

COURSEBOOK EVALUATION

IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) EDUCATION

EDITED BY

HANDAN ÇELİK - SERVET ÇELİK

...Ideas of the future...



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Tel.: (0312) 482 00 11

Web: www.vizetek.com.tr

E-mail: vizetekyayincilik@gmail.com

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AUTHORS

HANDAN ÇELİK

ECE ZEHİR TOPKAYA

MÜGE KARAKAŞ

LILIA SAVOVA

MARYAM AZARNOOSH

MITRA ZERAATPISHE

MEHDI SOLHI

ADNAN YILMAZ

SİBEL SÖĞÜT

UFUK KELEŞ

BEDRETTİN YAZAN

MELİKE ÜNAL GEZER

MEHMET GALİP ZORBA

CLAUDIA NICKOLSON

SERVET ÇELİK

ŞAKİRE ERBAY ÇETİNKAYA

REYHAN AĞÇAM

DEVİRİM GÜNAY

ELİF BURHAN HORASANLI

DENİZ ORTAÇTEPE HART

YASEMİN KIRKGÖZ

DENİZ ŞALLI ÇOPUR

PREFACE

“How do I know a coursebook is a good one?” and “What do I look for when evaluating a coursebook?” are two of the most frequent questions we have received from language teachers over the years. Considering the vast number of coursebooks published every year, particularly at a time when e-books, print-on-demand, and digital publishing platforms make publishing a lot easier, identifying a good coursebook has become a more important concern than ever.

Therefore, with this book, we intend to help pre-service and in-service language teachers with the evaluation and selection of a coursebook, one of the significant instructional decisions they will make in planning and shaping the type of teaching and learning that will take place in their classrooms. As we aim for this, we take pride in bringing together a group of passionate and talented experts highly regarded in their fields to contribute to this work.

To set the scene, the opening chapter by Çelik, “English language coursebooks in the language classroom,” provides a brief overview of English language teaching coursebooks as a multi-billion industry worldwide and discusses how English language coursebooks are perceived and evaluated by teachers, including the facts and fallacies regarding the coursebooks.

Afterwards, the second chapter by Zehir Topkaya and Karakaş aims to introduce the coursebook selection process in detail. First, it clarifies what coursebook selection is and then moves on to explain how it is carried out in a principled, systematic, and rigorous manner. Finally, it explores teaching programs, needs analysis, and situation analysis and their relationship to coursebook selection.

In Chapter 3, “Approaches to textbook evaluation: A dynamic approach to textbook evaluation in context,” Savova and Azarnoosh differentiate between the processes of evaluating textbooks out of context or employing static evaluation approaches, and in context or utilizing a dynamic approach. They emphasize that static approaches treat textbooks as static objects and authority and utilize general macro and micro textbook evaluation checklists for use out of context. In contrast, they propose a dynamic approach that conceptualizes textbooks as dynamic constructs, engages teachers as the authority on context-based textbook evaluation, and encourages them to use fewer but purposefully selected specific evaluation criteria in pursuit of meaningful learning outcomes. Finally, they demonstrate how their dynamic textbook evaluation model could be applied in specific educational contexts.

In Chapter 4, Zeraatpishe presents different types of syllabi based on the dichotomy of product-oriented and process-oriented syllabi. Discussing all subcategories of

these syllabi, the author goes through the commonalities of the post-method era in language teaching. She concludes that, based on the three main parameters of the post-method pedagogy—particularity, practicality, and possibility, syllabus types should be determined on the basis of context of the situation.

In the next chapter, Solhi reviews the evaluation of reading skills in the ELT coursebooks, elaborating on some coursebook evaluation criteria such as cognitive/affective engagement, personalization of learning, and cultural awareness. In the listening section, the most common themes and typology of listening activities are taken into closer scrutiny in an attempt to illustrate how the effectiveness of listening skills in ELT coursebooks can be evaluated.

In Chapter 6, Yılmaz and Söğüt present an evaluation of speaking and writing skills in English coursebooks available on the local and global markets. They first make an overall introduction to speaking skills and then explain several criteria deemed essential to the evaluation of speaking skills in coursebooks. These criteria include discourse knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, style and appropriacy, element of unpredictability, and organization of conversations. Following speaking skills, they present a broad background to writing skills and elucidate different criteria for evaluating writing skills in coursebooks. The evaluation criteria for writing skills incorporate language, style, appropriacy, and audience; exemplars of target texts and contextualization; writing processes and text structures; provision of scaffolding, guidance on reviewing, and editing. All the criteria related to these two major skills are illustrated through various examples from different English coursebooks used in local and global contexts.

In the following chapter, Keleş and Yazan first briefly describe the historical background and tenets of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach with its relevance to language coursebooks. Scrutinizing communicative classroom activities in the form of pair and group work, the authors move on to discuss communicative competence and authenticity in CLT-based coursebooks. Second, they examine two examples of coursebook activities from two global coursebooks – Speakout Elementary 2nd Edition (2015) and Headway Elementary 5th Edition (2019). Next, they provide alternative ways for language teachers to adapt ELT coursebooks to address their students' communicative needs. Lastly, the authors offer a list of criteria for coursebook evaluation in accordance with the CLT.

In Chapter 8, Ünal Gezer argues that coursebooks reflect language education policy-making, implementation, and access by catering to the needs of language practitioners and families. The author lays out the methodological orientations of coursebooks that guide steering principles and procedures for language teaching

and learning. Macro and micro level coursebook methodology; selection of approaches, methods, and techniques; staging; skills, and linguistic constructs are several integral components that are further evaluated in the chapter.

In Chapter 9, Zorba and Nickolson address global and social values in coursebooks and aim to discuss the rationale for such values in these materials and give a clear picture of the representations of these values in internationally and locally produced English coursebooks. Emphasizing its global status, the authors underline that the English language functions as the medium of communication in various linguistically and culturally diverse real-life settings where global and social norms and values profoundly impact daily interactions and human relations. However, the empirical studies reviewed in this chapter revealed that the representation of social and global values in locally and internationally produced English coursebooks was still problematic. Therefore, the authors suggest that teachers of English should apply some strategies to compensate for such shortcomings. They also suggest that there is a need for studies investigating the quality of activities addressing social and global values and the impact of these activities on learners' knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

In the next chapter, Çelik and Erbay Çetinkaya explore the (inter)cultural elements and roles in English language coursebooks, commonly used as prime sources for teaching culture. After looking at the multiple roles of coursebooks and their functions, they give special attention to the meaning of culture and the notion of (inter)cultural awareness. They also explore the recurrent results of related studies on cultural representations in locally and globally produced ELT coursebooks. Later, they analyze coursebook samples from three locally devised ELT coursebooks in Turkey, representing cultural categories related to product, person, and practice. Besides, they offer a comparative summary of domains and criteria of several material evaluation checklists, as well as sample lists of questions that could help teachers assess their coursebooks' potential to develop learners' (Inter)cultural Communicative Competence. Finally, they conclude their chapter with suggestions that could turn teaching materials into ICC-sensitive ones, thereby compensating for possibly inappropriate cultural content.

The following chapter by Ağçam primarily aims to cover gender representations and roles in language coursebooks. With this aim in mind, it delves into the gender policies in Turkey with a focus on gender representation in instructional materials and outcomes of the relevant publications on the representation of gender in the English coursebooks used in the Turkish schools of various educational levels. Lastly, it offers a checklist for the coursebook evaluation committees, coursebook writers/publishers, and teachers to select/revise EFL coursebooks concerning gender representations and roles.

In Chapter 12, Günay addresses issues of identity representation in the ELT Coursebooks from a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective. Seeking to respond to the crucial question of “how various identities are discursively constructed and presented in the coursebooks, ” the chapter concludes with a conception of the coursebook as a “representational repertoire.” Following a brief introduction to various approaches to identity, a thorough investigation into the coursebooks’ textual, visual and audio domains is brought to the readers’ attention with sample analyses for each discursive domain. Many discriminative practices of exclusion, distancing, passivation, objectivation, and assimilation encountered in the coursebooks are highlighted for the critical reader. Also included in the chapter is a frame of analysis that can be employed for future research on identity representations proposes an alternative tool of investigation into coursebooks as representational repertoires.

Adopting social justice language education as their pedagogical lens, the authors of the next chapter, Burhan Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe Hart, first discuss the historical and political role language coursebooks play in perpetuating the existing hierarchies in educational contexts as well as the broader societies. Next, they provide a critical framework for language teachers to engage in coursebook evaluation and adaptation. Finally, their last section offers several strategies to allow language teachers to build a community of practice - including different stakeholders in the schooling process - who work towards social action.

In Chapter 14, Kirkgöz discusses the central role that coursebooks play in teaching ESP, and explains how an ESP coursebook differs from an EGP coursebook. First, the author outlines the main characteristics of ESP coursebooks in relation to the main functions ESP materials serve. Accordingly, ESP materials present the learners with different language samples in meaningful contexts as models for appropriate language use in different target contexts. She then evaluates two ESP coursebooks; one published earlier in the development of ESP in 1980, while the second one was published relatively recently, in 2006, under four categories: audience, aims, content, and methodology.

Finally, in Chapter 15, Şallı Çopur concentrates on the use of materials after the coursebook selection process focusing on two aspects: (1) adapting the selected material through various techniques or methodological decisions, and (2) designing new materials to supplement or expand the selected coursebook. The decision about materials adaptation and design depends on the context of language teaching, the needs of the learners, and the realities of the classroom; therefore, the chapter also provides (i) problematic cases where an adaptation is required, (ii) actual teacher-made materials designed to be used for specific

learner groups, and (iii) suggestions for integrating authenticity into materials development.

There has been tremendous time, effort, and work put into this work by all parties involved—from the editors to all the authors, and reviewers to the typesetters and designers. We, as the editors, would like to thank all the contributing authors for their dedication and hard work in bringing this text to completion after several rounds of feedback and revisions over a 10-month period. We are confident that the book will be an insightful material and textbook for pre-service language teachers in teacher education programs and graduate students in language education, and a valuable reference guide for teachers in practice, in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of English language coursebooks.

Handan Çelik
Servet Çelik

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