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**Diversity of Cultural Sources in ELT Activity Books: A  
Case Study of a Multicultural Primary School in Thailand**

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**Abstract**

Thai government schools have become multicultural due to an increasing number of migrant students whose parents are from neighboring ASEAN countries. Although published English language teaching (ELT) materials have been researched extensively, supplementary materials that are integrated as additional resources for teachers and students such as workbooks or activity books used in Thai government schools are under-researched. This study investigated the cultural diversity content represented in six ELT activity books used in a primary school located in Samut Sakhon province in Thailand. Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural concept was employed as a framework to analyze layers of cultural diversity represented in the selected ELT activity books. Drawing upon content analysis, the findings reveal six cultural sources ranked in the following order: international cultures (40%), target cultures (23%), global cultures (17%), Asian regional cultures (16%), unidentified sources (4%), source cultures (0%), and ASEAN regional cultures (0%). Diverse international cultures are frequently incorporated into these activity books; however, source cultures referring to students' sociocultural backgrounds and ASEAN regional cultures are under-represented. This study proposes pedagogical implications for teachers who use local

ELT activity books provided by the government, with regard to adapting and designing culturally appropriate lessons and activities for students in multicultural primary schools in Thailand in order to meet UNESCO SDG 4 (Quality Education).

**Keywords:** *ASEAN, cultural diversity, ELT activity books, migrant students, multicultural school*

## **Introduction**

According to Richards (2014), published materials on English language teaching (ELT) can be categorized into eight types: (i) coursebooks for international markets, (ii) material for specific age groups – children, teenagers, adults, (iii) material for specific skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking, (iv) material for specific purposes – academic study, travel, business, law, engineering, (v) materials for exam preparation – TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, (vi) reference materials – dictionaries and grammar, (vii) self-study materials, and (viii) graded readers. Supplementary materials such as workbooks and CD-ROMs serve as additional resources for teachers and students (Richards, 2014) and play a crucial role in complementing materials used in English as a Second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Those supplementary materials, however, have not been widely studied in terms of the representations of cultures and applications in ELT classrooms.

Cultural representations in published ELT materials have been analyzed and discussed in terms of native and non-native content and diversity in relation to students' cultural backgrounds and cultures in local and global contexts (Baker, 2016; Byram, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Karim, 2020; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; McKay, 2003, 2012; Nomnian, 2013a). Although cultural content represented in published ELT materials has been primarily based on native-speaking countries such as UK and USA, that of their non-native counterparts is scarce and often irrelevant to students' sociocultural backgrounds (Alshenqeeti, 2019; Anita, 2019; Böcü & Razi, 2016; Syahri & Susanti, 2016; Thumvichit, 2018; Waharak, 2015). These aforementioned studies, however,

have not explored the student activity books that supplement their respective main textbooks. Despite the different functions and objectives of textbooks and activity books, ELT activity books play an essential role in promoting and reinforcing students' understanding of lessons learned in particular classes. The ELT activity books should, therefore, be investigated and analyzed for effective teaching and learning of English.

In the Thai context, textbooks and workbooks are essential, and in many cases, they are the only source of material used for ELT (Nomnian, 2013a, 2013b; Thumvichit, 2018; Waharak, 2015). A list of approved materials and publishers for primary and secondary schools is provided by the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), the Ministry of Education (MOE). Nevertheless, recent studies and reports have confirmed that the current curriculum, recommended materials, and instructions stipulated for multicultural schools in Thailand are not culturally sensitive to migrant students' sociocultural backgrounds (Arphattananon, 2013a, 2013b, 2018; IPSR & AIT, 2014; Save the Children Association & World Education, 2015). Although the Thai Cabinet and the MOE have provided compulsory and free primary education for unregistered migrant children who cannot legally enroll in Thai public schools since 2005, ongoing problems remain such as language and cultural barriers between teachers and migrant students, and inappropriate cultural content represented in school textbooks. (IPSR & AIT, 2014; Saemee & Nomnian, 2021; Save the Children Association & World Education, 2015; UNESCO, 2019).

Due to the limited number of studies conducted regarding student activity books, this study aims to investigate the diversity of cultural content represented in both written and visual forms in ELT activity books used in one particular primary school located in Samut Sakhon province that has Thailand's second largest number of migrant children from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. This research sheds light on the cultural content represented in ELT supplementary materials used in multicultural schools to raise key stakeholders' awareness of culture-centeredness, including school administrators, teachers, and parents with the aim of developing mutual respect and reciprocal understanding.

## **Literature Review**

ELT published materials, including textbooks and supplementary materials such as activity books, have long been acknowledged as beneficial for language teaching and learning in ELT classrooms because they provide specific frameworks that guide teachers and learners in terms of what they need to do and what they will have done (Richards, 2001; Tomlinson, 2008, 2010, 2012). However, focusing solely on linguistic knowledge, such as lexis and grammar alone, is insufficient for real-life intercultural communication (Baker, 2016; Inpeng & Nomnian, 2020). ELT textbooks and supplementary activity materials used by students from different sociocultural backgrounds should promote mutual understanding and facilitate intercultural and cross-cultural interactions (Baker, 2016; Inphoo & Nomnian, 2019; Nomnian, 2018). Culturally diverse content represented in ELT activity books is useful and suitable in providing pedagogical assistance in ELT by allowing students to develop cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

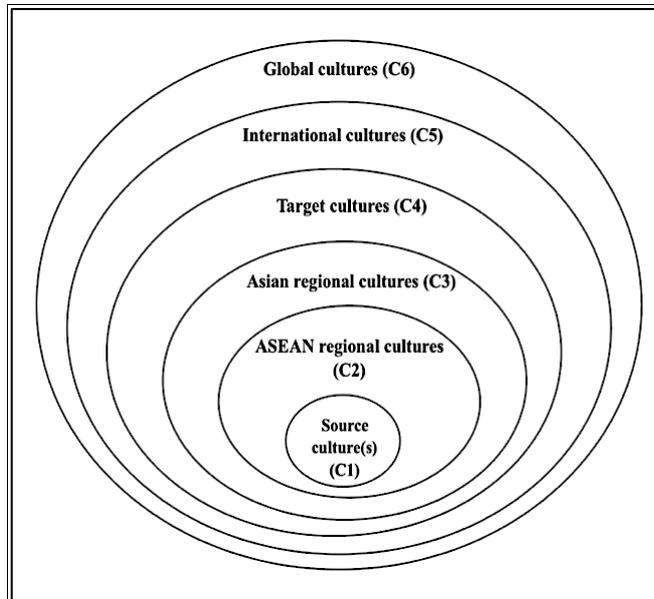
The concept applied in this study is based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) source cultures, target cultures, and international cultures, which underpins our analysis of cultures depicted in student activity books that serve as both primary and supplementary texts in some Thai schools. These various culture-types are discussed below.

Source culture is a reference to a student's cultural background. These cultural elements are typically represented in ESL/EFL textbooks produced in a particular context at a national level. The main objective of this cultural categorization is to equip students with cultural knowledge and wisdom that can be introduced to foreign counterparts and visitors. The significance of source cultures in ELT classrooms is twofold. Firstly, familiarity with the source cultures allows students not to feel completely isolated from their experiences. Secondly, this cultural categorization enhances students' intercultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding, allowing them to judiciously compare and contrast aspects of their own culture and other cultures.

Target culture refers to cultures from inner-circle countries where English is used and spoken as the first language (L1) according to Kachru (1985). This categorization includes the cultures of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although activity book materials depicting target cultures are used worldwide, they are regularly criticized for being culturally specific for commercial reasons and not aligning with the students' own sociocultural backgrounds (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999).

International cultures are described by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) as being an essential element in ELT textbooks because English is used as a lingua franca for those from outer- and expanding-circle countries (Kachru, 1985). International cultures are introduced in ELT materials to balance the actual use of English in all of Kachru's (1985) circles. The presentation of international cultures in ELT textbooks promotes intercultural awareness and ICC when students interact with people who come from non-native-English-speaking countries; thus, international cultural content helps students learn how to express themselves and communicate appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Drawing upon Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) three cultural sources as a conceptual framework, this study proposes three additional categories, namely (i) ASEAN regional cultures, (ii) Asian regional cultures, and (iii) global cultures to correspond to the research context of migrant students and teachers who use the activity books. In this respect, the revised sources of the cultural content are represented as six layers in the onion diagram below (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of Layered Cultural Sources (Adapted from Cortazzi and Jin (1999))**

The conceptual framework of cultural sources used in this study is categorized into six cultural layers or circles, described here from the outermost to innermost, respectively. Global cultures (C6) represent the shared experiences, norms, symbols, and ideas known to people at a global level. These cultures are not mutually exclusive, but rather they overlap in various dimensions (e.g., New Year holidays, world religions, and fast foods that are well-known in several countries). International cultures (C5) refer to cultures in Kachru's (1985) outer and expanding circle countries, but does not include source, ASEAN and Asian regional cultures. Target cultures (C4) include the cultures of inner circle English-speaking countries, essentially Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United States. Asian regional cultures (C3) exclude source cultures and ASEAN regional cultures. This layer focuses on 38 countries located in the Asian region. ASEAN regional cultures (C2) comprise specifically six member countries of the ASEAN community, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. Source cultures (C1) are those of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, which represent the cultural backgrounds of the students in this study. An overview of the model with definitions in each layer is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Definitions of the cultural sources in this study**

No.	Cultural sources (from inner to outer layers)	Definitions
1	Source cultures (C1)	Students' sociocultural backgrounds ( <i>Cambodian, Lao, Myanmar, and Thai cultures</i> ).
2	ASEAN regional cultures (C2)	10 ASEAN members' cultures excluding the four aforementioned students' cultures. This layer focuses on six countries located in the ASEAN region ( <i>Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam</i> ).
3	Asian regional cultures (C3)	Cultures belonging to 48 Asian countries (United Nations Statistics Division, 2018) except the source and ASEAN regional cultures. This layer focuses on 38 countries located in the Asian region as follows: <i>Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Cyprus, East Timor, Georgia, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen</i>
4	Target cultures (C4)	Native English-speaking countries ( <i>Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United States</i> ) according to Kachru's concentric circles (1985).
5	International cultures (C5)	Cultures found in outer and expanding circle countries (Kachru, 1985) but exclude source cultures, ASEAN regional cultures, Asian regional cultures, and target cultures. This layer focuses on diverse cultures, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>African cultures (e.g., Egyptian and Moroccan cultures)</i></li> <li>• <i>European cultures (e.g., French and Italian cultures)</i></li> <li>• <i>Latin American cultures (e.g., Brazilian and Mexican cultures)</i></li> </ul>
6	Global cultures (C6)	This refers to a set of shared experiences, norms, symbols, and ideas that unite people at the global level. Globalization is defined as the strengthening of worldwide interconnectedness in terms of society, culture, economy, politics, spirituality, and language (McIntyre, 2009). Due to globalization, experiences, norms, symbols, and ideas are shared, and this unites people at the global level.

Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) concept has been widely used to explore the origin of cultures represented in ELT textbooks used in ESL and EFL contexts (Böcü & Razi, 2016; Kaewsakul & Teo, 2016; Pinjinda, 2015; Waharak, 2015). Waharak's (2015) findings, for example, indicate that the cultural content of Thai ELT textbooks references mainly British and American cultures. Furthermore, the activity books explored in that study emphasized descriptions of grammatical aspects rather than aspects of communication between people of different cultures (Waharak, 2015). Similarly, Syahri and Susanti (2016) investigated the local and target culture integration in English textbooks used in senior high school classes in Palembang, Indonesia. Their results show that target cultures were featured far more than local cultures. Likewise, Böcü and Razi (2016) explain that the textbooks in their case study covered a variety of cultures but without any direct references to the source culture (Turkish cultures).

Other studies (e.g., Kaewsakul & Teo, 2016; Pinjinda, 2015; Srithi, 2014; Za & Ramnath, 2016) have demonstrated a mixed representation of the target, international, and source cultures prevails in ELT textbooks. Srithi (2014) reveals that English textbooks for primary education written by Thai authors present cultural diversity sourced in all three of Kachru's (1985) concentric circles of English. Likewise, some English textbooks used at secondary and tertiary levels contain a moderate amount of cultural diversity (Kaewsakul & Teo, 2016; Pinjinda, 2015). Za and Ramnath (2016) also discover that the cultural content and activities found in general English textbooks used by Myanmar students in a refugee camp on the Myanmar-Thailand border were generally suitable and relevant to young Myanmar migrant learners. These findings indicate that the selected textbooks in these cases do not just focus on target cultures but provide a variety of cultural content appropriate for their learners.

This current study extends the scope of studies by investigating cultural representations found in ELT activity books used in a multicultural primary school comprising Thai and migrant pupils from a variety of different sociocultural backgrounds. The cultural content was analyzed according to six sources: (i) source cultures (C1), (ii) ASEAN regional cultures (C2),

(iii) Asian regional cultures (C3), (iv) target cultures (C4), (v) international cultures (C5), and (vi) global cultures (C6).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research setting**

Drawing upon a case study as a research design in this study, it enables researchers to be more flexible and adaptive to a particular research case for in-depth analysis without making universal claims or generalizing results (Casanave, 2010; Nomnian, 2018; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). The research setting of this study was a government primary school located in the district of Nadee in Samut Sakhon province, Thailand.

This school was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it is a government primary school in a province with the second largest number of migrant workers in Thailand, who originate from Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos – 257,559 in total, according to Ministry of Labor statistics (2019, p.13). Moreover, primary school level is the first stage of compulsory education in Thailand, which is provided to every child regardless of their legal status. Secondly, according to the Samut Sakhon Education Service Area Office (ESAO), there were a total of 2,590 migrant and stateless children registered in public schools in the province in 2017, the majority of whom were from Myanmar (1,620), and about 700 were stateless (UNICEF, 2019, p.27). At the school in question, there were 404 students, 45 of whom were migrants, from Myanmar (22 students), Laos (9 students), and Cambodia (8 students), as well as ethnic Karen and Tai (6 students). Migrant children were in all classes. As family and social milieus are significant factors that influence a child's development, migrant children commonly possess the values and cultural norms that they are taught by their families (Gomez, 2015).

In this study, the experience of migrant children, their sense of belonging, and attitudes towards the larger society differ greatly. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argue that the various self-categorizations are formed by the intricate ways in which an individual's traits (e.g., their family backgrounds and experiences) combine with the characteristics of the community and

environment (e.g., the school system and the social values). As a result, migrant students of different ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds may hold different beliefs, values, and cultural identities. It should be noted that migrant students bring their identities into the classroom with them, and in this respect, ELT classrooms play a vital role as a space for identity construction and negotiation (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Consequently, this research setting can be regarded as a site for the students' representation of themselves in a multicultural context.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Following approval by the IPSR-Institutional Review Board (IPSR-IRB) committee and the Committee for Research Ethics (Social Sciences) of Mahidol University under the project No. IRB0001007 and COA. No. 2019/10-388, this study was undertaken at a local primary school in Samut Sakhon province.

The ELT materials explored in this study were ELT Activity Books 1-6. They were selected by convenience sampling because they were used as ELT supplementary materials for primary students in all grades by the English language teachers and the director of the school in question. Moreover, these books were approved by the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Thailand, and they were designed to be in line with the A2 (Basic User) level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels of language proficiency.

Content analysis was adopted to analyze the cultural sources found in the activity books in this study, and both quantitative and qualitative content analyses were undertaken in order to provide multiple interpretations and to analyze the data thoroughly with a greater degree of accuracy (Krippendorf, 2012). To do this, the researchers created tables (see Appendix A) to categorize six cultural sources based on the conceptual framework: (i) source cultures (C1), (ii) ASEAN regional cultures (C2), (iii) Asian regional cultures (C3), (iv) target cultures (C4), (v) international cultures (C5), and (vi) global cultures (C6). Following the categorization of the cultural sources, the frequency of representation of cultural

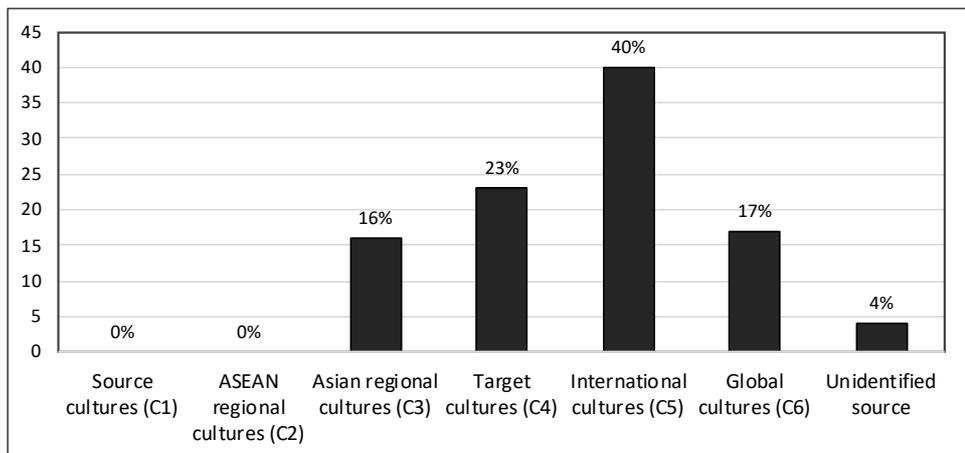
information was collated; the corresponding themes of each cultural source are presented in the discussion part of this paper.

## Findings

This section presents the three key research findings, namely 1) the frequency with which cultural information is represented in the activity books; 2) the frequency with which cultural information is represented in each activity book; and 3) a list of cultural source countries represented in the activity books. The findings are as follows:

### 1. The frequency with which cultural information represented

The frequency percentages of references to source cultures (C1), ASEAN regional cultures (C2), Asian regional cultures (C3), target cultures (C4), international cultures (C5), and global cultures (C6) in the activity books are illustrated in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2. Overall cultural sources represented in the target activity books (all grades)**

Figure 2 depicts the frequency percentage of references to cultural sources (by group) as follows.

*International cultures (C5).* International cultures (C5) were found to be the most frequently represented cultural source (40%),

and this was done in five main topics featured in listening exercises, short reading passages, and illustrations. The five topics were (i) food and drinks, (ii) famous places, (iii) famous figures, (iv) national symbols, and (v) traditions.

Various international cuisines were introduced, Mexican dishes (e.g., tortillas, chorizo, tortas, and tacos), Italian desserts such as tiramisu, Italian breakfast, German breakfast, and Moroccan food.

Famous places were mentioned in listening exercises and short reading passages, illustrations, and pictures. Short reading passages described famous places in the world such as the Amazon rainforest in Brazil, Plikta playground in Sweden, Brumleby Park in Denmark, Gulliver Park in Spain, and the Colosseum in Italy.

Famous historical and world figures were introduced in listening exercises, short reading passages, and illustrations such as the story of Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa, as well as celebrated people who were not native English speakers, including Albert Einstein, Leonardo Da Vinci, Marie Curie, Picasso and Dali, Mother Teresa, Cleopatra, Nefertiti, and Eva Peron.

The social norms of Mexican culture, including greetings (e.g., 'Hola' in Mexican culture), school uniforms in Mexico, and Mexican holidays were explained in listening exercises and short reading passages.

*Target cultures (C4).* Target cultures (C4) were the second most frequently represented (23%) on the topic of food and drinks, the activity books mainly highlighted the American breakfast, and for famous places and attractions in English-speaking countries, Niagara Falls in the USA, Horseshoe Falls in Canada, Stonehenge in England, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, USA were notable inclusions. American and British personalities such as Abraham Lincoln (an American president), Martin Luther King Jr. (an American activist), and William Shakespeare (a British poet) featured in the famous people list, and the topic of traditions included special holidays and traditional clothes such as kilts (Scottish skirt for boys and men) and the traditional clothing of Maori in New Zealand – these described in reading exercises. In terms of special holidays, the activity books mentioned Christmas, Halloween, and St. Valentine's Day.

*Global cultures (C6).* Global cultures were referenced third most (17%), aspects of which were described in listening exercises and illustrations focusing on five topics: food and drinks (e.g., ice cream, sandwiches, chips, bread, cakes, milk, orange juice, tea, and coffee), musical instruments (e.g., piano and guitar), inventions (e.g., computers, MP3, internet, and Skype), symbols (e.g., Olympic rings and Noble Prize), and social issues (e.g., racism, environment conservation, and cyberbullying).

*Asian regional cultures (C3).* Asian regional cultures constituted the fourth highest percentage of referenced cultural sources (16%). They were mainly acknowledged in listening exercises and short reading passages on four topics: food and drinks, famous places, famous figures, and national symbols in Asian regional countries. In terms of food, the activity books noted only Japanese and Indian breakfasts, and as for famous Asian places, only a playground in Japan was indicated. Regarding famous Asians, there was but one – Indian activist Mahatma Gandhi. National symbols, however, were represented in various ways: national flags (e.g., India, Japan, and China), traditional clothes (e.g., Sari), and language (e.g., Kanji).

*Source cultures (C1) and ASEAN regional cultures (C2).* Source cultures as in the cultures of the students in this study, namely Cambodian, Lao, Myanmar, and Thai, were not included in any of the activity books. ASEAN regional cultures were similarly absent; no cultural elements were found in terms of national symbols, social norms, traditions, or cultural legacy of any ASEAN member country. In this respect, creating classroom activities for students with these sociocultural backgrounds should be considered by teachers as a supplement to the activity books.

*Unidentified sources.* Apart from the six cultural sources found in the activity books, there were also a number of unidentified sources (4%). They are classified as unidentified sources (e.g., the perspectives that students must keep secrets between friends) because they are not tied to a specific culture.

To conclude, the findings reveal that the most to the least frequently represented cultural sources were as follows: international cultures (40%), target cultures (23%), global cultures

(17%), Asian regional cultures (16%), unidentified cultures (4%), and none of the source and ASEAN cultures (0%). These activity books predominantly feature a large number of international and target culture-related elements that are famous worldwide. Source and ASEAN culture-related elements were not highlighted, most likely because they were not familiar to international audiences.

## 2. Frequency of culture-related information presented in each activity book

The results of this investigation of six ELT activity books indicate that they did not include items from each of the six sources that formed the basis of this study. The activity book used in grade 5 provided the most culture-related items (32%) compared to other grades, but nevertheless, there was absolutely no reference to source cultures, ASEAN regional cultures, or global cultures. The amount of culture-related information presented in the grade 6 activity book was slightly higher than that in the grade 3 material, accounting for 27% and 24%, respectively. Furthermore, more culture-related items were provided in activity books for grade 4 than grades 1 and 2, the activity book for which incorporated hardly any cultural content (2%) (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Frequency with which cultural information represented in each activity book**

Grade level	C1 Source Culture	C2 ASEAN Cultures	C3 Asian Cultures	C4 Target Cultures	C5 Internat ional Cultures	C6 Global Cultures	Unident ified Cultures	Total	Total (%)
Grade 1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	2%
Grade 2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	2%
Grade 3	-	-	9	8	10	2	2	31	24%
Grade 4	-	-	1	11	3	4	-	19	14%
Grade 5	-	-	6	7	28	-	-	41	32%
Grade 6	-	-	4	2	11	14	3	34	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 displays useful details on the extent to which cultural information is available to students in each grade. Information about source cultures and ASEAN regional cultures, which should be evident in this context, is clearly missing, and this suggests that the students' activity books are not systematically designed, inclusive, or balanced in their presentation of cultures.

### 3. List of cultural source countries represented in the activity books

As noted, international cultures were the most frequently represented in the activity books – 20 countries in particular. In terms of Asian regional cultures, the activity books highlighted cultural aspects of only a few countries; four target country cultures were also included. Overall, 28 countries were referenced in the activity books (see Table 3).

**Table 3: List of countries represented in the activity books**

The cultural sources	List of the countries	Total
Source cultures (C1)	Not available	0
ASEAN regional cultures (C2)	Not available	0
Asian regional cultures (C3)	<i>China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan</i>	4
Target cultures (C4)	<i>Australia, Canada, The United States of America, The United Kingdom</i>	4
International cultures (C5)	<i>Albania, Argentina, Bahrein, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, South Africa, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Venezuela</i>	20
		28

It is important to note that global cultures (C6), such as football, piano, guitar, and computer, can be found in all countries with no country's specificity; thus, they were not included in this list.

To conclude, these findings reveal the representation of cultural diversity in the students' activity books approved by the Ministry of Education and subsequently selected by the director and teachers for use as the key ELT materials for all students at the school where students' culturally diverse backgrounds existed.

### Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) conceptual framework, international cultures were the most frequently referenced sources found in the activity books at issue in this study. International cultures refer to those in outer and expanding circle countries (Kachru, 1985) and exclude source cultures, ASEAN

regional cultures, Asian regional cultures, and target cultures. The activity books contained a range of cultural content related to 20 countries, and this is consistent with recent studies (e.g., Alshenqeeti, 2019; Mofidi & Hashemi, 2019), indicating that international cultures predominate in such EFL textbooks.

This current study found that cultural elements of non-native-English-speaking countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, and Mexico were integrated broadly into listening exercises, short reading passages, and illustrations. The study also shows that target cultures were not so prominently featured although the results of previous studies indicate that target cultures were overrepresented in the textbooks investigated in those cases (e.g., Alshenqeeti, 2019; Anita, 2019; Böcü & Razi, 2016; Saemee & Nomnian, 2021; Syahri & Susanti, 2016; Thumvichit, 2018; Waharak, 2015). The activity books presented different sociocultural content related to both native English-speaking countries and a variety of other cultures. In this respect, exercises and activities which integrate diverse cultural content are especially beneficial in promoting students' intercultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding owing to the global use of English (Baker, 2011, 2012, 2016; Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020; Nomnian, 2018).

Regarding global cultures, our study indicates that the activity books incorporated various dimensions of shared experiences, norms, symbols, and ideas in a global context that students could recognize. This result varies from that of Davidson and Liu (2020), whose study found that cultural representations in terms of global citizenship were underrepresented. They contend, however, that global cultural references are nevertheless meaningful because they reinforce cultural awareness, open-mindedness, and social responsibility (Davidson & Liu, 2020). In our study, global cultures were represented in various topics that expose students to social issues, food and drinks, and symbols enabling them to connect with people at the global level.

In terms of Asian regional cultures, the activity books introduced only a few items related to them. This was particularly noticeable in the activity books used by grades 1 and 2 students, so it is suggested that Asian cultural elements be incorporated into

ELT materials designed for use in EFL/ESL classrooms throughout Asia. This way, Asian students will learn more about and better understand the different sociocultural environments of their own region.

This study also found that source and ASEAN regional cultures were scarce. As the activity books were used in a multicultural context, ELT teachers should be aware of students' cultural diversity and include the students' source cultures into teaching and learning, which will be essential and beneficial to encourage students to share different cultural perspectives.

In this respect, the relevance and significance of source culture in ELT classrooms can be divided into two aspects. First, representation of the students' own cultures in the materials would make them feel less isolated from their lived experiences. Second, featuring source cultures can help students develop their own intercultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding (Chalermnirundorn; 2019; Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020; Nomnian, 2018). By discovering similarities and differences between their own and other cultures, students learn how to interact appropriately with people of different cultural backgrounds, both inside and outside the classroom. We argue that the inclusion of source cultural content in ELT is vital; and thus, sociocultural knowledge of Thailand and its neighboring countries in the ELT supplementary books should be integrated, addressed, and linked to the students' sociocultural and ethnic backgrounds.

This study suggests that teaching and learning of English for culturally diverse students will be effective by improving the students' English proficiency and at the same time taking their cultural values, perspectives, and practices of their counterparts in neighboring countries into account for cross-cultural understanding (Chalermnirundorn; 2019; Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020; Nomnian, 2018). Moreover, English has officially been adopted as the ASEAN lingua franca (Phumpho & Nomnian, 2019; Suebwongsuwan & Nomnian, 2020). In this respect, stakeholders of textbook design and development should recognize local varieties of English and different cultural sources owing to the use of English as a lingua franca in multilingual and multicultural ASEAN settings (Kirkpatrick, 2010).

Regarding ELT materials design and development, Srithi's (2014) study found that English textbooks written by Thai authors introduced ASEAN cultures extensively. This confirms that authors play an essential role in improving and developing English language teaching and learning materials. Because elements of local and ASEAN regional cultures are rarely reflected in activity books, teachers are encouraged to integrate authentic materials such as news, movies, and travel documentaries that are relevant to the students' own situations into the textbook content. Tomlinson (2012) recommends that language teachers include local cultural aspects that are familiar to their students in their lessons, or even create their own textbooks. By doing this, teachers can promote intercultural and cross-cultural understanding through more meaningful activities in the ELT classroom.

Reid (2015) demonstrates creative methods to promote cultural awareness, cross-cultural understanding, and mutual respect. For example, the comparative method is one of the most used techniques for teaching cultures. Teachers can select general cultural topics discussed in the activity books to create activities such as comparing local school uniforms with those of students in other cultural contexts. A prediction method can be applied to engage students in predicting or guessing a half-told story. This activity can motivate students' curiosity and interest in sharing their points of view. Role-plays are also effective in getting students to practice real-life situations that involve intercultural communication. Moreover, the use of media to sample entertainment, news, documentaries, movies, TV shows, and songs can be adapted for teaching about different cultures.

In sum, teachers should provide space for students to represent their own cultural identities. Integrating information and activities that address local and ASEAN regional cultures in multicultural classrooms is increasingly important and should be given serious consideration by teachers (Mahmud, 2019; Messekher, 2014). However, teachers should first understand how to introduce such cultural elements creatively and appropriately, and where necessary, adapt them for younger learners.

**Conclusion**

This study explored cultural diversity in ELT activity books used in a government primary school in Samut Sakhon province in Thailand. This school is considered multicultural in nature because of its high percentage of migrant students whose parents came from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar to work in Thailand. Based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural sources framework, the results reveal a diverse range of cultural content originating from the global, international, target, and Asian countries. However, cultural content and activities relating to the sociocultural backgrounds of the students in this study or any ASEAN regional cultures for that matter were scarce. Teachers of English who rely on activity books should be prepared to create their own culturally-relevant content and activities to supplement the textbooks when these are gaps that do not address the cultures of their students.

Therefore, integrating multicultural content in terms of both local and global cultural aspects into ELT activity books and classroom activities is crucial. School administrators and teachers should take into account cultural issues when choosing and using ELT textbooks and activity books for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important to note that this study makes no universal claims as it focuses only on this specific multicultural school and cannot be generalized in other school settings. This study aims to be a stepping stone for other educational researchers, publishers, school administrators, and teachers to take students' sociocultural backgrounds into account in order to create equitable education for all, which can enhance target objectives of quality education proposed by UNESCO's SDG 4.

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**Appendix A**

Detail	The sources of cultural content						
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Unidentified sources
1. The illustration (The Olympic ring)						✓	
2. The illustration (The national flag of India)			✓				
3. The listening exercise (The recipe of Tiramisu, Italian cake)					✓		
4. The listening exercise (Halloween Day)				✓			
5. The listening exercise (Christmas holiday)			✓				