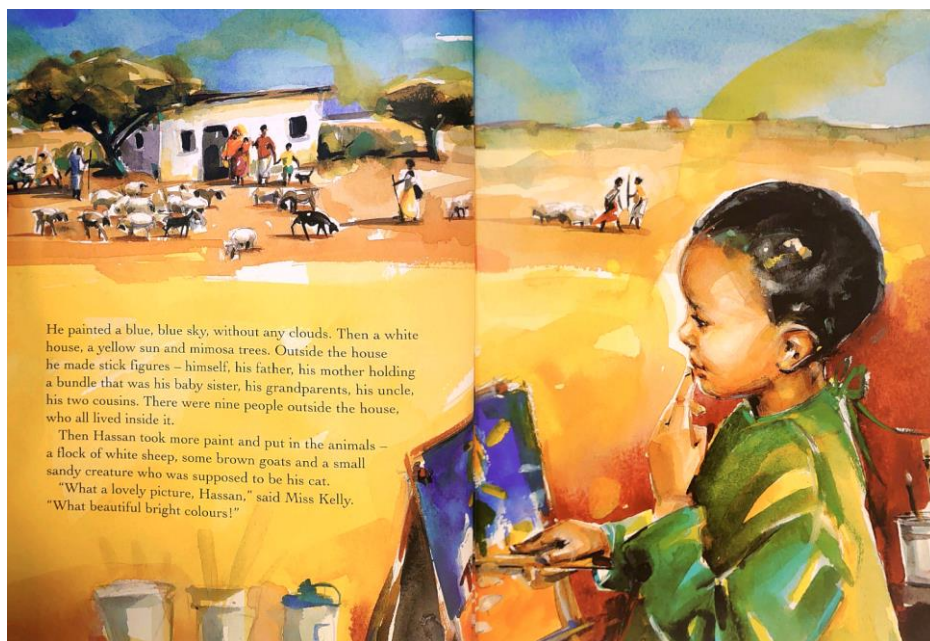


Figure 22: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.6-7)

The Colour of Home empowers Somali women by presenting them as resources to their families and their communities. Hassan’s mother is portrayed as a resource to her family through how she provides for her family in the refugee camp. In England her love for her children continues to show through her picking up Hassan from school and sewing a dress for his sister. Throughout the picturebook, Hassan’s mother is depicted with traditional clothing and caring for her children. This can reflect many women with ties to Somali culture, however not all. As Adichie (2009) points out, the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. The Somali interpreter Fela contributes to complete readers’ impressions of which roles Somali women can take, and what they are like. Fela is described as “a Somali lady wearing a black hijab like his mother’s - only she also wore blue jeans and a black leather jacket, like a Western woman” (p.12). This can bring readers' attention to the fact that people who share the same religion and speak the same language can choose to wear different clothing. Fela is a resource to Hassan in a different way than his mother, as she “put his words into English” (p.15). This way, readers get to see that knowing Somali is a benefit in Hassan’s new school. Fela's role as an interpreter demonstrates to readers that people who know multiple languages can be an asset to their society by helping people communicate across linguistic barriers. This shows how Somali women can not only be a resource to their families, but also to their communities. Because Hassan also knows Somali, readers can imagine him taking on the role of an interpreter in the future.

The picturebook can be a mirror for pupils that see their physical appearances or cultural identities reflected (Johnson et al., 2017). Some pupils could see their physical appearances reflected in Hassan, and some may wear a hijab like Fela and Hassan's mother. Readers who have ties to Somali culture could have their cultural identities reflected in the story. For pupils who are unfamiliar with Islam, the picturebook can be a window for them to learn about the values and customs of the religion. The verbal text brings attention to the family's religion by describing that the qu'ran was hidden in Naima's bag of nappies on their journey, and that they kept the prayer mat with them on their journey. Being forced to leave their homes, the family likely only brought their most valuable assets with them. Bringing these two items shows readers how important keeping their religious values is to the family. The prayer mat having a place in their new home symbolizes that the family can preserve their identities as Muslims in England. The customs of hijabi women are also displayed through Hassan's wears her hijab in public, and not at home with her family. When Hassan is picked up from school, the visual image depicts another mother wearing a hijab who picks up her children. This could symbolize that Muslim women have a natural place in Hassan's new community.

The picturebook has potential to become a sliding glass for pupils when Hassan tells his story, and readers are invited to "step into an experience that may differ from their own" (Bishop, 1990). The point of view in the picturebook is variable, starting out with the narrative voice telling readers about Hassan's experiences. Thus, the verbal text is nonfocalized, also referred to as an omniscient, omnipresent perspective (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.118). There is no inner monologue allowing readers to permeate the character's thoughts or feelings. However, the distance between the reader and Hassan is reduced through a shift from a 3rd-person narrator to a 1st-person narrator. The perceptual point of view (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117) shifts to the events being presented directly from Hassan. The visual images are unframed, which blends the fictional world with the real world and positions the reader as someone experiencing the story from the inside (Habegger-Conti, 2021, p.60-61). For instance, readers view the visual image of Hassan lying under the bed from a fixed perspective making it seem like they were on the floor with him. This way, readers are also encouraged to stand with Hassan (Habegger-Conti, 2021). The visual image of Hassan on the floor opens for readers to take his visual perspective while he tells his story (figure 23). Positioning the "I" child below adults is a way

to let readers share the first-person narrator's point of view while portraying the character in the picture (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.125-126). Readers are positioned opposite to him on the floor, seeing a soldier's boot up close like him.

Many pupils in Norway have refugee backgrounds. Using *The Colour of Home* in the classroom would be in line with Freire (1970) who highlighted the importance of teachers relating to the realities of life that are familiar to students and can give them voice. The picturebook gives voice to refugee children through Hassan when he tells his own story, in his own language. This way, Hassan gets the privilege to represent (Said, 1978). The interest point of view in a picturebook conveys who the narrative benefits (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.117). In *The Colour of Home*, the interest point of view is refugee children, as Hassan symbolically gives voice to children who are or have been refugees. The visual image where Hassan holds his hand over his mouth symbolizes how some refugee children are unable to speak up. In the visual image, Hassan is silent due to dangerous circumstances. However, other reasons can later keep children from speaking. Refugee children can be unable to tell their stories themselves since they are either too small, displaced in language or traumatized (Skyggebjerg, 2021, p.315-316). Like Hassan on his first day of school, they could also lack the energy to do so. Reading the story aloud gives voice to these refugee children in a literal sense. Miss Kelly contributes to giving Hassan voice by bringing in a translator. When Hassan tells his story, he is thinking as he is speaking, giving the impression that the words flow out naturally. This would not have been possible for him in English, as he only knows his name, "hello" and "toilet" (p.4). Hassan gets an opportunity to express himself through painting despite being tired and not knowing the language.

Although Hassan tells his story in Somali, the verbal text is in English. Instead of English replacing Hassan's Somali words, it could have been used to supplement the story in Somali. This could have further strengthened Hassan's voice in the sense that the character's words were reproduced exactly as he said them. Readers would also get the opportunity to compare the two languages, and see that Somali is an equally complex and valuable language. Another aspect worth commenting upon is that Hassan does not offer sufficient privacy when telling his story. The verbal text describes how another teacher taught the rest of the class math, while "Hassan sat in the reading corner with Fela and Miss Kelly and his picture" (p.13). This implies that Hassan's classmates are in the same room. It is not unlikely that other pupils in his class understand Somali. In real life, some pupils could be reluctant to

tell their stories if they were in a comparable situation. Teachers who share *The Colour of Home* with their pupils should let them know that the custom in Norway is to offer pupils a separate room if they wish to share sensitive information with their teachers.



Figure 23: *The Colour of Home* (Hoffman & Littlewood, 1993, p.16-17)

5.0 Conclusions

My analysis and discussion provided several answers as to how narrative perspectives of newcomer immigrants in picturebooks could potentially invite perspective-taking in the English subject. Central findings of the study are presented through a summary of each picturebook's potential for perspective-taking. Lastly, I discuss how the study enhances ELT and make recommendations for further research.

5.1 The picturebooks' potential for perspective-taking

My analysis of *The Arabic Quilt* found that Kanzi is displayed as a dynamic, relatable character with nuanced emotions, who is a resource to her school. Findings showed that the picturebook can function as a window for readers to learn about her Egyptian home culture and Arabic. It can also be a mirror for pupils who see their physical appearances, experiences or emotions reflected through the depiction of Kanzi's identity. The story shows potential to help discontinue discriminating views of newcomer immigrants through perspective-taking. The picturebook poses several opportunities for the reader to compare their own meanings, beliefs, and behaviors to various characters in the book. These show how the picturebook can become a sliding glass door for pupils. Additionally, the point of view in the picturebook encourages readers to take Kanzi's perspective and stand with her. Furthermore, *The Arabic*

Quilt display how us/them binaries are constructed and how they can be deconstructed in the classroom through perspective-taking. Lastly, *The Arabic Quilt* provides concrete examples of how both teachers and pupils can encourage inclusion of bilingual pupils in their classrooms.

The Name Jar portrays Unhei as a nervous and conflicted girl who gains the confidence to stand up for herself and be proud of her name and identity. However, the events leading up to this moment depict her as passive, and the visual images do not tend to reflect the nuances in Unhei's emotions. Still, the perceptual point of view invites readers to take Unhei's perspective and gain insight into how her experiences affect her emotionally. The picturebook can be a mirror for pupils who experience a dissonance between their identities and the dominant school culture. It can also be a mirror for pupils who see their physical appearances, experiences or emotions reflected in Unhei's home setting. Furthermore, *The Name Jar* has potential to become a window for pupils to learn about Unhei's Korean home culture. Readers get opportunities to decenter by comparing their own meanings and beliefs to both positive and negative views of Korean names. This makes the picturebook well suited for perspective-taking and gives it potential to become a sliding glass door for pupils. Lastly, the perspectives offered could serve as a starting point for classroom discussions about name negotiations.

The Colour of Home presents opportunities to learn about the experiences of a refugee child through the main character Hassan. The portrayal of Hassan's identity invites readers to realize that traumatic experiences can manifest themselves in behavior and emotional reactions long after the traumatic incidents have occurred. The picturebook could be a mirror for pupils who have undergone similar trauma, or who recognize their emotions or parts of their identities in the picturebook. It can also be a window for pupils unfamiliar with refugees' diverse experiences. Pupils could decenter by comparing their own school environments, homes, and experiences with those of Hassan. Through taking Hassan's perspective, readers are invited to see refugees as individuals as opposed to a generalized group. This gives the picturebook potential to become a sliding glass door for pupils. The picturebook can be used as a base for classroom discussions about the diverse experiences of refugees, before, during and after their journeys. It can also serve as inspiration for how teachers and pupils can show compassion and practice inclusion of pupils who are refugees despite potential language barriers.

5.2 Implications for English Language Teaching

My study could inspire literary approaches to teach matters of identity and diversity through immigration-themed picturebooks in ELT. The study contributes to assessing teaching materials within ELT by facilitating teachers' selection of suitable picturebooks for teaching perspective-taking in ELT. By adding an interpretation of these immigration-themed picturebooks, I also contribute to the research field of literary analysis. Previous research has shown that few children's books featuring characters with refugee backgrounds focus on the complexity of making a life in a new place (Ward & Warren., 2019, p.148). By analyzing picturebooks that focus on the complexity of making a new life in a new country, I draw attention to the need for picturebooks that reflect the experiences of these children. Pupils who are, or have been, in introductory classes could have parts of their identities and experiences reflected and validated in the picturebooks. The findings shed light on how using these picturebooks in the classroom could give voice to, and benefit, the many pupils in Norway who have finished their journeys but who are still adjusting to their new environments. Furthermore, the picturebooks could inspire teachers and pupils to co-create inclusive classroom environments where cultural and linguistic diversity is valued. Using the picturebooks could thus benefit pupils with immigrant backgrounds as well as their classmates.

New perspectives on specific approaches to intercultural competence could increase the attention to the learning opportunities that lie within addressing culture-sensitive topics, such as immigration, in the English subject specifically. Immigration, identity, and perspective-taking are necessary topics to address for teachers and pupils to co-create classroom environments where diversity is valued. This thesis could serve as inspiration for working with immigration and identity with picturebooks as a starting point. The results from my analysis show potential for the picturebooks to be used in interdisciplinary work between 1.2 Identity and cultural diversity (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), 1.3 critical thinking (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017) in the core curriculum and teaching matters of identity and culture in the English subject.

The LK20 curriculum for English states that knowledge of and an exploratory approach to language, communication patterns, lifestyles, ways of thinking and social conditions open for

new perspectives on the world and ourselves (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Findings show that the selected immigration-themed picturebooks could be fruitful to use as an exploratory approach to learn about language, communication, lifestyles, and social conditions. Thus, the picturebooks could potentially contribute to pupils gaining new perspectives on the world, and on themselves. Ellis (2018, p.95) demonstrated the potential of visual texts for developing cultural literacy and thereby intercultural competencies, by helping pupils view differences and similarities between their world and the world of another. My findings showed that the picturebooks invited readers to go beyond comparing worlds, and step through the sliding glass door (Bishop, 1990) through perspective-taking. Working with picturebooks that allow for this kind of personal involvement and critical thinking could be beneficial for intercultural learning (Hoff, 2019, p.443).

Practical implementation of the picturebooks in ELT should include encouraging pupils to engage with the issues raised by the picturebooks. A way to facilitate personal involvement with the stories could be to employ a critical literacy approach, such as Dolan's (2014) framework of "respect-understanding-action". The framework encourages pupils to engage with the characters and reflect on their experiences through various tasks. For instance, pupils could respond to the stories with drawings (respect), participate in role-play to emphasize with the characters in the story (understand) and write letters to the authors or the characters (action) (Dolan, 2014, p.104-107). Active engagement with the different perspectives in the picturebooks could potentially enhance the chances for them to become transformative learning experiences. All three picturebooks have potential to invite perspective-taking and could potentially be fruitful to use as teaching materials in ELT. Still, each picturebook should be supplemented by other representations and perspectives to prevent a single story (Adichie, 2009) about the identities and experiences of newcomer immigrants. For instance, teachers could make an immigration-themed text to work with perspective-taking.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

A limitation of this study is that it provides a single perspective on the opportunities for perspective-taking in these selected immigration-themed picturebooks. The findings cannot be generalized to apply to all immigration-themed picturebooks. Another limitation is the low number of picturebooks analyzed. Analyzing more immigration-themed picturebooks

could provide further insight into which picturebooks that could be suitable to teach perspective-taking the English subject. Furthermore, providing pupils with access to picturebooks that have the potential to invite perspective-taking does not ensure further development of this skill. As teachers can have no insight into the learning process within readers, it is necessary to engage learners in a further process of talking or writing to gain that insight (Fenner, 2001, p.25). Classroom research should be conducted to better assess the effects the selected stories could have on pupils. In this respect, I suggest employing a reader-response approach to assessing pupils' reaction to and involvement with these picturebooks. A one-group pretest-posttest design could be employed, like in Sindland & Birketveit (2020) study of Development of intercultural competence among a class of 5th graders using a picture book. In the study, pupils investigated the characters' perspectives through various tasks. Group interviews where pupils shared their reflections were conducted and analyzed to strengthen or challenge the pretest and posttest findings. A similar study where the picturebooks analyzed for this thesis are used could give further insight into whether the picturebooks serve to invite perspective-taking.

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