

8. An Analysis of Cultural Content in an English Textbook Series¹

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Abstract

This article analyzes the integration of cultural content in the Evolve English textbook series, which was used by an English preparatory school in Türkiye. This study investigates the extent to which cultural elements are presented in the textbook series, as well as cultural sources and the types of culture that are prioritized. The study used quantitative content analysis to classify cultural content based on Peterson's (2004) cultural framework and the classification of cultural sources based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework. The results of this study showed that the book series contained more cultural content than culture-free content, predominantly incorporated the target culture and international culture with minimum representation of students' local culture, and the small "C" type of culture was emphasized more. The study also found that although the Evolve textbook series incorporates significant cultural exposure, it prioritizes Anglo-American cultural content, limiting language learners' exposure to diverse global perspectives, including their local cultures. The study highlights the importance of incorporating diverse cultural elements in EFL and ESL teaching to enhance the intercultural communicative competence of English language learners. The study reveals a need for a balanced representation of learners' native, target, and international cultures in textbooks to better prepare students for global communication.

Keywords: EFL/ESL Textbook; Cultural Content; Cultural Sources; Types of Cultures

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Bir İngilizce Ders Kitabı Serisindeki Kültürel İçeriklerin Analizi⁴

Öz

Bu makalede, Türkiye'deki bir İngilizce hazırlık okulunda kullanılan Evolve English ders kitabı serisindeki kültürel içeriğin entegrasyonu analiz edilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, ders kitabı serisinde kültürel öğelerin ne ölçüde sunulduğu, önceliklendirilen kültürel kaynaklar ve kültür türleri araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmada, kültürel içeriği Peterson'ın (2004) kültürel çerçevesine göre sınıflandırmak için nicel içerik analizi ve Cortazzi ve Jin'in (1999) çerçevesine göre kültürel kaynakların sınıflandırılması kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, kitap serisinin kültürsüz içerikten daha fazla kültürel içerik içerdiğini, öğrencilerin yerel kültürünün minimum temsiliyle ağırlıklı olarak hedef kültürü ve uluslararası kültürü içerdiğini ve küçük "C" tipi kültürün daha fazla vurgulandığını göstermiştir. Çalışmada ayrıca, Evolve ders kitabı serisinin önemli ölçüde kültürel maruziyeti içermesine rağmen, Anglo-Amerikan kültürel içeriğine öncelik vermesinin, dil öğrenenlerin yerel kültürleri de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli küresel bakış açılarına maruz kalmasını sınırladığı bulunmuştur. Çalışma, İngilizce dil öğrenenlerin kültürlerarası iletişim yeterliliğini geliştirmek için EFL ve ESL öğretiminde çeşitli kültürel öğelerin dahil edilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, öğrencilerin küresel iletişime daha iyi hazırlanması için ders kitaplarında öğrencilerin ana kültürlerinin, hedef kültürlerinin ve uluslararası kültürlerinin dengeli bir şekilde temsil edilmesinin gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: EFL/ESL Ders Kitabı; Kültürel İçerik; Kültürel Kaynaklar; Kültür Türleri

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1. Introduction

Language and culture are two concepts that have been debated in academia (Shaules, 2019). The inclusion of cultural content from a wide range of genres is crucial to effective language education (Jiang, 2000). Academic investigations also focus on how people of certain communities speak and how the words that they use for their language expression are influenced by daily life and the traditional beliefs, norms, and customs of their society. Therefore, such studies have outlined that culture and language are inherently interrelated and inseparable entities (Liddicoat et al., 2003).

Scholars have argued over the close relationship between the two elements: culture and language (Bagea, 2023). It is argued that a mutual connection exists between language and culture, where one's cultural background and behaviors significantly influence their perception of their surroundings (Kavakli, 2020). This goes to be true for language learning, where cultural aspects can have a profoundly positive effect on learning. Therefore, such studies have outlined that culture and language are inherently interrelated and inseparable entities (Liddicoat et al., 2003).

Elements of culture to include in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching involve the source culture, which refers to the culture of the L2 learner, the target culture, which is the culture of the target language, and cross-cultural aspects, which refer to global or international cultures (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). It also involves small "c" type cultures and ettype cultures. The big "C" is also called the visible and enduring cultural elements of a particular culture (Peterson, 2004). These may include food, dress, fashion, art and music, which are often connected with a particular culture and can be easily recognized while discussing its associated cultural type. The small "c" type of culture can be defined as a given culture's intangible or invisible features, including its social customs, values, traditions, faiths and beliefs (Peterson, 2004).

The wide usage of English has surpassed the countries that use English officially as their first language, like Canada, Australia, the U.S., the United Kingdom and New Zealand. English is now used worldwide as a medium of communication and is also the language of global technology (Labtic & Teo, 2019). In the modern world, non-native English speakers have become more than that of native English speakers (Nymeyer et al., 2022). This is mainly because English has gained widespread acceptance as the medium of communication, international politics and business, and shared technologies across different nations worldwide (Crystal, 2008). Learners are motivated to learn and speak English to communicate with countries beyond English-speaking countries, including international communities and their local communities. Many countries like India use English as a medium of communication with their people because of their diverse races and languages. For this reason, English language learners should gain a suitable foundation of global cultural knowledge since they learn English as an international language.

If cultural awareness is introduced in English classes, learners become more familiar with not only their local culture but also the cultural aspects of other languages (Byram, 1997). Bayram (1997) argued that with the help of gaining cultural awareness, learners also have opportunities to share their native cultural experiences and learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures. Developing cross-cultural awareness becomes a valuable way to improve cross-cultural communicative skills (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Therefore, while learning an international language as it is used as a lingua franca, it could be helpful for students to learn their local culture and a basic foundation of the global cultures, as well as the cultures of their target language (Ngatu & Basikin, 2019).

It is often suggested that L2 learners must understand their own and the foreign cultures that they are studying (Kramsch, 1998). For this reason, it is better to incorporate the cultural content from students' local, target, and international cultures in textbooks when learners learn English as an international language (Syahri & Su.Snti, 2016). In incorporating local, target, and international cultural content, the learners may gain a deeper understanding of cultural norms and learn to appreciate diversity while developing communication skills for a broader background (Duc Chinh, 2013). Consequently, with the help of understanding how diverse cultural contexts influence language, students can communicate more effectively in diverse settings and prepare themselves better for international communication (Karlik, 2023).

Exposure to local and international cultural content through language textbooks benefits learners (Shin et al., 2011). Language textbooks play an important role as a source of knowledge for students to gain a comprehensive understanding of multicultural aspects (Huang, 2019). It is argued that textbooks represent one critical aspect of the broader institutional culture of schools that must be considered when implementing educational reforms (McCarthy, 1990). Besides providing a standard, organized content that covers various language skills and aspects, textbooks also offer learners a glimpse into different cultural content globally. Therefore, teachers must ensure that textbooks incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences to improve a more inclusive and well-rounded learning experience for learners.

Textbooks have long been perceived as a backbone for language teaching since they serve as vehicles of well-structured and organized learning content to enable learners to acquire several language skills (Yüce & Emir, 2020). They are essential tools for the teacher and the learner, and they can have a variety of exercises and activities that will help language learners develop the four skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Radić-Bojanić & Topalov, 2016). Besides, textbooks that contain a variety of cultural perspectives can enhance their scope of understanding and learning based on different cultures of other people (McCarthy, 1990).

As we know, culture is central and it cannot be ignored (Gaeini & Basirizadeh, 2020). For this reason, the primary focus of this research is to examine the integration of different cultures in an English textbook series. This textbook series has been used at an English preparatory school at a foundation university in Türkiye. In this context, this study aims to assess the degree of cultural content available in *Evolve* English textbooks. Particularly, the research attempts to thoroughly examine the degree of cultural content, the sources, and the themes of the culture presented in 6 textbooks of the *Evolve* series.

Throughout the study, the target cultures are considered to be the cultural content used in English-speaking countries. The cultural content and cross-cultural information selected from countries other than English-speaking countries are categorized as international cultures. The cultural content that is used from Türkiye is considered local or source culture. While recording and analyzing cultural elements, this study expects to shed new light on how language learners are introduced to different cultures through their textbooks. In particular, the study is set to examine whether the *Evolve* textbook series is, for the most part, using the small "c" or the big "C" type of culture in its presentation of cultural elements (Peterson, 2004).

A few studies show the presentation of cultural content in English textbooks. More studies are also found on cultural content, sources and the types of culture used in ELT textbooks separately in Türkiye and other countries. However, there are no studies analyzing the place of cultural content, types of culture

and cultural sources in a specific book series in one study. Considering the above-mentioned arguments, the main objective of this study is to examine the presentation of cultural elements in the *Evolve* textbook series, find answers to and shed some light on the following main questions:

1. To what extent is cultural content presented in the *Evolve* textbook series?
2. What cultural sources are presented in the *Evolve* textbook, and to what extent?
3. What types of cultural content are distributed in the *Evolve* textbook, and to what extent?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The study used a quantitative method to analyze and collect data. The quantitative method is also used to analyze the cultural content of the textbooks. Quantitative research seeks numerical evidence on which to make conclusions, and it makes predictions on data collection and analysis, which may constrain some investigations (Newby, 2010). This study used a content analysis method to calculate the presentation of cultural content in students' books and workbooks. Content analysis is a research method that analyzes quantitative data, and language studies are its research field alongside many others, which analyze specific things by classification, tabulation, and evaluation (Dinçer, 2018). In another way, the content analysis defines the process where the primary contents of data and their messages are summarized, reported and written (Cohen et al., 2000). Cohen also defines content analysis by dividing it into four 'C's: coding, categorizing, comparing, and concluding.

2.2. Sampling of the Study

The textbook series analyzed in this study is entitled *Evolve* English textbooks (Table 1). The reason for selecting this textbook series for this study is that the textbooks are published by the famous worldwide publisher, Cambridge University Press, in 2020. The textbooks consist of a series of six levels, respectively, *Evolve* Level 1, *Evolve* Level 2, *Evolve* Level 3, *Evolve* Level 4, *Evolve* Level 5, and *Evolve* Level 6.

Each book of this series comprises one student's book that is usually used in the class, a workbook which students usually practice at home and exercise in the class, and a video book. They all have digital versions. The textbook series also has software games to practice, especially grammar and vocabulary. Every unit of the book contains nine sections. The sections are learning objectives, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functional language, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The textbook analysis was primarily based on communicative competence and was designed and adopted for almost the same purpose, just from a different country's perspective. The information about the books is shown in fi 1.

Table 1: Information about the six textbooks in the *Evolve* series

No	Title of The Books	Author(s)	Publisher(s)	Level
1.	EVOLVE 1	Leslie Anne Hendra, Mark Ibbotson, Kathryn O'Dell, and Samuela Eckstut	Cambridge University Press	A1 (CEFR)
2.	EVOLVE 2	Lindsay Clanfield, Ben Goldstein, Ceri Jones, Philip Kerr, and Octavio Ramirez	Cambridge University Press	A2 (CEFR)

		Espinosa		
3.	EVOLVE 3	Leslie Anne Hendra, Mark Ibbotson, Kathryn O'Dell, and Mari Vargo	Cambridge University Press	B1 (CEFR)
4.	EVOLVE 4	Ben Goldstein, Ceri Jones, and Samuela Eckstut	Cambridge University Press	B1 + (CEFR)
5.	EVOLVE 5	Leslie Anne Hendra, Mark Ibbotson, Kathryn O'Dell, Carolyn Clarke Flores, and Michele Lewis	Cambridge University Press	B2 (CEFR)
6.	EVOLVE 6	Ben Goldstein, Ceri Jones, and Mari Vargo	Cambridge University Press	C1 (CEFR)

2.3. Data Collection

To start, the total units in the *Evolve* series were identified to find out the presentation of cultural content. Because we cannot do anything without identifying the units, it is one of the most important things to identify the types of units in the *Evolve* textbooks. The numerical order was followed during the identification of the units. It was mentioned earlier that each level has students' books, teachers' books, and video resource books. This study only focused on students' and teachers' books, excluding video books.

As a part of data collection, this study examined all aspects of the books to discover the cultural content. The study first emphasized collecting and examining the tasks. The tasks are associated with Brown's (Brown, 2007) receptive skills, which are listening and reading, and productive skills, which are speaking and writing. Since this research examined the *Evolve* textbooks in terms of cultural content based on receptive and productive skills, as mentioned above, the other language tasks were not considered. The tasks focusing on students' grammar, vocabulary, review activities and pronunciation were excluded from this study. These sections typically lacked extended texts or contextual situations where cultural elements could be identified meaningfully. Moreover, any units without explicit or implicit cultural references were excluded from the coded dataset, and this ensured that only content with analyzable cultural material was included, consistent with the study's operational definition of cultural representation.

After identifying the units, the units were examined following the themes of big "C" and small "c" culture proposed by Peterson (Peterson, 2004). The study did not cover the whole twenty-two themes of big "C" culture. Instead, ten of the twenty-two were examined: architecture, music, literature, geography, political issues, history, social norms, core values, and legal foundation. An example of big 'C' culture is found in unit 6 of the *Evolve 6* textbook titled 'Do you Believe in Miracles?' which emphasizes the 1980 Winter Olympics hockey game where team U.S. defeated the Soviet Union in what is known as 'the Miracle on Ice'. This event is widely regarded as a historically significant moment in American sports and is closely tied to the Cold War context. The unit not only recounts the athletic achievement but also includes commentary from historians and comparisons to other cultural and political upsets, reflecting institutional and historical dimensions of culture. From the principal themes under small "c" culture, this study examined ten small "c" cultures from Therme's (2004) framework. The ten themes of small "c" culture are opinions, viewpoints, preferences or states, gestures, body postures, fashion, foods, hobbies, popular music, and specific knowledge. For example, one unit from the *Evolve 6* textbook, unit 5 titled 'The End of the Road' was coded as an example of small 'c' culture. The text describes a real-life American family that travel to remote, unspoiled areas across the United States. Their journeys, recorded in a personal blog, highlight everyday cultural values, individual preferences in lifestyle, and

hobbies. To ensure coding consistency, two trained coders independently analyzed all units. Before the main analysis, the coders conducted a pilot coding session using five sample units to calibrate their understanding of the coding categories. Discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussion until full agreement was reached. The overall inter-rater reliability, calculated using Cohen's Kappa, was 0.82, indicating strong agreement between coders.

The study analyzed ten particular themes to allow for a more focused and manageable analysis of the textbook content. The reason why the selected ten themes, such as architecture, music, and literature, are more robustly represented in educational materials and offer richer chances for analyzing how culture is explicitly or implicitly conveyed. These themes also align more directly with the goals of intercultural competence in language teaching. Besides, while examining the cultural themes in the *Evolve* textbook, a new category was included called "culture-free." The culture-free units were included with the units, which accommodate absolutely no information about culture or anything that identifies any specific culture.

The next step was to examine the identified 228 units to find out the source, international, and target cultures proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). First, the study identified the cultural sources of referred countries and the cultural themes such as architecture, celebrations, social norms, beliefs, history, attitude, and race. After identifying the sources and the themes, the cultural sources were examined. As mentioned earlier, out of 658 units, 246 units were solely about grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, these units were excluded. Consequently, a total of 412 units were the focus of this study. Out of 412, 184 units were considered culture-free; thus, these units were not considered when examining the cultural contents. Nevertheless, although these culture-free units were excluded from examining the cultural contents, they were included in the evaluation in terms of being receptive or productive, big "C" and small "c".

2.4. Data Analysis

After examining the units of the textbooks, the data obtained from the analysis was analyzed. Regarding cultural content, the data were categorized into two types: specified cultural content and culture-free content. The next step was to categorize the cultural content using cultural sources. The international culture, the target culture, and the source culture were separated. The examined data regarding cultural content, cultural sources, and types of culture were categorized in Microsoft Excel. Each category of data was calculated by using Excel. To examine whether the distribution of culture types differed significantly between receptive and productive skills, and the relationship between culture types, a Chi-square test of independence was conducted. A 2×2 contingency table was created using the observed frequencies of culture type across skill types. After analyzing all the data, the findings of the study were compared and converted into percentages. The next step was to present the data and percentages in tables and graphs. The graphs of the findings were made through Microsoft Excel. Afterward, the findings of the study were discussed quantitatively.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. R.Q.1: Cultural Content Presented in the Evolve English Textbook Series

As one may see in Figure 1, 412 units were analyzed in this study. The units that contain cultural content in Evolve English textbooks have the highest percentage. The number of units with cultural information

is 228, 55.3%, whereas the units without cultural content or culture-free accounted for the lowest amount, 44.7% and 184 units.

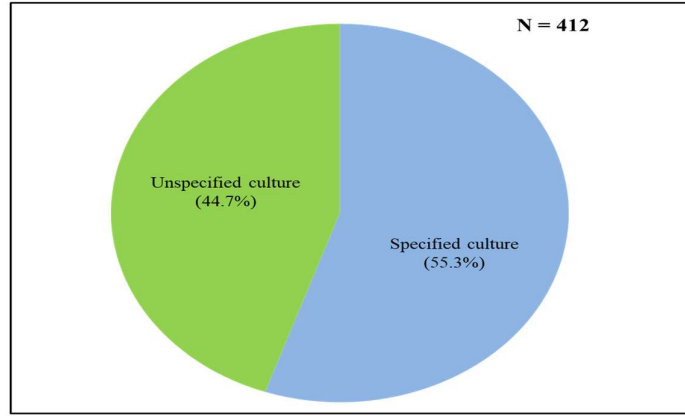


Figure 1. Ratio of units with and without cultural contents in the Evolve English textbook Series.

The ratio from Table 2 and Figure 1 shows that the Evolve series focused more on including cultural content. By looking at the percentage of cultural content in each textbook, one can see that there is no statistically significant cultural presentation of specified culture and culture-free content, $\chi^2 (5, N = 412) = 5.15, p = .397$. This indicates that the inclusion of cultural material is relatively consistent throughout the series, and any differences observed are likely due to chance rather than a systematic pattern. Although there is not a big difference, the specified cultural content was prioritized. It is well-known that cultures help people to understand and to know the language well (Syaputri et al., 2021). For instance, in Turkish culture, when people shower or do anything related to cleaning, they use a specific phrase that is probably not used in other cultures. If foreigners are familiar with certain things, they will understand and use the Turkish language faster and more easily. Therefore, using more cultural content in the Evolve series will help learners understand the language well. Nevertheless, it is surprising to mention that the maximum units (228 units) of the textbooks that this research analyzed had specified cultural content.

Table 2: Cultural content presented in the Evolve textbooks

Textbook	Specified culture	%	Culture-free	%	Total	%Total
Textbook 1	26	11.4	24	13.0	50	12.1
Textbook 2	35	15.4	23	12.5	58	14.1
Textbook 3	26	11.4	34	18.5	60	14.6
Textbook 4	34	14.9	27	14.7	61	14.8
Textbook 5	59	25.9	40	21.7	99	24.0
Textbook 6	48	21.1	36	19.6	84	20.4
Grand total	228	100.0	184	100.0	412	100.0

Using more cultural content in the Evolve textbooks shows that the book series not only focuses on developing learners' linguistic skills, such as expertise in grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, but it also helps to develop students' knowledge about culture. Knowledge of different societies' cultures is

important for communicating meaningfully (Rabiah, 2018). Individuals also need to know how they perceive their interlocutors in another group for successful communication (Byram, 1997). Therefore, English language learners can prepare themselves to interact with people from various global communities and different cultural backgrounds.

Table 3: Cultural content in receptive and productive skills in the Evolve textbooks

Textbook	Receptive skills	%	Productive skills	%	Total	%Total
Textbook 1	24	10.5	2	.9	26	11.4%
Textbook 2	30	13.2	5	2.2	35	15.4%
Textbook 3	20	8.8	6	2.6	26	11.4%
Textbook 4	29	12.7	5	2.2	34	14.9%
Textbook 5	40	17.5	18	7.9	58	25.4%
Textbook 6	43	18.9	6	2.6	49	21.5%
Grand total	186	81.6	42	18.4	228	100%

Table 3 presents the cultural presentation of receptive and productive skills in the Evolve English textbook series. The table shows that out of 228 units analyzed in terms of cultural content, 186 units were in the receptive skills, which is 81.6% of the total units. In contrast, 42 units were in productive skills, which is 18.4%. Overall, it is seen from the table that more cultural content was used in receptive skills compared to productive skills in the Evolve series.

It is necessary to mention that receptive skills are the primary consideration when using cultural content in all Evolve Textbook series, as can be seen from Table 3. The reason could be that the author expected the learners to improve their comprehension skills with different cultural information, so that students may be aware of and receive cultural schemata through good reading and listening. As a result, students will be ready for international interaction in their future lives. The result from the analysis here is similar to the studies conducted previously. One study found that combining International Cultural Competence (ICC) improved participants' cross-cultural awareness and L1, and improved learners' awareness of the role of culture in language learning (Mede & Gunes, 2019).

World Englishes are distributed into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985). The Inner Circle represents the countries where English is the primary language, such as the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. The Outer Circle presents the countries that are former colonies of the British Empire, such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Finally, the Expanding Circle presents countries where English is introduced as a foreign language, such as Türkiye, Japan, and Korea. Learners of expanding and outer circle countries use productive skills to communicate in international settings (Monfared & Khatib, 2018). Moreover, English language learners acquire and get information about cultural contexts from receptive skills, which are listening and reading (Magyar et al., 2022). Besides, the authors of the textbook series focused on receptive skills so that learners can understand and be familiar with cultural content from all over the world by reading and listening. Therefore, it will improve their knowledge about culture and language for further encounters in international communication settings. Moreover, when learners want to use productive skills of the language and discuss a certain culture or culture-related society, they first need to comprehend that specific culture using receptive skills (Hismanoglu, 2011). Therefore, the authors in the Evolve series might have prioritized receptive skills more than productive skills.

3.2. R.Q.2: Cultural Sources in the Evolve Series

Table 4.3 shows that culture-free accounted for around half of the total units analyzed in the books, which is 44.7%, from all four sources. Without counting culture-free content, the book series contained the highest percentage of Target culture at 30.1%. The second highest percentage of culture used in the book series was the global culture at 24%. Learners' local culture (L1) was the lowest in the Evolve book series, with only 1.2%. Finally, the Evolve textbook series emphasized the target source of culture (L2) over other cultural sources. By analyzing Table 4, it can be said that the source culture is not presented in almost any of the Textbook series. Even though the Evolve English textbook series was taught at a Turkish University, the books were published by Cambridge University Press, and the authors of the Textbooks are non-Turkish. Thus, the authors and the publication probably did not pay more attention to source culture, or the institute that used the textbooks did not emphasize the importance of cultural content in the Evolve series. Textbook authors' cultural backgrounds and training may unconsciously bias their content decisions, favoring dominant global narratives over localized experiences. Thus, without intentional inclusion of local culture, learners may perceive their identity as secondary or incompatible with the English language, undermining critical intercultural competence.

Table 4: Cultural sources observed in the Evolve textbooks

Textbook	Source culture	%	Target culture	%	International culture	%	Culture-free	%
Textbook 1	-	0.0	11	1.1	15	1.5	24	2.4
Textbook 2	-	0.0	16	1.6	19	1.9	23	2.3
Textbook 3	-	0.0	14	1.4	12	1.2	34	3.4
Textbook 4	-	0.0	16	1.6	18	1.8	27	2.7
Textbook 5	0.5	0.5	38	3.8	16	1.6	40	4.0
Textbook 6	-	0.0	29	2.9	19	1.9	36	3.6
Total	0.5	1.2	124	30.1	99	24.0	184	44.7

The international and the target cultural content were presented predominantly in the Evolve English textbook series. Since the authors are primarily from the target language countries and other countries, their cultural background influenced them to include more Anglo-Saxon content and the content from the nationalities of the other authors. As a result, it is predictable why the Evolve series used less Turkish culture (source culture). Furthermore, using more international cultural content in the Evolve textbooks is helpful for students in preparing them for communication in diverse cultural encounters, and it fulfills the aim of teaching English as an international language (Labtic & Teo, 2019).

However, English textbooks should consider including more source cultural content to make students aware of their culture and compare it with diversified cultural content (Sun-Young Kim & Jiwon Paek, 2015). Besides introducing target culture and international cultures in English language teaching, the L1 cultures of English language learners must also be introduced (Duc Chinh, 2013). The

underrepresentation of Turkish (L1) cultural content in textbook series raises concerns about cultural alignment and relevance. Students may struggle to connect personally with texts that prioritize Anglo-American norms while sidelining local cultural perspectives. This imbalance risks reinforcing linguistic imperialism, where English becomes not only a language of communication but also a vehicle for foreign cultural values. Therefore, country that teaches English as EIL/ESL/EFL should consider taking ownership of the language (Monfared, 2019). Without relying on such educational sources of English-speaking countries, they must consider selecting teaching materials, contents and approaches that are more appropriate and suitable for learners' local context (McKay, 2003, p. 145).

Table 5 presents the distribution of the cultural sources in receptive skills and the cultural sources in productive skills. It shows that culture-free content is used more in productive and receptive skills. Regarding presenting cultural sources in productive and receptive skills, the table shows that the target culture was mostly distributed in receptive skills. Interestingly, the Target culture (target language culture) was also distributed the most in the productive skills in the Evolve Textbooks. Therefore, the Evolve English textbooks focus on/concentrate on/emphasize introducing the target culture more in receptive skills rather than other cultural sources. Moreover, speaking and writing skills (productive skills) also encourage the target culture more than others. In brief, it was found that receptive skills dominated the Evolve Textbook series, promoting inner circle countries' cultures, like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and England. Although the target culture dominated the receptive and productive skills, various international cultures were also used in receptive and productive skills; still, they are less than the target culture. However, there is no representation of Turkish culture.

Table 5: Cultural sources in receptive and productive skills

Cultural source	Receptive skills	%	Productive skills	%	Total	%Total
Source culture	2	0.5	3	0.7	5	1.2
Target culture	103	25.0	21	5.3	124	30.1
International culture	81	19.7	18	4.4	99	24.0
Culture-free	138	33.5	46	11.1	184	44.7

The dominant use of the target culture in reading and listening skills indicates that learners need to learn more about the target language, since a language is completely connected with that country's culture. By listening and reading (receptive skills), they learn and decode cultural information, which they can apply by speaking and writing (productive skills) in international settings. Improving learners' cultural knowledge is the ultimate goal of the Evolve textbook series to improve students' knowledge of the target and international cultures when they learn English as an international language. However, the presentation of the source culture in productive skills is more than in receptive skills. In contrast, the target and international cultures were presented more with receptive than productive skills. The rationality of using source culture more in productive skills might be that English Learners already know and are familiar with the source culture. Therefore, Turkish learners do not need to input and decode the source culture from receptive skills.

Using more target cultures with international cultures in the Evolve series might help the books develop

students' intercultural competence level. Intercultural competence is necessary for learners to acquire Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) since they are learning English as an international language (Gün, 2023). It is said that language teaching must embody language skills and strategies for developing students' cultural awareness (Wang, 2018). Embodying language skills and strategies is also necessary for leading learners to intercultural communicative competence, which helps them to be global citizens (López-Rocha, 2016). It is known that culture and language are areas of interest in sociolinguistics (Lut & Starenkova, 2022). Thus, if people have a deeper knowledge of a particular culture, they can use that language correctly. Learners' intercultural competence helps them to understand and use the language appropriately in different social contexts (Byram, 1997, p. 71).

3.3. R.Q.3: Types of Culture Used in the Evolve Series

A close examination of data on cultural themes in Table 6 shows that the content of the Evolve textbooks series was pertinent, and the books also distributed all source culture materials well. The table also shows that most of the cultural content used in the Evolve Textbook series is the small “c” culture, and a lower percentage of cultural content is devoted to the big “C” culture. The percentages of them are 56.06% and 43.93% respectively. The results of the chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between culture type and textbook level, $\chi^2 (5, N = 412) = 11.60, p = .041$. This indicates that the balance of small “c” and big “C” culture shifts meaningfully from one level to another, suggesting changes in cultural emphasis across the curriculum.

It is noticeable that although Evolve Textbooks used small “c” cultures more than big “C” cultures, there is a balanced use of them. Therefore, it indicates that the Evolve Textbook series aims to introduce invisible (small “c”) cultures related to our daily life or living conditions more than visible cultural content (big “C” culture). It is known that having visible and invisible cultural knowledge of the target language's country helps learners to communicate appropriately in that particular language (Abdulaziz Aldawood & Almeshari, 2019). It was shown that culture encloses a restricted set of beliefs, concepts, norms, values, and perceptions, which compose the invisible section of any culture (Arslan, 2020). Thus, language learners need to become exposed to this side and achieve cultural discovery. A large assortment of cultural knowledge of different cultures in Evolve Textbooks will facilitate learners' intercultural communicative competence in the classroom (Byram, 1997), which is essential when communicating in English as an international language.

Table 6: Culture types observed in the Evolve textbook series.

Textbook	Big “C”	%	Small “c”	%
Textbook 1	22	5.3	28	6.8
Textbook 2	30	7.3	28	6.8
Textbook 3	31	7.5	29	7.0
Textbook 4	24	5.9	37	9.0
Textbook 5	31	7.5	68	16.5
Textbook 6	43	10.4	41	10.0

Total	181	43.9	231	56.1
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Table 7 shows that approximately four times more of the total cultural content analyzed in this study was presented in receptive skills. Of the 412 contents, 326 were used in receptive skills, which is 79.1%, whereas only 86 were used in productive skills, which is 20.9%. The table also revealed that small “c” culture was used more in receptive and productive skills than big “C” culture; however, there was little difference in using the types of culture in these two specific skills. Moreover, A chi-square test of independence indicated that the relationship between culture type and language skill was not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 412) = 1.85, p = .173$. This suggests that although small “c” culture appeared more frequently overall, its distribution between receptive and productive skills does not differ in a statistically meaningful way.

Table 7: Presence of receptive and productive skills found in the Evolve series

Type	Receptive skill	%	Productive skill	%
Big “C”	144	35.0	41	10.0
Small “c”	182	44.1	45	10.9
Total	326	79.1	86	20.9

The authors presented the big “C”, i.e., national cultural elements; and the small “c”, i.e., the elements of local culture, in reading and listening skills, because the learners are learning English as an international or global language. Therefore, students need to comprehend and develop their understanding of global cultures. Learners can comprehend global cultures better by listening and reading than by speaking and writing. The result of one study showed that the types of cultures were presented more in receptive skills than in productive skills (Glenn, 2021). Since English is an international language, students must acquire international culture, and they can acquire it better through reading and listening (Guetatlia & Hamane, 2022). It was reported that language learners need to improve their understanding of listening and reading more than speaking and writing skills to improve cross-cultural competence, since English has become a global language (Crystal, 2003).

4. Conclusion

This study analyzed how cultures are used in the Evolve textbook series. The primary objective of the research was to investigate the presentation of cultural content in the book series. The cultural content in the students’ books and workbooks of the Evolve series was analyzed carefully. From the analysis of the book series, it was found that the Evolve series used more cultural content than culture-free content. Although cultural content is used more in Evolve books and develops learners’ cultural knowledge, the difference between cultural content and culture-free content is not statistically significant. It is said that culture and language cannot be separated; they influence each other (Liddicoat et al., 2003). The culture and tradition of a specific society help create new words and expressions in a language (Lut & Starenkova, 2022). For example, Canada is a cold country, and many parts of Canada are covered with ice. Since ice is part of their lives, they naturally create and use different ice-related words or even celebrate ice-related traditions. On the contrary, it would be difficult to find too many ice-related words in any desert country in the Middle East, such as Sudan or Saudi Arabia. However, in such countries,

more words related to the desert will be found than in Canada. Thus, culture and language are always intertwined.

It is known that if a language learner has knowledge about international and target cultures, it helps the learner to easily interact with the people of other societies (Yurtsever & Özel, 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Evolve series aimed to facilitate learners' communicative competence in diverse contexts since the book series used more target and international cultural content. The study also found that the Evolve series used the cultural content more in receptive skills than in productive skills. Students get knowledge and improve their knowledge of culture through reading and listening to be aware of international culture for future interaction with international communities. Therefore, listening and reading skills were prioritized over speaking and writing skills to facilitate learners' international communication.

The second objective of the research was to find out how the cultural sources are placed in the Evolve textbooks. Considering the specified culture, the use of the target culture was of priority, and international culture was of second priority. It was found that the book used the lowest percentage of learners' native culture (Turkish culture). Although the target culture gained a higher frequency than the international culture, the difference was not statistically significant. However, the frequency of learners' native culture was much lower than that of the target and international cultures.

It has been a matter of debate that cross-cultural content must be introduced to English learners besides the target culture in ELT materials since they learn English as an international language (Alptekin, 1993). The examinations of the Evolve series showed that a high frequency of target and international cultures was presented. Therefore, the Evolve book series includes sufficient cultural content, but mostly the culture of the target language. Moreover, the Evolve series presented more target language culture in all four language skills. Reinforcing teaching target culture more than other cultures shows that authors of the books encourage learners to learn more about the target culture since language and culture are intertwined.

The third objective of this study was to analyze how the types of culture are presented in the Evolve book series. It was found that the Evolve textbook prioritized the small "c" culture type and less prioritized the big "C" culture type. It is known that the invisible (small "c") culture is the culture that is hidden but directly connected to a certain community, and knowledge of the invisible culture of a certain culture helps to understand that language easily (Holliday, 1999).

The Evolve books aimed to introduce invisible culture to learners so that they can understand L2 and international cultures. Therefore, the learners who used the Evolve book series will gain an international communicative competence since the books used small "c" more in cultural sources. The study also found that small "c" cultures were used more in productive and receptive cultures. The reason why authors used different types of culture more in their receptive skills might be that they wanted to help students develop their understanding of international cultures. Thus, the language learners will be familiar with the invisible (small "c") culture of different countries all over the world.

5. Implications and Recommendations for Further Studies

This study presented an analysis of the Evolve English textbook series regarding cultural content. The students' books and workbooks of the series were analyzed in the study. Although the students' book

and teachers' book of the Evolve series were analyzed, not all series were included in the analysis. The grammar topics, vocabulary, functional language, and punctuation were excluded. This study only included four basic language skills in the Evolve series. It would be more interesting if excluded skills were included in the investigation. Since the study did not include all skills, we cannot get complete cultural information about the Evolve series. However, we could find a holistic and general idea of the place of culture in the series if the study included all aspects of the book series. For future studies, it would be recommended that all aspects of such course books be included in the analyses.

As can be seen, the current study only analyzed how types of cultures are presented in the Evolve series. However, it did not analyze the details of cultural themes. Therefore, it is possible to improve the same study by analyzing the details of each cultural theme in future studies. The study could analyze the big "C" cultural themes (e.g., literature, agriculture, history and so on) and the small "c" cultural themes (e.g., behaviors, myths, social norms, and so on). This would be beneficial for teaching and learning and for future research. The study analyzed just one book series. Although the book series was used in Turkish universities, it was published in other countries, and the authors were from other countries. Therefore, we can only get limited information. Future studies could also analyze another book series published in Türkiye by local authors. The two analyzed book series could be compared, and this could yield broader and comparative results.

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