

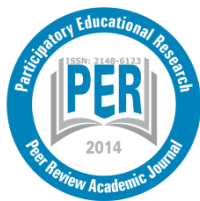
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## Promoting Multicultural Learning: An Investigation of Race Representation in Turkish Secondary School EFL Coursebooks

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Globalization has been a transformative force in the world, shaping the way countries interact with one another and impacting a wide range of economic, political, and social factors (Akcaoglu & Arsal, 2022). In this context, promoting understanding of diversity and inclusion among students is essential which can be effectively cultivated through learning materials. Raising students' awareness of the diverse range of cultures, perspectives, and experiences that exist within the world should be a concern for teachers. Therefore, this study explores the representation of race in four EFL coursebooks prepared for secondary school grades (5-8) published by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. In a qualitative descriptive research design, document analysis was used to analyze the images and written texts. The results revealed that in all four books the target language countries, European nationalities, and white race were predominantly referred to and portrayed. The most diverse coursebook was the 5th grade one in terms of racial representation whereas the 6th grade coursebook was found to include references to only Türkiye. The study suggests revising the coursebooks to promote diversity and inclusivity can be an effective way to cultivate intercultural competence, foster greater empathy and understanding among students, and create more equitable and inclusive learning environments.

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## Introduction

In today's globalized world, English has become the primary medium of communication transcending boundaries of language, religion, culture, and race. Within this context, English language classrooms hold immense potential to foster learners' intercultural competence by raising awareness of real-world issues and expanding their appreciation of diversity. It is recognized that language teaching and learning no longer solely prioritize achieving linguistic proficiency; rather, educators can effectively utilize the classroom as a space to cultivate intercultural understanding. Embracing diversity and inclusivity as

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fundamental tenets of teaching practice, teachers can employ various pedagogical approaches to establish a culturally responsive learning environment, thereby nurturing students' intercultural competence (Gay, 2018). By using a wide variety of materials and activities, learners can be guided to understand and appreciate different cultures, custom, values, and beliefs and adopt an attitude which fosters global citizenship which is essential for personal growth as well as professional success. Therefore, it is crucial that English language teachers make room for multicultural education in their teaching practices.

Parallel to the global increase in migration and mobility in the past few decades (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021), the number of people who migrated to Türkiye also increased in 2021. 739 thousand 364 people migrated, 124 thousand 269 of the population coming from abroad were Turkish citizens and 615 thousand 95 of them were foreign nationals (TUIK, 2023). According to a latest report published by UNICEF (2022), 3,731,028 registered Syrians live in Türkiye, 1,124,353 of these immigrants are children of compulsory education age.

Migration, wars, and natural disasters all enhance diversity inside borders and the need for redesigned education emerges not only in Türkiye but all around the world as student populations in many schools demonstrate significant racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic variety (Gomez et al., 2009). The number of internationally mobile students, which tripled from 2000 to 2019, from two to six million, is increasing rapidly (UNESCO, 2022). The continued demand for international interchange at a period of border restrictions, along with an extraordinary global shift from in-person to online teaching and learning following the global pandemic Covid-19 (UNESCO et al., 2021), has resulted in a rise in virtual forms of mobility as well. Some scholars have a common consensus on the nexus between globalization and English language and the influence of the two on people's lives. Globalization and the English language are coupled together since both have spread and remain spreading hand in hand all over the world (Altan, 2017).

In this context, English language classrooms can play a vital role in creating a learning environment where students are deliberately exposed to multicultural content and materials that reflect diversity and inclusivity and learn to value and respect people regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, or class background. One of the most essential tools for incorporating multicultural education into language learning is through the use of coursebooks. Littlejohn (2012) stated that EFL coursebooks “can be seen as potentially resonating in tune with social forces far beyond language teaching itself” (p. 285) as effective instructional and educational resources are essential for a teacher to properly teach a lesson (Charunsri, 2019).

EFL coursebooks are extremely significant in terms of conveying rich material through language, which is the fundamental mechanism by which individuals make sense of the world and construct their thoughts (Reid et al., 2014). Students are exposed to perspectives conveyed through their coursebooks (Kubota, 2021). Therefore, in many studies, researchers emphasize that coursebooks should reflect students' broad racial and cultural backgrounds, equip them to recognize different voices and opinions, deliver universal values, serve as an important vehicle for transferring cultural knowledge (Derakhshan, 2018; Gebregeorgis, 2016; Shin et al., 2011). EFL coursebook writers and English teachers thus should include multicultural texts in coursebooks to equip students with intercultural competence (Widodo et al., 2017).

However, most previous studies have shown that EFL coursebooks tend to be outweighed by a dominant racial group in a particular society (e.g., target culture, American, British) (Kubota, 2021; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Shin et al., 2011; Song, 2013; Su, 2016). Similarly, in the

Turkish context, Sarıçoban and Kırmızı (2020) also indicate that while many coursebooks include elements from international cultures, they mainly focus on cultural topics such as such as idioms, superstitions, and other cultural references related to the target language, with little attention given to Asian cultures and virtually none to African cultures.

Numerous recent research studies have focused on sociocultural aspects, such as race, gender, social class, and others, in English coursebooks. Scholars have examined the issue of representation in coursebooks primarily in relation to gender (Selvi & Kocaman, 2021), culture (Alizadeh et al., 2024; Farooq, 2021; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020), social justice (Alter, 2021; Brown & Nanguy, 2021), and ethnicity (Durand, 2021). Of the topics that have been studied, race seems to have attracted less attention. Existing studies on race representation in coursebooks have discovered a prevalence of images of White people, as well as stereotyping of people of various races (Bowen & Hoper, 2022; Canagarajah, 1999; Yamada, 2011). According to Kubota (2021), it is essential for teachers to practice anti-racism in their line of work since language instruction attempts to foster understanding between those with various linguistic, cultural, and racial origins. Teachers should be aware of several topics including what racial and linguistic stereotypes are represented in multimodal resources, if certain racialized groups are over- or under-represented, and how the stereotypes and inequalities can be transformed (Kubota, 2021).

By focusing on the examination of race representation within EFL coursebooks, this study contributes to the broader understanding of how race is portrayed in educational materials and has implications for promoting inclusivity and diversity in EFL curricula. Thus, this study sets out to examine racial inclusion in coursebooks, in this case, the secondary school English coursebooks published by the Turkish MoNE, considering the recent upsurge in anti-racism interest in ELT (Kubota, 2021). The study aims to offer further evidence supporting the suggestion that anti-racism curricula should be decolonized.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Multiculturalism and Multicultural education in the EFL context***

English has emerged as the most extensively spoken lingua franca in the world. This development is largely attributed to the increasing number of non-native speakers who have contributed to shaping the language in diverse multilingual and multicultural settings across the globe. The global spread of English has resulted in numerous variations and hybrid forms of the language that reflect local cultural and linguistic influences (Jenkins, 2015).

According to Gebregeorgis (2016), a society that lacks tolerance and multicultural understanding will inevitably struggle to coexist peacefully in a multicultural country. This observation highlights the importance of promoting multicultural awareness and understanding as a means of fostering social cohesion and facilitating peaceful coexistence. Pratama et al. (2021) add that difficulties in achieving these goals often arise from a lack of knowledge about multicultural values in society. In this context, multicultural education has emerged as a promising approach to promoting cultural understanding and respect.

However, promoting multicultural awareness requires more than just teaching students about diverse cultures. Teachers must also be aware of the cultural and moral values represented in the materials they use (Widodo et al., 2017). English coursebooks, in particular, have emerged as noteworthy teaching materials that can be deployed by teachers to equip their students with

the knowledge and skills needed to navigate a multicultural world. Coursebooks can serve as a valuable resource for promoting multicultural awareness and developing intercultural competence among students (Bon & Chuaychoowong, 2023; Pratama et al., 2021). Language educators should use thoughtfully chosen coursebooks to tackle global issues, prompting the encouragement for teachers to incorporate captivating topics that go beyond traditional exam-centered methods (Akban & Yavuz, 2022).

### ***Multiculturalism in EFL Coursebooks***

Coursebooks play a crucial role in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge in classrooms, particularly in reinforcing multicultural education (Pratama et al., 2021). A considerable number of studies have been conducted to assess how multicultural content is represented in EFL coursebooks (Dinh & Sharifian, 2017; McConachy, 2018; Su, 2016; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). These studies suggest that coursebooks should represent diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives to promote intercultural communication and understanding in the classroom.

Therefore, the representation of different races, cultures, and languages in coursebooks must be examined carefully to make informed judgments about their efficacy in promoting diversity and inclusivity. In several studies, it is found that the representation of the source culture is favored, while the international, and universal cultures are heavily under-represented in coursebooks (Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021; Çelik & Erbay-Çetinkaya, 2022; Fakazlı & Baytar, 2021). This lack of diversity in coursebooks can hinder learners' acculturation and cultural awareness.

In addition to linguistic features, visual elements such as images and illustrations can play a crucial role in shaping learners' perceptions of different cultures and races. Canagarajah (1999) highlights the existence of racial stereotyping in coursebook depictions, where people of different races are attributed with cultural, economic, political, and social positions. Studies conducted by Canagarajah (1999) and Derakhshan (2021) highlight the importance of scrutinizing all aspects of coursebooks to ensure that they promote cultural awareness and inclusivity and that they do not perpetuate stereotypes or reinforce cultural biases.

The representation of race and ethnicity in EFL coursebooks has been a topic of critical discussion in the field of language education. Kubota (2021) argues that coursebooks often reflect a Western-centric view of the world, which can marginalize non-Western cultures and perpetuate stereotypes. Similarly, Bouzid (2017) points out that EFL coursebooks often depict homogenized and stereotypical representations of other cultures, which can lead to a narrow understanding of the world and reinforce existing power dynamics. These representations can have a significant impact on students' perceptions of themselves and others, as well as their attitudes toward different cultures and identities.

Given that recent research has generally centered on cultural aspects, a concentrated examination of race and inclusion is believed to enhance the field. Furthermore, considering that approximately 30 percent of young immigrants are enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Türkiye, as per data from the Refugees Association, scrutinizing secondary education EFL coursebooks is deemed essential for generating more significant insights and fostering awareness about this issue.

This research aims to explore how the concept of race is depicted in the secondary school EFL coursebooks, specifically focusing on Turkish MoNE books. Sub-questions are devised to delve



into various aspects of representation within the coursebooks: (a) examining the portrayal of skin colors in images, (b) analyzing the diversity of name origins, (c) assessing the distribution of countries and nationalities, and (d) evaluating the racial representation of prominent figures.

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

This study follows a qualitative, descriptive design that uses document analysis to explore the representation of diversity and inclusion in terms of race in secondary school level 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade EFL coursebooks published by the Turkish MoNE. The objective is to identify and describe the patterns of putative racial representation in the images and written texts included in the coursebooks. Putative race represents the socially constructed race (Adukia et al., 2023) that people perceive from certain hints of appearance.

Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to delve deeper into the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation helping them collect and present data in a manner that is accessible and easy to understand, while still providing valuable insights into the research phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2013). According to Morgan (2021), by using this approach, researchers can effectively present their findings and provide a clear understanding of the research phenomenon under investigation. This research aims to reveal patterns of bias or underrepresentation in coursebooks by specifically focusing on the representation of race. To achieve this goal, document analysis is employed as a method for determining the presence or absence of racial descriptors or stereotypes in the language used to describe characters.

Thus, the qualitative descriptive approach was considered to be well-suited to the research purposes of this study allowing the researchers to do a rich and detailed exploration of the representation of race in the Turkish secondary school EFL coursebooks while the document analysis allowed for a systematic and thorough examination of the written and visual content.

### ***Setting and Research Materials***

In Türkiye, with the adoption of the 4+4+4 education system in April 2012, compulsory education was extended to 12 years and includes primary (2nd to 4th grades), secondary (5th to 8th grades), and high school levels (9th to 12th grades). It is publicly financed and free at the public schools. English language lessons are mandatory in Turkish schools, starting from Grade 2 of primary school and continuing throughout 12 years of compulsory education. The number of hours per week for English language classes varies depending on the grade level; in primary schools, it is 2 hours, in middle schools, it ranges from 3 to 4 hours per week, and in high schools, it may range from 4-8 hours per week (Board of Education and Training, 2022). Students in the 5th grade of secondary school can enroll in an intensive English course with the approval of their parents. Similarly, preparatory classes in some high schools provide extensive English instruction. The number of hours of English education provided in such classes may increase to 20 hours (Board of Education and Training, 2022).

English language teaching begins in primary schools in Türkiye with Grade 2. In grades 2-4 (A1 Level), the emphasis is on fundamental vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and listening and speaking abilities. Students learn to introduce themselves, and hold simple conversations about everyday themes including family, school, and routines. In middle schools, English language instruction continues with a greater emphasis on grammar, reading, and writing abilities. In grades 5-8 (A2 Level), students improve their ability to express themselves



more fluently and accurately, and they begin to read and comprehend simple texts. Hobbies, eating, travel, and the environment may all be covered. English language teaching grows more advanced in high schools, with a focus on developing intermediate to upper-intermediate level language skills. In grades 9-12 (B1-B2 Level), students learn to articulate themselves, argue, and debate more complicated themes in culture, technology, global affairs, and literature. Students' reading, writing, and speaking skills are honed, and they learn to compose essays, reports, and other sorts of academic materials.

In Türkiye, the MoNE (2018a) has taken a proactive approach by providing free coursebooks that are distributed at the beginning of each school year for each lesson. These coursebooks have been meticulously constructed to cater to various age groups and competence levels, ranging from primary to high school. They are comprehensive with exercises in a variety of language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as grammar and vocabulary. The coursebooks include visuals, images, and real-life scenarios for learners, and supplemented by interactive multimedia elements such as audio recordings, movies, and online activities in Education Information Network (EBA) system. The MoNE's free distribution of English language coursebooks has made them available to all students across the country, enabling equitable access to educational resources for English language education for Turkish students (MoNE, 2020).

There is a national curriculum in Türkiye. The Turkish Primary and Secondary EFL curriculum aims "to develop students' appreciation for their own culture, understanding, and valuation of international languages and cultures, intercultural competence, and learner autonomy, in line with the principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and current educational research" (MoNE, 2018a, p. 3). The EFL curriculum claims to put emphasis on cultural diversity stating that "the curriculum aims at developing appreciation for their own unique culture while learning to understand and value a broad spectrum of international languages and cultures in accordance with the CEFR's" (MoNE, 2018a, p. 8). This objective underscores the importance of students recognizing and valuing their own cultural heritage while also fostering understanding and appreciation for a wide range of international languages and cultures in alignment with the CEFR.

Elements of both the target culture and international cultures are presented in accordance with the themes of each unit, while also stressing the value of home culture to prevent the formation of negative attitudes (MoNE, 2018a). Moreover, the curriculum adopts an action-oriented approach based on current educational research and international teaching standards, taking into account the three descriptors of the CEFR, including learner autonomy, self-assessment, and appreciation for cultural diversity (MoNE, 2018a). In this respect, the curriculum's emphasis on learner autonomy, self-assessment, and appreciation for cultural diversity also aligns with promoting race and racial awareness. By empowering learners to take ownership of their language learning journey, students are encouraged to critically reflect on their own cultural perspectives and biases, including those related to race.

Coursebooks distributed to schools in Türkiye are frequently produced and authorized by the MoNE. A team of professional language educators and linguists prepares the English language coursebooks who are determined by the MoNE among experienced teachers and field experts. They prepare the drafts of the coursebooks in line with the CEFR's standards and four general criteria which are compatibility of the content with the constitution, scientific adequacy, capacity for fulfilling the curriculum achievements, and supportive quality of visuals and other content (Board of Education and Training, 2015). As a result of a rigorous selection process,

coursebooks get ready to be delivered to schools. The secondary school coursebooks are prepared for all public secondary schools and are available digitally on the EBA system and Fundamental Education General Directorate Materials (TEGM) website and are open to everyone (<https://tegmateriyal.eba.gov.tr/>).

In line with the purpose of this current research study, the English language coursebooks used for the secondary schools in the 2022-2023 academic year, published by the MoNE are used for analysis. The coursebooks are described in the table below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Secondary School English Coursebooks

Coursebooks	Authors	Publication year	Language Level
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Dr. Mehmet Yalçın Günhan Genç Nihat Özgür Orhon Hayriye Şahin	2021	A2.1
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Fatma Demircan Gonca Akıskalı Aysel Berket Ferdi Günay	2021	A2.2
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Aydan Aykanat Erdem Turgut Balcı Kader Duran Özdil	2019	A2.3
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Binnur İlter İlknur İzgi Esra Çavuşer Özdemir Ayşegül Türkeri Yeter Zeliha Tuğba Çavuşer Yünlü	2021	B1.1

The EFL coursebooks for the secondary schools in Türkiye were published in the years 2021 and 2019, as shown in the table. These coursebooks cover a range of levels, from A2.1 to B1.1, to accommodate students with varying levels of English language proficiency. These coursebooks are widely used in the secondary schools across Türkiye, catering to students from a variety of backgrounds and regions. A preliminary review of the coursebooks revealed that there are 10 units in all grade levels. The units include various authentic topics as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2. Units Included in Secondary School English Coursebooks

Coursebooks	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Unit 1	Hello	Life	Appearance and Personality	Friendship
Unit 2	My Town	Yummy Breakfast	Sports	Teen Life
Unit 3	Games and Hobbies	Downtown	Biographies	In the Kitchen
Unit 4	My Daily Routine	Weather and Emotions	Wild Animals	On the Phone
Unit 5	Health	At the Fair	Television	The Internet
Unit 6	Movies	Occupations	Celebrations	Adventures
Unit 7	Party Time	Holidays	Dreams	Tourism
Unit 8	Fitness	Bookworms	Public Buildings	Chores
Unit 9	Animal Shelter	Saving the Planet	Environment	Science
Unit 10	Festivals	Democracy	Planets	Natural Forces

Each unit is 15-20 pages long. At the end of each unit, there is a page with a summary for students to evaluate themselves. There is also a section where grammar topics are explained, and word lists are given. These sections are not included in the analysis because they are



repetitions of or the answers for the activities in the units.

For the purposes of this study, the images, and texts in all four books were coded and classified. A total of 1812 image and text data were collected and analyzed from four coursebooks. Of these, 950 were images and 862 were texts including names, nationalities, and countries in (see Figure 1).

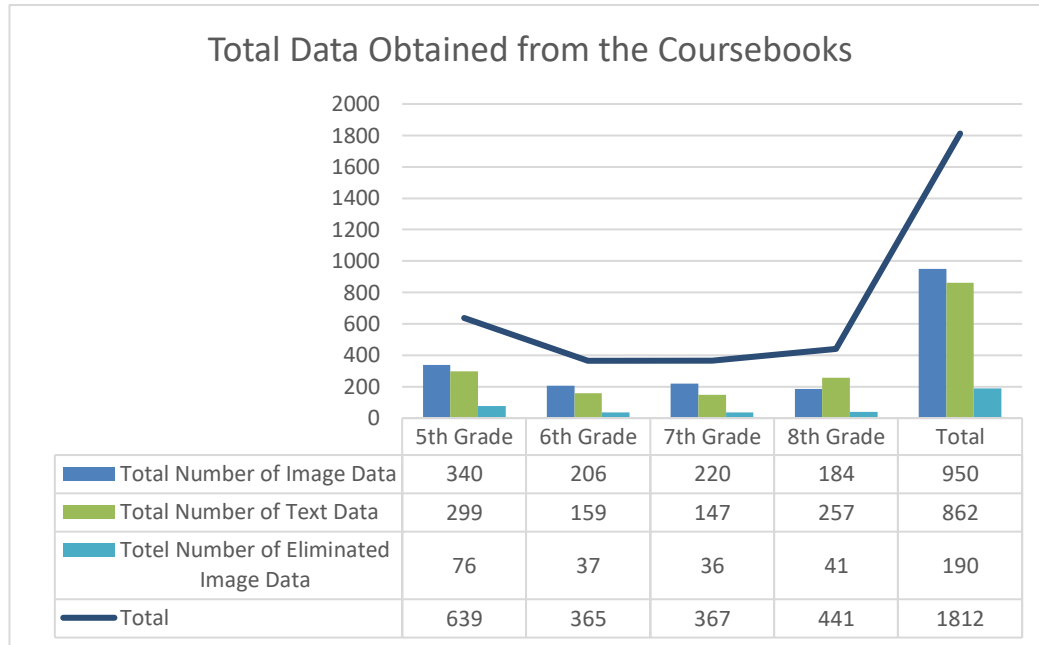


Figure 1. The number of parts included in the analysis in all coursebooks

As seen in the table, the most visual and text data were collected from the 5th grade book, followed by the 8th grade book. The 7th and 6th grade coursebooks come after the other two coursebooks with close frequencies. In addition, a total of 190 images were eliminated as the faces were too far or not seen to be determined.

### ***Data Collection Tool and Procedures***

The findings from the examination of the coursebooks were combined into groups and tabulated. These groups are the skin colors/tints of the characters on the images, origins of characters' names, counts of words used to acknowledge nationality such as country names, ethnic group names, nationalities, and lastly, word token counts such as black, white, Asian, etc. These coded findings were placed in a checklist so that putative races of the characters can be determined.

One main tool used in this study was "An image and text analysis for coursebooks checklist" (see Figure 2). The image analysis part of the checklist was created including categories of coursebook and unit, image number and skin tint while text analysis part included character names, nationalities, countries, and word token counts. Lastly, the checklist includes the putative race for each image, determined with the help of the data obtained from the image and text analysis.



COURSE BOOK /UNIT	IMAGE NO	IMAGES	SKIN TINT			NAMES	NATIONS /LANGUAGES /CITIES	WORD TOKEN COUNTS	PUTATIVE RACE
			FAIR	MEDIUM	DARK				
5TH GRADE /UNIT 1	1		✓			AYŞE	TÜRKİYE İSTANBUL	-	WHITE
5TH GRADE /UNIT 1	2			✓		PAULA	SPANISH PUEBLA CITY	MEXICAN	LATINX

Figure 2. Excerpt from the image and text analysis for coursebooks checklist

In the development of the tool, the researchers followed the methodology and the steps of Adukia et al. (2023) and Kubota (2021) to determine the putative races. Kubota (2021) explored racial representation in terms of (a) images, (b) origins of the names, (c) countries and nationalities, and (d) famous figures mentioned, while Adukia et al. (2023) conducted text and image analysis in 1,130 children's books in order to make a classification on race through images. They first segmented the skin portion of each face, extracted predominant colors in the identified skin and lastly constructing measures of skin color. In this way, they determined the representative skin color as the skin tint, determined the midpoint as the perceptual tint, classified them as darker and lighter. In terms of textual analysis, putative racial constructs were determined through a number of qualifications such as counts of words relating to nationalities and word token counts related to race. In light of these additional data, they determined the putative race as Asian, Black, Latinx, White, Indigenous, and Multiracial.

As for the data collection and analysis procedure in this study, the researchers merged the categories of Kubota (2021) with the methodology of Adukia et al. (2023). First, the digital copies of the books were downloaded from the EBA system, and a repository was created. The texts and images to be used were determined by coding all identifiable characters to an excel file. The images and the textual data were placed on the checklist to determine the putative races. The skin colour of the people in the images was counted, the origins of the names assigned for these characters were identified and the words relating to nationalities were determined. The steps for image and text data analysis were explained in detail in the figure below (see Figure 3).

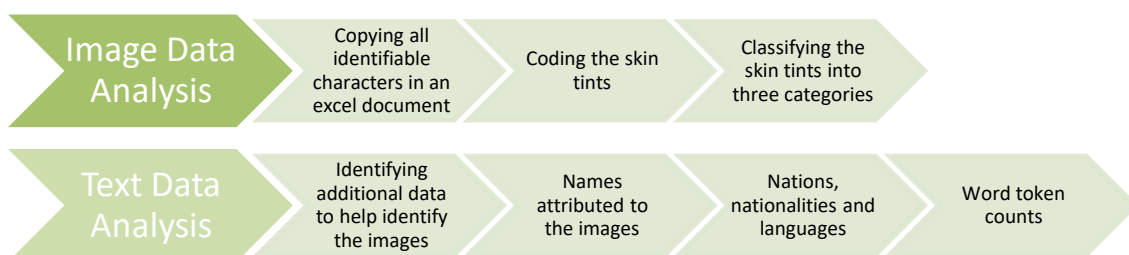


Figure 3. Steps for image and text data analysis

The coursebook analysis included both photographs and illustrations, excluding images where individuals had their backs turned or were too small for identification. Text analysis focused on dialogs, reading passages, and sentences used in grammar and vocabulary activities, omitting instructional content. The researchers manually coded the data throughout the study. In examining race representation in the texts, they identified racial token words and determined race through words in dialogs, sentences, and the origin of names in pictures. For famous names, the researchers conducted manual internet searches to ascertain their races. This

comprehensive approach provided a nuanced understanding of race portrayal in both images and texts within the coursebooks.

### ***Data Analysis***

In this study, the researchers employed deductive content analysis, a structured method used to apply existing frameworks to new or different data. Catanzaro (1988) highlights the value of this approach when researchers aim to reanalyze previously collected data in a new context, offering deeper insights into how certain patterns or themes persist or change across settings. Researchers often start with predefined categories or theories, as Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest, and systematically test them against the data. This process can involve validating or refining existing models, concepts, or hypotheses, ensuring alignment with the predetermined framework. By doing so, researchers can confirm previous findings or explore how theoretical constructs hold in different conditions.

This method is particularly used in image analysis, as highlighted by Nowell et al. (2017), who describe image analysis as "a flexible and creative method for examining the ways in which visual representations shape our understanding of the world" (p. 243). Image analysis involves recognizing and interpreting patterns within visual data, such as photographs, drawings, or videos, to gain insights into research questions.

Similarly, just as image analysis helps us interpret and extract information from visual data, text analysis serves as a method for analyzing written or spoken language. As explained by Krippendorff (2018), text analysis is a technique for "making sense of textual data", involving the processes of "identifying, coding, and interpreting patterns of meaning" (p. 5). In simpler terms, text analysis allows us to scrutinize written or spoken language to identify and interpret patterns of meaning. This method is versatile and applicable to various types of textual data, including written documents, interview transcripts, focus group discussions, social media posts, and more.

In this study, the researchers' primary objective is to investigate how race is portrayed in a set of coursebooks, utilizing both image and text analysis methods. The focus lies in the manual coding of characters, encompassing aspects such as skin color, facial features, names, and descriptive text. This manual coding process aligns with Krippendorff's (2018) approach, involving a meticulous examination of textual or visual data to manually identify and code the presence of specific words, themes, or concepts. By integrating both image and text analysis, this study aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how race is represented in coursebooks.

To analyze the collected data, the researchers employed frequency analysis as a statistical technique. Each character's race in the coursebooks underwent manual coding, and frequency analysis was utilized to calculate the percentage of characters belonging to each racial category. This entailed counting instances of a particular race represented in the coursebooks. Subsequently, the researchers inputted these data into SPSS statistical software for further analysis and interpretation. For the text analysis component, a similar statistical approach was adopted. The manual coding process involved identifying and counting mentions of specific words or themes in the text. Frequency analysis was then conducted to ascertain the prevalence of these words or themes within the data. This method involved counting the frequency of a particular word or theme in the text, and the resulting data were subjected to analysis using statistical software.

In this research, the first step involved gathering data from coursebooks in the form of texts and images. The first researcher meticulously recorded all the images and text from the coursebooks into the checklist. This file was then shared with two additional researchers who were tasked with identifying the race of each character in the book. After the initial analysis was complete, the researchers compared their individual findings and came to a consensus on the classification of each of the putative races. Through this process of consensus seeking and peer debriefing, the researchers were able to achieve a 100% agreement on the classification of the characters in the coursebooks.

## Findings

Before focusing on race representation, a classification was made about how many of the total images in the coursebooks were real pictures and how many were animations to show the representation of authentic images used in the coursebooks (see Figure 4).

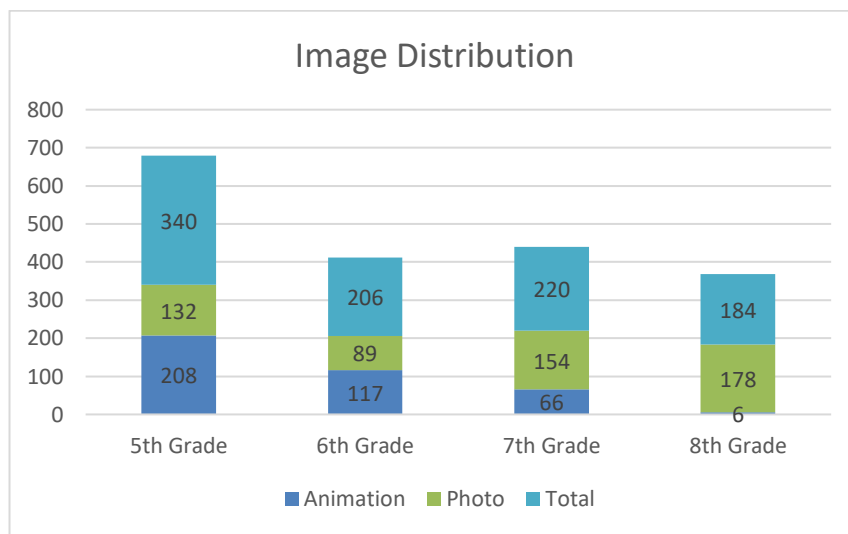


Figure 4. Counts of images which appear in the coursebooks

As can be seen, as the age increases in the coursebooks, the animated characters decrease according to the level, and more images of real people are included. The total number of pictures used is the highest in the 5th grade, relatively close in the 6th and 7th grades, and the lowest in the 8th grade. It is seen that these coursebooks are progressing and adapting in accordance with the ages of students.

### **Main research question: Race distribution in the coursebooks**

As an answer to the research question, the representation of putative race was determined through merging text and image analysis for each character in the coursebooks (see Figure 5). The putative race groups considered in this analysis were based on a study conducted by Adukia et al. (2023), which categorized races as Asian, Black, Latinx, White, Indigenous, and Multiracial.

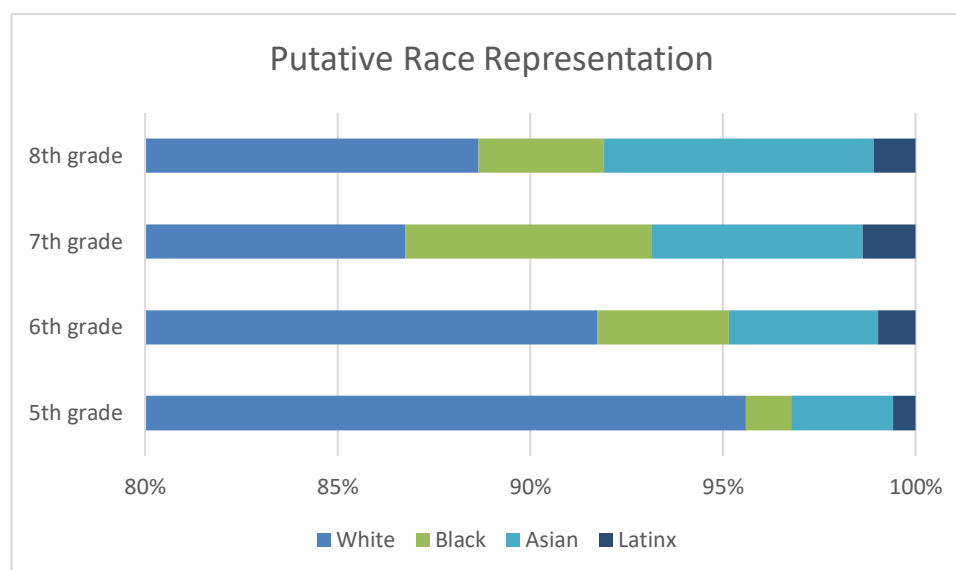


Figure 5. Putative race representation in the coursebooks

As Figure 5 shows, a significant emphasis is placed on depicting individuals of the white race. Conversely, the representation of black and Asian races appears to be relatively proportional, while the representation of Latinx individuals is notably lower. It is important to highlight that the coursebooks entirely omit any mention or textual reference to indigenous or multiracial races.

#### ***Sub-research question a: Skin color distribution in the coursebooks***

The distribution of the skin color was examined through the pictured and animated characters, and the races of these characters were analyzed by counting the images and animated characters used in the book. For analysis, the characters were collected in a file, the tints of the characters, that is, the skin colors, were determined, and the tints were classified according to their color tones as fair, medium, and dark (see Figure 6).

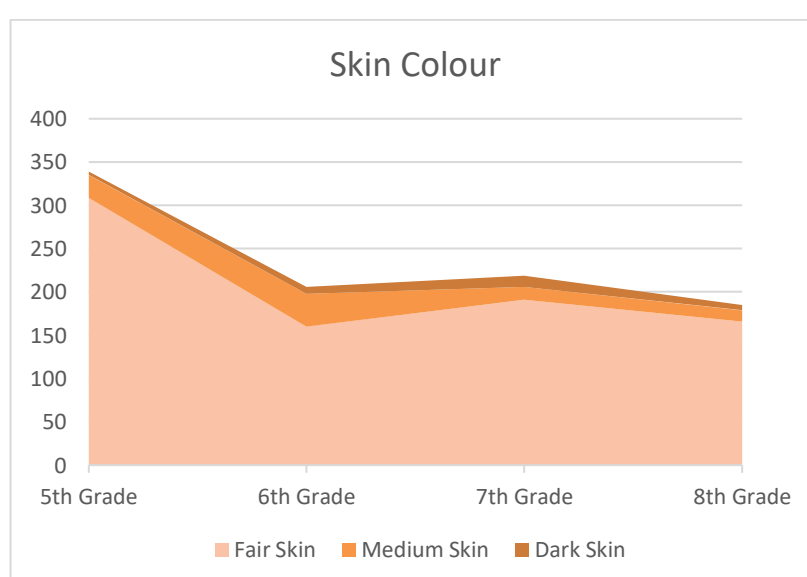


Figure 6. Skin color classification of the characters which appear in the coursebooks

It is observed that fair skin tone is represented more across all four coursebooks. The 6th grade coursebook extensively features the medium skin tones, while the 7th grade coursebook includes dark skin tones more. It is seen that the 6th grade book is the most diverse book in terms of race representation, whereas the 5th grade coursebook, with its predominantly fair skin representation, is the least diverse.

### ***Sub-research question b: Race distribution of the origins of the names***

As an answer to the second sub-research question, the names given to the characters and the names in the texts were found and their origins were determined with the help of other information given in addition to the names such as the name of the country, the information in the text, the spoken language etc. Names were divided into five groups, namely, English dominant countries, which are core English countries, Turkish, European, and Asian, and African origin (see Figure 7).

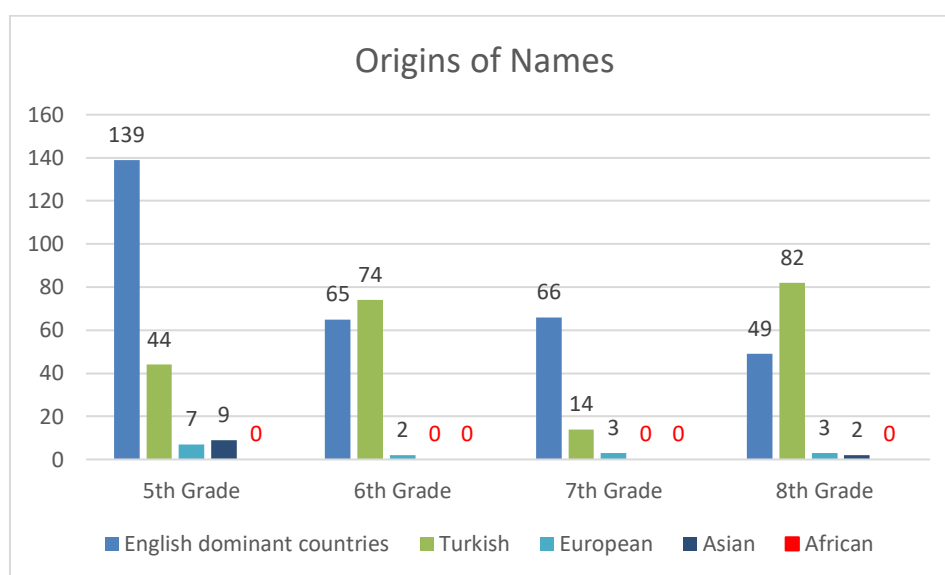


Figure 7. Origins of the characters' names

The table reveals that the names of English dominant countries are predominantly used in the 5th and 7th grade coursebooks. In the 6th grade coursebook, close frequencies are observed in the names from English-dominant countries and Turkish names. In the 8th grade coursebook, Turkish nouns are used relatively more frequently. The 5th grade coursebook includes 7 names from European countries and 9 from Asian countries, while the 8th grade coursebook features 3 names from European countries and 2 from Asian countries. In the 6th and 7th grade coursebooks, only 2 and 3 names of European countries were used, respectively. African names are not used in any of the coursebooks. When the data is converted to percentages, it is seen that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursebook has the most diverse representation, followed by the 5th grade coursebook, with the highest number of names in English-dominant countries. The 6th grade coursebook follows, with the 7th grade coursebook being the least diverse.

### ***Sub-research question c: Race distribution of countries and nationalities***

As an answer to this research question, the country names and nationalities in the coursebooks were determined in separate groups and tabulated according to the counts of words acknowledging countries and nationalities. While the frequencies of the country names in the



coursebooks were collected, it was noticed that although the 6th grade coursebook was released in 2019 and the other three coursebooks were released in 2021, only one of them, the 5th grade coursebook, used the updated name of Türkiye instead of Turkey. In the other three coursebooks, the name of the country is given as Türkiye. The collected data on the distribution of the countries are visualized in Figure 8.

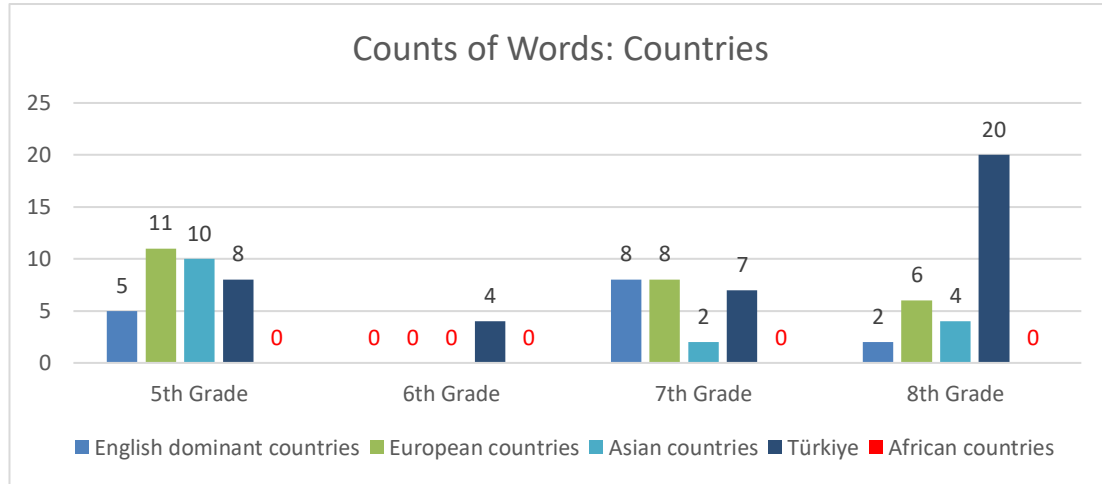


Figure 8. Counts of words used to acknowledge countries

The distribution of country names is observed to be the most diverse in 5th grade coursebook. The 6th grade coursebook only includes Türkiye. Compared to the other books, the 7th grade coursebook shows a relatively even distribution of countries, while the 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursebook, mentions Türkiye the most. Overall, the 5th grade coursebook is the most diverse in this regard.

After analyzing the countries, a text analysis was conducted on nationalities, and the results are presented in Figure 9. In this section, the nationalities used while giving information about the characters, as well as those used in the information about the food and belongings of a place are included.

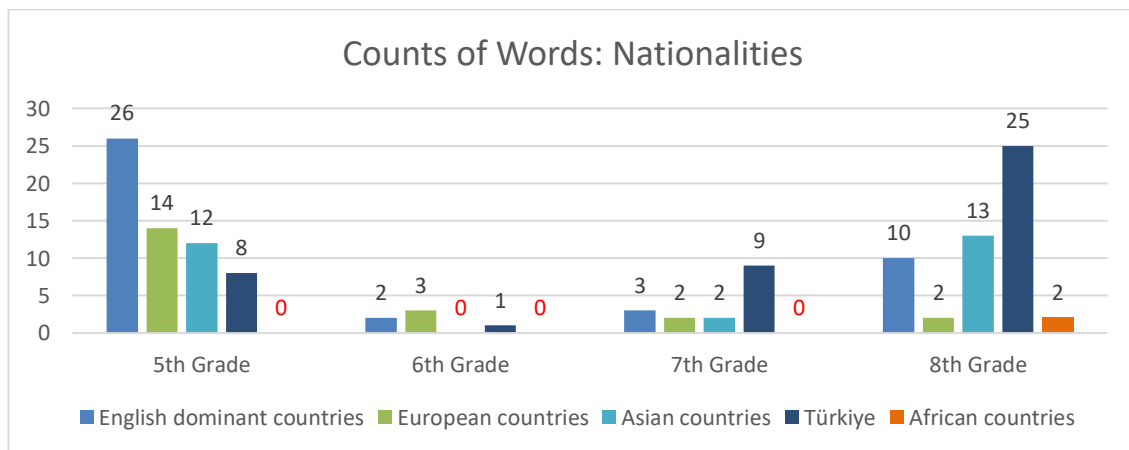


Figure 9. Counts of words used to acknowledge nationalities

The analysis revealed that the most diverse book is again the 5th grade one, followed by the 8th grade coursebook. Besides Turkish, English-dominant countries, European, and Asian nationalities, two African nationalities are included. However, the nationality mentioned in the

coursebook is specified as 'African' and no country that is in the continent of Africa is mentioned. The 7th grade coursebook includes fewer references to nationality compared to the others. Lastly, the 6th grade book is the least diverse.

#### ***Sub-research question d: Race distribution of the famous figures***

In this sub-research question, the focus was on the races of famous people included in the coursebooks. (see Figure 10).

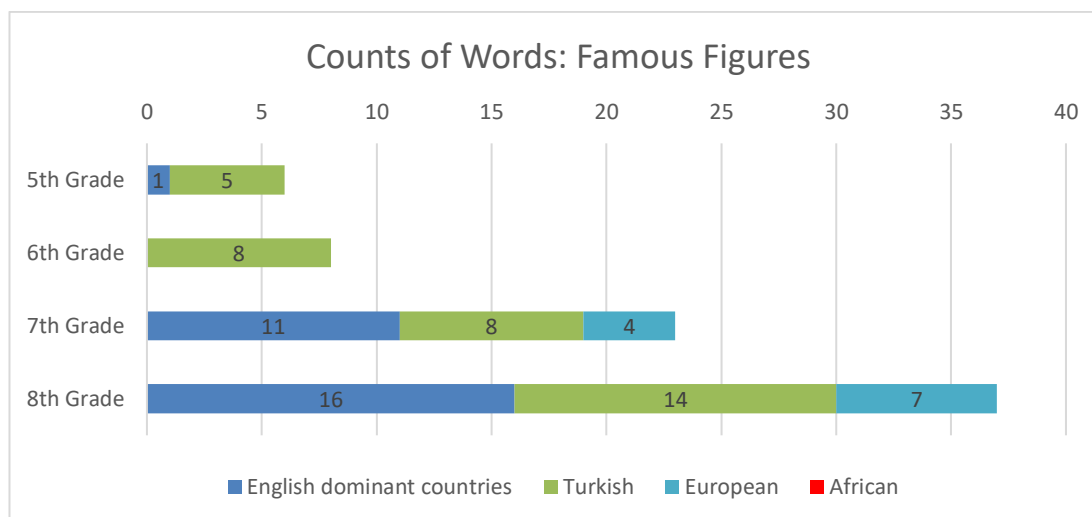


Figure 10. Races of famous figures included in the coursebooks

As can be seen in the figure, the number of famous people in the coursebooks increases from the 5th grade to 8th grade, and the diversity of races also grows in the same way. There are only famous Turkish characters in the 6th grade coursebook. The 5th grade coursebook, besides the Turkish characters, has only one famous figure from an English dominant country. In the 7th grade coursebook, there are not only famous figures of Turkish origin, but also a greater number of figures from English-dominant countries, more diverse professions, and the addition of four figures from European countries. Finally, the 8th grade book shows increased frequencies of figures from English-dominant countries, Türkiye and Europe. Therefore, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursebook is the most diverse and comprehensive coursebook in terms of representing famous figures from different.

## **Discussion**

The study aims to raise awareness about the importance of racial representation and inclusion in high school EFL coursebooks, particularly in the Turkish context, to inform program designers, coursebook writers, and teachers. Based on the findings, it is evident that there is a need for significant action to address the issue of diversity in coursebooks. It is crucial for coursebook designers to adopt a more inclusive approach. This entails recognizing and incorporating the range of cultures, skin colors, and backgrounds found in English language courses. By integrating varied examples, visuals, and texts that authentically represent the international aspect of English language learning, coursebooks can become more representative, interesting, and successful learning aids.

This research specifically investigates how different skin colors are depicted in the EFL

coursebooks used in Turkish MoNE secondary schools to ensure that learners are exposed to a more inclusive representation. The current study's findings provide evidence to support the claim that English language education coursebooks often present an idealized image of the target culture, while neglecting to reflect the diversity of our globalized world. The examination of the coursebooks in this study reveals a significant bias towards the target culture, as evidenced by the predominant use of names and representations of famous figures from the target culture. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted in this area (Bouzid, 2017; Farooq, 2021; Gebregeorgis, 2016), highlighting the urgent necessity for coursebook designers to address the issue of diversity in their materials. To create more inclusive and representative coursebooks, concrete steps need to be taken to incorporate diverse perspectives, cultures, and races in order to provide learners with a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the world (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022; Fakazlı & Baytar, 2021).

This research further investigates the distribution of countries and nationalities in Turkish MoNE EFL coursebooks to evaluate how well different global identities are portrayed. In parallel, Bowen and Hopper (2022) provide a detailed analysis of the representation of different races in EFL coursebooks, highlighting a similar issue. They note that despite growing awareness and demand for inclusivity, there remains a significant underrepresentation of dark-skinned individuals, such as Blacks, Asians, and Southeast Asians, compared to the overrepresentation of light-skinned individuals. This discrepancy is particularly pronounced in coursebooks produced in countries like England and America, where the racial demographics skew heavily towards White individuals (Pennycook, 2017). Such imbalances can lead to a skewed representation of target cultures and perpetuate misconceptions about the appearance of English native speakers (Nelson, 2019). The findings of this study align with Bowen and Hopper's observations, indicating that a comparable pattern of underrepresentation and overrepresentation may also be present in Turkish EFL coursebooks, thereby reflecting broader trends in racial representation.

In line with this, the research also examines the diversity of name origins featured in the coursebooks to determine whether they reflect a range of ethnic backgrounds or simply reinforce the dominance of a specific culture. Evaluating how prominent figures are racially represented in these coursebooks is crucial to understanding whether students are exposed to a diverse set of role models, or if the coursebooks inadvertently perpetuate cultural imperialism. The overemphasis on the target culture in EFL coursebooks can have a number of consequences for language learners. For example, it may foster a sense of cultural imperialism or cultural supremacy in which the target culture's values, beliefs, and behaviors are viewed as the only acceptable or desirable ones. This can lead to emotions of disengagement or alienation as a result of a lack of awareness or acknowledgement for learners' own cultural origins. Furthermore, it may limit learners' exposure to a variety of perspectives and experiences, limiting their ability to communicate effectively in global contexts. By not incorporating a range of cultural perspectives, learners are hindered in their understanding of the multicultural and interconnected nature of the world (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022; Gay, 2018). It is essential to foster an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that values and incorporates diverse cultural identities and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017).

Moreover, this lack of racial inclusivity in EFL coursebooks may have broader implications for learners from different racial backgrounds. This lack of representation can result in feelings of marginalization or exclusion among learners (Gay, 2018). Learners who do not see themselves represented in the materials they use may experience a sense of disengagement and reduced motivation, ultimately impacting their language learning outcomes (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022;



Fakazlı & Baytar, 2021). The negative consequences of this exclusionary practice have been observed in various educational contexts (Gebregeorgis, 2016). A critical examination of skin color representation in images within coursebooks is essential to avoid these negative outcomes and promote a more inclusive learning environment.

The findings of this current study align with the argument that cultural representation in educational materials is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Deardorff, 2018). Therefore, addressing the lack of racial representation in EFL coursebooks becomes imperative for promoting equitable learning experiences and maximizing learner engagement and success (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017). For instance, it may lead to feelings of marginalization or exclusion among learners who do not see themselves represented in the materials they are using. This, in turn, can impact their motivation and engagement with the course, which can have negative effects on their language learning outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the examination of secondary school EFL coursebooks in the Turkish state school context reveals a tendency towards an overemphasis on the target culture, leading to a lack of representation and recognition of the diversity present in the globalized world. The analysis of the coursebooks indicate that more than half of the characters depicted are animated characters lacking clear racial characteristics. Additionally, while there are variations in the names of the characters used, they predominantly represent the target and native language origins. The nationalities presented in the coursebooks tend to focus on students' own environment, limiting exposure to diverse cultures. However, in terms of famous figures, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade coursebook emerges to be the most diverse and extensively referenced among the four coursebooks.

Based on the findings, it is evident that there is a need for significant action to address the issue of diversity in EFL coursebooks. Coursebook designers should prioritize the development of learners' intercultural competence. This involves promoting awareness, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives and practices. By integrating activities and content that foster intercultural communication skills, coursebooks can prepare learners to navigate and communicate effectively in multicultural environments. By adopting an inclusive approach and prioritizing intercultural competence, coursebook designers have the opportunity to create materials that reflect the richness of our globalized world. These materials will not only engage and motivate learners but also equip them with the skills necessary to communicate successfully across cultures, promoting a more inclusive and interconnected society.

Overall, coursebook designers play a critical role in shaping the learning experiences of language learners. By embracing inclusivity and intercultural competence, they can contribute to creating a more equitable, representative, and empowering English language education environment. ELT teachers also play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of race and identity, and they must be vigilant in ensuring that coursebooks do not reinforce stereotypes or exclude certain racial groups. By critically evaluating course materials for balanced and accurate racial representation, teachers can select resources that reflect a diverse range of backgrounds, helping students see themselves represented in positive and meaningful ways. This not only prevents the perpetuation of harmful biases but also fosters a more inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, teachers should incorporate discussions about race and representation into their lessons, encouraging students to critically engage with the content and

challenge societal norms related to race. Through these efforts, teachers contribute to creating a classroom atmosphere where all students feel valued and respected, ultimately enhancing both their learning experience and their sense of identity.

Finally, it should be added that, as seen in the light of the collected data, the reviewed coursebooks are not as diverse and inclusive as the coursebooks reviewed in previous studies (Bowen and Hopper, 2022; Pennycook, 2017), and the content of the coursebooks needs to be improved in terms of racial representation. In future studies, it can be examined whether this distribution changed in the time elapsed, and different cultural elements such as festivals, food and musical instruments discussed in the coursebooks, and the reading texts on specific countries or themes in higher levels can also be discussed in addition to the sub-titles for which data is collected.

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