

A Critical Appraisal of the Language Textbook

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to evaluate the coursebook “An English Course for Turks” which was designed by Turkish Ministry of National Education for use in state high schools. Coursebook evaluation was done from the teachers’ points of views on the premise that teachers, being users and consumers of the coursebook, were in the best position to reflect their experience in relation to the coursebook. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Utmost attention was given to covering all aspects of a coursebook including layout, organization, activities, content, function, notion and language skills. A total of 68 teachers of English from 24 cities across Turkey participated in the study. Data which were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science version 11) suggest that regardless of teaching experience, background, age, and classroom environment, a great majority of English teachers found the coursebook inappropriate in many respects for foreign language teaching and learning. The same research design can also be applied to new textbooks.

Keywords: Evaluation, material, English textbook.

Yabancı Dil Ders Kitabına Kritik Bir Değerleme

ÖZ

Bu çalışma liselerde İngilizce derslerinde okutulan “An English Course for Turks” adlı ders kitabının değerlendirmesini içermektedir. Çalışma bizzat dersi veren ve kitabı kullanan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin deneyim, düşünce ve karşılaştıkları sorunlardan yola çıkılarak yapılmıştır. Veri toplamada anket ve mülakat yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Kitap, düzen, organizasyon, içerik, işlevsellik, dayandığı kavram ve dil becerileri açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Türkiye genelinde 24 farklı şehirden toplam 68 İngilizce öğretmeni çalışmaya katılmıştır. SPSS (sürüm 11) bilgisayar destekli istatistik programıyla yapılan analizde, deneyim, cinsiyet, yaş, altyapı ve sınıf ortamı farketmeksizin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin büyük bir kısmı ders kitabını birçok açıdan dil öğretme ve öğrenme amacına uygun bulmamışlardır. Uygulanan araştırma düzeni diğer ders kitaplarının etkinliğinin ölçülmesinde de kullanılabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Değerlendirme, materyal, İngilizce ders kitabı

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that learning a foreign or a second language has become a growing demand for many financial-commerce and educational institutions as well as individuals in many parts of the world. It suffices to say that possessing a good command of a foreign language has become critical for individuals to find jobs and at the same time a genuine growing concern for the survival of the institutions in the ever competitive world of business, tourism, economy,

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industry and more importantly education in the globalized world. Many countries for years have come a long way in their efforts to meet this rising demand, among other things, for teaching a foreign language as part of its development plan to provide better foreign language education opportunities for students and to ultimately accelerate the move towards the information era. Given the fact that a typical language classroom revolves around the coursebook, which in practice means the coursebook becomes the syllabus itself, determining what and how language is to be taught and in what order, the coursebook becomes a very vital element conducive to effective and efficient teaching-learning process. Therefore, the information to be obtained from the analysis of coursebook evaluation is of utmost importance not only for understanding the merits and appropriateness of the current coursebook but also for the effectiveness of language teaching in general. This, in turn, is likely to help identify priorities for designing a text book in the future and to provide a guideline for the decision making process. Many commercially-available textbooks fail to reflect language learners' needs and expectations as they have been produced to address global market of English, causing dissatisfaction among language teachers.

Interestingly enough, the English Language teaching practices in many non-English speaking countries as in Turkey appear to be based mainly on coursebooks or textbooks (used interchangeably in this article) which have become the only resources necessary for an effective language-teaching program in most schools. This can be accounted for in part by the fact that in an EFL setting people have a little chance to use the target language in their daily lives. Secondly, there is a prevailing idea that, in the absence of a textbook, language teachers are left without guidance. Textbooks are seen in a facilitating role, such as saving time, giving directions to lesson, guiding discussion and providing homework. In support of this idea, Ur (1996) holds the view that coursebooks provide (a) a definite framework within which teachers are informed about what to do in an order and (b) texts with tasks for different levels, saving time for teachers, (c) help students to be less-teacher-dependent (d) are of help to inexperienced teachers. O'Neil (1982) and Littlejohn (1998) also have similar views, suggesting that coursebooks present a consistent system for learners for progress.

To meet this increasing demand, the number of English-language teaching textbooks on the market has grown exponentially, addressing a variety of learners' interests, skills, levels, and tastes. Among other features, these materials also vary in their linguistic design, focus and objectives, making the choice of a textbook—an integral part of many ELT classrooms—a seemingly formidable task. A textbook, the aim of which is to assist language teachers in improving students' linguistic knowledge or language competence can turn out to be a source of boredom to the extent that students and the textbook itself can become the source of a problem and consequently teachers can lose their motivation. In a typical EFL context language teachers are strictly expected to follow a given coursebook with their students from the beginning to end without

much freedom to choose their own materials to adapt. However, governments' position in relation to the use of certain coursebooks for use in language classes across the country is quite justifiable with the fact that language instruction is to be standardized to some extent and foreign language has become part of the assessment for the entrance to relatively prestigious state secondary schools. Furthermore, once teachers and schools are left on their own to make their own decision concerning what textbooks are to be used, then it would be very hard to have a program with central core and a systematic syllabus, only inviting a more chaotic atmosphere. On the other hand, nothing can be more detrimental to the language classroom than a textbook which fails to meet students and teachers' needs and expectations in a situation where a textbook has become almost a main instructional material. As Allwright (1990) points out, texts provide a framework within which teachers of English can act and try to meet the needs of their students. This could be a source of relief and aid to many inexperienced teachers who are not in a position to adapt or develop their own materials for use in the classroom but have to rely on the textbook heavily in respect of content, language skills, ideas, practice and language inputs.

A textbook which is not suited to a given situation is very difficult to be of any pedagogical help and value, resulting in a very disappointing situation both on the part of teachers and students. Cunningsworth (1984: 6) argues that "no course book will be totally suited to a particular teaching situation. The teacher will have to find his own way of using it and adapting it if necessary". However this approach ignores the fact that a language textbook is not a collection of activities to be modified or adapted to fit the new changing teaching-learning situation but it prescribes at the same time a certain methodological stance and emphasizes a certain view of language learning and teaching as perceived by the author(s). In view of the fact that many English textbooks are designed for ESL (English as a second language) environments in the absence of local readership in mind or at least by those who have not any exposure to an EFL setting, trying to adapt a textbook requires challenging a certain language learning view unless it is used as a source of language activities.

The fundamental issue that is very often ignored or receives only sporadic attention in several EFL settings is that almost all textbooks reflect explicitly or implicitly certain views of language learning theories (Littlejohn & Windeatt 1989). From a historical perspective many foreign language textbooks have grown out of certain language approaches and views of what a language is and how a language is learned. Theories derived from the disciplines such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and other related disciplines were used to develop a philosophical and practical basis for many language textbooks. In other words, language teaching methods, which provide a basis for textbooks, have been developed in reference to general principles of language learning, and theories about language learning. For example, according to structural view, "language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 1989: 17). While functional view depicts language as a

tool for the expression of functional meaning, interactional approach views language as a vehicle for the fulfillment of interpersonal and social relations. All these models prescribe axioms to favor certain teaching methods.

To highlight the trend, in the 1850s when structural aspects of language were focused, a typical textbook was composed of illustrated grammar rules and sentences for translation (Titone, 1968). By the nineteenth century, grammar-translation content dominated the foreign language teaching discipline and was well reflected in texts for the teaching of foreign language at colleges. Towards the mid-nineteenth century, naturalistic principles of language learning started to gain more recognition, creating a demand for oral proficiency and spontaneous use of foreign languages. This time, what was focused in textbooks was speech patterns and systematic attention to pronunciation rather than grammar, reflecting the dominant language learning method which came to be known as the Direct Method. Dating from the 1970, with the influence of Hymes' (1972) communicative competence-based language view, in contrast to Chomsky's linguistic competence, many textbooks involved communicative acts as language started to be viewed to be a system for the expression of meaning, with a focus on interaction and communication. From the theoretical approach almost all textbooks inspired by methods have taken a certain position toward the nature of language and learning either explicitly or implicitly. It might be relatively easy to adapt and modify materials at a practical level. However, it is quite difficult to adapt an instructional philosophy in a textbook which does not apply to our EFL settings.

Yet, all materials need to be designed and be consistent with the aims and objectives of teaching program. Together with the underlying teaching/learning theory, the course should present and practice the language in a systematic, attractive, graded and comprehensible way for easy assimilation by the students. The textbook should prepare the students psychologically, culturally and linguistically to benefit from classroom teaching.

METHOD

The aim of this study was to evaluate the coursebook "An English Course for Turks" which was designed by Ministry of National Education for use in state high schools in Turkey. Coursebook evaluation was done from the teachers' perspectives on the premise that teachers, being user and consumers of the coursebook, were in the best position to reflect their experience in relation to the coursebook.

On the basis of material evaluation criteria obtained from the related literature review (Chamber 1997, Dougill 1987, Ellis 1997, Sheldon 1987, Cunningsworth 1984, Allwright 1990) and our field work, a questionnaire was prepared and designed with 58 items in a structured manner of the 5-likert scale. Particular attention was paid to the overall balance of all aspects of the coursebook in terms

of design, activities, language skills, layout, teacher's book, workbook and motivational factors. Having been piloted to a representative group of five teachers, the questionnaire was revised and distributed to a sample of more than 110 teachers of English. A return of 68 completed questionnaires was received giving a response rate 61.81%, while the item completion rate was 94%. Unsurprisingly a great majority of the participants were female (55.9%), and the male (39.7%). Because of the nature of the research, random sampling was ruled out. Instead a convenience sampling was adopted and a quota of the population, predicted to be relatively accessible was identified. Initially teachers of English based in Trabzon were contacted by personal visit when convenient or by an email letter seeking co-operation in the distribution of questionnaires. The participants from 22 cities in 5 different regions as shown in Figure 1 were reached through mail and household drop-off questionnaires. Sixteen (16) of the subjects were identified through references from English Teachers regular term meeting minutes in Trabzon. The rest of the subjects were contacted through a teacher's website <http://www.dilforum.com/forum/>, an internet-based interactive application. Against these limitations, the sample selected was representative of various schools in different areas, and the participants were all full-time teachers with a considerable amount of teaching experience. A further predicted strength of the sample was that as participants were in the process of using the coursebook during the research, respondents would be willing to reflect upon and hence provide reliable data about their experience with the material.

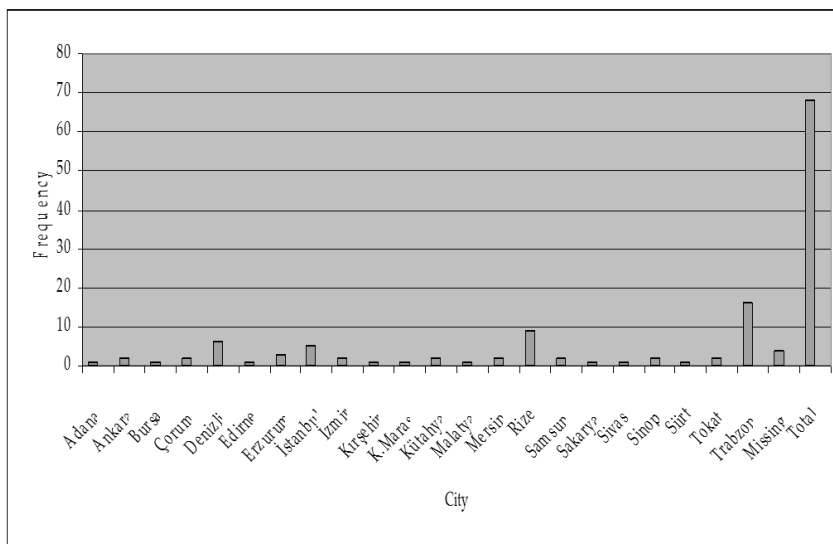


Figure 1. Participants Profile

FINDINGS and INTERPRETATIONS

Quantitative survey data were entered into SPSS 15 (Statistical Package for Social Science), which by its nature took the form of a set of numbers in the present study. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to summarize patterns in the responses of the participants in the sample. Frequency distributions with percentages were conventionally found to be the best tool to present the information in an informative way through tables that allowed us to see how the sample was spread amongst the items of the questionnaire. The scope of the research is thus limited to a descriptive analysis of findings from the survey based on analyses of frequencies of response to the questionnaire returns.

Table 1. *Teaching Experience in English*

Number of years	Frequency	Percent
1-5	32	47.1
6-10	19	27.9
11-15	4	5.9
16-20	4	5.9
21-25	1	1.5
More than 25	3	4.4
Missing	5	7.4
Total	68	100

Table 1 summarizes the amount of time participants had been teaching English. The results suggest that the sample population appears representative of as wide range of teaching experience as possible. Majority of the participants (47.1 %) had teaching experience of 1-5 years. While 27.9% had a 6-10 years of experience, only 1.5% had 21-25 years of teaching experience.

Table 2. *Gender Profile*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	38	55.9
Male	27	39.7
Missing	3	4.4
Total	68	100

Table 2 shows that most of the participants were female (55.9 %), while male (39.7%). This is not surprising in view of the fact that the profession of foreign language teaching has been culturally and traditionally associated with the female gender as a whole.

Table 3. *Design of the Coursebook*

The Coursebook	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. is well organized	51.47	45.59	1.47	1.47	0.00
2. is visually attractive.	72.06	20.59	5.88	1.47	0.00
3. contains visual materials.	44.12	35.29	11.76	8.82	0.00
4. pictures serve their aim.	50.00	33.88	14.71	1.47	0.00
5. includes a detailed overview of the vocabulary to be taught in each unit.	33.82	42.65	14.71	8.82	0.00
6. includes a detailed overview of the functions to be taught in each unit.	48.53	32.35	16.18	1.47	1.47
7. includes a detailed overview of the structure to be taught in each unit.	48.53	33.82	13.24	4.41	0.00

Despite the variation in items, Table 3 above provides evidence that overwhelmingly teachers were not satisfied with the design of the coursebook. Majority of the teachers (97.06% overall disagreement) did not think that the coursebook was well organized. The very high frequencies negatively reported for visual aspects of the coursebook suggesting that the coursebook did not appeal to teachers. We observe the same dissatisfaction with the design of vocabulary, function and structure, which received very negative response.

Table 4. *Activities of the Coursebook*

The Activities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. help learner's language development.	48.53	32.35	16.18	1.47	1.47
9. are varied (free or controlled exercises)	48.53	33.82	13.24	4.41	0.00
10. provide sufficient communication	69.12	20.59	8.82	1.47	0.00
11. provide meaningful practice.	47.06	36.76	10.29	5.88	0.00
12. include pairwork.	32.35	39.71	22.06	5.88	0.00
13. include group work.	44.12	30.88	19.12	5.88	0.00
14. promote creative responses.	48.53	39.71	8.82	2.94	0.00
15. reinforce what the students have already learned.	45.59	35.29	8.82	8.82	1.47
16. are organized from simple to difficult.	51.47	29.41	13.24	5.88	0.00

Table 4 deals with responses in relation to the activities in the coursebook. To our surprise, participants developed very negative attitude towards the activities provided in the coursebook. From the very beginning, 80.88% of the participants had the opinion that the coursebook didn't help learner's language development. With respect to variety of activities and sufficient communications, participants were mostly unhappy with 82.35% and 89.71% respectively. Majority of the participants felt that the coursebook was not suitable for pair and group work activities.

Table 5. *Motivational Factors*

In general, the coursebook	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. attracts the students' attention.	63.24	27.94	5.88	1.47	1.47
18. motivates the students positively.	69.12	20.59	7.35	2.94	0.00
19. encourages the learners' classroom participation.	58.82	30.88	5.88	4.41	0.00
20. language is presented in an attractive way.	63.24	32.35	1.47	2.94	0.00
21. encourages learners to become independent in their learning.	55.88	33.82	7.35	2.94	0.00

In responses to the questions concerning the motivational factors about the coursebook, the vast majority of the participants as shown in Table 5 found the coursebook inappropriate. The items 17 and 18 and 20 provide sufficient evidence that the textbook failed to motivate students (91.18%, 89.71% and 95.59%). Similarly, 89.70% of the participants did not find the book helpful to enable the students to become independent learners.

Table 6. *Grammar and Vocabulary*

(In) The Coursebook	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. covers major grammatical areas.	22.06	30.88	19.12	26.47	1.47
23. focuses on potential difficult grammar points.	19.12	29.41	41.18	7.35	2.94
24. The grammar exercises are interesting	51.47	41.18	2.94	2.94	1.47
25. The grammar exercises provide meaningful context	45.59	36.76	13.24	2.94	1.47
26. There are enough exercises for revising grammar.	35.29	41.18	8.82	13.24	1.47
27. The grammar is presented from simple to difficult.	39.71	30.88	19.12	10.29	0.00

28. covers basic vocabulary items.	23.53	44.12	20.59	10.29	1.47
29. The meaning of new vocabulary is presented in context.	36.76	47.06	10.29	5.88	0.00
30. There are enough exercises for vocabulary development.	44.12	45.59	7.35	1.47	1.47
31. The vocabulary exercises are interesting for the students.	60.29	27.94	4.41	5.88	1.47

It was very surprising to note in Table 6 that the grammatical aspect of the coursebook which we predicted to be a strong point received negative response by a substantial number of participants (52.94%). Similarly, grammar exercises were not found interesting, and only a few teachers stated that there were enough exercises for revising grammar (14.71%) and only 10.29% reported that the grammar points were presented from simple to difficult. When it comes to vocabulary, a great number of participants thought (67, 65%) that the coursebook didn't cover basic vocabulary items. Similarly 83.82% (when strongly disagree and disagree responses were collapsed) reported that the meaning of new vocabulary wasn't presented in context and vocabulary exercises were found uninteresting (88.23%).

Table 7. *Content of the Coursebook*

Content	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. provides information about the English language culture	64.71	27.94	4.41	1.47	1.47
33. is familiar to my students.	35.29	42.65	20.59	1.47	0.00
34. provides good model for language usage.	52.94	36.76	8.82	1.47	0.00

The findings in Table 7 suggest that 92, 65% (overall agreement) of the teachers thought that the content of the coursebook didn't serve as a window into learning about the English language culture. According to 77.94% of the teachers, mostly, the content wasn't familiar to the students. Only 1.47% of them agreed with the statement that the coursebook generally provided good model for language usage.

Table 8. *Supporting Materials*

The teacher's book (35,36,37) The workbook (38, 39)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
35. gives enough advice on teaching methods	38.24	44.12	14.71	1.47	1.47

36. gives enough information about the topics.	41.18	36.76	17.65	2.94	1.47
37. suggests alternative plans for each unit.	44.12	42.65	10.29	1.47	1.47
38. contains appropriate supplementary activities.	39.71	35.29	14.71	10.29	0.00
39. contains different kinds of activities.	42.65	35.29	11.76	10.29	0.00

In view of the fact that a considerable number of teachers are considered to be relatively young and therefore need support and guidance to use the coursebook effectively, to our astonishment, only 2.94 % of the teachers found the teacher's book efficient in respect of having enough guidance and information on teaching methods. Table 8 also reveals that 77.88 % of the participants thought that the teacher's book didn't give enough information about the topics. Majority of the teachers stated that the teacher's book didn't suggest alternative plans for each unit (86.77%). For the workbook as a supporting material for the students, the participants (75 %) reported that the workbook didn't contain appropriate supplementary activities.

Table 9. *Four Language Skills*

(In) The Coursebook	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
40. provide language skills appropriate to the course aims.	47.06	45.59	2.94	4.41	0.00
41. gives language skills equal importance.	51.47	39.71	5.88	2.94	0.00
42. The reading texts are familiar to my students.	38.24	36.76	16.18	8.82	0.00
43. The reading texts are interesting.	54.41	39.71	2.94	1.47	1.47
44. develops reading skills and strategies.	42.65	39.71	11.76	5.88	0.00
45. provides different types of writing activities.	48.53	33.82	16.18	1.47	0.00
46. provides the students with the sufficient practice in expressing their views.	45.59	42.65	10.29	1.47	0.00
47. contains rewrite activities.	41.18	36.76	11.76	10.29	0.00
48. leads the students to organize their thoughts for writing	47.06	38.24	11.76	1.47	1.47
49. provides sufficient speaking practice.	61.76	33.82	2.94	1.47	0.00
50. The speaking practices are interesting for the students.	58.82	33.82	4.41	1.47	1.47

51. pays attention to pronunciation.	67.65	23.53	2.94	4.41	1.47
52. There are enough listening actactivities.	72.06	17.65	7.35	1.47	1.47

The findings from Table 9 reveal that the language skills emphasized in the coursebook were not found appropriate to the course aims as documented by responses given to the items in the table. In the view of the responses given to the items, it is hard to talk of any specific language skill being emphasized in the coursebook. To start with, the large majority of the respondents (88.24%) state that the coursebook does not provide opportunities for students to express their feelings in the targeted second language, indicating that speaking skill has almost no place in the coursebook. Not surprisingly, a very big majority of the respondents (91.18%) state that the coursebook does not pay attention to the pronunciation. Likewise, 89.71% of the participants state that the coursebook does not provide listening activities in the coursebook. A very similar high frequency was observed in responses given to the questions concerning reading and writing skills in the coursebook.

Table 10. *Appropriateness*

(In) Coursebook	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
53. level in appropriate for the students' level	75.00	11.76	8.82	4.41	0.00
54. meets long-term goal of the course	63.24	30.88	1.47	4.41	0.00
55. meets short-term goals of the course.	44.12	33.82	10.29	11.76	0.00
56. provides choices for different learning styles.	69.12	19.12	8.82	2.94	0.00
57. The instructions are clear for the students.	51.47	23.53	13.24	11.76	0,00

The items in Table 10 concern appropriateness of the coursebook in terms of students' level, learning style, instructions and objectives of the course. According to the most of the teachers, the coursebook level wasn't appropriate for their students (86%). From the teacher' point of view, the book does not meet long and short term goals of the course.

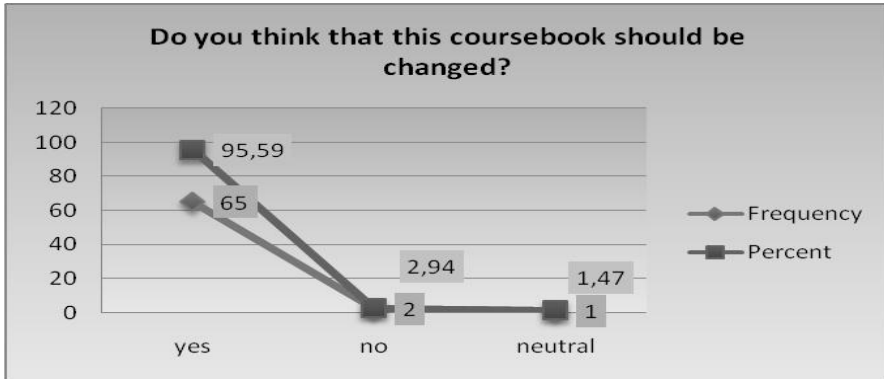


Figure 2. Changing the Coursebook

It is very clear from Figure 2 above that nearly all the teachers (95.59 %) who used the coursebook in question with their ninth grade classes, agreed on the idea that this coursebook should be changed.

CONCLUSION

In EFL settings like in Turkey the primary source and channel of having exposure to the target language has become through a textbook that the teacher has to follow systematically. a coursebook is not a simple tool which can be shaped and modified in the hands of teachers as it should be. Yet, mainly because of heavily centralized education system, unfortunately a material shapes the teachers and formulates the teaching and learning activities. There is a bitter irony contradicting Cunningsworth's (1984:2) remark "course-books are good servants but poor masters", suggesting that coursebooks should act to serve teachers in the realization of the course objectives. The paradox is that EFL teachers become or are made to become servant of coursebooks rather than masters. What has been discussed in relation to the use of coursebook in related literature appears to be based on the premise that the coursebook is an aid among many other materials and the teacher is flexible to choose, adapt, modify and change the coursebook, considering his/her own teaching situation (Chamber 1997, Sheldon 1987, Huthhinson 1987, Ellis 1997, Cunningsworth 1995) However, the centralized education system with strictly controlled syllabus in Turkey leaves almost no room for teachers to play any role either in the selection or adaptation process of the coursebook. This is the reason why coursebook in question has been used as mandatory material in our state public schools for more than 18 years in spite of all the disappointment felt by a great majority of teachers of English. Therefore, as most of teaching and learning activities evolve around the coursebook, neglecting this indispensable element of foreign language teaching is more likely to result in very inefficient teaching-learning outcome.

Overall, the findings suggest that the coursebook English for Turks suffers greatly from many inefficiencies as seen from the teachers' point of view. From the very beginning, the way that the materials, activities, language items and content are organized and presented is not effective, attractive and appropriate. The coursebook fails to provide activities to develop language skills including speaking, reading, writing and listening. Students are not allowed to use the language for communicative purposes even at a minimal level. In view of an apparent dissatisfaction with the coursebook in respect to language skills, content, vocabulary and even grammar, the coursebook is very far from being a coherent syllabus in the sense that teachers do not know where they are going. Regardless of teaching experience, background, age, and classroom environment, a great majority of English teachers were found to be quite unhappy with the coursebook, strongly indicating that the coursebook should immediately and substantially be revised or changed.

Considering the fact that there has been a constant and growing dependence on coursebooks in Turkey (Arıkan 2009, Yıldırım 2006) and teachers prefer ready-made coursebooks for practical reasons, it is important that teaching textbooks should cultivate communicative functions of the target language and include varied activities, a range of different types of reading texts, up-to-date and interesting topics. Furthermore, all four language skills should be integrated in such way that teachers should feel flexible to cater for individual differences. To this end, activities in a coursebook should provide meaningful practice and promote creative responses with sufficient communication in controlled and free contexts. Since the coursebooks are likely to remain the most pervasive tool that teachers rely on for foreign language instruction, there is a strong need for supporting materials that should provide teaching methods, alternative plans for units, extra activities, choices for different learning styles and intelligences.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Türkiye'deki yabancı dil eğitiminin temel özelliklerinden birisi de takip edilen ders kitabının yalnızca içerik değil, aynı zamanda öğretmenin ve öğrencinin ders içinde yapacağı tüm etkinlikleri belirlemesidir. Genelde yabancı dil sınıfı, sınıfta takip edilen ders kitabının etrafında şekillenmektedir. Uygulamada bu durum müfredatın kendisini oluşturmaktadır. Çünkü neyin, nasıl ve hangi sırayla verileceğine karar veren ders kitabı yabancı dil öğretiminde son derece belirleyici bir konuma gelmektedir. Ders kitabının bu denli belirleyici olması İngilizcenin sınıf ortamının dışında kullanılma olanağının olmaması ve eğitimin merkezietçi yaklaşımından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bunun yanında bu tür ana materyalin zaman kazandırma, kolaylık sağlama, yönlendirme, çerçeve ve sistematik oluşturma gibi olumlu özellikleri de bulunmaktadır (O'Neil 1982, Littlejohn 1998). Ders kitabının yokluğunda öğretmenin neyi, nasıl ve hangi sırayla takip edeceği şeklinde ana bir çatının olmamasından dolayı öğretmenin zor durumda kalacağı görüşünün belirleyici olmasını sağlamaktadır. İngilizce ders kitabının öğretime yardımcı, yol gösterici, kaynak olma ve öğretmenin yükünü hafifletme özellikleri olduğu bilinmektedir. Fakat ders kitabının öğrencilerin beklentileri, ilgisi, sunuş biçimi, sunulan aktivitelerin içeriği, öğrencinin seviye ve ilgisine uygunluğu, dil becerilerinin dengeli ve uygun bir biçimde hazırlanması, öğretime seçme ve uygulama esnekliği sağlaması gibi özellikleri yeterince değerlendirilmezse katkı sağlaması düşünülen bir materyal çok olumsuz sonuçlar doğurabilir. Pedagojik bağlamda da anlamsızlaşabilir.

Bu çalışma ortaöğretimde İngilizce derslerinde okutulan "An English Course for Turks" adlı ders kitabının değerlendirmesini içermektedir. Çalışma bizzat dersi veren ve kitabı kullanan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin bu konudaki deneyim, düşünce ve karşılaştıkları sorunları ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Veri toplamada, standardı sağlamak ve mümkün olan geniş coğrafik bölgeden katılımcılara ulaşabilmek için anket yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Mevcut literatürde yer alan materyal değerlendirme ölçütleri esas alınarak (Chamber 1997, Dougill 1987, Ellis 1997, Sheldon 1987, Cunningsworth 1984, Allwright 1990) 58 maddeden oluşan beş ölçekli bir anket hazırlanmıştır. Ankette yer alan konular: kitap düzeni, organizasyon, etkinlikler, içerik, işlevsellik, kitabın dayandığı kavram ve dil becerileri (okuma, konuşma, yazma, dinleme) kelime ve gramer açısından uygunluğu ve yeterliliği tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Ankette yer alan maddeler temsil özelliği taşıyan 5 öğretime pilot çalışması yapılmıştır. Anketler, Türkiye genelinde bütün bölgeleri içerecek şekilde 24 farklı şehirden toplam 110 öğretime rastgele seçim yöntemiyle gönderilmiştir ve 68 İngilizce öğretmeni ankete cevap vererek çalışmaya katılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılanların % 55.9'u kadın, % 39.7'si ise erkektir. Veriler bilgisayar destekli istatistik programıyla (SPSS, 11. Sürüm) analiz edilmiştir.

Sonuçların en belirgin özelliği söz konusu İngilizce ders kitabının, çalışmaya katılan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin büyük bir kısmı tarafından birçok açıdan ihtiyacı karşılamaktan uzak ve çok yetersiz bulunması şeklinde özetlenebilir. Benzer şekilde, kitapta verilen etkinlikler, içerik ve yabancı dil öğelerinin

sunuluş biçimi de uygun bulunmamış ve öğrencilerin konuşma, dinleme, yazma ve okuma becerilerini geliştirmede yetersiz olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Yapılan analizde, deneyim, cinsiyet, yaş, altyapı ve sınıf ortamı fark etmeksizin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin büyük bir kısmı ders kitabını birçok açıdan dil öğretme ve öğrenme amacına uygun bulmamışlardır. Katılımcıların ezici bir çoğunluğu (% 97.06) ders kitabının organizasyonunu etkin bulmazken, benzer oranda (% 89) öğretmen de kullandıkları ders kitabının öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenmelerine katkı sağlamadığını düşünmektedir. Motivasyon açısından ders kitabının öğrencinin ilgisini çekemediği ifade edilmiştir. (% 89.71). Öğretmenlerin önemli bir oranı (77.65%) ders kitabının kelime bilgisi açısından yetersiz olduğunu ifade ederken, benzer memnuniyetsizlik (% 88.24) öğrencilerin kendilerini ifade etme imkanı bulamadıkları şeklinde ifade edilmiştir. Ders kitabının öğrencilerin öğrenme stratejilerine, ve seviyelerine uygun bulunmadığı (%86) vurgulanmıştır. Öğrencilerin kısa ve uzun vadeli hedeflerine de hitap etmediği belirtilmiştir. İncelenen ders kitabı üzerinde katılımcıların düşüncelerini özetleyen temel bulgu, öğretmenlerin tamamına yakınının (%95.59) ders kitabının değişmesi gerektiğini söylemesidir.

Yakın bir zamanda ders kitabı merkezli yabancı dil öğretim yaklaşımından vazgeçilmesi pek ihtimal dahilinde olmadığından, ders kitabının yabancı dil öğretiminin başarısında etkin rol oynamaya devam edeceği aşıkardır. Benzer şekilde öğrencinin yabancı dil ile ilk karşılaşması ve “kaynaşması” durumunun ders kitabı aracılığıyla gerçekleşeceği muhtemeldir. Buna bağlı olarak, bu materyallerin öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin beklentilerine cevap verecek şekilde düzenlenmesi gerekmektedir. Materyallere öğrencileri etkinliğin içine katacak iletişim merkezli bir yapı ve zenginlik kazandırılmalıdır. Ders kitabını “hizmet edilen” değil de “hizmet eden” konuma getirmek gerekmektedir. Öğretmen, yabancı dil öğretiminde kullanılacak ve öğrenme sistemini oluşturma rolü üstlenecek olan temel ders kitabının “sürekli takipçisi” değil, durum ve konuma göre onu uyarlayan ve uygulayan bir rol üstlenmelidir. Buna yönelik etkinlikler öğretmene seçenek ve esneklik sağlayacak bir özellikte olmalıdır. Öğrenciyi de tamamen öğretmene bağlı öğrenme rolünden kurtaracak donanımda olmalıdır.

Uygulanan araştırma düzeni, belli seviyede okutulan ders kitabını ele almakla ve onunla sınırlı olmakla birlikte diğer seviyelerde okutulan yabancı dilde ders kitaplarının etkinliğinin ölçülmesinde de kullanılabilir