

A Comparative Analysis of Global English Textbooks in Terms of the Notion of English as an International Language

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Abstract

The global spread of English in recent decades has raised important questions about the long-standing dominance of native-speakerism ideology in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Current research on ELT materials critically examines the prevalent approach that prioritizes the inner circle countries, their use of English, and their cultural values. These studies also emphasize a growing demand for a broader perspective that integrates both local and global diversity. However, this integration appears to be minimal and remains a relatively underexplored area in current ELT resources. The present study aims to address this gap, analyzing two global textbooks widely used for teaching English in Türkiye: *Language Hub Elementary* and *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. The analysis was conducted within the notion of English as an International Language (EIL) based on Kachru's framework known as the Three Concentric Circles of the English Language. The findings of the analysis revealed that both textbooks fall short of representing the wide range of uses of English and its diverse users worldwide. *Language Hub Elementary* takes a more inclusive approach by including a variety of characters, accents, and cultural elements from the expanding circle countries. However, *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* shows clear bias towards inner circle characters, their use of 'standard' language, and elements of Anglo-Saxon culture. The rich tapestry of local cultures in the countries of the outer circle is absent from both books. Similarly, *Language Hub Elementary* lacks any Turkish cultural elements, while *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* only offers limited coverage. The findings of this study emphasize the need for more inclusive and culturally diverse ELT materials in a global context and have important implications for both material designers and ELT scholars.

Keywords: English as an International Language (EIL), expanding circle, inner circle, outer circle, textbook evaluation.

Uluslararası Bir Dil Olarak İngilizce Kavramı Açısından Küresel İngilizce Ders Kitaplarının Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

Öz

İngilizcenin son yıllarda küresel çapta yayılması, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (ELT) alanında anadilcilik (native-speakersim) ideolojisinin uzun süredir devam eden hakimiyeti hakkında önemli soruları gündeme getirmiştir. ELT materyalleri üzerine yapılan güncel araştırmalar, yakın çevre ülkelerine, onların standart İngilizce kullanımına ve kültürel değerlerine öncelik veren yaygın yaklaşımı, eleştirel bir gözle incelemektedir. Bu çalışmalar ayrıca, ELT materyallerinde hem yerel hem de küresel çeşitliliği entegre eden daha geniş bir bakış açısına yönelik artan talebi vurgulamaktadır. Ancak, mevcut ELT kaynaklarında bu entegrasyonun asgari düzeyde olduğu ve nispeten az keşfedilmiş bir alan olarak kaldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminde yaygın olarak kullanılan iki küresel ders kitabını analiz ederek bu boşluğu gidermeyi amaçlamaktadır: *Language Hub Elementary* ve *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. Analiz, Uluslararası Dil Olarak İngilizce (EIL) kavramı içerisinde, Kachru'nun İngilizce Dili'nin Üç Konsantrik Dairesi olarak bilinen çerçevesine dayalı olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analiz bulguları, her iki ders kitabının da İngilizcenin geniş kullanım yelpazesini ve dünya çapındaki farklı kullanıcılarını temsil etmekte yetersiz kaldığını ortaya koymuştur. *Language Hub Elementary*, genişleyen çember ülkelerinden çeşitli karakterleri, aksanları ve kültürel unsurları dahil ederek daha kapsayıcı bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Bununla birlikte, *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, iç çember karakterleri, onların dil kullanımları ve Anglo-Sakson kültürünün unsurları lehine açık bir önyargı sergilemektedir. Dış çember ülkelerindeki yerel kültürlerin zengin dokusu her iki kitapta da yer almamaktadır. Benzer şekilde, Türk kültür öğelerine *Language Hub Elementary*'de hiç rastlanmazken, *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*'de çok sınırlı yer verilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, küresel bağlamda daha kapsayıcı ve kültürel çeşitliliğe sahip ELT materyallerine duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamakta ve hem materyal tasarımcıları hem de ELT akademisyenleri için önemli çıkarımlarda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Uluslararası Dil Olarak İngilizce (EIL), genişleyen daire, iç daire, dış daire, ders kitabı değerlendirmesi.

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INTRODUCTION

A combination of historical factors, economic power, and the influence of the English-speaking world has led to the widespread use of English for a variety of purposes in today's interconnected and globalized world. Today, English is recognized as the dominant language in many fields, including business, finance, education, technology, tourism, diplomacy, and media. This has contributed to the status of English as an international language spoken by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and has challenged the notion of 'native speakers' (NS). Furthermore, the emergence of various concepts such as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL), Global Englishes (GE) and World Englishes (WE) acknowledges the various varieties of English spoken around the world, such as African English, Indian English, Singapore English and others. It emphasizes the use of English as a global lingua franca, adapted to suit local linguistic and cultural contexts (Matsuda, 2019).

Besides, the evolving landscape of English language use in the world has made it increasingly problematic to use the traditional NS and non-native speaker (NNS) labels, as speakers of varieties may not fit the traditional definitions. According to the 2020 Ethnologue, a digital encyclopedia of world languages, the number of English speakers worldwide is 1,268,100,190. While only 369,704,070 of this population constitute NSs, the number of NNSs is 898,396,120 (Ethnologue, 2020). This fact has led scholars and educators in the field of ELT to adopt more inclusive and context-specific terms such as "users of ELF" and "users of EIL" as these terms take into account the different backgrounds and purposes of people who use English around the world.

With these developments, the focus has shifted in ELT textbooks towards effective communication and the recognition of the various English varieties and their speakers worldwide. A lot of research has been done on ELT textbooks over the last few decades. These studies have looked at EIL (Brown, 2012; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012; Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020), ELF (Guerra et al., 2020; Takahashi, 2014; Vettorel, 2018; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013), WE (Matsuda, 2019), and GE (Gray, 2010). Most of the prior research on this issue was conducted in certain contexts, such as Japan (Matsuda, 2002; Takahashi, 2014), Italy (Vettorel, 2010, 2018; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013), Germany (Syrbe & Rose, 2018) and Iran (Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020).

In the Turkish context, where English holds a prominent place in the foreign language curriculum, textbooks have long been central to language education. These textbooks serve as the cornerstone of education, providing students across the country with a standardized curriculum and ensuring consistent exposure to shared content and language learning goals. Additionally, textbooks come equipped with essential teaching materials, including lesson plans, activities, and assessment tools. As a result, they have become the primary teaching resource for many ELT educators in Türkiye. This reliance on textbooks is partly due to the high-stakes nature of English language exams in Türkiye, which necessitates a strong emphasis on exam-focused materials typically found within these textbooks. In Türkiye, however, most of the academic research on ELT textbooks and how they relate to ideas like EIL has been focused on textbooks that have been approved and controlled by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Examples of these studies are Çelik and Erbay (2013) and Demirbaş (2013). Therefore, we aim to thoroughly investigate the representation of EIL in the global ELT textbooks commonly used in Türkiye. Such an inquiry will provide invaluable data on the effectiveness of specific textbooks, thus guiding educators, institutions, and policymakers in making well-informed decisions regarding the adoption of these materials. This detailed evaluation can also help identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks, shedding light on where they may align with the necessities of a more globalized world and where they may fall short. Ultimately, the findings from our study will inform the adaptation and customization of textbooks, ensuring they cater more effectively to the needs of language learners who may find themselves in different situations of cross-cultural communication. Additionally, they will offer valuable insights for publishers and language educators on creating teaching materials that are more culturally inclusive and linguistically diverse, highlighting ways to incorporate EIL-oriented practices effectively into second/foreign language (L2) classrooms.

The Present Study

The main purpose of the present study is to analyze and compare two global English language textbooks commonly used in Türkiye to teach teenage and adult L2 learners, with a focus on their adherence to the notion of EIL. We chose EIL as the major approach over others because it recognizes English's role as a global medium of communication for speakers of various languages. It focuses on effective communication and mutual intelligibility rather than adherence to native speaker norms. Besides, as stated by Rose and Galloway (2019), EIL functions as an encompassing term that captures all uses of English. This perspective effectively dissolves the conventional

distinctions between English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and English as an Additional Language (EAL). Due to its political and sociolinguistic inclusivity, EIL thus serves as the primary construct in this study, providing a comprehensive framework for our analysis.

The study looks at how the two global ELT textbooks define "inner," "outer," and "expanding circle" countries by using characters and cultural information. It is mostly based on Kachru's framework, the Three Concentric Circles of English Language (1985). The analysis further focuses on the presentation of non-native accents, types of communication, and references to the local culture (in our case, the Turkish culture) in the content. In pursuit of this objective, we address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the two commonly used ELT textbooks in Türkiye represent characters from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries?
2. How are cultural elements from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries portrayed in these textbooks?
3. Is Turkish culture represented within the selected textbooks?
4. How are non-native English accents depicted in the textbooks?
5. What types of interactions and communication scenarios are presented in the selected textbooks?

Theoretical Framework: Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English

Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English is a sociolinguistic framework introduced by linguist Braj Kachru in 1985 to describe the global prevalence and application of the English language. Based on the historical, societal, and functional roles of English, this model classifies countries and regions that speak English into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. Within this framework, the inner circle encompasses countries (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), where English is the native language. These nations utilize English as their primary medium of communication, employing standard English dialects in various aspects of daily life, such as governance, education, the media, and all societal domains. The inner circle stands as the epicenter of authority and linguistic prestige for the English language. The outer circle consists of countries such as India, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, and numerous others, where English is not the native language but is significantly employed as a second language or official language. In these regions, English coexists with indigenous languages, giving rise to local adaptations and variations of the language infused with elements of the local vernacular. The functions of English in the outer circle extend to areas such as education, legal affairs, administration, and cross-cultural communication. Countries in the expanding circle primarily learn English as a foreign language. Despite not being an official language, these nations incorporate English into their educational curriculum and primarily use it for international communication. In the expanding circle, learners' native languages often shape English, resulting in distinctive non-native accents and idiomatic expressions. Specific purposes such as business, scientific discourse, tourism, and diplomatic exchanges often employ this variety of English, acting as a lingua franca that bridges linguistic diversity.

However, Kachru's model has notable limitations that are particularly relevant to this study. Firstly, it has been critiqued for oversimplification, as it assigns countries to fixed categories without accounting for the dynamic and fluid nature of English use in a globalized world (Schmitz, 2014). For instance, English functions differently within a single country, depending on regional and sociocultural factors, which the model does not capture. Secondly, the model inherently reinforces a bias toward inner circle varieties, implicitly privileging native-speaker norms as the standard for English language education (Park & Wee, 2009). This bias reinforces the dominance of British and American English, often marginalizing the linguistic contributions of outer and expanding circle users. Such a perspective is at odds with the realities of EIL, where communication among NNSs is far more prevalent.

While recognizing the potential shortcomings explained above, the present study relies extensively on Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English Language framework to evaluate the representation of EIL in commonly used ELT textbooks in Türkiye for several reasons. First of all, this framework aligns with the study's objectives by addressing the global usage and application of English, its multifaceted roles, and its linguistic variations across regions. It also provides a practical foundation for guiding English language instruction, helping educators and policymakers tailor approaches to meet local needs while considering the sociolinguistic issues of prestige, identity, and language contact that shape learners' perceptions. Most importantly, by celebrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of English and recognizing its pivotal role in international communication, diplomacy, trade, and academia, Kachru's model offers a systematic and comprehensive basis for examining how

ELT textbooks reflect the contexts of inner, outer, and expanding circle countries. This comprehensive approach ensures the study's conformity with its research goals and provides valuable insights into the global and local dimensions of English language teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Notion of EIL and ELT Textbooks

Textbooks have long been essential in EFL contexts, serving as language resources, trainers, guides, and authorities (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). In the past, the main goal of ELT was to give EFL students an English level that was similar to that of native speakers and to teach them how to use standard English and its rules for communication. This approach resulted in ELT textbooks primarily emphasizing inner-circle varieties, especially American and British English (Matsuda, 2003).

This inner circle orientation had not only linguistic implications but also substantial economic, cultural, and political impacts, primarily favoring NS communities (Gray, 2002). English language textbooks originating from English-speaking countries, with their power to be adopted globally, went beyond language instruction, often conveying cultural values and, at times, promoting particular ideologies (Gray, 2002). As Widdowson (1994) noted, these textbooks had significant contextual limitations:

So it is that native speakers write textbooks and teachers' books, make pronouncements and recommendations, and bring to remote and hitherto benighted places the good news about real English and good teaching to lighten their darkness. Real English: their English. Good teaching: their teaching. But both are contextually limited by cultural factors. Their English is that which is associated with the communicative and communal needs of their community, and these may have little relevance for those learning English as an international language. (p.388)

This narrow focus drew criticism, as many global English textbooks tended to disproportionately feature idealized characters from white middle-class backgrounds while neglecting socio-cultural diversity (Crawford, 1990; Matsuda, 2003). This not only sustained the differences between NSs and NNSs, but also created a hierarchy that viewed NSs as superior (Matsuda, 2003; Nguyen et al., 2021). The persistent problems arising from the exclusive focus on the inner circle and the restricted exposure to diverse English variations have also presented difficulties for L2 learners. As pointed out by Matsuda (2003), this situation led to confusion and resistance when learners came across various forms of English used in real-world situations. In some instances, learners unintentionally adopted the perspectives and values of inner circle countries, ultimately undervaluing their own cultural and linguistic identities (Matsuda, 2003).

Recognizing these challenges, the field of ELT has been undergoing a gradual transformation recently. The native-oriented models of the past have evolved to embrace the concept of EIL (Matsuda, 2012; Sifakis, 2014), which acknowledges not only the type of English used but also the diverse ways in which it is used across the globe (McKay, 2012). The issue of who owns English has been a topic of intense debate, with many scholars advocating for a shift from an exclusive emphasis on NSs' English to a more inclusive approach that recognizes the various users and usages of English from outer and expanding circle varieties while respecting local cultures (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; McKay, 2012; Matsuda, 2003). This inclusive approach, in line with the ongoing transformation, aims to promote unity in the international use of English and to eliminate prejudices and stigmas against NNSs in global ELT textbooks. To achieve this, many scholars think that English textbooks need to introduce students to the rich tapestry of English uses and emphasize that having a non-native accent is neither unusual nor derogatory (Naji Meidani & Pishadam, 2013). In conclusion, these evolving pedagogical approaches within the field of ELT reflect the global nature of English usage, with a commitment to celebrating linguistic diversity, bridging the gap between NS and NNS English, and contributing to a more inclusive and comprehensive language education.

Character Representations in ELT Textbooks

Character representation is a critical dimension of textbook evaluation studies, reflecting the inclusivity and balance of these materials. Previous studies have scrutinized the portrayal of characters from Kachru's three concentric circles in ELT textbooks and demonstrated that many textbooks still favor characters from inner-circle countries, even though the number of NNSs that use English is growing (Hanashiro, 2016; Hu & McKay, 2014; Matsuda, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2021; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013).

Matsuda (2002) examined the representation of English users and uses in Japanese EFL textbooks for seventh graders. The study revealed a strong focus on inner-circle users, even in contexts where English was used

internationally. While Matsuda's findings highlight a widespread issue, the study leaves room to explore how this emphasis might affect learners' perceptions of English as a global language. The prioritization of inner-circle users risks perpetuating the belief that NSs are the "ideal" English speakers, potentially undermining learners' confidence and preparation for intercultural communication.

Hanashiro (2016) reached very similar findings in his study. He investigated how Japanese high school EFL textbooks depict different countries and their cultural elements, potentially enriching students' understanding of diverse English varieties and global cultures. Employing Kachru's three-concentric-circle model of English, the researcher assessed three textbooks. The results indicated that these textbooks predominantly spotlighted inner circle nations while neglecting outer circle countries and, to a lesser extent, expanding circle countries. The study effectively highlights the lack of inclusivity and the necessity of modifying Japanese English textbooks to increase students' understanding of English varieties in outer and expanding circle nations. However, it heavily relies on Kachru's concentric-circle framework, which has faced criticism for oversimplifying the intricate realities of English use (Park & Wee, 2009). A deeper exploration of how such portrayals influence learners' intercultural competence could further strengthen these findings.

The analysis by Syrbe and Rose (2018) pointed to a comparable trend. The researchers explored three textbooks utilized in Germany to assess their alignment with contemporary trends in teaching EIL. The focus was on how these textbooks portrayed ownership, users, models, and intended interlocutors of the English language. Their analysis revealed an over-reliance on UK English models and a static portrayal of language users. Across all three textbooks, the predominant nationality of characters was either American or British, with some representation from Australia and South Africa.

Le (2022) evaluated how well the English textbook series for high school students in Vietnam's grades 10, 11, and 12 prepared them for effective communication in an international and global context. He examined the categorization of interlocutors based on the Kachruvian system and the portrayal of characters with different skin tones. Similar to the above-mentioned findings, the study revealed a significant prevalence of British English norms, with American English norms playing a comparatively minor role. Moreover, there was an observable overrepresentation of characters with light skin tones. The data also displayed positive depictions of Vietnamese characters as competent English speakers and interlocutors. While the study highlighted the persistent bias, it could have addressed how these portrayals impacted learners' motivation and adaptability in real-world English communication.

Several other studies examined specifically the speaking, listening, and reading activities of ELT textbooks. To illustrate, Asakereh et al. (2019) investigated the listening and speaking activities found in ELT textbooks used in Iranian junior and senior high schools with a focus on ELF features. Their findings demonstrated a notable deficiency in character diversity within these textbooks. They asserted that their analysis could encourage change in the approaches adopted by ELT textbook creators, both domestically and internationally, encouraging them to adopt a more adaptable and inclusive perspective regarding English language users.

Bose and Gao (2022) investigated the cultural representation in the reading sections of ten ELT textbooks in India. They delved into the characteristics of individuals concerning their race, gender, and nationality while also assessing the depth of the cultural content presented. It was clear from their research that most of the cultural representations were based in Britain, with a lot of British, Irish, and mostly white characters. The study also revealed a marked gender bias and a general lack of depth in cultural exploration. The limited representation of other cultures raises concerns about the persisting colonial influence on English education in India. However, the study could have gone further to examine how these biases shape learners' attitudes toward their own cultural identity and the broader global role of English.

In the context of the present study, Çelik and Erbay (2013) evaluated three MoNE-authorized English coursebooks used in public elementary schools in Türkiye, specifically examining the cultural content within them. They specifically focused on the portrayal of *persons* in these coursebooks as a crucial dimension. The study's key finding was that the representation of cultures in the series was primarily focused on individuals from the target culture countries, which they attributed to the series depicting the life of an English family. Additionally, their analysis showed that the characters in the series mainly featured well-known figures, including scientists, inventors, and celebrities. In terms of geographical representation, the majority of individuals featured were from Europe.

In a similar vein, Demirbaş (2013) conducted an analysis of cultural content within four MoNE-authorized English coursebooks implemented in elementary schools in Türkiye. While her primary focus was on identifying

recurring intercultural and culture-specific elements within these materials, her study also comprised an examination of the characters introduced to students as an integral facet of culture. However, differently from Çelik and Erbay (2013), a key finding from Demirbaş (2013) was that the coursebooks under examination did not specifically emphasize Anglo-centric aspects or rely on stereotypical characters in their textual and visual materials. Instead, they offered learners opportunities to engage with the target language through intercultural names and characters, albeit to a certain extent.

In conclusion, most studies reviewed highlight a persistent bias toward inner-circle representations in ELT materials, though it differs in focus and methodology. Matsuda (2002) and Hanashiro (2016) emphasize inner-circle dominance in Japanese textbooks, with Hanashiro further critiquing cultural inclusivity, though both rely on Kachru's framework, which has limitations in capturing the fluidity of global English use. Syrbe and Rose (2018) and Le (2022) similarly identify inner-circle bias in German and Vietnamese textbooks but differ in scope, with Syrbe and Rose critiquing static user portrayals and Le addressing racial representation and local speakers. Studies like Asakereh et al. (2019) and Bose and Gao (2022) focus on specific content areas, revealing deficiencies in diversity and prevailing colonial influences. In Türkiye, Çelik and Erbay (2013) and Demirbaş (2013) show a partial move toward intercultural engagement in MoNE textbooks, though still limited. Overall, these results show how important it is for ELT materials to reflect the variety of people who use English around the world, going beyond inner-circle norms to better prepare students for communicating with people from other cultures in the real world.

Presentation of Culture in ELT Textbooks

The representation of cultural elements in ELT materials plays a pivotal role in shaping not only the linguistic proficiency of learners but also their cultural awareness and identity. Scholars have focused on the depiction of cultural elements in ELT textbooks, particularly concerning the integration of cultural references from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries. In 2005, Kachru's work on World Englishes made it clear how important it is to take into account cultural diversity and sociolinguistic variations in ELT materials. This had a huge impact on how cultural elements from different linguistic backgrounds are included in ELT textbooks.

Shin et al. (2011) investigated the depiction of the EIL paradigm in seven sets of contemporary international ELT textbooks, specifically focusing on cultural considerations. They examined the portrayal of cultural elements and the depth of cultural coverage within selected textbooks. The analysis revealed a proportional diversity of cultural aspects in each textbook series. Unfortunately, many of the textbooks continued to emphasize inner circle cultures and primarily adopted a traditional, knowledge-based approach to teaching culture, which failed to engage students in deeper critical thinking.

Similarly, Yuen (2011) conducted an examination of the portrayal of foreign cultures in two English language textbooks used in Hong Kong secondary schools, with the aim of determining if this portrayal aligned with the status of English as a global language. The study revealed a widespread bias in favor of cultures from English-speaking countries and a significant underrepresentation of African cultures.

In 2019, Asakereh and colleagues analyzed the listening and speaking sections of ELT textbooks used in Iranian high schools, with a particular emphasis on ELF features. Their analysis revealed that the textbooks lacked sufficient diversity in situational contexts and cultural elements, presenting English in an unrealistic and inauthentic manner.

Keles and Yazan (2020) investigated the representation of various cultures and communities worldwide within the context of five editions of the New Headway elementary-level textbook (NHE). They traced the evolution of cultural representation in NHE across five editions, starting with its initial release in 1993. Their analysis identified a sustained dominance of inner circle cultures throughout the five editions of NHE, with an imbalance favoring European cultures over non-European ones, particularly within the expanding circle.

In her mixed-method systematic review, Karakuş (2021) explored the dynamics of cultural representation in L2 English language textbooks, focusing on how culture is portrayed in both local and globally published materials used in diverse educational settings. Analyzing 22 empirical studies published between 2005 and 2019, the review aimed to identify recurring patterns and trends in cultural content. The findings revealed five dominant themes: the overwhelming emphasis on target culture (primarily inner circle, English-speaking countries), the complete exclusion of local cultural references, minimal cross-cultural comparisons, a prevalence of surface-level cultural information, and a significant imbalance in the representation of global cultures. These results highlight ongoing concerns regarding the limited and often biased portrayal of culture in L2 materials, which may hinder learners' development of intercultural competence.

Zhang and Su (2021) investigated the portrayal of culture within high school English language textbooks used in China and Germany, aiming to assess the breadth and depth of cultural representations in these textbooks. The findings showed that English textbooks in China exhibited a degree of balance among different cultures. However, their focus was predominantly on presenting factual knowledge and static information, which somewhat overshadowed the deeper exploration of underlying value orientations. On the other hand, English textbooks in Germany prioritized the target culture, with relatively few representations of the source cultures.

As mentioned earlier in this study, Bose and Gao (2022) conducted an analysis of 10 ELT textbooks used in India to investigate the cultural content within them. Their findings revealed a significant dominance of cultural representations originating from Britain, with target culture content accounting for 49% of the material. Additionally, the study highlighted a general lack of depth in the exploration of cultural themes.

In summary, the studies reveal a persistent dominance of inner-circle cultures in ELT textbooks, with varying conclusions shaped by context and methodology. While Shin et al. (2011) and Keles and Yazan (2020) document inner-circle bias, Shin et al. emphasize shallow cultural content, and Keles and Yazan note limited progress over time. Yuen (2011) and Bose and Gao (2022) similarly highlight inner-circle dominance, with Bose and Gao attributing it to lingering colonial influences. Zhang and Su (2021), however, find a relative balance in Chinese textbooks compared to the stronger target-culture focus on German ones, reflecting regional differences in priorities. Outer circle cultures remain underrepresented across contexts, as noted by Asakereh et al. (2019) in Iranian textbooks, which also lack diverse situational contexts. These disparities highlight the need for ELT materials to move beyond traditional norms and embrace cultural diversity, fostering intercultural competence and aligning with the realities of English as a global language.

Representation of Turkish Culture in ELT Textbooks

Specific textbook evaluation studies have not only assessed the broader representation of the three concentric circle countries but have also investigated the depiction of Turkish culture in ELT textbooks. This line of research aims to evaluate the representation of the local culture's role in shaping cultural identity and connections among Turkish students. Such an evaluation is crucial for determining the appropriateness of these textbooks in the local context.

In their study, Yiğit and Dolgunsöz (2023) investigated how a local textbook portrayed interlingual and intercultural diversity within EFL classrooms in Türkiye. Their findings emphasized that the cultural content in the textbook predominantly centered around native Turkish culture. The majority of settings within the textbook revolved around mainstream contexts such as family, school, and holidays. These settings were complemented by elements of local Turkish culture, which were consistently reinforced through the abundant use of Turkish places, names, and events. In contrast, elements from other cultures were notably limited. While the textbook did include cross-cultural conversations, the chosen topics primarily revolved around Turkish culture and popular culture, highlighting a need for greater diversity and representation of various cultural perspectives.

Dolgunsöz and Yiğit (2022) conducted an analysis and comparison of the cultural aspects in local EFL textbooks in Türkiye and Iran. They observed that the Iranian textbook primarily concentrated on native culture, with only a few topics from expanding circle countries. In contrast, Turkish EFL textbooks, on the other hand, primarily focused on inner-circle countries like the USA and the UK, often overlooking native culture in the process.

Kırkgöz and Ağçam (2018) conducted a comprehensive investigation of the cultural elements found in locally produced English textbooks used in Turkish primary schools. They particularly situated their study in the context of two significant curriculum innovations in ELT. They examined a total of 18 textbooks, with eight of them published after the 1997 curriculum innovation and ten following the curriculum innovation introduced in 2005. The aim was to assess the extent to which these textbooks incorporated references to the source culture (Turkish), the target culture (e.g., British/American), and the international target culture. A quantitative analysis of the cultural components revealed that in textbooks published between 1997 and 2005, references to the source and target cultures outnumbered elements related to the international target culture. However, a different trend emerged in the cultural analysis of textbooks published after the 2005 curriculum innovation.

In summary, studies on Turkish culture in ELT textbooks reveal varying emphases and gaps, reflecting differences in context and methodological approaches. Yiğit and Dolgunsöz (2023) highlight a predominance of native Turkish culture in local EFL textbooks, emphasizing the need for greater cross-cultural diversity. In contrast, Dolgunsöz and Yiğit (2022) note that Turkish EFL textbooks tend to focus on inner-circle cultures, mirroring global trends while neglecting local cultural representation. According to Kırkgöz and Ağçam (2018),

there has been a change over time toward more international culture being included in Turkish textbooks. This is especially true after changes were made to the curriculum, but there is still an imbalance favoring the source and target cultures. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for a more balanced approach that integrates Turkish, target, and international cultural elements, fostering cultural sensitivity and equipping learners with the skills for intercultural communication. These findings also reflect broader trends in ELT, where local priorities often interact with global influences, leading to varying degrees of cultural representation across different contexts.

Representation of Different Accents in ELT Textbooks

Levis (2005) and Jenkins (2007)'s pioneering works on the significance of diverse accents in international communication have reshaped discussions about including non-native English speakers with varying accents in teaching materials, challenging the notion of what constitutes a "standard" English accent. An emerging area of interest in coursebook evaluation studies has become the inclusion of foreign-accented speakers in ELT materials. It also contributed to a deeper understanding of the benefits of exposing students to different accents throughout their language learning journey, making learners more adaptable and receptive to diverse English accents, ultimately enhancing their overall language proficiency.

Kopperoinen (2011) analyzed two English textbook series utilized in Finnish upper secondary schools to assess their inclusion of non-native English accents in the learning materials. The analysis primarily utilized quantitative methods to quantify the proportion of non-native speech. The study demonstrated that while there are brief instances of non-native speech in the analyzed audio materials, they did not substantially embrace the ELF perspective. Native accents delivered the majority of the texts. Some outer and expanding circle accents were introduced to the students, but the excerpts tended to be quite brief. Additionally, most of the non-native accents introduced in the books were European and predominantly Western. Eastern European accents were notably absent from the data. An intriguing detail found in one of the textbook series was the prominence of the Finnish accent compared to other expanding circle accents.

Syrbe and Rose (2018) examined three textbooks used in German classrooms to assess their compatibility with modern approaches to teaching EIL. To assess the English models presented in the textbook, the researchers conducted an evaluation of the audio materials to determine the represented dialect of English. It became evident that Received Pronunciation (RP), an accent and a standardized or "neutral" form of pronunciation of the English language that is typically associated with educated speakers in the United Kingdom, was the predominant variety. Several audio tracks featured the portrayal of American English, Australian English, and South African English accents. Additionally, the audio material contained one conversation between two European NNSs, one from Spain and one from Finland. This was the sole instance illustrating the use of ELF between two NNSs. The study also observed that the audio materials consistently reflected RP English pronunciation, presented in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

In the Iranian context, Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) examined the portrayal of World Englishes and various cultures within three prominent global language teaching textbooks. The findings revealed that a substantial majority of references to the three concentric circles and the cultural components embedded within the textbooks were predominantly directed towards inner circle countries in one series, while the other two displayed a relatively more substantial presence of references to outer and expanding circles' language varieties and cultural elements. Nevertheless, across all three textbook series, the predominant focus remained on inner circle accents and cultural influences. Similarly, Naji Meidani and Pishadam (2013) identified a significant bias toward standard accents in English language textbooks, with limited representation of non-native accents. Their study, conducted within the Iranian educational context, analyzed widely used English textbooks for secondary school students. The aim of the study was to examine which accents were represented in these textbooks and how they reflected global English usage. The findings revealed a predominant focus on standard accents, particularly American and British English, while non-native accents, such as those spoken by speakers of English as a second language, were virtually absent. This lack of representation can be seen as a major pedagogical limitation, as it leaves students unprepared for the diversity of accents they may encounter in real-world communication, potentially hindering their development of intercultural awareness and communication skills.

In conclusion, these studies collectively reveal the persistent dominance of inner-circle accents in ELT materials, though they differ in focus and methodology. Kopperoinen (2011) and Syrbe and Rose (2018) highlight the prevalence of Received Pronunciation and Western European accents in Finnish and German textbooks, with minimal inclusion of outer circle varieties. Meanwhile, Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) and Naji Meidani and Pishadam (2013) identify slightly broader representations in global textbooks but still find inner-circle norms prevailing. These findings reflect the influence of market demands and methodological approaches, with some

studies emphasizing quantitative measures of inclusion and others exploring qualitative dimensions like dialogue contexts. Importantly, this bias toward standard accents not only limits learners' exposure to the diversity of English speakers worldwide but can also negatively impact their self-perception and confidence as communicators. By portraying standard accents as the norm, ELT materials risk reinforcing linguistic hierarchies that marginalize non-native varieties, potentially undermining learners' ability to embrace their unique linguistic identities. Addressing these gaps through more inclusive and diverse representations of accents is crucial to preparing learners for authentic intercultural communication and fostering a sense of equality and adaptability in their language use.

Communication Types in Textbooks

Textbook evaluation studies have explored the various communication types depicted in English language textbooks. This exploration involves assessing whether textbooks predominantly feature interactions between NSs, a mix of NSs and NNSs, or NNSs exclusively. It is crucial to understand the representation of these different communication types in these materials, as it significantly influences students' perception of EIL and better prepares them for real-world language use scenarios.

Moreover, an examination of various communication types serves to highlight the multifaceted nature of language representation within these textbooks. Notably, Galloway and Rose (2015) have made significant contributions by emphasizing the promotion of intercultural communication within English language materials. Their book underscores the importance of including both NSs and NNSs, thereby creating a more realistic and diverse learning environment in ELT textbooks. Canagarajah (2006) has also contributed substantially to the field by examining World Englishes and the role of NNSs in ELT. His article emphasized the importance of including interactions between NNSs in teaching materials and advocated for a broader perspective on communication types, underlining the need to represent diverse linguistic backgrounds to create a more inclusive and realistic language learning environment.

In a recent analysis of three textbooks utilized in Germany, Syrbe and Rose (2018) identified a total of 29 authentic excerpts that captured real-world instances of English language use among speakers. The overwhelming majority of these instances involved interactions solely among NSs, who communicated within their respective linguistic communities, whether in the inner circle or the outer circle. However, they found only two instances of authentic materials illustrating cross-border English usage: one involving an English tourist and an Australian, and the other featuring a Hong Kongese individual and an Australian. Furthermore, there was only one portrayal of a language contact situation in the authentic texts, where a German student corresponded with his British host family. Interestingly, none of these textbooks' authentic materials showed NNSs using English.

In conclusion, studies on communication types in ELT textbooks highlight significant gaps in the representation of diverse interactions, with differing emphases and methodologies offering nuanced insights. Syrbe and Rose (2018) reveal that German textbooks overwhelmingly prioritize NS-to-NS interactions, with limited inclusion of cross-border communication or NNS-to-NNS interactions, reflecting a traditional inner-circle bias. By contrast, Galloway and Rose (2015) advocate for a shift toward more intercultural communication in ELT materials, emphasizing the need to include NNSs to mirror real-world usage of English as a global language. Canagarajah (2006) similarly underscores the importance of NNS-to-NNS interactions, framing them as essential for preparing learners to engage in diverse linguistic contexts. These studies illustrate a tension between traditional approaches, which often favor inner-circle norms, and more progressive perspectives that aim to reflect the dynamic and pluralistic nature of English today. Addressing these divergences requires diversifying communication types in textbooks to better equip learners for authentic, intercultural interactions and foster a more inclusive understanding of EIL.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative, document-based research design to evaluate the representation of EIL in two widely used global ELT textbooks. The design aligns with descriptive content analysis principles, enabling a systematic investigation of cultural and linguistic representations in teaching materials. Purposeful sampling was used to select English File Fourth Edition and Language Hub Elementary, which are frequently utilized in Türkiye's language education settings. The analysis was guided by Kachru's (1985) Three Concentric Circles model and informed by the theoretical framework of EIL (Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012). Categories such as character nationality, accent variety, communication type, and cultural representation were examined to identify

how well these textbooks reflect the diversity of English users worldwide. Inter-rater reliability was ensured through independent coding of textbook content, and consensus was reached via collaborative discussion. This rigorous approach supports the validity and reliability of the findings.

Materials

Two new general English textbooks from British-owned companies were chosen for this study's analysis: English File Fourth Edition (Latham-Koenig, Oxeden, & Lambert, 2019) by Oxford University Press and Language Hub Elementary (Maggs, Smith, & Tennant, 2019) by Macmillan Education. The textbooks were selected based on four main criteria: global usage, reputation and credibility, contemporary relevance, and local relevance. Accordingly,

- both series are widely used internationally in language schools, ESL/EFL programs, and by self-learners, making them representative of global ELT textbooks. They are designed to address the diverse needs of learners worldwide.
- both series are authored by leading experts in ELT and published by well-established, reputable publishers, ensuring high standards of content quality.
- while the *English File* series has undergone regular updates since its introduction in the early 2000s, the *Language Hub* series represents a newer contribution to ELT. Both series align with contemporary language teaching methodologies.
- both series are commonly used in intensive English programs at universities in Türkiye, adding significance to their analysis in this context.

To ensure comparability and consistency, we selected textbooks at the elementary level. This level is critical for evaluating how beginners are introduced to diverse communicative situations and whether the materials align with their experiences and backgrounds without overemphasizing native-speaker norms. Designed specifically for students at the early stages of learning English, these resources are expected to present a variety of relatable communicative contexts. This approach not only improves comprehension but also fosters a sense of connection and engagement with the language.

Procedure

The study's main objective is to analyze two ELT textbooks frequently used in Türkiye to find out whether the recent EIL-oriented appeal has found a place in recently published English textbooks. We searched specifically for the degree of the two books' representation of speakers, contexts, and contents that were compatible with the paradigm of EIL. We compared the textbooks based on their portrayal of inner, outer, and expanding circle countries, taking into account the nationalities of characters, cultural elements, local culture, non-native accents, and dialogue types. The analysis primarily focused on the skills sections of the books, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in addition to the videos. We conducted the analysis systematically at the lesson and unit level, examining all parts available to students in these sections. We omitted the grammar sections from the analysis because they primarily presented individual sentences that lacked connection or did not contribute to a broader context or narrative. The focus of the analysis was on contextual language learning, and analyzing isolated sentences would not provide a comprehensive understanding of language use. We excluded the pronunciation sections from both textbooks because they solely focused on teaching standard British pronunciation through individual sounds, words, or sentences. This exclusive focus on a single accent may not align with the diverse nature of EIL and the major goal of the present study.

The following criteria were determined as relevant following the objective of the study:

1. Distribution of the characters from the three concentric circles in the textbooks
2. References to the cultural elements from the three concentric circle countries
3. References to Turkish culture as the local culture
4. Inclusion of foreign-accented speakers
5. Types of communication: NSs only, NSs and NNSs, and NNSs only

Kachru's model, which divides countries into inner, outer, and expanding circles, guided our categorization. We identified and quantified explicit references to or occurrences of aspects related to the above criteria. We calculated and presented frequencies and percentages in tables and figures. We determined the nationality or background of the characters for the first criterion by gathering information from various sources within the textbook. This involved examining clues like speech patterns, the context in which characters appeared, the

cultural references they made, and how other characters interacted with them. We also consulted the supplementary materials and guides included with the textbook to gain insight into the intended character representations. However, when a character's name was the only clear clue to their nationality, we conducted online searches to identify the typical country or countries associated with that name. If the name was commonly used in inner, outer, and expanding circle countries and there was no additional information available about the character's nationality, that character was excluded from the analysis. Throughout this rigorous analysis, we remained mindful of potential challenges and biases that might emerge when deducing character nationalities or cultural backgrounds based on their names. It is essential to acknowledge that a name suggestive of a specific nationality does not necessarily reflect the character's actual background. Nonetheless, it can suggest the textbook's inclination toward inclusivity, encompassing a diverse range of English users.

The analysis for the second criterion involved the examination of specific cultural themes within the two textbooks. We carefully selected these themes based on a combination of existing literature and a content analysis of cultural topics presented within the selected textbooks. The following cultural themes were considered:

Social: This category included aspects such as leisure time activities, nationality, work, and social class, focusing on how these elements were depicted in the textbooks.

Artistic: The focus of this category was on the portrayal of artistic expressions in the materials, such as music, plays, films, and paintings.

Historical: The analysis looked at how historical themes, such as historical places and characters, were presented in the textbooks.

Sacred: This category involved examining how sacred places and people were depicted, revealing the religious aspects integrated into the materials.

Political and institutional: This theme included the portrayal of elements like government, education, and language in textbooks.

Environmental: Topics related to weather and natural places within the textbooks were examined to understand how environmental aspects were represented.

Famous: This theme delved into iconic figures, brands, places, and sports, with a particular focus on their portrayal in the materials.

We conducted a systematic and comprehensive content analysis for the third criterion, which involves searching for direct references to Turkish culture in the textbooks. The analysis included descriptions of Turkish customs, traditions, food, holidays, or any specific references to Türkiye. We searched for relevant keywords or phrases associated with Turkish culture, such as Türkiye, Turkish, Turkish cuisine, Istanbul, or Turkish traditions.

We looked for and counted speakers with a non-native accent, considering the fourth criterion. While the shifting patterns of global English language use have made the traditional labels of “NSs” and “NNSs” less clear, in this specific study, we classified accents belonging to English speakers from outer and expanding circle countries as non-native in line with Kachru’s model. We actively engaged with the audio and videos of the textbooks, listened carefully to dialogues, speeches, or any sections involving speakers, and developed criteria for classifying foreign accents, which involved transcribing speech to identify specific characteristics of speakers' accents that make them distinctively foreign and noting deviations from standard pronunciation, such as unique intonations, pronunciations, or speech patterns.

Finally, we documented interactions where the speakers explicitly mentioned their nationalities for the fifth criterion. We also analyzed the context surrounding interactions for indirect clues, such as specific locations, cultures, or languages, that might suggest the nationality of the speakers. We excluded interactions from the analysis if there was any ambiguity about a character's nationality.

In accordance with Creswell's (2016) recommendations, an independent researcher undertook a rigorous examination of each criterion within five randomly selected textbook units. This effort aimed not only to verify the consistent analysis but also to maintain the crucial factor of inter-rater reliability. Before starting the analysis, the independent researcher was provided with detailed guidelines outlining the specific criteria for the process. Notably, this analysis placed particular emphasis on identifying elements pertaining to EIL present in the chosen textbook units. Upon the completion of this analysis, the results revealed a 92% agreement among the researchers on a total of 54 codes identified within these five randomly selected units. This high degree of agreement among coders, as documented by Creswell (2016), stands as a testament to the robustness of the coding procedure and the shared comprehension of the criteria at play. The coders then revisited their lists to resolve differences in

categorization and reach a final consensus. These collaborative discussions were instrumental in developing a unified framework for analysis, highlighting the research's thoroughness and rigor.

Research Ethics

The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner. All sources used are properly disclosed.

FINDINGS

Representations of Users of English

Investigating the representations of native and non-native characters in ELT textbooks is crucial for understanding how these materials reflect the global use of English and prepare learners for authentic intercultural communication in today's interconnected world. Therefore, the first research question aimed to investigate the representations of native and non-native characters in the two textbooks: *Language Hub Elementary* and *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. To achieve this, we examined and counted the nationalities of the characters introduced in the listening, speaking, reading, writing, and video sections of the two books. Table 1 presents the number of characters from Kachru's three concentric circles. Within this analysis, the inner circle encompassed characters from the United Kingdom (e.g., Adele, British singer and songwriter, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 7A, p.55), the United States (e.g., Milly, 25, American, see *Language Hub Elementary*, Unit 1.4., p.8), and Canada (e.g., Michelle from Canada, 24, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 3A, p.23), where English is the native language. The outer circle consisted of characters coming from countries such as India (e.g., Tara from India; see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 11A, p. 86), Pakistan (e.g., Rahim from Pakistan; see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 11A, p. 86), the Philippines (e.g., Grace from the Philippines; see *Language Hub Elementary*, Unit 5.2., p. 44), and numerous others, where English is not the native language but is significantly employed as a second language (ESL) or official language. The expanding circle comprised countries such as France (e.g., Chloe from France, see *Language Hub Elementary*, Unit 1.1., p.3), Bulgaria (e.g., Cvetomir, Bulgarian, see *Language Hub Elementary*, Unit 2.3., p.17), Germany (e.g., Stef, a traveler from Germany, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 11B, p.88), Iran (e.g., Marjan Jahangiri from Iran, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 4B, p. 32-33), Belarus (e.g., Natasha from Belarus, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 11A, p.86), Hungary (e.g., Lilla from Budapest, Hungary, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Communication, p.108), Sweden (e.g., Jonas, Swedish, see *Language Hub Elementary*, Unit 2.3., p.17) and China (e.g., Lian Tang, 24, see *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, Unit 3A, p.23) where English is predominantly learned as a foreign language.

The analysis revealed a dominant representation of individuals from the inner circle countries in *Language Hub Elementary* (N=124, 73%) and *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* (N=151, 77%). Of the 169 characters in *Language Hub Elementary*, 42 (25%) characters were from the expanding circle countries, and only 3 (2%) were from the outer circle countries. Similarly, of the 195 characters in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, 40 (21%) were from the expanding circle, while only 4 (2%) were from the outer circle.

More main characters from the expanding circle countries were included in *Language Hub Elementary* compared to *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. For example, in *Cafe Hub* videos in each of the twelve units, a Spanish photographer and language learner, Gabriela, played the leading role. In *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, on the other hand, the characters from expanding circle countries not only occurred less but also played less important roles and were generally portrayed in lower-middle-class positions, such as a waitress from Budapest, Hungary (see the video: Practical English, Episode 2, Jenny talks to Rob) or an Asian cashier in a coffee shop (see the video: Practical English, Episode 2, Buying a coffee). Outer circle characters were almost non-existent in both books.

Table 1. Distribution of the Characters from the Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle Counties

Course	The inner circle		The outer circle		The expanding circle		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Language Hub Elementary	124	73	3	2	42	25	169
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	151	77	4	2	40	21	195

To sum up, the findings reveal a clear dominance of inner-circle representations in both textbooks, with characters from countries like the UK and the USA significantly outnumbering those from outer and expanding

circles. This imbalance carries important implications for learners of English and the objectives of EIL. The overrepresentation of inner-circle characters reinforces the perception that NSs are the primary and ideal users of English, which could undermine learners' confidence in their ability to use it effectively in global contexts. Moreover, it fails to expose learners to the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes the real-world use of English, potentially limiting their preparedness for intercultural communication. For EIL objectives, this narrow focus runs counter to the goal of fostering inclusivity and recognizing the legitimacy of diverse English users worldwide, highlighting a need for more balanced and representative materials in ELT.

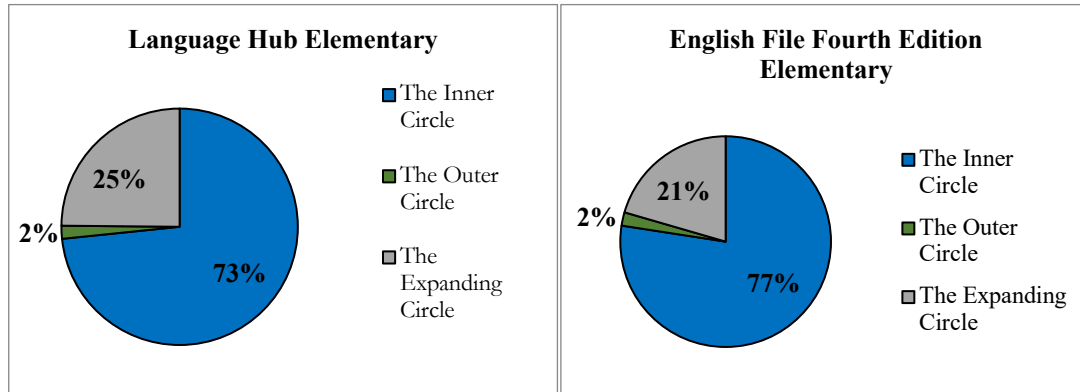


Figure 1. *Distribution of the Characters According to Kachru's Three Concentric Circles*

Representation of Cultural Elements from Different Countries

The second research question aimed to examine the cultural elements of three concentric circles in the two books. In the third research question, the representation of Turkish culture was analyzed separately. Tables 2, 3, and 4 demonstrate the frequency of references to the inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle cultures. Table 5 displays the frequency of elements associated with Turkish culture. We further calculated the percentages based on the overall frequency of references to Turkish culture and the three concentric circles of cultures, which we then displayed in Figure 2. In most cases, the sections dedicated to cultures were found in the reading and listening sections of *Language Hub Elementary* and the reading, listening, and video sections of *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*.

The analysis revealed that cultural items concerned with the inner circle ($f=40$, 47%) and expanding circle ($f=41$, 48%) countries were almost evenly distributed in *Language Hub Elementary*. However, the outer circle cultures seemed to be underrepresented with a frequency of four (5%). The major themes concerned with inner circle countries (Britain, $f=12$; The USA, $f=24$; Canada, $f=1$; New Zealand, $f=2$; Australia, $f=1$) were *social* (e.g., things to do in Chicago, see Unit 5.2., p.44), *personal* (e.g., eating and shopping for food in the USA, see Unit 8.2., p.74), *artistic* (e.g., Shakespeare in the park, see Unit 6.1., p.53), *political and institutional* (e.g., the Open University in the UK, see Unit 4.3., p.36), *environmental* (e.g., Fiordland National Park in New Zealand, see Unit 10.1., p.92), and *famous* (e.g., Hollywood families, see Unit 2.1., p.12). As predicted, the references that belong to the USA and the UK by far outnumbered the ones from other inner circle countries. However, although the textbook was written by a British publishing house, the number of cultural references to the USA was unexpectedly twice those to the UK.

The themes concerning the samples of cultural elements from the outer circle countries (Pakistan, $f=1$; Ghana, $f=1$; India, $f=1$; Hawaii, $f=1$) were *artistic* (e.g., the exhibition of Kwame Abraham's photographs of people from his country, Ghana, see Unit 6.1., p.52), *environmental* (e.g., Hamakua Coast of Hawaii, see Unit 10.1., p.92), and *famous* (e.g., red buses in Mumbai, India, see Unit 7.1., p.63).

Table 2. References to the Cultural Elements from the Inner Circle Countries

Course	Country	f	%	Cultural themes
Language Hub Elementary	The UK (12), the USA (24), Canada (1), New Zealand (2), Australia (1)	40	47	social, personal, artistic, historical, political, institutional, environmental, and famous
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	The UK (89), the USA (43), Canada (2), Ireland (1), Australia (5), the Caribbean (1), New Zealand (2)	143	59	social, personal, artistic, historical, political, institutional, environmental, famous, and sacred

Finally, in *Language Hub Elementary*, learners were provided with cultural details from nineteen different expanding circle countries (see Table 4 for the full list). The major themes identified were *social* (e.g., social life in Yakutsk, Siberia, see Unit 10.2., p.94), *personal* (e.g., eating and shopping for food in Italy, see Unit 8.2., p.74), *artistic* (e.g., Niteroi Contemporary Art Museum in Brazil, see Unit 5.3., p.46), *historical* (e.g., the Independence Day in Mexico, see Unit 3.3., p.27), *environmental* (e.g., the weather in Tokyo, Japan, see Unit 1.2., p.4), and *famous* (e.g., a popular app in China: WeChat, see Unit 12.3, p.116).

Table 3. References to the Cultural Elements from the Outer Circle Countries

Course	Country	f	%	Cultural themes
Language Hub Elementary	Pakistan (1), Ghana (1), India (1), Hawaii (1)	4	5	arts, environmental, and famous
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	India (5), Oman (1), Pakistan (1)	7	3	political and institutional, social, and environmental

The analysis of cultural elements in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* revealed an obvious intensive orientation towards inner circle countries ($f=143$, 59%), mainly the UK ($f=89$). The USA followed it with a frequency of 43. The other inner circle countries that were addressed included Canada ($f=2$), Ireland ($f=1$), Australia ($f=5$), the Caribbean ($f=1$), and New Zealand ($f=2$). A whole section in a textbook unit (see Unit 2, Part 2B, Made in America, pp.16, 17) was allocated to the United States. It contained many visual and written items about American icons (e.g., New York, American football, blue jeans, hot dog, yellow taxis, and so forth). Even the reading text presented in this section was about the differences between British and American English. Similarly, another chapter was dedicated to the UK in the book (see Unit 3, Part 2B Britain: The good and the bad, pp.22, 23). It involved details about what the British liked about Britain and what foreigners who lived in Britain thought about it.

Table 4. References to the Cultural Elements from the Expanding Circle Countries

Course	Country	f	%	Cultural elements
Language Hub Elementary	Italy (4), China (6) Japan (2) Mexico (3) Madagascar (1) Czech Republic (1), The Netherlands (2), Brazil (3), Spain (5), Cuba (1), Vietnam (1), Russia (1), Thailand (2), France (4), Ecuador (1), Morocco (1), Siberia (1), Kuwait (1), Chile (1)	41	48	social, personal, artistic, historical, environmental, and famous
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	Argentina (3), Italy (9), Brazil (5), Russia (2), Mexico (5), Germany (5), Spain (7), Poland (2), Switzerland (4), Hungary (2), China (4), France (5), Czech Republic (3), Egypt (1), Colombia (1), Greece (3), Costa Rica (3), Japan (3), Slovakia (1), Iceland (1), The Netherlands (2), Belgium (1), Morocco (1), Vietnam (1), Dominican Republic (1), Venezuela (1), Thailand (2), Sweden (1), Ukraine (1), Belarus (1), Ecuador (1), Morocco (1), Portugal (1), Chile (1)	85	35	social, personal, artistic, historical, environmental, famous, and sacred

The major themes concerned with inner circle countries' cultures in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* were *social* (e.g., Pub Quizzes, see Unit 9C, p.75), *personal* (e.g., food in Britain: Scotch eggs, see Unit 2B, p.23), *artistic* (e.g., music from Scotland, see Unit 1B, p.8), *historical* (e.g., Queen Victoria, see Unit 12C, p.99), *political and institutional* (e.g., the British parliament, see Unit 9C, p.75), *environmental* (e.g., beautiful scenery in the UK, see Unit 2B, p.23), *famous* (e.g., British and American actors and actresses, see Unit 4A, p.30), and *sacred* (Thanksgiving in the USA, see Unit 9A, p.71).

Compared to *Language Hub Elementary*, *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* contained cultural details about more countries (N=34) from the expanding circle (for the full list of the countries and frequency of recurrence, see Table 4). However, throughout the book, the frequency of cultural elements from the expanding circle (f=85, 35%) was still quite low compared to the inner circle (f=143, 59%).

References to cultural elements from outer circle countries in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* were sporadic (f=7, 3%) and were limited to India (f=5), Oman (f=1), and Pakistan (f=1). The themes identified were *social* (e.g., calling older people by their first name in Pakistan, see Unit 11A, p.86), *environmental* (the weather in Oman, see Unit 3A, p.22), and *political and institutional* (e.g., freedom for women in Oman, see Unit 3A, p.22).

Finally, in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, learners were exposed to cultural details from expanding circle countries about the themes *social* (e.g., the most dangerous place in the world: Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, see Unit 10A, p.79), *personal* (e.g., eating habits in Okinawa in Japan, see Unit 4C, p.35), *artistic* (e.g., Vincent van Gogh from the Netherlands, see Unit 7A, p.54), *historical* (e.g., the oldest bridge in Europe: Ponte Fabricio in Italy, see Unit 10A, p.78), *environmental* (e.g., the weather in Valencia, see Unit 5C, p.42), *famous* (e.g., the football team Boca Juniors in Argentina, see Unit 1A, p.8) and *sacred* (the tallest cathedral in the world: Ulm Münster in Germany, see Unit 10A, p.78).

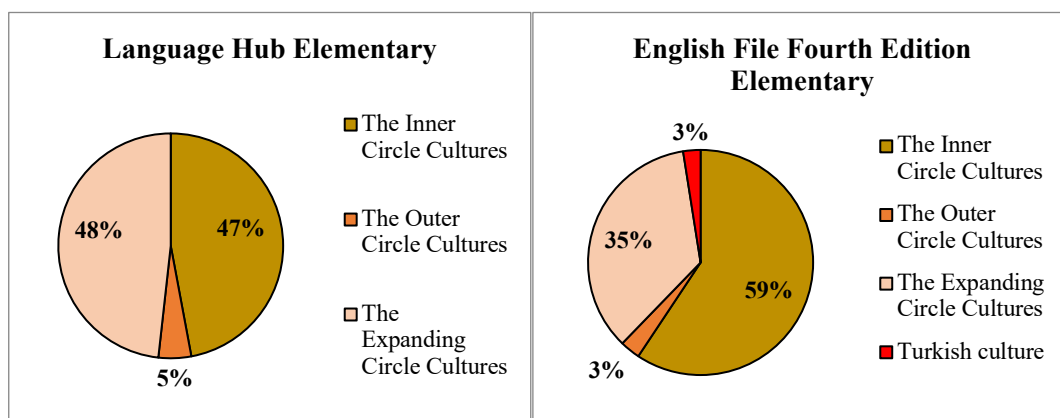


Figure 2. Distribution of Cultural Items

Table 5. References to Turkish culture

Course	Country	f	%	Cultural elements
Language Hub Elementary	Türkiye	0	0	-
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	Türkiye	5	3	personal, famous, sacred

Since the study aimed to analyze the two textbooks widely used to teach English to adult *Turkish* students, the references to Turkish culture were examined independently from other expanding circle countries. The analysis revealed that *Language Hub Elementary* did not include any elements specific to Turkish culture. Representation of Turkish culture in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, on the other hand, was limited to a few small details about Türkiye and Turkish people in a few words (e.g., a football team: Galatasaray, a mosque in Istanbul, Turkish people working hard, and Turkish restaurants).

To conclude, the findings highlight a significant imbalance in the representation of cultural elements from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries in both textbooks, with a predominant focus on inner-circle cultures and limited inclusion of outer circle elements. While the inclusion of expanding circle cultures shows some diversity in *Language Hub Elementary*, their representation remains secondary to inner-circle dominance in

English File Fourth Edition Elementary. Furthermore, the minimal references to Turkish culture in both textbooks underscore a lack of localized content relevant to learners in Türkiye. These findings inform the understanding of EIL by emphasizing the gap between the global diversity of English use and the cultural representations in these materials. The persistent focus on inner-circle cultures and minimal integration of local or outer circle contexts suggests that these textbooks may not fully align with EIL principles, which advocate for inclusivity, diversity, and relevance to learners' real-world cultural needs.

Inclusion of the Foreign-Accented Speakers

To incorporate an EIL perspective to ELT and implement the current status of the English language worldwide into ELT materials, representation of different varieties of English is essential. The fourth research question aimed to investigate whether non-native accents were included in the textbooks analyzed for the study. The frequencies and percentages of native and non-native accents heard in dialogues and monologues in the audio and video parts of the textbooks are shown in Table 6. For the distribution of percentages, see Figure 3.

Table 6. Frequency of Native and Non-native Accents

Course	Non-native Accent		Native Accent		Total
	f	%	f	%	
Language Hub Elementary	16	17	78	83	94
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	14	6	214	94	228

The analysis revealed that *Language Hub Elementary* involved 16 speakers with non-native accents among a total of 94 speakers. This represents 17% of all speakers featured in the audio and videos in the book. In *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, on the other hand, out of 228 English users in the audio and video parts, 214 (94%) had standard native accents, predominantly British accents. Only 14 speakers, who constitute 6% of the whole speakers, were found to have non-native accents. These findings revealed that *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* provided learners with more listening opportunities than *Language Hub Elementary*. However, different varieties of English and their users in today's globalized world seem to be underrepresented in the book.

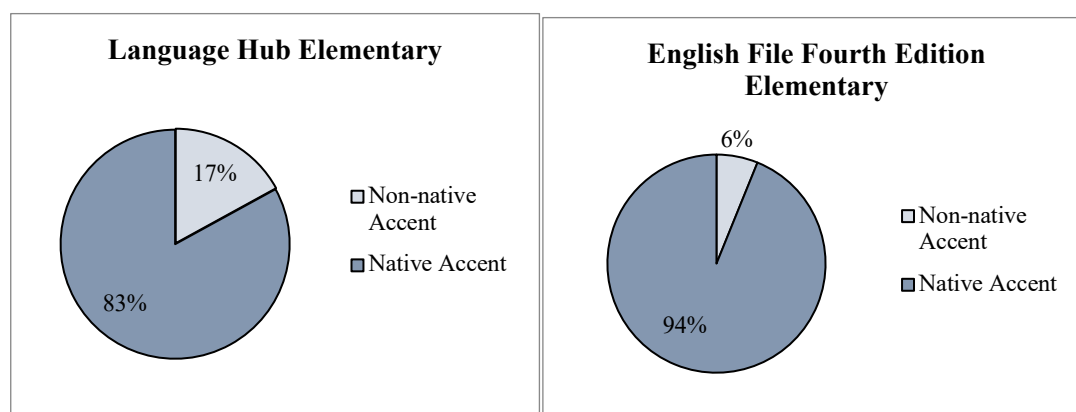


Figure 3. Distribution of Native and Non-native Accents

In conclusion, the findings reveal a notable underrepresentation of non-native English accents in both textbooks, with a clear dominance of native accents, particularly in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. While *Language Hub Elementary* included slightly more non-native accents, the overall inclusion remains insufficient to reflect the diversity of English users in today's globalized world. These results inform the understanding of EIL by highlighting a disconnect between the current status of English as a global language and its portrayal in these textbooks. The limited representation of non-native accents fails to be consistent with EIL principles, which emphasize the inclusion of diverse English varieties to prepare learners for authentic, intercultural communication in multilingual contexts. This suggests a need for ELT materials to move beyond traditional native-centric norms and embrace the linguistic diversity of English users worldwide.

Types of Conversations: NSs only, NNSs only, NSs and NNSs

The last research question focused on the conversations between NSs, NNSs, or NSs and NNSs in the two books. In *Language Hub Elementary*, 59% (N=27) of all dialogues took place between NSs, or more specifically,

between English users from countries within the inner circle. Of the 46 dialogues, only 6% (N=3) took place between NNSs coming from the outer or expanding circle countries. The dialogues between NSs and NNSs made up 35% (N=16) of all conversations in the book.

Table 7. The Type of Communication

Course	NSs		NNSs		NSs and NNSs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Language Hub Elementary	27	59	3	6	16	35	46
English File Fourth Edition Elementary	93	83	0	0	19	17	112

Compared to *Language Hub Elementary*, learners in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* encountered a significantly higher number of dialogues from English users. However, of the total 112 dialogues, 83% (N=93) were between NSs. The learners did not read, listen to, or watch any dialogues between NNSs in English throughout the entire book. Only 17% (N=19) of the book's total conversations involved NSs and NNSs, indicating their limited presence.

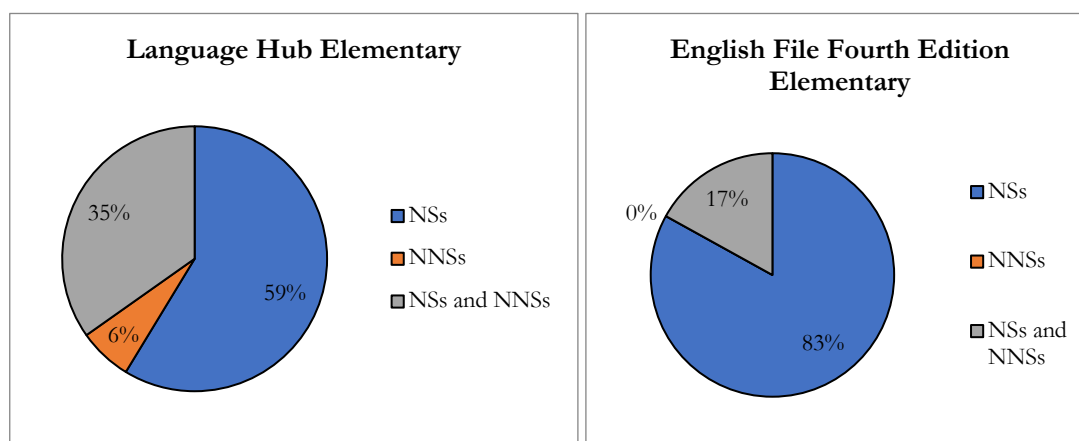


Figure 4. Distribution of the Dialogues between NSs Only, NNSs Only, and NSs and NNSs

Overall, the results show that conversations between NSs are emphasized a lot in both textbooks, while dialogues involving NNSs or mixed interactions between NSs and NNSs are barely mentioned. Notably, *English File Fourth Edition Elementary* excludes NNS-to-NNS dialogues entirely, and such interactions are severely limited in *Language Hub Elementary*. These results suggest that the textbooks fall short of adequately representing the diverse communication scenarios typical in EIL contexts. By failing to include a broader range of speaker interactions, particularly NNS-to-NNS dialogues, the textbooks miss an opportunity to prepare learners for real-world multilingual and multicultural communication. This shows how important it is for ELT materials to reflect how English is used around the world, helping students become more flexible and skilled in a wide range of intercultural situations.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether the content of global ELT textbooks widely used in Türkiye reflects the concept of EIL. Two recently published ELT textbooks, *Language Hub Elementary* and *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, were selected and analyzed using Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of English framework. In relation to the first research question, the analysis reveals a dominant representation of people from inner circle countries in both books. Characters from expanding circle countries are few, while those from outer circle countries are sparse. Especially in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, the majority of individuals come from inner circle countries, especially from the UK and the USA. In *Language Hub Elementary*, the tendency to use characters and identities from outer and expanding circle countries in dialogues and videos is more common. These findings are in line with previous studies (Hanashiro, 2016; Matsuda, 2002; Syrbe & Rose,

2018; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013) and show that native speakerism continues in ELT materials. It is possible to see the increased representation of expanding circle characters in Language Hub Elementary as a step towards a more inclusive approach for global Englishes in line with EIL principles. However, the near absence of outer circle characters highlights a critical gap in global textbooks in reflecting the full spectrum of English users worldwide. The lack of representation of the outer circle reinforces the perception that English belongs predominantly to inner circle countries, potentially limiting learners' understanding of English as a global language. For students from expanding and outer circle contexts, this imbalance can negatively affect their identity and confidence in using English. This can demotivate learners by sustaining the idea that their English is inferior to native language norms and hinder their engagement with English as a tool for global communication. Future materials should work for a balanced representation of all three contexts to better reflect the diversity of English speakers worldwide and promote a sense of inclusiveness and equity among learners.

The second research question reveals that Language Hub Elementary distributes cultural elements from both inner circle and expanding circle countries almost equally. This finding provides evidence for a wider representation of different cultures in English textbooks in recent times and for a growing awareness of the pluralization of English (Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013; Vettorel, 2008, 2010; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013). However, the analysis of the cultural elements in English File Fourth Edition Elementary reveals a greater orientation towards the cultures of the inner circle, a finding confirmed by some other studies (Hanashiro, 2016; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). It is seen that the cultural elements in this textbook are predominantly dominated by the UK and the USA. These results reveal a remarkable neglect of outer circle cultures in both textbooks when compared to previous studies (see Hanashiro, 2016; Yamanaka, 2006). This oversight deprives learners of the chance to engage with the rich cultural diversity found within English-speaking communities around the world. For students in expanding and outer circle countries, this can further marginalize their cultural identity and reduce their confidence in contributing to global conversations in English. To address these shortcomings, future textbooks should integrate cultural elements from all circles into their content and promote a more inclusive understanding of English as a global language.

The findings related to research question three are in line with previous studies (Hu & McKay, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2021; Syrbe & Rose, 2018; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020), which have highlighted that textbooks prioritize inner circle cultures while neglecting local culture. In particular, Language Hub Elementary does not contain any elements of Turkish culture, while English File Fourth Edition Elementary barely touches on cultural elements related to Türkiye and its people. Unfortunately, both textbooks fall short of encouraging Turkish learners to interact with their own cultural background as potential EIL users. The underrepresentation of Turkish culture in both textbooks further highlights the need for localized content for learners to engage with their own cultural context as part of global dialogue.

In response to the fourth research question, Language Hub Elementary exposes learners to more non-native accents than English File Fourth Edition Elementary. The presentation of varieties of English in this book conforms to EIL principles and practices; however, the percentage of non-native accents is still quite low compared to native accents. On the other hand, English File Fourth Edition Elementary clearly emphasizes inner circle accents. The vast majority of the audio recordings and videos in the book feature English users with native accents, mainly British and American. The book makes explicit reference to British and American English, emphasizing differences in spelling and pronunciation, but seems to completely ignore non-native variations. These findings are in line with previous studies (Hanashiro, 2016; Kopperoinen, 2011; Naji Meidani & Pishghadam, 2013; Syrbe & Rose, 2018; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013). Moreover, the prevalence of native speaker characters with standard accents in the materials is indicative of the industry's deep-rooted bias towards native speaker norms, which is a long-standing feature of ELT. By consistently featuring native speaker characters with so-called 'standard' accents, these materials unintentionally reinforce the idea that this is the ideal or default form of English. Such representations can contribute to maintaining linguistic stereotypes and marginalizing other valid varieties of English. Such biases may discourage learners from embracing their own authentic linguistic identities and undermine their confidence in using English in authentic global contexts. Future materials should aim to include a balanced variety of accents, showing the dynamic and pluralistic nature of contemporary English.

Finally, the last research question concerned the type of dialogues in the two books: NSs only, NNSs only or NSs and NNSs. 59% of the dialogues in Language Hub Elementary and 83% of the dialogues in English File Fourth Edition Elementary take place between NSs from nearby countries. In the books, 35% of the dialogues in Language Hub Elementary and 17% in English File Fourth Edition Elementary take place between NSs and NNSs.

As suggested in other similar studies (Hu & McKay, 2014; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013), NNSs are rarely represented in conversations with other NNSs in *Language Hub Elementary*. Although it happens a few times, there is no explicit intention to emphasize the global use of English or pluralism, where the syntax and vocabulary of English today are ‘far more diverse than ever before’ (McKay, 2012, p.73). In *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*, interactions only between NNSs of English are completely ignored. This emphasis on native speaker interactions reflects a traditional and outdated view of English use and ignores the fact that most English communication today takes place between NNSs. Without depicting such interactions, these materials present a limited and unrealistic view of global English communication. Especially for learners from expanding and outer circle countries, this may hinder the development of their intercultural competences and their ability to interact effectively within different linguistic contexts.

The findings of this study reveal persistent biases in the representation of characters, cultures, accents, and speech varieties in two widely used ELT textbooks, which largely prioritize inner circle norms. Although *Language Hub Elementary* makes a modest effort towards inclusivity, both textbooks do not fully comply with the EIL principles, especially due to their marginalization of outer circle accents and cultures and limited inclusion of local Turkish contexts. These shortcomings are likely to be influenced by linguistic, economic, and sociocultural factors such as global publishers' focus on profitability, difficulties in accessing outer circle content, and established native language norms.

To better reflect the realities of English as a global language, future ELT materials need to adopt a more balanced and inclusive approach. This includes equal representation of characters and cultures from all three concentric circles, wider inclusion of different accents of English, and greater emphasis on interactions involving NNSs of English. Furthermore, integrating localized cultural elements can help learners connect with their own identities while participating in global communication. By addressing these shortcomings, textbook design can be improved to promote intercultural competence, challenge traditional hierarchies, and equip students for authentic and dynamic global interactions. This study highlights the urgent need for such a shift to align ELT materials with the evolving role of English in today's multilingual world.

CONCLUSION

In line with its central objective, this study investigates the representation of EIL in popular ELT textbooks in Türkiye. Notably, the prevailing focus remains on inner circle cultures and native-speaker norms in *English File Fourth Edition Elementary*. In comparison, *Language Hub Elementary* displays a broader range of English users, non-native accents, and cultural elements from expanding circle countries. This suggests an important shift towards a more inclusive understanding of global Englishes. However, it still seems to place a greater emphasis on native-speaking characters with standard accents and includes a greater number of dialogues between NSs. This finding reveals the enduring reliance on native-speakerism in both textbooks.

Moreover, both textbooks fail to integrate any elements of Turkish culture into their cultural content and show a notable disregard for the English varieties and cultures belonging to the outer circle. Although there is a growing awareness of the need for diversity and the inclusion of various cultures in English teaching materials in the field of ELT, this awareness has not translated effectively into the textbooks analyzed in this study. However, diversifying the sources of cultural items and integrating local and global elements into textbooks is both possible and necessary. It is especially important to extend the cultural content beyond inner circle countries like the UK and the USA, recognizing that English users come from various cultures in three concentric circles. Such an approach also enables learners to use English not only as a tool for communication but also as a means to preserve their cultural and linguistic identities and develop understanding and respect for other cultures.

In today's globalized era, the worldwide spread of English, with its varied forms and functions, requires a different approach to teaching and learning it; thus, textbooks should equip learners with intercultural awareness and communication strategies, enabling them to navigate real-life communication scenarios with speakers worldwide more effectively. However, all these findings underscore a missed opportunity in ELT materials to prepare learners for the dynamic, multifaceted world of English language use. ELT textbooks wield significant influence on how ESL/EFL learners perceive the English language and the cultures it represents; therefore, English users should not be confined to static roles. An overreliance on fixed and unchanging roles in ELT materials, as also proved by the present study, hampers students' readiness for real-world language interactions. Therefore, ELT materials must adapt to reflect the evolving nature of English. This transformation does not entail eliminating inner circle English but rather embracing a plurilithic approach that goes beyond inner circle varieties to serve learners' communicative needs in real-life situations.

Given the global challenge to native-speakerism and the increasing number of non-native English teachers outnumbering native speaker teachers, it is essential for teacher education programs to integrate the EIL paradigm into their curriculum (see Braine, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). This integration should focus on making future teachers more aware of the variety of ways English is used and who uses it. This will help them make better decisions about their future work and allow them to choose materials that better reflect the growing use of English in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings, as well as its global diversity. Furthermore, non-native teachers should receive training in intercultural communication skills to prepare learners for successful interactions in today's English-speaking world. This holistic approach not only equips teachers with the necessary skills but also helps foster a more inclusive and culturally sensitive English language education.

To conclude, this study is unique and insightful in the context of ELT and EIL because it provides empirical evidence of the current state of ELT textbooks in regard to the notion of EIL in Türkiye. It reveals the persistence of native-speaker norms and the underrepresentation of expanding and outer circle countries in the global textbooks. The findings underscore the need for a paradigm shift in these textbooks in Türkiye and beyond. To foster more inclusive and culturally diverse ELT materials, the educational community must recognize the global nature of English and the importance of embracing EIL. By incorporating non-native accents, a broader spectrum of English users, and elements from various cultures, ELT materials can better prepare learners for international communication, promote linguistic diversity, and empower learners to express their identities through English. This shift is not only essential for improving language education but also for fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive global society. Most importantly, it may help combat prejudices and stigmas against NNSs.

Like any research endeavor, this study possesses certain limitations, and, consequently, we propose several recommendations for future investigations. Firstly, our analysis focused solely on the elementary series of the two textbooks. Future research could expand its scope to encompass complete volumes of these textbooks, enabling a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, broadening the scope of analyzed textbook series could enhance our understanding of the subject matter. Secondly, it is worth noting that both textbooks examined in this study were published by British-owned companies. While this was outside the scope of our current research, future endeavors might benefit from including textbooks from various local and international publishing companies. Finally, the current analysis relied on a quantitative approach, involving the counting of frequencies and percentages. To gain deeper insights, future research could incorporate qualitative data gathered from students and teachers via questionnaires and interviews to capture their perspectives on the textbooks under scrutiny. This aspect may also warrant attention in subsequent studies.

Statements of Publication Ethics

The authors affirm that the manuscript represents their original work and complies with academic integrity principles throughout the research process. Since this study is based solely on the analysis of publicly available textbook content and does not involve human participants or personal data, it did not require ethical approval from an institutional review board. This has been formally confirmed by the Yalova University Research Ethics Committee (Approval Date: 27/02/2021, Protocol Number: 2021/19).

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The analysis process for this study was conducted collaboratively among the researchers. Each researcher contributed equally to the stages of data analysis, category determination, and interpretation of the findings.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest for the present study.

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