The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning™

2026 Volume 16/Issue 1 Article 8

Looking Through the Multiculturalism Glass: An Exploratory Study with Primary English Teachers Working with Diverse Learner Populations in Turkey

Eslem Ural, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, eslem.ural@tedu.edu.tr
Elif Özkul, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, elif.ozkul@tedu.edu.tr
Melike Ünal Gezer, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, melike.gezer@tedu.edu.tr

Recommended Citations:

APA
Ural, E., Özkul, E., & Ünal Gezer, M. (2026). Looking through the multiculturalism glass: An exploratory study with primary English teachers working with diverse learner populations in Turkey. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, *16*(1), 129-151.

MLA
Ural, Eslem, et al. "Looking Through the Multiculturalism Glass: An Exploratory Study with Primary English Teachers Working with Diverse Learner Populations in Turkey." *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2026, 129-151.

The JLTL is freely available online at www.jltl.com.tr, with neither subscription nor membership required.
Contributors are invited to review the Submission page and manuscript templates at www.jltl.org/Submitonline

As an online journal, the JLTL adopts a green-policy journal. Please print out and copy responsibly.

Contents lists available at www.jltl.com.tr

The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning

Published by the Association of Applied Linguistics

www.jltl.com.tr

The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, 2026*(1)*, pp. 129-151

Looking Through the Multiculturalism Glass: An Exploratory Study with Primary English Teachers Working with Diverse Learner Populations in Turkey

Eslem Ural[1], Elif Özkul[2], Melike Ünal Gezer[3]

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 27 Dec 2024
Revisions completed 12 Oct 2025
Published 31 Jan 2026

Key Words:
Multiculturalism
Syrian refugee children
Primary English
Coursebook analysis
Diversity
Multicultural education

ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism, defined as the coexistence of diverse races, religions, languages, and traditions fostering equality, plays a crucial role in language teaching by incorporating various cultural elements. In Turkey, a country hosting a myriad of cultures, cultivating awareness of multiculturalism is essential. This study investigates the representation of cultural elements in primary English coursebooks published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey and international publisher's primary English books commonly used for primary English in Turkey. Eleven primary-level English coursebooks from the 2018-2019 academic year were analyzed, employing a coding framework originating from multiculturalism principles. The macro-level coding encompassed source, target, and international cultures, followed by a detailed analysis of multiculturalism indicators. For data-triangulation, focus group interviews with primary English teachers working in linguistically-diverse classrooms were conducted, revealing their perspectives on multiculturalism and their evaluations of primary English materials. The findings indicated that public English books predominantly emphasized the source culture, particularly imbalanced representation of gender, interpersonal relations, and cultural values. The study implications were an improved diversity reflecting target and international cultures, mainly, in public coursebooks. Coursebook analyses aligning with teacher interview called for the need for a more balanced representation of cultures in primary English education in Turkey's primary English instruction.

© Association of Applied Linguistics. All rights reserved

[1]Department of English Language Education, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, eslem.ural@tedu.edu.tr
[2]Department of English Language Education, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, elif.ozkul@tedu.edu.tr
[3]Department of English Language Education, TED University, Ankara, Türkiye, melike.gezer@tedu.edu.tr
Ural, E., Özkul, E., & Ünal Gezer, M. (2026). Looking through the multiculturalism glass: An exploratory study with primary English teachers working with diverse learner populations in Turkey. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, *16*(1), 129-151.

The concept of multiculturalism has been around since the 1960s-1970s, and it suggests individuals' competencies in two or more different cultures (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017). Essentially, multiculturalism supports the good deeds of diversity in ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, language, and religion (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017). The concept of multiculturalism, which started to take its place in our lives in the middle of the 20th century, means the recognition of cultural differences and identity emphases in the social and political sphere and their evaluation within the framework of equality discourse (Yanık, 2012). It is to allow each culture to live equally by accepting diversity rather than trying to gather cultures together and assimilate them as one. Additionally, multiculturalism is the awareness of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, social class, religious orientation, and other cultural dimensions as well as cultural differences (Başbay, Dimici &Yıldız, 2018). Our country has adopted this multicultural structure for years and learned to live with it. This adoption is supported by the fact that Turkey has hosted the largest Syrian refugee population since the civil war in Syria began in 2011. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Turkey hosts more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees, half of whom are school-age children (Ünal Gezer, 2019). Considering this rate, it is clear that there is a dire need for an update in the national education system.

This demographic shift has also influenced reforms to the national curriculum. Communicative competence and intercultural awareness are highlighted as key learning outcomes in the English language curriculum (MoNE, 2018). Furthermore, the inclusion of 21st-century skills aims to promote inclusive teaching methods that support students from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. Furthermore, 21st-century skills also encourage a range of teaching methods that are inclusive of students with diverse linguistic and sociocultural skills.

The long history of multiculturalism in the country helped educators establish a common ground that is related to instructional practice. This is called multicultural education. Multicultural education is "a construct that acknowledges the diversity of the students and their families and builds on that diversity to promote equality and social justice in education" (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017, p.19). In bilingual education, cultural difference is regarded as a strength and variety should be supported in educational settings, curricula, and materials, as well as teachers as agents are key to learners' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and orientations toward multiculturalism (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017). This multicultural structure from the past has recently started to come to the fore in our country, especially following the refugee crisis in Turkey. Along with these problems, it has become more critical for teachers to create a suitable environment to reach students with different qualities in the classroom and to see individual differences as a resource that enriches the learning environment, rather than a problem in education. For this reason, it is crucial for teachers to understand the effects of culture on education and multiculturalism (Başbay, 2014). As it can be understood, the reflection of the concept of multiculturalism in the field of education, which is already discussed extensively in other circles, is inevitable.

Another mandatory consideration is that to maintain international communication in inclusive educational settings, it is necessary to learn English, the lingua franca of this era (Bayyurt & Erduyan, 2022). Like many developing nations, Turkey attaches importance to teaching English so English has become a compulsory subject in public schools since Grade 2 starting the 2013-2014 academic year (MoNE, 2018). It is essential to understand the connection between language and culture since one of the main goals of language teaching from an early age is to teach a language with all its dimensions (Öztürk Duman, 2012). These two important concepts are interdependent disciplines because a language spoken by people reflects their culture in the way they think and live. As a result, learning a language means learning the culture as well. Because when cultural elements are missing in language teaching, students cannot look at the world from a different perspective and this prevents students from fully understanding other societies

through a common language (Korkmaz, 2009). In this sense, English education aims to prepare students in terms of linguistic and cultural diversity for using English so that they can be a part of a global world (Başbay, Dimici & Yıldız, 2018). In this context, although the meanings take place in the mind, the theory that they take their roots and importance from the culture in which they were created gains meaning (Bruner, 1996).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Primary English Coursebooks

The most widely used material in foreign language teaching today is coursebooks. Coursebooks, which are essential tools of education, are the main source of guidance for teachers and students (Oğuzkan, 1993). They significantly affect what students will learn and how teachers organize, conduct, and maintain a lesson during teaching relies on coursebooks (Brown, 1994). It is considered very difficult to organize coursebooks prepared in line with scientific principles completely independent of culture. Considering that the teaching process is adorned with cultural elements, the way these elements are presented and how they are presented to the teaching resources are of great importance. Since foreign language learners may not have the opportunity to use the language they learn in real life, coursebooks have a very important role in the representation of culture, and the development of positive attitudes toward different cultures. It is considered very significant that coursebooks that guide teachers in language teaching also try to provide students and teachers with a systematic and comprehensive cultural perspective (Korkmaz, 2009).

Public English textbooks were updated to improve language proficiency and intercultural communication skills in line with the 2017-2018 curriculum changes. However, analysis shows that these textbooks still reflect their objectives in a limited and often implicit way (Haznedar, 2004; Başbay & Dimici, 2018).

As the existing literature demonstrates, English coursebooks have been examined from different perspectives such as language acquisition and policy-making (Haznedar, 2004); literacy development (Ünal Gezer, 2022); and inclusive education (Kula & Özaslan, 2023). However, up to this day, there is no comprehensive study on primary English coursebooks used in Turkey from a multiculturalism point of view. The present study emerged from the dire need for practices of multiculturalism in an ever-multicultural and multilingual country, Turkey, based on an analysis of coursebooks as they can sum up and reflect on the education policy and planning of the nation (Ünal Gezer & Dixon, 2021).

2.2. A Review of the Existing Literature on Multiculturalism

The concept of multiculturalism itself constitutes a two-dimensional structure. One of these dimensions defines differences, and the other has a system that makes differences valuable (Özhan, 2006). The first dimension of multiculturalism refers to many ethnic and cultural groups. The fact that the country's population consists of different ethnic groups makes it multicultural only at a diagnostic level. The second dimension is that what determines the multicultural society model is not that the population consists of people from different ethnic origins, but that the social relations between these people are organized within a specific framework.

Additionally, multiculturalism includes the concept of protecting and sustaining different cultural values. Çetin (2005) compares multiculturalism to a garden with flowers of different colors and draws attention to the richness of multiculturalism with this analogy. On the other hand, there are critical perspectives on multiculturalism in the literature.

Yalçın (2002) states that thinkers who oppose multicultural approaches point out that multiculturalism has not a unifying but a divisive effect. According to the opponents of multiculturalism, thinkers defend that instead of uniting people as a nation, it divides and defines them according to their categories. This situation means the end of politics, culture, and civilization and prevents integration (Altınbaş, 2006). Despite

such critical perspectives, multiculturalism and its differences have been included in the founding purposes of UNESCO. In the first general assembly meeting of UNESCO held in 1946, it was determined as a goal to "educate the child's mind together with its national social structure and international understandings" (Başbay & Bektaş, 2009).

2.3. Multiculturalism and Language Education

Multicultural education is defined as adding self-criticism to the evaluation process but respect for others and being sensitive to different thoughts and lifestyles (Parekh, 2002). It means moving away from ethnicity and looking at it from a broader perspective. From the point of view of foreign language education, it is simple to integrate the acquisition needed to raise global citizens in education and training thereby in this way to convey the targeted achievements to the learners. Learning a language fully means learning how the written language is used in places and situations in social life, as well as the language spoken by its people (Ateş & Aytekin, 2020). In a language course where culture is not included, it is not possible for the student to learn the target language effectively.

Turkey is a country that has been receiving an influx of immigrants due to its geopolitical location. According to UNICEF's report on the number of Syrian children under temporary protection enrolled by grade level and gender published in October 2019, a total of 684,028 pupils were registered in preschool to twelfth grade including open school and support classes. Their primary school enrolment rate is ninety percent. In this respect, the classroom environments in our country have a multicultural and multilingual configuration for over a decade now; therefore, students in diverse educational contexts can easily adapt to linguistic and cultural diversity by maneuvering across linguistic and cultural orientations through multiculturalism and via translanguaging (UNICEF, 2019).

2.4. Important Stakeholders of Education in the Context of Multiculturalism

Teachers

Multicultural education aims to incorporate positive ethnic characteristics into the classroom atmosphere (Gollnick & Chinn, 2017). For this purpose, the learning and teaching process in multicultural education should be built within the framework of cultural pluralism to ensure respect for different cultures. The most important responsibility in creating this bridge is on teachers' shoulders. In a study, a certain group of teachers were asked to name the first three concepts that came to their mind when multiculturalism was mentioned. The concept that teachers regarded most associated with multiculturalism was the concept of diversity and teachers drew bridges across societies and cultures. Gay (2002), in his studies on multicultural education, emphasizes in addition to knowing the concepts of ethnicity and multiculturalism, the need for transforming the essence of these concepts into multicultural teaching practices. The ability to demonstrate tolerance and respect for multicultural education throughout both pre-service and in-service training is crucial for teachers so they create a learning environment that will promote equal learning opportunities for those with diverse backgrounds.

Coursebooks

Coursebooks have always been a vital part of language courses since they provide a variety of communicative tasks, drills, exercises, examples of grammatical functions, and situations where the target language can be presented in its original form, from which learners could grasp the target language thoroughly. Moreover, since students spend most of their time at school, coursebooks are language and culture resources to which students are frequently exposed. In this situation, coursebooks have a major impact on students.

The dire need for the target language culture and local language culture to be included in foreign language teaching has intersected with the

pathways of multiculturalism. A recent study focusing on the cultural diversity elements in coursebooks reported a dominating target language culture in English coursebooks and rare inclusivity, diversity, and multiculturalism (Başbay, Dimici, & Yıldız, 2018).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) classified English coursebooks as coursebooks highlighting the source culture, the target culture, and the international culture. In this categorization, source culture implies learners' own culture. The target culture suggests the cultures of the countries where the target language is spoken. The international culture; however, highlights English as a lingua franca and world English (Seidlhofer, 2011) which represents peoples of color and varieties of English.

The present study, with an aim to analyze cultural characteristics being reflected in the coursebooks, delves deeper into the sub-dimensions of multiculturalism. The sub-dimensions analyzed were daily life, living conditions, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs, attitudes, body language, social and traditional acts, and uniformization. Sampled public and private coursebooks were analyzed to present the way they deal with multicultural elements.

The present study is unique in many ways, and it is beyond a simple examination of coursebooks. It aims to increase awareness of cultural diversity among young language learners and teachers working at primary levels. Within the scope of this research, teachers' experiences with and perspectives on multiculturalism in primary English coursebooks are examined. Thus, answers to the following research questions will be sought:

1. How multicultural are the sampled primary English coursebooks used in linguistically and culturally-diverse primary English classrooms in Turkey?

2. Based on the primary English coursebook sampled, to what extent are the source, target, and international cultures integrated into the units?

3. What are the participating English teachers' perspectives on multiculturalism as an integral component of the sampled English coursebooks?

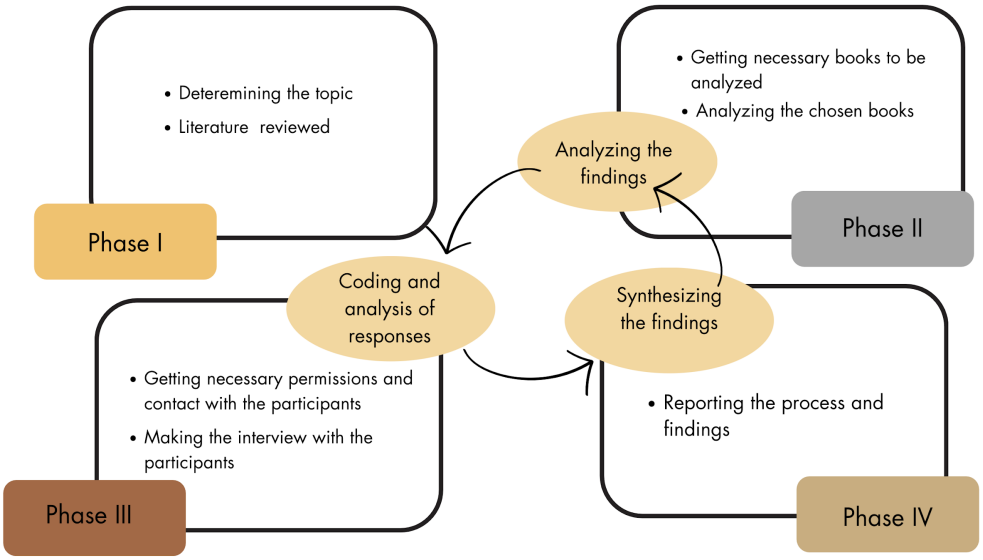
3. Method

To elicit data on the way multiculturalism is presented and practiced across primary English classrooms in Turkey, the present study followed an explanatory mixed-method research design (Dörnyei, 2011) where the primary English coursebooks were examined based on an apriori analysis scheme quantitatively which was followed by qualitative teacher interviews. The present study followed the ethical conduct by getting the informed consent of the participating English language teachers and the study was reviewed and approved by an IRB Board.

3.1. Research Design

The present study aimed to uncover the multiculturalism orientations of the widely used primary English coursebooks prepared locally by MoNE and by an international publishing house. The qualitative design with thematic analysis of the published coursebook materials which can be regarded as a case study explores complex phenomena encountered by stakeholders (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The thematic analysis looks for recurring themes across data to identify bigger patterns. To increase the validity and to enhance the research team's ability to evaluate the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), data triangulation by examining evidence from multiple sources of information during data collection was followed. In addition to coursebook evaluation from multiculturalism perspectives, in-service English language teacher interviews were held to gain a deeper understanding of participating primary English teachers' multiculturalism orientations. This was to ensure the data from several sources yield converging themes, and thus, to increase the validity of the study. The details of the data collection process followed can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Phases of the research process



3.2. Sample

The study consisted of two types of data sets. The first one is a sample of coursebooks and the second one is a group of in-service language teachers. The sample consisted of Grades 2, 3, and 4 coursebooks approved and prepared by the Ministry of National Education and a world-wide-known publisher's primary English coursebooks commonly preferred in Turkey. The sample also included the activity (i.e., student workbooks) for different grade levels.

Both for the coursebook analysis stage and the teacher interviews, a purposive sampling procedure was followed. A total of eleven primary English coursebooks were examined for coursebook analysis as the study aimed to unearth early English tendencies about multiculturalism. As for in-service teacher interviews, six schools from Mamak and Altındağ districts of Ankara, which were densely populated with Syrian refugee children, were selected. English language teachers, working in such schools, were invited to be a part of the study and six primary English teachers volunteered to provide data for the present study. Because different school types and demographic areas were selected during the data collection process, interviews were conducted with teachers in rural, urban, and refugee-dense areas. This allowed us to obtain insights into how multiculturalism is perceived in various social contexts. Those in-service English teachers working with diverse learner populations were interviewed. All of the schools were well-established and they were highly populated with Syrian refugee children and diverse with students from other nationalities such as China or Iraq.

All six participating teachers were female and they each had 16 to 20 years of work experience working for different tiers of the K-12 education system in Turkey. They formed a purposive sample in the study as they were expected to be working at schools with diverse learner populations (i.e., highly populated by Syrian refugees).

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure encompassed two stages. In the first stage, primary English coursebooks were sampled. In addition to print textbooks, relevant digital resources (audio files, video content, teacher guides, and online learning tools) provided by both public and private publishers were also examined. This review aimed to determine whether the cultural and pedagogical trends identified in the textbooks were supported or contradicted by these additional resources. For the

second round of data collection, to yield data on the multiculturalism orientations of in-service English teachers, structured interview sessions were held in the face-to-face mode at participating teachers' school settings in an environment where the session was not interrupted by external factors. Participants gave their consent to be participants and to provide data with audio-recorded sessions. Every participating in-service teacher received a gift card as a token of appreciation for their full participation in the study. The audio-recorded interview was a total of 240 minutes.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis on the primary English coursebooks was a systematic document analysis on the sampled coursebooks where the themes tapping into multiculturalism were located by trained examiners. To track cultural indicators across multimodal formats, digital components were qualitatively analyzed in parallel with the document analysis of the printed textbooks. Every digital resource (such as instructional videos, audio tracks, and online assignments) was coded using the same multiculturalism framework as was used for the textbooks. This made it possible to compare printed and digital content across modalities. Content analysis entailed systematically coding textual information unobtrusively to determine trends and patterns. Such descriptive examination of coursebooks was to detect multiculturalism orientations of the present primary English coursebooks. Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis established the core of the data analysis framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The thematic analysis consisted of the initial round of familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for the themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and reporting on the findings (Creswell, 2012). To ensure credibility and rigor in a qualitative study, inter-coder reliability procedures were followed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An eclectic method of analysis was followed: a priori categories to determine multilingualism signs were utilized and additional emerging categories were considered.

The a priori categories were determined based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2023). The reason why CEFR Companion Volume (2001) was used in the research was that it was a text that aimed to create a framework on which all European countries would base foreign language education issues, and the cultural topics in the text were suitable for this study. The MoNE Primary English Program (MoNE, 2018) follows CEFR for real-life practice to support fluency, proficiency, and language retention. The details for the a priori categories, the elements that can be located to track them in the coursebooks, and the explanations for each category can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Cultural Indicators in CEFR Companion Volume (2001)

Aspects of Multiculturalism	Signs for Multiculturalism	Further Explanations
Daily Life	Food and Beverages Public Holidays Spare Times Activities	The culture's famous foods and drinks and table manners, as well as special holidays and preferred leisure activities, are examined.
Living Conditions	Living Standards Welfare status	Living standards, the lifestyle of that culture, such as house selection and arrangement, as well as their welfare status are taken into consideration.

Table 1 (continued)

Aspects of Multiculturalism	Signs for Multiculturalism	Further Explanations
Interpersonal Relations	Class Structure of Society and Relationship Between Classes Family Structure and Family Relations Relationship Between Sexes	How individuals are classified in society and relations between classes, as well as the approach between genders, family structures and their relationships with each other are also examined.
Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes	Art Humor Regional culture	Cultural values of nations regionally; special beliefs or places such as church, mosque, history, especially iconic historical events/persons, visual arts, literature, and popular cultural music, as well as their sense of humor, jokes, and reactions are observed.
Body Language	Nonverbal Communication	Under this heading, non-linguistic communication elements such as hand/arm movements, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact are examined.
Social Traditions / Traditional Acts	Gift giving Clothing Behavior and Speech Customs and Prohibitions Saying goodbye Religious Ceremonies Birth / Marriage / Death Celebrations / Festivals / Dances	While social traditions and actions in this direction are taken into consideration, how the guest is greeted in the culture, gift exchange, greetings, behavior towards each other, and speech traditions are taken into consideration. In addition, cultural and religious ceremonies, behaviors, celebrations, and festivals in events such as birth, marriage, or death are examined.
Uniformization	Typical Nation's Perspective or Symbols	The national flag, coat of arms, slogan or anthem, national colors, and symbols are examined.

In the second round of data analysis, teacher interviews were held on a one-on-one basis, systematically across participants, in the same manner, at a quiet spot in the school environment. In future research, data collected from student work could be analyzed using the same methodology used for teacher interviews. This comparison would yield broader findings that would allow us to identify similarities and differences in multicultural perceptions. During the analysis, comparisons were made between participating educator groups based on whether they worked in urban, rural, or refugee-populated areas. This study revealed indicators of how teachers from different regions evaluated and reflected on the process of understanding and applying cultural diversity. The sessions were audio-recorded per participant consent. The audio-recorded interview sessions were transcribed to locate the codes which then were converted into themes by following the fundamental stages of qualitative data analysis (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The raw data obtained from the interview forms conducted with English teachers in public schools were analyzed and interpreted using the content analysis technique. Content analysis is defined as a systematic, repeatable technique in which data is summarized into small content categories. Tables were obtained where each participant's opinions on each question can be seen separately. The raw data obtained from the interviews were brought together by the researchers and common aspects were determined. The data were classified and made meaningful for the reader. In short, two researchers worked independently on the same data set to categorize and interpret the answers given to each question in the interview form. Then, the analyses made by the researchers were compared and presented to reach a consensus.

Additionally, expert opinion was sought to determine the reliability of the analysis and whether there was any misclassified or overlooked finding. Thanks to the expert opinion, the analyses were re-examined where needed, and inter-coder reliability was ensured with the analyses.

4. Findings

The findings obtained from the book analyses of public and private publishers prepared for different grade levels were presented based on frequency tables. The frequency of cultural themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Coursebook Analyses of Cultural Indicators

CEFR Culture Indicators	Grade 2 English Coursebooks		Grade 3 English Coursebooks		Grade 4 English Coursebooks		Total
	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	
Daily life	4	3	3	1	0	4	15
Living conditions	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Interpersonal relations	12	12	6	17	7	14	68
Values, beliefs, and attitudes	14	7	6	35	5	13	80
Body language	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social traditions, traditional acts	9	1	4	2	1	2	19
Uniformization	0	1	0	8	0	7	16

4.1. Examining multiculturality of the sampled primary English coursebooks

The frequency table summarizes the number of cultural indicators in locally and internationally published coursebooks for all three grade levels. Based on the frequency which is the number of occurrences of cultural indicators found in the coursebooks, it is evident that some cultural elements are more frequently observed than others, both in the locally and internationally-published coursebooks. In both, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs, and attitudes, and social traditions, traditional acts are the most commonly observed culture indicators, consistently across grade levels.

The qualitative analyses of the public coursebooks provided further details on the culture indicators for these frequently observed indicators. To answer the first research question, the second research question should be answered first. Establishing an understanding of whether sampled coursebooks carry the source culture more than

international culture would give us an idea of the multiculturalism orientations of the primary English coursebooks.

4.2. Source, target, and international cultures integration to primary English coursebooks

An Examination of the Source, Target, and International Cultures in Grade 2 Coursebooks

The qualitative analyses on Grade 2 coursebooks, under interpersonal relations, family relations, and assigning roles to genders were represented rather traditionally through representation of female figures in teaching or housekeeping, which are associations for mainly females in Turkish society in locally-published English coursebooks. Similarly, in the public coursebook, children playing in the park are attended by their mothers rather than fathers, which implies assigned roles to different genders in the source culture. While public coursebooks reflect a patriarchal society typical of source culture where male figures are breadwinners working as doctors and police officers, female figures are the primary caregivers of the society. The private publications demonstrate an equal role distribution among members of the society. Interpersonal relations such as societal roles assigned to genders in the private coursebooks are depicted as a father figure in the kitchen or females playing soccer. For values, beliefs, and attitudes, symbols for religious backgrounds were detected in the public primary English coursebooks but not the international private publications. For uniformization, nationalism-related units such as the Turkish flag represented the source culture.

A close examination of the target culture representations in Grade 2 coursebooks, celebrations, and carnivals belonging to the target Westernized cultures, such as Halloween or Christmas, elf figurines are depicted within the international publications. Because coursebooks are educational items, it is not surprising to see educational settings being displayed in those coursebooks. Educational settings should be exemplars of multiculturalism with their design and functioning. One of the points that should not be forgotten about this subject is that the physical conditions of educational settings can motivate students. For this reason, a school design is expected to boost instructional performance at the highest level, as well as provide sociability, enjoyment, and self-development. However, in the context of multiculturalism, there cannot be a single type and style of school suitable for all societies (Aydoğan, 2012). While educational settings depicted in public coursebooks were typically mono-form, educational settings displayed in international publications were versatile and suitable for students of all needs and backgrounds. Another target culture indicator is target language spelling conventions followed in the primary English coursebooks. British versus American spelling conventions and word choices were detected in the sampled coursebooks. While locally designed coursebooks mainly followed American spelling conventions, the international publication was written in British English.

As signs of internationalization and multicultural education, children's games available in all cultures, names from different languages, not just only the names from the target culture and language, were detected as signs of diversity and thus multiculturalism. Another sign of diversity, as an integral component of multiculturalism, is representing people of color, ethnic, and racial orientations. Both locally-published coursebooks and international coursebooks presented an exemplary case where diversity was embraced with people of color, and people with different needs and conditions (e.g., individuals with prosthetic legs and wheelchairs). Welcoming a variety of cultures in both types of publications was visible with food choices from different cuisines and cultural associations to different nations (i.e., pizza with Italian culture or pie with American culture).

An Examination of the Source, Target, and International Cultures in Grade 3 Coursebooks

With a closer examination of the Grade 3 coursebooks, researchers found Grade 3 coursebooks demonstrated the source, target, and

international cultures in different ways. As an Islamic and secular nation, Turkey has been represented with local, source cultural elements such as female characters with their headscarves or people praying in a mosque in the public primary English coursebooks. These are religious and yet cultural elements that represent the society and they were found to be indicators of values, beliefs, and attitudes located in local publications for this grade level. In Turkish society, rather stereotypically, the female figure is associated with home-based tasks and duties such as kitchen and kitchen work. Despite changing perceptions across families in society, through education, this perception is still dominant (Sayın Güran, 2021). In the analysis under the title of "interpersonal relations", it is seen that the reflection of this perception in the books is in direct proportion to the dominance of the perception. In two of the public books for Grade 3, the mother figure appears in the kitchen.

Similar to the Grade 2 coursebook, the analyzed Grade 3 coursebooks demonstrated the target culture with the integration of Western society-related traditions, celebrations, and festivities (i.e., Halloween or Dia de los Muertos, St. Patrick's Day). Each of the special days, which is an important part of the culture, contains a deep meaning that embodies the common aspirations, historical narratives, and collective values of humanity, while also awakening a sense of common purpose in individuals. These building blocks of culture help students learn the language by getting to know the culture better and adopting that language. In the international publications for this grade level, British culture has been imposed as several units depicted Oxford City which was a sign of the target culture. Nations fight against each other for numerous reasons, even in this age, countries are involved in ongoing war. Peace-making is often associated with white dove and to represent National Peace Day in the public coursebook, the dove figure was used. To tap into diversity, learners with a diverse learner background such as Down syndrome were added to locally-prepared coursebooks. These are to ensure multiculturalism in English coursebooks.

In addition to such good practices, Grade 3 public coursebooks demonstrated sexist approaches by associating the color blue with masculinity and pink color with femininity. In one unit where the toys and favorite games were introduced, gender associations were observed as robots, trucks, and cars were associated with toys for boys and dolls for girls. In other units of the Grade 3 coursebooks from international publishers, the father figure was represented in the kitchen, doing chores, as well as in the garden, doing repair work or gardening. These analyses revealed while the locally prepared coursebook showed leniency toward sexism, the international publication was more diverse in the ways it demonstrated male and female figures in society.

The results also support Turkey's changing demographic structure in terms of schooling. This shifting structure, driven by migration, has altered classroom structure over the last decade, creating increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse classroom environments (UNICEF, 2019). However, this increased diversity in textual and visual content was not adequately reflected in the textbooks studied.

An Examination of the Source, Target, and International Cultures in Grade 4 Coursebooks

The locally prepared coursebooks demonstrated source culture elements to uniformization as these books included symbols of Turkish culture such as the Turkish flag, Turkey's map, the national anthem, and the founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's picture in the introductory pages of the book. Another case where source culture is embodied in the related units was where Turkish culture, tradition, and history were symbolized with Hacivat and Karagöz appearing in the Cartoon Characters unit. As a part of social traditions/traditional acts Hacivat and Karagöz, named as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO added colorful variety to the coursebook. Additionally, April 23, National Sovereignty and Children's Day to commemorate the establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, and July 15 as Democracy and National Unity Day were

other locally-oriented cultural elements. One last piece under the category of values, beliefs, and attitudes was incorporating Islam-related elements such as mosques or females with scarves.

For target-culture representations in Grade 4 coursebooks, target culture indicators such as Bonfire Night and Christmas as traditional celebrations aimed to inform language learners about the target language culture. From another category, daily life, British culture associations were made with fish and chips or American culture with cupcakes seen in the food and drinks unit. Such English-based elements allowed students to explore English-language-associated cuisines and flavors, which can be engaging and motivating in language learning.

Internationalization is the over-arching target of the primary English coursebooks. A close examination of Grade 4 local publication English coursebooks revealed the integration of various flags for different countries in the nationalities unit, which helps with awareness and familiarity of other nations, their flags, and geo-locations in the world map. In the international publications, world-wide figures, heroes, and places were incorporated so the learners, early on, gain knowledge of other nations and the associated cultures. Similarly, cartoon characters such as Pinocchio or Aladdin and Japanese cartoon characters were incorporated into the locally published English coursebooks for international cultures.

Under the category of interpersonal relations visible in primary English coursebooks, local coursebooks integrated people with different needs such as people with disabilities, in a wheelchair, or the blind visualized with their walking aids, people playing basketball in their wheelchairs were observed in Grade 4 published coursebooks. To deconstruct sexist approaches, Grade 4 coursebooks from local publishers were observed to use bias-free language for genders. For so long, certain occupations have been associated with certain genders. With this in mind, instead of a policeman, for instance, policewoman or instead of fireman a gender-neutral expression such as firefighter was preferred.

Having analyzed all primary grade levels' English coursebooks quantitatively and qualitatively, to respond to the second research question, based on the primary English coursebook sampled, to what extent are the source, target, and international cultures integrated into the units of Grades 2, 3, and 4 coursebooks, the most likely answer would be the locally-published coursebooks were the most representative of the source culture. As the books by an international publisher largely aim at wider circles of consumers, they showed a tendency towards internationalization and target culture embodiment (i.e., British or American culture). Multiculturalism was observable in both locally-published and internationally-published coursebooks as diversity was highlighted in different ways.

In order to provide further explanations on the multiculturalism orientations of the sampled coursebooks, in-service teacher interviews were held. The following research question, for teacher interviews, was posed with the hopes of providing elaborate information on the incorporation of the coursebooks from multiculturalism perspectives. The interview protocol was followed (See Appendix 1 for details) and due to word limit constraints for an article publication, only two first two interview questions will be shared in the present section. Verbal teacher responses were recorded and when relevant, they were shared in the findings section.

4.3. Teachers' multiculturalism orientation and implementations

To answer this double-edged question, the researchers tried to understand the multicultural orientations of the participating teachers first. Secondly, these teachers' experiences with the sampled primary English coursebooks were examined and interview questions were interrogated around this theme. First, the teachers were asked this question: "What does multiculturalism mean to you?" This question aimed to understand what public primary school teachers generally associated multiculturalism with and how familiar they were with the concept. In line with the answers given, it was clear that teachers

generally had a positive approach to the concept of multiculturalism and regarded it as an improving element in the context of the teaching environment. Teacher 1, who had been teaching for 19 years and had students from many different cultures in the schools responded:

> *"Foreign language education means getting to know another culture. Learning a foreign language also includes other cultures, which is important in terms of improving students' vision and perspective on life. I think it is necessary to touch not only the culture of England or America but also all other foreign cultures. Multiculturalism is the coexistence of different cultures."*

Teacher 2, who was teaching a diversely-populated primary school in Ankara, when responding to the same interview question, brought a deeper-rooted matter to the surface, which was educational attainment to a certain threshold level so multiculturalism is beneficial for all. She quoted:

> *"There are too many Iraqi students in this school. That's why I thought cultural exchange would be good between students, but it didn't turn out as I expected. Iraqi students are introverted and cannot adapt to the classroom, so students are negatively influenced by each other. I think what causes this situation is the educational status of refugee families. If the children's families are educated, which is very rare, students have less trouble adjusting."*

With this, she stated that multiculturalism was not an advantage unless there was a good level of education. Otherwise, it would rather be a disadvantage. Also, Teacher 5, who had been teaching at the school interviewed for 21 years, based on her wide-range of experience with refugee students, defined multiculturalism as "an extremely important element that is not one-sided and contains different perspectives." The concept of multiculturalism, following teacher interviews, was found to be commonly defined by all teachers with the keywords such as diversity, awareness, harmony, and respect. It has been observed that primary school English teachers in public schools are not unfamiliar with the concept of multiculturalism, rather, they have a not-so-dense and detailed interpretation and conceptualization of it.

To elicit responses on teachers' interpretations of multiculturalism based on the primary English coursebooks that they use, the following interview questions were posed: "How do you think multiculturalism is reflected in the books you use? Do you think it is important that multiculturalism is reflected in the books you use in this context?"

This question has been emphasized extensively to understand the importance teachers attach to the concept of multiculturalism, to reach their observations about the books they use in the classroom, and to confirm the primary English coursebook examinations made in line with the research questions. All teachers agreed that it was adamant for multiculturalism to be reflected in the primary English coursebooks; however, multiculturalism was not reflected enough in locally published books. Another agreed point was that the reflection of multiculturalism was lacking, especially at the primary school level, when the coursebook's multicultural integration was considered. There were some comparisons made by teachers regarding this deficiency at the primary school level.

Teacher 2, who had worked in both secondary and primary schools and had completed 16 years in her profession, made the comparison and said:

> *"Multiculturalism in secondary schools is reflected more in the books. There are units related to holidays and special occasions. Celebrations of other countries such as Halloween are included in the book. But at the primary school level, our books only contain the names and flags of the countries. At least local clothes and dishes from cultures could have been included."*

Another comment that supported this idea was that while Teacher 1's 4th-grade books included foods from different cultures, there were only greetings in different languages at the primary school level. Contrary to these views, Teacher 5, who worked in the Mamak district said: "I notice that individuals with dark skin and different races

were depicted in the newly published public books, but I do not think it is enough." She further added that thanks to such diversity inclusions in the coursebook, she did not observe a mono-typical portrayal of English-speaking populations nor a strict imposition of men's and women's roles on primary school students, yet she did not find the existing representation of multiculturalism and diversity sufficient.

Teacher 4 answered this question by approaching it from a broad perspective. She stated that when teaching foreign languages to children, an effort should be made to teach the existence of another world and those cultures at the same time. And she added:

> *"At least I am making this effort. I always try to give examples in class. Even if it is not in the book, I try to explain that it is like this in our culture, but it is different in their culture."*

It was visible that this teacher adopted a comparative approach toward multiculturalism and multicultural education.

Regional Differences in Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' views on multiculturalism vary significantly across regions. Urban educators interpreted multicultural classrooms as a "natural diversity," while rural educators characterized them as a "new educational challenge." However, teachers working in areas with high refugee populations reported significant challenges with language barriers and cultural adaptation. These differences suggest that multicultural education approaches need to be adapted and tailored to local needs.

Based on this interpretation, it can be understood that the target culture was not adequately reflected in the books at the primary school level and that teachers aim to make the students familiar with the target culture through their efforts. Overall teachers' attitudes and observations towards the coursebooks were in the same direction. They all argued that there would be much more to be improved and that the books were far behind in reflecting the essential tenets of multiculturalism.

Digital Supplementary Materials: Support or Contradiction?

Digital platforms and multimedia content for privately published English textbooks offer a wide range of voices, accents, and visuals, strongly promoting intercultural awareness and inclusivity. Analysis of supporting digital materials revealed that government English textbook resources (such as audio recordings and teacher guides) largely mirror the content of printed textbooks, reinforcing the dominance of the source culture and traditional gender roles. However, some inconsistencies have been observed, with print materials promoting diversity while supplementary resources offer uniform or Western-centric representations.

Intercultural Pedagogical Practices and Classroom Methods

Textbooks can be considered physical resources that guide students and teachers' language development. They provide the learner with raw information, enabling them to learn, while also helping the teacher determine how to deliver this information to the student. However, the instructor may not always find the textbook appropriate for their audience. For example, the student's purpose in learning the language will be a criterion in adapting the textbook. When the levels presented in the textbooks do not always align with our audience, the teacher may also need to adapt. In addition to technical language-related issues, the teacher must also address the social and cultural aspects of the source, such as the types of elements presented in the textbook and the learning style employed (Atar, 2021). While our primary goal is to teach by reflecting the cultures of native-speaking countries, it's important to remember that our own audience also has a culture to which they feel comfortable and connected. By adopting this perspective, learners can develop a multicultural perspective and view other cultures from different perspectives (Mede & Yalçın, 2019). Even if teachers

have limited print resources, they can offer cultural education to learners through certain tools. For example, we can invite a native speaker into the classroom or connect our students with this person at a communication point. In addition to print resources, there may be newspapers, magazines, books, or posters related to the target language, which are called authentic materials. Non-print, or digital, resources are also possible, such as songs, videos, and films. Another project could be celebrating special days in the target language or displaying its food in a given environment.

According to Herod (Sabir & Hammad, 2023), authentic materials inevitably involve learners in real-life situations, as they embody the characteristics of real-life situations. A 2014 study (Al Azri & Al Rashdi, 2014) observed that authentic materials are most effective in communication skills, namely speaking, listening, and writing. This is because the primary purpose of authentic materials is not to teach the language but to use it (Sabir & Hammad, 2023). Additionally, using authentic materials increases learner motivation by allowing us to pay attention to students' individual interests and areas. Today, with the advent of artificial intelligence, teachers' resource shortages for authentic materials have become increasingly difficult.

Comparative summary, Table 3, was developed to illustrate how public (MoNE) and private publisher coursebooks differ in terms of cultural representation, gender roles, and stereotypical portrayals.

Table 3
Comparative Summary of Findings

Category	Public English Coursebooks	Private English Coursebooks	Interpretation
Cultural Types	The flag, national holidays, and Atatürk's image are the main examples of the source culture (Turkish). Few allusions to foreign or target cultures.	Balanced portrayal of foreign and target (American/British) cultures. includes scenes from multicultural classrooms, festivals, and a variety of names.	Private books highlight global interconnectedness, while MoNE books represent national and monocultural identity.
Gender Roles	Traditional roles: men as professionals (physicians, police officers, pilots), women as caregivers or educators.	More balanced depictions, with both sexes playing a variety of roles. Fathers can be found in domestic settings, while women can be found in technical jobs and sports.	Private books promote gender inclusion, whereas MoNE books perpetuate old gender norms.
Presence of Stereotypes	Stereotypes based on gender and religious culture are common (e.g., women with headscarves, men in authority). Restricted racial and ethnic variety.	Stereotypes are reduced when characters of color, people with impairments, and diverse cultural contexts are present. There is still some bias that is Western-centric.	Private books are outward-looking but Western-dominated, while public books display inward cultural stereotyping.

According to the comparative analysis, foreign publish materials show more balanced gender roles and culturally diverse representations, while public English books mainly emphasize the source culture and replicate traditional gender norms.

5. Discussion

The present study focused on multiculturalism orientations of primary English coursebooks published by local publishers for state schools and by an international publisher mainly outsourcing the private primary English sector in Turkey. For this, a sample of currently used primary English coursebooks published by MoNE in Turkey and by a worldwide known publisher were examined from multiculturalism perspectives. The sampled coursebooks were examined for every cultural entry, which were codes, and these codes located in the coursebooks were categorized into themes according to the CEFR guidelines. When multiculturalism was targeted, the research schema had to incorporate the examination of the source, target, and international culture indicators found in the examined coursebooks. The results of the examination of source, target, and international cultural elements embedded in Grade 2, 3, and 4 English coursebooks revealed books published for the use of public primary schools were mainly reflecting the source culture. These books from local publishers were found to be quite lacking in terms of reflecting the target culture. An important step towards raising world citizens, which was one of the goals, was to include celebrations, special foods, traditions, and flags of the target culture as presented and practiced by the coursebooks so young learners, early on, gain intercultural and intracultural familiarity.

The results align with the inclusive education model outlined in Turkey's recent national education policies. The 2023 Education Vision and the subsequent Turkey Century Curriculum Model (2024-2025) emphasize equality for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (MoNE, 2023). However, this adopted vision remains limited in concrete terms, particularly in state English textbooks, and needs to be systematically integrated into both content and pedagogy.

As a response to their quest whether coursebooks for public schools in Turkey incorporated interculturality, Çelik and Erbay (2013) reported that government-issued coursebooks in language classes failed to create a meaningful relationship between local and target cultures by overlooking cultural diversity. The present study findings proved within a decade, significant progress was not made. In contrast, the private publisher's primary English coursebooks were adequate in terms of reflecting the target culture. When the reflection of international culture on books was examined, while the private publisher coursebooks contained elements under various categories, public coursebooks only scratched the surface in terms of international culture incorporated into the units, instructional materials, and tasks. Recommendations for a stronger case of multiculturalism conveyed through primary coursebooks would be presenting a global English case where speakers of the language from various mother tongue backgrounds would be incorporated not only visually but also through international soundscapes. Such practices are aligned with Turkey's internationalization steps at primary levels (Ünal Gezer, 2025). For instance, authentic visual representations of the other speakers of the English language coming from Mandarin, Hindi, or Nordic language backgrounds speaking English as a second or foreign language could be represented via sound files for listening and communicative tasks. This would enable familiarization with varieties of English, as defined by the term World Englishes (Jenkins, 2003). This acknowledgement of the types of variation across English (Jenkins, 2003), will deconstruct the Standard English ideology. Diversity, the essence of multiculturalism, is also providing learning and practice opportunities for those who come from diverse learners backgrounds. Providing metalinguistic cues for varieties of word choice across English (i.e., semantic choices), spelling conventions across dialectal variations (i.e., literacy choices), and touching on local culture in relation to English learning would be integral components for a thorough multiculturalism

experience. Oftentimes, multiculturalism has been associated with special days to commemorate certain cultures and peoples of those cultures and this is a rather superficial approach to it (Ünal Gezer, 2019).

These results suggest that while print textbooks play a significant role, their compatibility and consistency with the accompanying digital resources are crucial. If digital resources and textbook content are not compatible, the intended multicultural message may be undermined. To increase consistency and effectiveness in intercultural education, future textbook evaluations should utilize a multimodal perspective encompassing both print and digital ecosystems.

Examining the coursebook, without consulting with the consumers of these instructional tools would have been a single-sided depiction of multiculturalism at primary level English education. The inclusion of teachers from different regions in the study highlighted the dynamics of multicultural education in Turkey. The results demonstrate that regional differences directly influence multicultural practices. Therefore, considering regional factors in the development of curricula and teacher training programs is crucial for developing more comprehensive education policies. With this in mind, primary English teachers working in culturally and linguistically diverse school settings were interviewed a) to unearth participating teachers' multiculturalism orientations, and b) to explore their potential multiculturalism experience via the use of primary English coursebooks in their classrooms. Teacher interviews revealed teachers' positively oriented perception of multiculturalism and their present awareness of the nature of multilingualism depicted in primary English coursebooks. Interview findings revealed teachers who used primary English coursebooks prepared for public schools were dissatisfied with the stereotypical portrayal of genders in different units, mainly modeling after the gender associations and representations already visible in local culture and society where females are the homemakers and males are the breadwinners. Such a heavy load of local culture associations, rather than target or international cultures, presented by the coursebooks was criticized by the participant teachers. Accordingly, this type of superficial approach toward multiculturalism is rather generic and it potentially causes misconceptions about multilingualism and multiculturalism. Acquiring the patterns, expressions, or behavioral acts of the culture of the target language and associated culture is essential for being a world citizen. Brown and Ratcliff (1998) emphasize the need for a variety of multiculturalism that incorporates core values while promoting unity in a culture of difference. Learning different cultures is an added value not only for foreign language learners but for everyone. The main purpose when teaching culture is to create cultural awareness and synergy, to promote intercultural awareness, not to simply feed into cultural assimilation. The most important prejudice or lack of knowledge about multiculturalism in our country is to see it only as an issue related to ethnic problems. (Yazıcı, Başol, & Toprak, 2009). However, the concept of multiculturalism includes awareness of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, social class, education, religious orientation, and other cultural dimensions (Başbay and Kağnıcı, 2011). Considering this broad spectrum of multilingualism, this extensive analysis of the coursebooks for primary levels is a response to societies where monoculturalism and monolingualism are the norm. Prejudice against diversity is like swimming against the current and falling behind other nations and societies.

Additional remarks from teacher interviews on the source, target, and international cultures observed in the sampled coursebooks were that public books focused too much on the source culture and that this did not benefit primary school students in foreign language education. Teachers stated that this deficiency was especially prevalent in Grade 2 public coursebooks. For Grade 2 students who encounter English for the first time, indirectly familiarizing them with the elements of the target and international culture would be engaging and motivating. Such teacher comments were cross-tabulated with the coursebook examination which reported a minimal-level multiculturalism incorporation into primary English curricula.

In the current study, among the professions represented with the visuals in the public English books at all grade levels, women were listed as teachers, nurses, singers, and dancers, and men were listed as police, chefs, business people, pilots, drivers, firefighters, waiters, security guards, and engineers. These stereotypical gender-associative role distribution across public primary English coursebooks was another reported argument in the interviews which were also backed up by the coursebook examination. It was determined that textbooks tended to portray males in a wider variety of occupations than they do women. Nonetheless, in the examination of private publishing houses, it was seen that there was no gender discrimination in matters such as professions and sports activities. As such representations could, misleadingly, create perceptions in children's minds that certain jobs or sports can only be done by certain profiles, a balanced representation of genders for different jobs and sports would be a more proper representation. Such discriminatory classifications may have long-lasting impacts on certain learner profiles, especially female learners, who may develop low self-efficacy judgments on their potential for particular professions in their career choices. To avoid such misinterpretations should be avoided with diverse gender-based occupational representations across primary English coursebooks.

Another major trend observed across coursebooks was that both public and private publishing houses needed to improve the way they incorporate individuals with special needs. The rate of people with rare conditions, or special cases, compared to all other cases was quite low in the examined coursebooks. It was noted that the individuals with special needs presented in the books were only visually impaired and physically disabled. Studies conducted on English-language literature revealed a dearth of information in the books regarding disability, political beliefs, and socioeconomic status (Başbay, Dimici, & Yıldız, 2018; Özen & Dağyar, 2020) which all should be integrated into course profiles.

Finally, when ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity were considered in English textbooks, it was seen that there was no individual from another ethnic or racial background in the Grade 2 English coursebook. Only two entries for people of color were observed in the Grade 3 coursebook. In the Grade 4 English coursebook, limited space was given to people of different origins, dishes from various cuisines, and symbolic representations of various nations. The books prepared by foreign publishing houses mainly focused on the cultures of their own countries, and even if they covered different nations, they were generally limited to Europe. Therefore, it was determined that the representation of various nations in public English textbooks was insufficient with its inclusivity. Nonetheless, as it was stressed in the teaching program for the English course (MoNE, 2018), one of the vital tools that would help students recognize differences and similarities across cultures would be English coursebooks. Integrating cultural and linguistic elements should be re-considered, having this dimension in mind.

To conclude the arguments made in the present study with Mahmood's (2011) words emphasized coursebooks would be regarded as the foundation of instructional practices that could provide students with a variety of striking linguistic and cultural experiences. Because of this, coursebooks that could have a direct impact on the caliber of teaching methods ought to be carefully chosen. Textbook illustrations and their layout were useful in assisting students in understanding ideologies and practices in other cultures (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). Students usually use their preexisting schemas to create interpretations by relating the images in textbooks to their personal experiences (Kasmaienezhadfard, Pourrajab, & Rabbani, 2015). Still, most textbook illustrations were drawn without considering the educational philosophies or the psychological needs of the students (Morris, 2006).

A language coursebook with multicultural elements presents topics from a wide range of different cultures and focuses on themes such as family relationships or social elements. Books that accurately present the target and source culture elements give students the chance to understand the current society and prepare them for the changing world. Supporting the presentation of these cultural

elements, especially with authentic pictures, increases the effect of the book in conveying multicultural elements (Korkmaz, 2009). Indeed, according to the research findings, English coursebooks for primary school students appear to be many different funds of knowledge but when it comes to issues of gender, peoples of color, special education, socioeconomic status, and ideologies in a diverse manner, these coursebooks were found to be immensely lacking. Additionally, the research, which also examined the additional resources of the books, concluded that digital learning components should not only strengthen the textbook content but also expand multicultural and inclusive learning opportunities. The regional expansion of the study would have been a significant advantage in providing a more comprehensive understanding of how diverse socioeconomic and cultural conditions across Turkey influence multicultural education practices.

The evaluations of the multicultural context in the current study, which examined the teacher perspective, should be expanded to include students' experiences in future studies. Examining how students perceive and respond to multicultural content is crucial for the effectiveness of responsive materials in this context, while also supporting the development of more inclusive English Language Teaching resources in Turkey.

Future research is recommended to further explore this diversity and increase its generalizability. Besides Incorporating student perspectives into future research will not only improve multicultural education but also foster a more holistic perspective in practice. Students' motivation, interest, and curiosity in diverse cultural contexts may differ from those of teachers. Therefore, the need for materials and pedagogical approaches that foster inclusivity through both content and its presentation is emphasized.

Future research is recommended to further explore this diversity and increase its generalizability.

6. Limitation and Future Directions

In the present study, only written components were examined. It is known that coursebooks are multimodal instructional tools with audio, audio-visual files, scannable QR codes. Because the researchers did not have immediate access to these materials, the analysis of the coursebooks, for the present study, was limited to print materials only with written and visual input presented.

One of the limitations is sustainability because there are too many books for the use of young learners and their teachers to be reviewed and it is a never-ending task to review these materials. This is one other potential limitation.

Researches should examine how Turkey's changing demographic structure and recent curriculum reforms reflect its intercultural goals in terms of awareness and inclusiveness.

For future studies, the perspectives of the participating families, children who deal with the books regularly, the perspectives of the publisher affiliates, and school management people should be included for a more comprehensive look into this matter.

Future studies can provide guidance to teachers from students' perspectives. A brief survey of student groups could provide insight into their views and opinions on multicultural issues and their representation in English textbooks. The results of the study, conducted using students' English textbooks, will complement teachers' perspectives on this topic and offer new perspectives on classroom practices. Additionally, it is important to examine students' attitudes toward multicultural elements in textbooks. Exploring which cultural themes students find less engaging, which they embrace more, and how they interpret representations of diversity can be valuable for curriculum and materials development.

Acknowledgement

Ethics Committee Approval This research was conducted with permission obtained by the University Human Subject Research and Ethics

Commission's decision dated 13/03/2023 and numbered E-27535802-100-24776.
Funding This research was funded by TED University Undergraduate Research Fund Project ID # T-21-B2021-90112.
A paper presentation based on the preliminary findings of the study was accepted and presented at 15th METU ELT Convention, May 10-11 2024.
Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

Altınbaş, D. (2006). Avrupa ve Çokkültürlülük: Fransa örneği. *Stratejik Analiz, 78*(6), 52-61.

Atar, C. (2021). An analysis of the English textbooks in Turkish primary schools with regard to the Processability Theory. *Shanlax International Journal of Education, 9*(S1), 117–125. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9iS1-May.4007

Ateş, E., & Aytekin, H. (2020). Küreselleşen dünyada cokkültürlülük ve yabancı dil eğitimi. *OPUS Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi, 15*(26), 4563-4579. https://doi.org/10.26466/opus.651385

Aydoğan, I. (2012). Okul binalarının özellikleri ve öğrenciler üzerine etkileri, *Milli Eğitim, 41*(193), 29-43.

Başbay, A. (2014). Çokkültürlü eğitim kapsamındaki derslerinin incelenmesi: Georgia State Üniversitesi örneği. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 14*(2), 585-608.

Başbay, A., & Bektaş, Y. (2009). Instructional environment and teacher competences in the context of multiculturalism. *Education and Science, 34*(152), 30-43.

Başbay, A., Dimici, K., Yıldız, B. (2018). Hazırlık sınıfı İngilizce ders kitabının çokkültürlülük açısından incelenmesi: English File örneği. *Dil Eğitimi ve Araştırmaları Dergisi, 4*(3), 175-200. https://doi.org/10.31464/jlere.426780

Başbay, A., & Kağnıcı, D. Y. (2011). Çokkültürlü yeterlik algıları ölçeği: Bir ölçek geliştirme çalışması. *Eğitim ve Bilim, 36*(161), 199-212.

Bayyurt, Y., & Erduyan, I. (2022). Special issue on English as a lingua franca practices for inclusive multilingual classrooms (ENRICH). *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Dergisi, 39*(1), 195-197.

Brown H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy.* Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, M. C., & Ratcliff, J. L. (1998). Multiculturalism and multicultural curricula in the United States. *Higher Education in Europe, 23*(1), 11-21, DOI: 10.1080/0379772980230102

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment Companion Volume. (2001). Retrieved December 01, 2023, from https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). (2023). Retrieved December 20, 2023, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages

Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. X. (1999). Cultural mirrors: materials and methods in the EFL classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 196-219). Cambridge University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sage.*

Çelik, S., & Erbay, Ş. (2013). Cultural perspectives of Turkish ELT coursebooks: Do standardized teaching texts incorporate intercultural features? *Education & Science, 38*(167), 336-351.

Çetin, İ. (2005). *Kent kültürü zenginliğinde etnik farklılıklar: Midyat örneği.* [Yüksek lisans tezi, Ege Üniversitesi]. Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Sage Publications.

Dörnyei, Z. (2011). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). Mc Graw Hill.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106-116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gollnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. C. (2017). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society*. (10th ed.). Pearson.

Haznedar, B. (2004). Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretimi: İlköğretim yabancı dil programı. *Boğaziçi University Journal of Education, 21*(2), 15-29.

Hibbing, A. N., & Rankin-Erickson, J. L. (2003). A picture is worth a thousand words: Using visual images to improve comprehension for middle school struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher, 56*(8), 758-770.

Jenkins, J. (2003). *World Englishes: A resource book for students.* Routledge.

Kasmaienezhadfard, S., Pourrajab, M., & Rabbani, M. (2015). Effects of pictures in textbooks on students' creativity. *Multi Disciplinary Edu Global Quest Quarterly, 4*(2), 83-96.

Korkmaz, I. (2009). *A descriptive study on the concepts of culture and multiculturalism in English language coursebooks*. [Yüksek lisans tezi, Trakya Üniversitesi]. Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Kula, S. S., & Özaslan, D. (2023). İlkokul İngilizce ders kitaplarının kapsayıcı eğitim bağlamında değerlendirilmesi. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, *9*(2), 457-476. https://doi.org/10.31592/aeusbed.1101757

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Mahmood, K. (2011). Conformity to quality characteristics of textbooks: the illusion of textbook evaluation in Pakistan. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education, 5*, 170-190.

Mede, E., & Yalçın, Ş. (2019). *Utilizing textbook adaptation strategies: Experiences and challenges of novice and experienced EFL instructors. TESOL International Journal, 14*(1), 91–104.

MoNE. (2018). İngilizce dersi öğretim programı (İlkokul ve Ortaokul 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 ve 8. Sınıflar). Retrieved December 08, 2023, from https://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/ProgramDetay.aspx?PID=327

Morris, W. (2006). *Creativity: Its place in education*. (2023, December 3). https://www.creativejeffrey.com/creative/Creativity_in_Education.pdf

Oğuzkan, F. (1993). *Eğitim terim sözlüğü*. Emel Matbaacılık.

Özen, D., & Dağyar, M. (2020). Çokkültürlülük bağlamında ortaöğretim İngilizce ders kitaplarının incelenmesi. *Ankara University Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences (JFES)*, *53*(2). 601-636.

Özhan, İ. (2006). *Farklılaşmanın özel görünümleri olarak çokkültürlülük ve çokkültürcülük*. [Yüksek lisans tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi]. Ulusal Tez Ofisi.

Öztürk Duman, Z. (2012). İngilizce ders kitaplarındaki kültürel öğelerin incelenmesi ve öğretmen görüşleri üzerine bir içerik analizi. [Yüksek lisans tezi, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi], Ulusal Tez Ofisi.

Parekh, B. (2002). *Çokkültürlülüğü yeniden düşünmek*. Phonix Yayınevi.

Sabir, G., & Hammad, F. A. (2023). *The effects of using authentic materials on motivating EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(12), 40–48. https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v1i12.75

Sayın Güran, U. (2021). *Women teachers' perceptions and experiences on gender roles in public and private spheres*. [Yüksek lisans tezi, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi]. Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca.* Oxford University Press.

UNICEF. (2019). *Tackling languages, inclusion, human mobility and multilingual education.* (2019). Retrieved December 01, 2023, from: https://www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/tackling-languages-inclusion-human-mobility-and-multilingual-education

Ünal Gezer, M. (2019). Looking through the multicultural glass: Re-examination of Syrian refugee children education in Turkey. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 5*(2), 303-322., https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.599275

Ünal Gezer, M., Dixon, Q. L. (2021). An overview of Turkey's policy development in TESOL and Multilingualism. In K. Raza, C. Coombe, & D. Reynolds (Eds.), *Policy development in TESOL and multilingualism: The past, the present and the way forward* (pp. 257-270). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3603-5_20

Ünal Gezer, M. (2022). English for young learners in Turkey: Reflections from pre-service English language teachers. In S. Zein & Y. Goto Butler (Eds.), *Routledge research in teacher education for young learners in Asia: Challenges and directions for teacher education* (pp.85-105). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003016977-6

Ünal Gezer, M. (2025). Turkey's internationalization steps at primary levels: Implications for early English education. In V. Tavares & S. Melo-Pfeifer (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of iternationalization of language education* (pp. 169-188). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-00887-9_10

Yalçın, C. (2002). Küreselleşme, çokkültürcülük ve eğitim. *Eğitim Araştırmaları, 6*, 65-77.

Yanık, C. (2012). *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de çokkültürlülük.* Sentez Yayıncılık.

Yazıcı, S., Başol, G. ve Toprak, G. (2009). Öğretmenlerin çok kültürlü eğitim tutumları: bir güvenirlik ve geçerlik çalışması. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 37*(37), *229-242.*

Appendices

Appendix 1
Interview Protocol and Questions

The interviews are conducted in face-to-face mode and all the participating teachers are asked the following questions, following a brief small talk as an ice-breaker and for logistics purposes.

1. What does multiculturalism mean to you?
2. How do you think multiculturalism is reflected in the books you use? Do you think it is important that multiculturalism is reflected in the books you use in this context?
3. To your observations and experiences with the coursebooks you have used, which of the following have been highlighted more: the source culture, the target culture, or the international culture?
1. How do you observe these three elements in the other sources you use?
4. Do you think the multiculturalism elements in textbooks are help or hindrance for students? Why?
5. Do you think the multiculturalism elements reflected in the books affect primary school students? How?
6. Do you think the books you use are sufficient in terms of reflecting multiculturalism? If your answer is no, what would you like to see included more and less in the context of multiculturalism in the books you use? Can you give an example?
7. Have you used books from private publishing houses such as Oxford in your classes How would you compare them with the government books in the context of multiculturalism?

If the teachers had no prior experience with the private publications, they were asked to look at the books and then share their answers.