

# ***Representations of Cultures and Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence in Chinese High School English Textbooks: A Longitudinal Comparative Study***

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**Abstract:** Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is becoming increasingly important with the ongoing globalization and researchers have emphasized the significance of cultivating such competence in English language teaching. As a major tool for language learning, textbooks play an important role in cultivating ICC in language classrooms. This study selected two versions of textbooks published by the same press to analyze and compare the cultural representations from the perspectives of the distribution of cultures, language activities, and cultural activities. Besides, the study also focuses on the links between textbook activities and the cultivation of ICC. It was found that the phenomenon of cultural imbalances, especially those dominated by the UK, the US and China, with the increase in the proportion of Chinese culture and a wider cultural coverage in the new edition. The results also revealed that the activities in the textbooks lack clear teaching objectives and that the ICC cultivation is superficial. This research mainly puts forward suggestions on the ICC cultivation in language teaching and the compilation of textbooks. In addition, it is also suggestive of the definition of intercultural communication and the arrangement of language classroom activities, etc.

**Keywords:** ELT textbooks, culture, intercultural communication competence, culture activities, longitudinal study

## **1. Introduction**

Under the background of globalization, English is used as a lingua franca in various fields, especially among social groups of different countries with diverse native languages. The indispensable role of English in international communication as well as the necessity of English language education has been prioritized. Hence, we should pay attention to the communication between different cultures and the cultivation of intercultural communication competence (ICC). At the same time, as high school is a critical period for students' second language learning and teaching materials are the main tool for language learning, so the research on English learning and teaching materials used in high schools is crucial to learners of English as a second language. This research mainly analyzes the representations of cultures from different countries and the cultivation of ICC in two versions of high school English textbooks published by Foreign Language Teaching

and Research Press (FLTRP). In addition, the study compares the similarities and the differences of the two versions of books to see whether there are any changes in cultural representations and ICC development.

In the past, research on teaching materials from the perspective of intercultural communication mainly focused on analyzing the distribution of cultural representations and identify problems like the imbalanced culture representations of different countries and making suggestions for the adaptation of teaching materials [1-5]. However, most of the studies are based on only one certain set of textbooks, so there is a lack of diachronic comparative studies. As a result, the results from previous studies are not time-sensitive and cannot effectively reflect how cultural representations and ICC development evolve with the increasing globalization and intercultural communication across countries. In addition, previous studies have mentioned the importance of cultivating intercultural communicative competence in English teaching [6], but have not explored this further. In view of the above shortcomings, this study analyzes the cultural representations, language and cultural activities in two versions of senior high school English textbooks published by FLTRP in 2006 and 2019, and uses the theoretical framework of Byram and Moran to analyze the relationship between the cultural activities of textbooks and the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence [6-7].

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. ELT Textbooks

Teaching materials are one of the major ways to help students master language knowledge and skills as well as to promote cultural transmission, as they are the carriers of knowledge and also serve as the effective intermediaries between teachers and students. Considering the indispensable role of teaching materials in English teaching and learning, many scholars has attempted to analyze ELT textbooks from different aspects. One of the important aspects of the study of textbooks is the identification of what they contain and the way they are represented [8]. Over the past years, the study of culture in ELT textbooks has covered countries all over the world like Cambodia [5], Japan [9], China [2, 4], and Europe [6]. The researchers focus mainly on three types: the first type uses corpus-assisted discourse analysis to analyze the cultural representations in particular series of textbooks, and based on the results of the research, illustrates problems such as the imbalanced representations in the textbooks and propose relevant suggestions [1-2]. The second type uses questionnaires to investigate and interview teachers' perceptions of their experiences and pedagogy with current English teaching materials, and to offer suggestions for improving the materials from their own perspectives [3-5]. And the third type, the analysis of teaching materials is only a small part of the study of the relationship between second language learning and teaching, with no major research conducted, to illustrate, some studies focus on language teaching and point out that textbook is an essential part in this process at merely conceptual-discussion level, without implementing experimental investigation [10-11].

One limitation of the existing study is most of the investigations are focusing on college ELT materials, while overlooking those use in high school textbooks to some extent. It is widely acknowledged that college is the stage for cultivating well-rounded and social-oriented talents, while high school period is of the same significance as it is critical for the development and formation of students' values, cultural concepts as well as the transition between high school and college studies [12]. In Chinese context, the existing studies have covered high school ELT textbooks, while there are less investigations on culture content compared with those on other language skills [13-15], for instance, the development of core literacy [16-17]; the teaching of language components such as vocabularies and grammar and so on [18-19]. However, teaching

culture is an essential part in both language learning and the development of ICC, studies on culture in ELT materials are indispensable.

## 2.2. Culture in ELT Textbooks

Many studies have revealed the over-representation of the culture of English speaking countries, especially the US and UK, as well as the absence of non-English speaking countries, such as China. In cross-sectional studies, Zhang, Liu, and May; Zhang, Liu, and Yang investigate the cultural representations and religious cultural representations in 10 sets of college English textbooks respectively [1-2], and point out the problem of the imbalanced cultural representations in existing college English textbooks, in particular the phenomenon of mono-dominance of British and American cultures among the textbooks. Moreover, focusing on high school materials, He also found the similar phenomenon of the uneven cultural representations [4]. In addition, she also pointed out that there was an existing problem of high school English textbooks—they emphasize the culture of the target language while ignoring the Chinese culture, as well as their priority on cultural input and the neglect of culture-related output in the implementation of ELT materials. Past research and data analysis on both college and high school English textbooks have identified flaws in the existing materials and proposed corresponding solutions to improve and solve them.

This kind of cross-sectional study can only cover a short period of time. However, the textbooks innovate with the time and the English Curriculum Standard for General High School (Revised Edition 2022) also explicitly mentions that both compulsory and optional textbooks should include the cultural knowledge of different countries as one of the teaching objectives. Therefore focusing on one version textbook is unable to reflect the changes over time

## 2.3. Intercultural Competence in ELT Textbooks

In China, the importance of teaching culture is reflected as the essential way to help students raise intercultural awareness and develop intercultural communicative competence according to *English Curriculum Standard for General High School*. ICC is a long-standing and complex concept that evolves with the times. Guilherme defines intercultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” [20]. Yang and Zhuang point that intercultural communicative competence should be composed of a global awareness system, a cultural adaptation competence system, a knowledge competence system and a communication practice competence system [21]. Byram and Masuhara consider intercultural competence as the fifth language learning skills in addition to listening, speaking, writing and reading, and argue that intercultural education should consist of four aspects: knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills [6]. Considering that intercultural communication skills need to be cultivated in specific practices, Moran divides cultural activities into four types: the first refers to activities that can develop skills (e.g. dialogues or role plays), the second one aims at gathering information (e.g. personal’s real stories or authentic materials), the third one focuses on discovering explanations (e.g. explanation of cultural meanings, or projects), and the last one highlights reflection (e.g. relating cultural information to their lives) which should be included in ELT materials in purpose of developing students’ cultural awareness [7].

Presenting multi-culture in textbooks aims to raise cultural awareness, as well as develop intercultural communication skills in terms of *English Curriculum Standard for General High School*. Although there are theoretical frameworks and ideas emphasizing the teaching of culture, current studies focus only on conceptual discussions and no empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between cultural representations and their pedagogical aims with respect to intercultural competence. Instead, they paid attention to identifying problems in textbooks,

such as the stereotypes of a culture [22], the pre-defined cultural conceptions that exist in textbooks [9], and so on. Although the studies of He, McConachy, and Zhang, Liu, and May focus on analyzing the cultural embodiment in the textbook, they neglect the purpose of teaching culture, e.g. to develop students' intercultural communication skills and awareness [4, 9, 2]. Nhem organically combines the fostering of the students' intercultural awareness in practice with culture representations in textbooks, while ignoring to explore the design of cultural activities in and their purposes in depth [5]. In addition, Corbett points that the topic-based books provide opportunities or learners to engage in and make a comparison between their own culture and others, which can raise the intercultural awareness [23]. Hence, it is essential to have a specified goal of the content in ELT materials as "targeting intercultural competences could help materials developers and teachers to treat language and culture as inseparable" [6].

To summarize, previous research on English textbooks (including college and high school) lack diachronic comparisons and contrast. Besides, most research focus on the cultural representations in textbooks and the development of intercultural awareness at theoretical level, while lacking research on whether the content of ELT materials can be set to effectively highlight intercultural awareness. Based on the above research gaps, this study will mainly answer the following research questions:

1. What are the differences in the frequency of cultural manifestations between the two versions of ELT textbooks published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2006 and 2019?
2. Are the cultural representations and the development of ICC effectively involved in the activity design in the textbooks?

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1. Materials**

The study selected two sets of senior high school English textbooks published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in August 2006 and June 2019, respectively. The textbooks published in 2006 (called the old version) consist of eight volumes in total, five of which are compulsory and three of are optional. Each volume contains seven teaching modules, and each module has ten parts: Introduction, Reading and vocabulary, Listening and vocabulary, Listening and speaking, Writing, Function and everyday English, Grammar, Pronunciation, Cultural corner and Task. The textbooks published in 2019 (called the new version) have seven books in all, including three compulsory books and four optional books. Each volume covers six units with seven parts: Starting out, Understanding ideas, Using language, Developing ideas, Presenting ideas, Reflection and Project.

#### **3.2. Theoretical Frameworks of Culture Classification**

The current study utilized two theoretical frameworks to determine whether each reference to an entity counts as a cultural representation: the big C and the little c theory and the English Curriculum Standard for General High School's division. Peterson divides the components of culture in terms of the visibility into big C culture and little c culture [24]. Big C visible culture consists of literature, classical music, architecture while big C invisible culture contains norms, values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, or laws of society. Furthermore, little c invisible culture also covers issues, viewpoints, opinions, preferences, and knowledge of individuals whereas little c visible culture refers to body languages, clothing styles, food, hobbies, or use of space. The curriculum standard divides cultural knowledge into two main aspects: material and spiritual. Its classification of culture generally covers the same content as Peterson's, while in comparison, there

are mainly two more parts: invention and creation as well as science. The study first used the framework of big C and little c, and then applied the English Curriculum Standard to further define some uncertain terms and last negotiate with the second coder to come to an agreement.

In the introduction of the unit structure of the old and new versions of the textbook, it is clearly stated that the “Cultural corner” and the “Understanding ideas” sections should cover cultural knowledge respectively. However, in the actual analysis, it was found that in addition to these two parts, other content of each unit also cover cultural knowledge in a scattered manner.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The coding scheme of the textbooks can be mainly divided in to two “wheres” (Where does the culture appear in the unit? Where does the culture from?); three “whats” (What is the cultural content about? What can the culture be categorized according to the division criteria? What can the culture activity be categorized according to the framework?) and two “hows” (How the culture is presented? How does the culture engage in activities?)

A more detailed coding scheme is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Coding Scheme for Culture Representations in Textbooks.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Page	On which page does this reference to culture appear?
Detail or not	It refers to the specificity whether there is detailed illustration of a certain culture entity.
Level	This code is related to the previous one: “in detail” can be further divided into elaboration of culture at the levels of paragraph and passage; “not in detail” can be defined as brief mention of culture in sentence, phrase, word and picture.
Region	Which country, region or continent does the culture entity represent? E.g., Countries like China, the UK, the US, Australia, Spain, Ireland, etc.; continents like Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, etc.; regions like the North Pole, Middle East, etc.; international organizations like WHO, UNESCO, etc.
Part	Where does the culture appear in the parts mentioned above in 3.1?
Language Activity	What kind of language activity the culture entity is presented in? E.g., Reading, Speaking, Listening, Grammar and so on.
Culture Activity	What kind of culture activity is the culture entity categorized into according to Moran’s (2001) framework?
Mention of Activity	Does the culture activity point out its object?
ICC Activity	What kind of culture activity is the culture entity categorized into according to Byram’s (2013) framework?
Theme	What kind of culture is it? (e.g., custom, food, animal, celebrity, science, art, geography, history and so on)
Content	What each cultural representation specifically tells?
Remarks	The uncertain culture entity in the first-round coding.

## 4. Results

The coding scheme investigates the frequency and the specific content of the cultural representations in every volume of the selected high ELT materials. The results are as follow:

## 4.1. What is the Difference in the Frequency of Cultural Manifestations between the 2006-published and 2019-published of FLTRP's ELT Textbooks?

### 4.1.1. Totality

Table 2: The Frequency of Cultural Representations in Two Sets of Textbooks.

2006-published version (the old version)				2019-published version (the new version)			
Compulsory		Optional		Compulsory		Optional	
Book	Frequency	Book	Frequency	Book	Frequency	Book	Frequency
1	20	1	57	1	31	1	81
2	23	2	47	2	74	2	47
3	46	3	58	3	74	3	70
4	22					4	78
5	56						
Total	167	Total	162	Total	179	Total	276

In general, the total number of occurrences of cultural entities in the new edition is more than that in the old edition. The new edition tallies up a total of 455 times and with an average of 65 cultural representations per volume. The old version has 329 occurrences in all, with an average of 41.125 cultural representations per volume.

### 4.1.2. Specificity-according Data

Table 3: The Frequency of Different-specificities Cultural Representations.

2006-published version (the old version)					2019-published version (the new version)				
Book	Indetail	Frequency	Notindetail	Frequency	Book	Indetail	Frequency	Notindetail	Frequency
C1*	10	3.0%	10	3.0%	C1	18	4.0%	13	2.9%
C2	15	4.6%	8	2.4%	C2	38	8.4%	36	8.0%
C3	25	7.6%	21	6.4%	C3	50	11.0%	24	5.3%
C4	15	4.6%	7	2.1%	OP1	41	9.0%	40	8.8%
C5	32	9.7%	24	7.3%	OP2	29	6.4%	18	4.0%
OP1*	32	9.7%	25	7.6%	OP3	43	9.5%	27	5.9%
OP2	41	12.5%	6	1.8%	OP4	41	9.0%	37	8.1%
OP3	40	12.2%	18	5.5%					
Total		329			Total		455		

(C refers to compulsory book, 1 refers to the first volume and OP refers to optional book)

\*C1 refers to the first compulsory volume and so on

\*OP1 refers to the first optional volume and so on.



Table 3 presents the distribution of the cultural entities that are elaborated in length of paragraph and passage (called “culture in detail”) and those presented in length of sentences, phrases, words or pictures (called “culture not in detail”) in two sets of ELT materials. Generally, the percentage of cultural entities that present in paragraphs and passages, is higher than the percentage of cultural entities that are embodied in sentences, phrases, words or pictures.

The gap between the percentages of “culture in detail” and “culture not in detail” in the old version textbooks is more obvious, and the percentage of detailed culture in some volumes is almost twice or more than the non-detailed culture representations, such as C2, C4, OP2 and OP3. While in the new version, this distribution is more even, with only the volume of C3 presents a distinct twice gap. In addition, the proportion of detailed culture in the optional volumes of the 2006-published version is far more than that of the compulsory ones. In comparison, there is a smaller gap in the proportion of the cultural representations between the compulsory and the optional books of the 2019-published version.

### 4.1.3. Country-according Data

The study categorized the countries into mainly three parts: China, UK and the US, and others.

Table 4: The Frequency of Different-countries/Regions/Continents Cultural Representations.

2006-published version (the old version)			2019-published version (the new version)		
Country/Region/Continent	Frequency	Proportion	Country/Region/Continent	Frequency	Proportion
China	93	30.0%	China	157	36.6%
UK & the US	135	43.5%	UK & the US	144	33.6%
English-speaking countries (except UK and the US)	11	3.5%	English-speaking countries (except UK and the US)	24	5.6%
Non-English-speaking countries (except China)	90	22.9%	Non-English-speaking countries (except China)	94	21.9%
Total	310	100%	Total	429	100%

Due to the limitation of length, Table 4 only presents frequencies and percentages of culture representations categorized into different country-types, and the specific frequencies for each country’s cultural representations and the regions, continents, international organizations and other global culture were attached in the Appendix. The old version contains 27 countries, 3 regions, 4 continents and 1 international organization, while the new version includes 44 countries and 4 regions or 4 continents and 4 international organizations. Table 4 merely counts the frequency of country-according cultural representations. Therefore, the totalities of Table 4 and Table 5 are different.

In summary, both sets of textbooks are predominantly featured with the culture of the United Kingdom and the United States as well as China, while the cultures of other English language countries like Canada, Australia, Ireland, Singapore are less represented in both books. In addition

to the countries mentioned above, countries such as France, Russia, Italy, etc. also appear several times in both sets of textbooks with even lower frequency.

Compared with the old version, the new version presents some changes. First, the percentage of the culture representations of UK and the US declines from 43.5% to 33.6%. Second, the proportion of Chinese culture increases from 30.0% to 36.6%. Third, the new version covers a wider range of countries, such as Nepal, Chile, Iran, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ecuador, etc. However, the proportion of countries except China, US and the UK decreases.

## 4.2. Are the Cultural Representations and the Development of ICC Effectively Involved in the Activity Design in the Textbooks?

### 4.2.1. Categorization into Language Activities

Table 5: The Frequency of Language Activities.

2006-published version (the old version)			2019-published version (the new version)		
Language activity	Frequency	Proportion	Language activity	Frequency	Proportion
Reading	207	62.92%	Reading	282	61.98%
Vocabulary	38	11.55%	Question	60	13.19%
Exercise*	26	7.90%	Listening	29	6.37%
Question*	17	5.17%	Vocabulary	26	5.71%
Speaking	17	5.17%	Grammar	20	4.40%
Listening	13	3.95%	Exercise	19	4.18%
Grammar	8	2.43%	Speaking	13	2.86%
Writing	3	0.91%	Writing	4	0.88%
			Reflection	2	0.44%
Total	329	100%	Total	455	100.00%

\*Exercise refers to activities such as filling the blanks according to the content of the text, and so on.

\*Questions mainly probe into students' world knowledge. E.g., which works of Western literature are popular in China?

Table 5 shows the percentage of the language activities in which the culture entities present. There is an obvious phenomenon of input-orientation as both in the old version and the new one, it is the Reading Part that takes the largest proportion. Instead, activities training receptive skills such as speaking and writing are insufficient, which also result in the predominant proportion of input in ICC activities.

### 4.2.2. Categorization into Culture Activities

Table 6 presents the frequency of culture activities according to Moran's framework. Most of the activity tends to convey culture knowledge through personal real story or authentic materials, which is call "gather information" and only a few activities try to through developing skills like dialogue in NO2 and role play in OO2. Besides, even less activities relate the culture information to the life.



Table 6: The Frequency of Culture Activities.

2006-published version (the old version)			2019-published version (the new version)		
Culture Activity	Frequency	Proportion	Culture Activity	Frequency	Proportion
gather information	218	66.26%	gather information	309	67.91%
discover explanation	58	17.63%	discover explanation	84	18.46%
ambiguous	49	14.89%	ambiguous	59	12.97%
develop skills	3	0.91%	develop skills	2	0.44%
highlight reflection	1	0.30%	highlight reflection	1	0.22%
Total	329	100.00%	Total	455	100.00%

#### 4.2.3. Categorization into Teaching Objectives

Table 7: The Frequency of Cultural Representations with Teaching Objects and Not.

2006-published version (the old version)					2019-published version (the new version)				
Book	NoObjective	Proportion	Objective	Proportion	Book	NoObjective	Proportion	Objective	Proportion
C1	18	5.5%	2	0.6%	C1	30	6.6%	1	0.2%
C2	20	6.1%	3	0.9%	C2	67	14.7%	7	1.5%
C3	40	12.2%	6	1.8%	C3	73	16.0%	1	0.2%
C4	19	5.8%	3	0.9%	OP1	81	17.8%	0	0.0%
C5	52	15.8%	4	1.2%	OP2	46	10.1%	1	0.2%
OP1	45	13.7%	12	3.6%	OP3	70	15.4%	0	0.0%
OP2	41	12.5%	6	1.8%	OP4	77	16.9%	1	0.2%
OP3	58	17.6%	0	0.0%					
Total			329		Total			455	

Table 7 shows the proportion of culture entities with clear teaching objects and those without specific aims. Generally speaking, overwhelming culture activities don't point out their teaching aims, and those with aims are also ambiguous, for instance, most of the objectives are about the comparison and contrast between two countries' culture. This phenomenon can be seen more obviously in the 2019-version ELT materials. In addition, the distribution of culture with objective is irregular and random.

#### 4.2.4. Categorization into Intercultural Activities

There are few cultural activities that can be linked to the cultivation of ICC, and most of them teach knowledge by introducing the differences between the cultures of the two countries. ICC activities in the textbooks mainly focus on the training of input, which is similar to the phenomenon that language activities in textbooks are reading-orientation.

Table 8: The Frequency of Intercultural Activities.

2006-published version (the old version)			2019-published version (the new version)		
Intercultural Activity	Frequency	Proportion	Intercultural Activity	Frequency	Proportion
Knowledge	32	94.1%	Knowledge	3	75%
Awareness	1	2.9%	Awareness	1	25%
Skills	1	2.9%			
Total	34	100%	discover explanation	4	100%

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. What is the Difference in the Frequency of Cultural Manifestations between the 2006-published and 2019-published of FLTRP's ELT Textbooks?

In general, the above results show a growth of the proportion of Chinese culture, the improvement of cultural dominance of Anglo-American countries, as well as a wider range of countries around the world in Chinese ELT materials, illustrating the emphasis on the host country's culture and the raising awareness of globalization and international perspective and the reasons for these changes are diverse.

Nowadays, China's international communication power still lags behind the needs of economic and social development, and the overall ability to grasp international discourse is not strong, which does not match China's comprehensive national strength and international status, while, cultural soft power can reserve this situation to a certain extent [25]. The proposal of the National People's Congress and the Nation Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference also mentioned that using cultural power to enhance international influence has become an important way for many countries in the world to develop. The country has realized that it is essential to cultivate young students' cultural awareness as they are the new force in the development of the country, and has encouraged cultural education through the introduction of relevant policies and plans. To illustrate, one of the aspects included in the 2016 edition of *Core Development of Chinese Students' Development* is the cultural foundation; the *English Curriculum Standard for General High School* (Revised Edition 2022) explicitly pointed out that general high school English courses should emphasize the cultivation of students' cultural awareness as well as the development of cross-cultural communication skills and carrying out cultural activities such as "Telling Excellent Chinese Stories" to encourage the learning and dissemination of Chinese culture. The significant increase in the proportion of Chinese culture in the 2019 version of textbooks is just the reflection of these policies. What's more, in addition to increasing the import and export of our own national culture, enhancing international communication capabilities also requires to cultivate a comprehensive international perspective. The wider coverage of countries in the 2019 version of the textbook is the embodiment. However, due to factors such as the limitation of the length of the

teaching materials, in order to cover a more comprehensive and diversified cultural content, the frequency of such cultures may be reduced.

Except for the reasons for the above-mentioned changes in the two textbooks, the results also present some similarities and differences with previous studies. First, the general characteristics of the cultural representations in the selected textbooks found in this study are similar to the findings of previous research, namely, the predominance of Anglo-American culture, as well as the relatively large percentage of Chinese culture [1-2]. Second, the editors tend to introduce their host countries' culture in a relatively larger proportion. For instance, in the study of a set of Japanese elementary ELT materials, Davidson and Liu found the remarkable dominant status of Japanese culture, accounting for nearly 30% of the cultural representations throughout the whole set [26]. Besides, Tajeddin and Pakzadian analyzed cultural representations in three globally used ELT textbooks called *Interchanged* and found the phenomenon of the prominent domination of American culture, as well as a large proportion of other English-speaking countries such as Britain and Australia [27].

In summary, most of the ELT textbooks have the problem of cultural imbalance as well as the tendency of reader-orientation.

## **5.2. Are the Cultural Representations and the Development of ICC Effectively Involved in the Activity Design in the Textbooks?**

Comparing the prefaces of the two versions of textbooks, the new edition emphasizes the need to put forward cultural awareness, especially the construction and development of intercultural communication awareness, besides, *the English Curriculum Standard for General High School* (Revised Edition 2022) also clearly regards the cultivation of cross-cultural competence as one of the teaching objectives. The importance of involving ICC training has been highlighting, while, according to the above results, there is an evident lack of training for ICC as well as noteworthy clear input-oriented phenomenon.

A major phenomenon found in the research process is that the proportion of cultural content in textbooks, especially those with output training is relatively small and most cultural activities do not clearly point out the teaching purpose. As Zhang pointed that English language teaching should shift from "language-centered" to "content-centered" which meant ELT materials are supposed to focus more on humanities education instead of vocabularies and grammars [11], this change is still in progress. Based on China's examination-oriented education system, the teaching of senior high schools mainly serves for the purpose of preparing students for the college entrance examination [28]. Therefore, the teaching materials are also largely oriented by the test content, which leads to the obvious reading orientation of language activities in textbooks and the obvious knowledge input orientation of ICC activities. However, considering the ultimate goal of language learning is applying proficient language use to achieve communicative purposes [10], this input-oriented teaching model leads to some problems, such as aphasia in Chinese culture and the ineffective recognition and cultural reflection on ICC [29-30]. These problems not only stem from the lack of culture in textbooks, but also the weak intercultural awareness of teachers. Their teaching focuses on language knowledge, and most teachers have not systematically studied ICC skills, knowledge or read related books, which leads to the fact that even with many years of teaching experience, the teaching of ICC is still shallow, even sometimes inaccurate [10].

However, existing content of ICC in textbooks is not in-depth enough, and there are few high-quality validated testing systems that assess intercultural communicative competence. To illustrate, ICC activities in ELT materials are limited as most of them are comparison and contrast between different cultures, aiming at mastering relevant knowledge, while lacking personal

reflection and the practical utilization. In terms of tests, it was until recently that the first test specifically targeting at ICC for Chinese learners of English has been released, called the "Intercultural Competence Test (ICT)". At the same time, "A Framework of Reference for Intercultural Competence Teaching in Foreign Language Education" was also published to fill the gap in the teaching guidance of intercultural competence in our country, to provide reference for teachers and to lay the foundation of discipline construction. This is a valuable initial attempt, while there is still a long way to go to truly realize the teaching of intercultural communication.

In addition, there is a lack of studies on the integration of the cultivation of ICC and the activities in ELT textbooks. Most of the existing research on English textbooks does not combine the development of intercultural communication skills with cultural activities, while this is an essential part in the promotion of students' ICC and comprehensive quality. In the future, textbook writers can clearly point out the specific teaching purposes of different cultural activities to emphasize the importance of ICC as well as to facilitate teachers' teaching process. In addition, they can also increase the proportion of cultural output activities.

There are some shortcomings and limitations in this study. First, due to the limitation of manual coding, the number of textbook samples selected for this study is relatively small. Secondly, due to the limited access to listening texts, some relevant cultural information in the listening exercises was not included in the coding process. Thirdly, the theoretical framework used in this study is less clear cut in terms of the division of cultural activities to some extent, which leads to the ambiguity of the subsequent categorization of some cultural activities. In the future, the corpus-assisted method can be used in the coding process to cover a larger content of teaching materials, and to make the data more generalizable. Besides, future research can also analyze the content of listening text and teacher's book which enables a more comprehensive and accurate presentation of cultural entities and better clarity on the design of instruction and purpose of each cultural activity. In addition, studies can focus on analyzing the relationship between the manifestation of cultural types and the values, social situation, etc., for instance, whether the proportion of a country's cultural representation is related to its social or international status, whether it has roots in the history of the host country, and whether the increase in scientific and technological cultural topics are related to the international situation, etc. The connotation of culture mentioned in the textbook and the relationship between different cultural entities are also topics worthy of discussion. In addition to the above-mentioned shortcomings, the study is also innovative in the following aspects. First, this study is a longitudinal study that examines the change of culture representations in two versions of textbooks published by the same press. It also analyzes how cultural activities and teaching objectives play a role in the process of the cultivation of ICC. In terms of theoretical implications, the study found that the existing framework for the division of cultural activities has problems such as overlapping in the actual application process which needs to be improved. Besides, in the practical context, the study found that few cultural activities have clear goals, and few activities can carry out in-depth discussions on the development of intercultural communicative competence.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has found unbalanced cultural representation in both two versions of textbooks, with the predominant proportion of Chinese, British and American cultures. Compared with the old version, the Chinese cultural awareness has increased in the new one and the proportion of Chinese culture has increased. The new version of the textbook covers a wider range of countries, and the international awareness has been improved. However, there is a lack of clear teaching objectives of culture activities in both two versions and a lack of specific correspondence between cultural activities and the development of ICC. On the theoretical side, this study found the inadequacies of the existing cultural classification framework, and on the practical side, pointing out that the link

between the objectives of language or cultural activities and the development of intercultural communicative competence can be a topic for future research.

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## Appendix

### The Frequency of Different-countries Cultural Representations.

Number	2006-published version (the old version)			2019-published version (the new version)		
	Type	Frequency	Proportion	Type	Frequency	Proportion
1	Athens, Britain, Italy	1	0.30%	Ancient Greece	4	0.88%
2	Australia	6	1.82%	Ancient Greek	1	0.22%
3	Austria	3	0.91%	Ancient Rome	1	0.22%
4	Belgium	1	0.30%	Argentina & Brazil	1	0.22%
5	Brazil	1	0.30%	Atlantis	1	0.22%
6	Canada	2	0.61%	Australia	8	1.76%
7	China	93	28.27%	Austria	2	0.44%
8	France	6	1.82%	Babylon	2	0.44%
9	German	8	2.43%	Belgium	2	0.44%
10	Greece	5	1.52%	Canada	13	2.86%
11	India	2	0.61%	Chile	1	0.22%
12	Iran	1	0.30%	China	157	34.51%
13	Ireland	2	0.61%	CostaRica/Kenya/Nepal	1	0.22%
14	Italy	13	3.95%	Cuba	1	0.22%
15	Jamaica	1	0.30%	Dutch/Netherland	4	0.88%
16	Kenya	2	0.61%	Ecuador	2	0.44%
17	La Paz	1	0.30%	Egypt	2	0.44%
18	Mexico	1	0.30%	Ethiopia	1	0.22%
19	Netherland	3	0.91%	France	23	5.05%
20	Portugal	2	0.61%	German	7	1.54%
21	Rome	1	0.30%	India	1	0.22%
22	Russia	5	1.52%	Iran	1	0.22%
23	Scotland	2	0.61%	Ireland	2	0.44%
24	Singapore	1	0.30%	Italy	9	1.98%
25	Spain	9	2.74%	Jamaica	1	0.22%
26	UK	66	20.06%	Japan	2	0.44%
27	US	72	21.88%	Liberia	1	0.22%
28	International organization	1	0.30%	Mexico	4	0.88%
29	Region	3	0.91%	Nepal	3	0.66%



30	Continent	14	4.26%	Peru	1	0.22%
31	Others	1	0.30%	Philippines	2	0.44%
32				Portugal	2	0.44%
33				Russia	5	1.10%

The Frequency of Different-countries Cultural Representations.(continued)

34				Scotland	3	0.66%
35				Singapore	1	0.22%
36				Spain	4	0.88%
37				Sweden	3	0.66%
38				Tanzania	1	0.22%
39				Thailand	1	0.22%
40				UK	64	14.07%
41				US	80	17.58%
42				Vietnam	1	0.22%
43				Zimbabwe	2	0.44%
44				Zambia	1	0.22%
45				International organization	4	0.88%
46				Region	7	1.54%
47				Continent	11	2.42%
48				Others	4	0.88%
Total		310	100%		455	100.00%