Investigating EFL Teachers' Coursebook Dependency: A Convergent Mixed-methods Study

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Abstract

Exploring English language teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks is important as there is a connection between teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices. In this regard, this study aims to examine English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' coursebook dependency and how their dependence varies according to their years of experience, the type of school they work at, program and degree of graduation. Data were collected out of 99 EFL teachers working at primary, secondary and high schools. The study follows a convergent mixed methods design that includes both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Quantitative data were collected through the "Coursebook Dependency Scale" and analyzed on the SPSS 26.0 program. Qualitative data, on the other hand, were gathered through an open-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher that invites the respondents to provide metaphors for coursebooks and analyzed with content analysis. Findings revealed that majority of the teachers are moderately dependent on coursebooks and that their years of experience, school level and academic background do not have a statistically significant effect on their level of coursebook dependency. However, there appears to be a significant difference in the sub-dimension 'practicality-based dependence' in favor of those with an experience of 15 to 20 years. Furthermore, majority of the teachers' metaphorical images fell under the categories of Support and Guidance that were in line with the finding indicating the moderate level of teachers' coursebook dependency. Exploring teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks might provide insights into the way they use materials in their teaching and help teachers become more aware of their practices and critical of their dependence on coursebooks, which might well contribute to develop in-service training programs.

Keywords: English language teaching, EFL teachers, coursebooks, coursebook dependency

İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Ders Kitabı Bağımlılığının Araştırılması: Bir Yakınsak Karma Yöntem Çalışması
Öz

Öğretmenlerin tutumları, inançları ve uygulamaları arasında bir bağlantı olduğu gerçeği göz önüne alındığında İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ders kitaplarına yönelik tutumlarını incelemek önem arz etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma yabancı dil olarak İngilizce (EFL) öğretmenlerinin ders kitabı bağımlılığını ve bu bağımlılıklarının yıllara, çalıştıkları okul türüne, mezuniyet programına ve mezuniyet derecesine göre nasıl değiştiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma verileri ilkokul, ortaokul ve liselerde görev yapan 99 İngilizce öğretmeninden toplanmıştır. Bu çalışma, hem nicel hem de nitel veri kaynaklarını içeren yakınsak karma yöntem desenini benimsemiştir. Nicel veriler "Ders Kitabı Bağımlılık Ölçeği" ile toplanmış ve SPSS 26.0 programında analiz edilmiştir. Nitel veriler ise araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen ve çalışmaya katılan öğretmenleri ders kitapları için metafor oluşturmaya davet eden bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve içerik analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, öğretmenlerin çoğunluğunun ders kitaplarına orta düzeyde bağımlı olduğunu ve deneyim yılı, okul düzeyi ve akademik geçmişlerinin ders kitabı bağımlılık düzeyleri üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak 'uygulamaya-dayalı bağımlılık' temelli bağımlılık alt boyutunda 15-20 yıl arası deneyime sahip olanlar lehine anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin metaforik imgelerinin büyük çoğunluğu, öğretmenlerin ders kitabı bağımlılığının orta düzeyde olduğuna ilişkin bulguyla uyumlu olarak, Destek ve Rehberlik kategorilerinde yer almaktadır. Öğretmenlerin ders kitaplarına yönelik tutumlarını araştırmak, materyalleri nasıl kullandıklarına dair fikir verebilir ve öğretmenlerin kendi uygulamalarının daha fazla farkına varmalarına ve ders kitaplarına bağımlılıkları konusunda eleştirel olmalarına yardımcı olabilir, bu da hizmet içi eğitim programlarının geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngiliz dili eğitimi, İngilizce öğretmenleri, ders kitabı, ders kitabı bağımlılığı

INTRODUCTION

Although technology and digital tools are widely used in education, it can be said that coursebooks are still widely used, especially in school environments because they meet many needs (Knight, 2015). The answer to why we cannot give up coursebooks can be sought in the work of some scholars who question and examine the benefits of coursebooks (Allwright, 1981; Cunningsworth, 1995; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; O'Neill, 1982; Ur, 1996). As coursebooks are "providers of input into classroom lessons in the form of texts, activities, explanations, and so on" (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p. 317), they have many advantages both for teachers and learners. First of all, teachers cannot prepare materials from scratch for every lesson and class they teach and they need effective language teaching materials that present variety and choice in terms of the language use and activities, and address learners' needs. Thus, coursebooks present linguistic and cultural materials, and instructional activities for practice and interaction (Cunnigsworth, 1995). Secondly, they provide a carefully planned selection of language content that both teachers and students can easily follow, which enables teachers prepare and students review the course content outside the classroom. As McGrath (2002) states "a coursebook is a map. It shows where one is going and where one has been" (p. 10). This also contributes to learner autonomy. Last but not least, when teachers follow a coursebook, the content and the methodological support given in the activities help to achieve consistency and continuation, which might well be regarded as "a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.7).

Although much has been written about the advantages of coursebooks, scholars have also warned us against potential disadvantages of coursebook-based teaching (McGrath, 2002; 2006; Ur, 1996). Since the coursebooks are produced for a general market, they cannot cater for the diverse learning needs of every classroom. Furthermore, as Ur (1996) suggests, "a coursebook is confining: its set structure and sequence may inhibit a teacher's initiative and creativity, and lead to boredom and lack of motivation on the part of the learners" (p. 185). This de-skilling of teachers might result in teachers' losing control over their work and considering the coursebook as the syllabus and "they might find themselves functioning merely as mediators of its content instead of as teachers in their own right" (ibid, p. 185). Allwright's (1981) seminal article sought to answer the question "What do we want teaching materials for" through an analysis of what needs to be done to manage language learning. In this article, Allwright (1981) discusses two main approaches to the role of materials in education. The *deficiency* view sees the role of coursebooks as making up for teachers' shortcomings, while arguing that good teachers can produce their own material because they will not need any printed books. On the other hand, the *difference* view argues that the role of the coursebook is not due to the lack of teachers but to the different expertise of coursebook writers and teachers. In other words, the assumption is that a different kind of expertise is required to develop materials. Both views may have valid arguments for teachers' coursebook dependency. However, it would not be correct to assert that these two views are comprehensive enough to explain the role of coursebooks in education. It might also be unrealistic to claim that teachers will have sufficient resources and time even if they have the necessary expertise and skills to prepare their own materials. Similarly, we cannot state that material developers can develop materials that will address the specific needs of different classes. As Allwright (1981, pp. 7 – 8) suggests, materials may contribute in some way to both goals and content, but they cannot determine either. What is learned in the lesson emerges as a result of the interaction of the student, the teacher and the material. Crawford (1995) argues that if the goal is to incorporate materials into the learning process, it is important to have a balanced view of the role assigned to the coursebook in classroom dynamics rather than deciding whether to use the coursebook. Cunningsworth (1995) also agrees with this idea and underlines the importance of establishing a balanced interaction between language teachers and coursebooks since "heavy dependence is far from ideal as it reduces the importance of individual contributions that good teachers make at all levels in the learning process. It can stifle innovation and it severely limits flexibility" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 10).

When we look at the studies investigating how coursebooks are used in education, it can be said that inexperienced teachers and teacher candidates have a more positive attitude towards the use of textbooks than experienced teachers (Allen, 2015; Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Tsui, 2003). Allen (2015) investigated Swedish EFL teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks and their dependency on ELT coursebook packages in the digital age when teachers have a lot of alternative digital tools and resources. In this study, the term coursebook package referred to all elements associated with a coursebook, including accompanying websites and digital resources. Data were gathered both from pre-service and in-service EFL teachers and the results indicated that pre-service Swedish EFL teachers were more dependent on the coursebook than in-service teachers in the study while designing their lessons during their practice teaching, despite being a generation more involved with technology in a technologically advantageous country. However, it was also found that more experienced in-service EFL

teachers were increasingly avoiding the coursebooks in favor of independent digital sources and considering coursebooks as a potential contingency plan and as a "fall-back position" (Allen, 2015, p. 249). The difference in coursebook dependency among teachers with varying degrees of experiences is also supported by Grossman and Thompson's (2008) longitudinal study conducted with beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching after graduation. Grossman and Thompson (2008) argue that "new teachers begin by sticking close to the materials they have at hand. Then, over time, as they learn more about both students and curriculum, they adapt and adjust their use of the materials" (p. 2014).

Kütük and Su-Bergil (2021) reported on a survey of Turkish EFL teachers' opinions towards the coursebooks they used in state schools. 102 EFL teachers participated in the study and the results showed that participants considered the coursebooks provided by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to be inadequate in terms of design, layout, activities and skills while the subject, content and language type in the coursebooks were found to be appropriate. Having analyzed the data collected from EFL teachers working in twenty-five high schools through a questionnaire with ninety-four teachers and interviews with forty teachers, Kayapınar (2009) argued that the coursebook packages met neither teachers' expectations nor the learner needs. Similarly, Şener and Mulcar (2018) investigated teachers' perceptions on the 10th grade ELT coursebook provided by MoNE and found that the book did not cater for the teachers' and the learners' needs. In a more recent study, Şahin (2022) evaluated ELT coursebooks used in different levels of state schools in Turkey based on the teachers' opinions and most of the participants were found to be satisfied with the coursebooks with regard to curriculum and teaching goals, but there were reservations about their efficiency in fostering learners' practical skills.

In another study, Çakır (2015) investigated EFL teachers' choices of instructional materials at primary level. In this study, 68 pre-service EFL teachers, as part of their practicum course, observed 38 EFL teachers at 14 primary schools two times a week for three months. The participants were also asked to fill out the questionnaire that the researcher had developed about the use of instructional materials and semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participants. Results showed that coursebooks were the most popular type of the materials and most teachers were found to be reluctant to use other materials "due to reasons including overcrowded classes, limited technological knowledge, lack of time, curricular constraints, heavy workload, burnout etc." (p. 69). Considering teachers' high dependency on coursebooks, Çakır (2015) argued that teachers should be encouraged to use alternative resources in order to inspire learners and foster a more engaging learning environment. In order to investigate how dependent English language teachers are on coursebooks, Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019) developed a questionnaire – the Coursebook Dependency Questionnaire (CDQ) – and applied this questionnaire to three hundred twenty-four EFL teachers working at private and state schools of primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Turkey and found out that the majority of the participants were medium dependent on coursebooks.

With all this in mind, it is possible to state that EFL teachers' use of instructional materials is an under-researched topic in the literature. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and their views on coursebooks. Investigating this issue is important since these views are likely to have an impact on how teachers use coursebooks, which in turn will have an impact on students' attitudes and learning. The following research questions guide this study:

1. How dependent are EFL teachers on coursebooks?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and a) their years of experience b) their program of graduation c) their graduation degree and d) the school level they work?
3. What metaphors did EFL teachers use for coursebooks?
4. What categories can the metaphors suggested by EFL teachers be classified according to their common characteristics?

METHOD

This current study uses a convergent mixed methods design (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The convergent mixed methods design combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive analysis of a research problem. This design can help to validate the findings from different sources of data, or explore the similarities and differences between them. In accordance with the research design of this study, the quantitative data were collected through "Coursebook Dependency Scale", while the qualitative data were obtained through an open-ended questionnaire from the participants simultaneously. Both types of data were

analysed and then combined to create a meaningful whole with this research design and have been appropriately interpreted.

Participants

Initially, there were 105 participants, however, six of them were removed during the data analysis since they either filled the scale randomly or failed to give an answer to a variable. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants. 74 of the participants were female, and 25 were male. 66 of them graduated from an ELT department and 33 of them graduated from non-ELT (i.e., linguistics, literature, etc.) departments. 38 of the participants were working with young learners (Grades 2-8) while 61 of them were working with high school students. 18 of the participants had an experience of 1 to 5 years, 23 had 5 to 10 years, 22 had 10 to 15 years, 16 had 15 to 20 years, and 20 had more than 20 years of experience. 71 held a B.A. degree, 23 had a M.A. degree, and 5 of them had a Ph.D. degree. Finally, 88 of the participants were working in a state school while 11 of them were working in a private school.

Table 1. Demographic Information About the Participants

Characteristics	n	(%)
Gender		
Female	74	74.7
Male	25	25.3
Program of Graduation		
ELT	66	66.7
Non-ELT	33	33.3
Degree of Graduation		
B.A.	71	71.7
M.A.	23	23.2
Ph.D.	5	5.1
School Type		
Grades (2-8)	38	38.4
Grades (9-12)	61	61.6
Years of Experience		
1-5 years	18	18.2
5-10 years	23	23.2
10-15 years	22	22.2
15-20 years	16	16.2
20 years and above	20	20.2

Data Collection

Prior to the study, the necessary ethical permission was obtained. For this study, the researcher used snowball sampling in order to reach more people. In snowball sampling, the researcher contacts a small number of people to initiate the sampling process. These individuals are then asked to name other people they know who would be willing to participate in the study. The practice continues until an appropriate sample size is reached (Ruane, 2005). The data collection tools were sent to the participants via the Google form.

The quantitative data of this study, which uses the Convergent mixed methods method, were collected through the "Coursebook Dependency Questionnaire" (CDQ) developed by Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019). Relevant researchers were contacted and their consent was obtained to use the questionnaire. CDQ consists of two parts: while the first part asks for personal demographic information about teachers, such as gender, work experience, type of school they work in and the school they graduated from, the second part includes 26 items in 7-point Likert type (0-never, 6-always). CDQ consists of five sub-dimensions, namely, practicality-based dependence, skill-based dependence, practicality-based independence, skill-based independence and structure-based dependence. Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019) determined the Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale as .90 for the overall scale. In this study, the overall reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .91. The high reliability coefficient calculated indicates that the data were collected with a highly reliable tool.

Qualitative data were collected with an open-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher. An open-ended questionnaire form was prepared in order to determine the perceptions of the teachers participating in the study about the coursebooks. In the questionnaire form the participants were given the sentence "A course book is like ……. because ……" and asked to complete this sentence with a metaphor or simile that represent their

attitudes to course books and provide an explanation for the metaphor/simile they have written. An explanatory example was also provided in the questionnaire form.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data of this study collected through CDQ were analyzed on the SPSS 26.0 program. Before starting with the analysis, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each sub-dimension and the whole scale. The results indicated values of .87 for the practicality-based dependence dimension, .77 for skill-based dependence dimension, .69 for practicality-based independence dimension, .82 for skill-based independence dimension, .50 for structure-based dependence dimension, and .91 for the whole scale. Since the data showed normal distribution for the department of graduation and school level variables, 12 independent samples T-tests, six for each variable, were conducted. However, since the number of the participants in each group was lower than 30, six Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted for the years of experience variable. Finally, since the number of graduate participants was lower than 30, six independent samples Mann-Whitney U tests were run for the degree of graduation variable.

Qualitative data were analyzed with the content analysis method and the data were interpreted in accordance with the research questions. Initial review of the data showed that there were some incomplete responses in the questionnaire forms and some responses did not have either metaphors or explanations. Thus, of 99 responses, 13 were not included in the data analysis. Content analysis process started with coding the data gathered from 86 EFL teachers. In this stage, the metaphors were first listed in alphabetical order with the accompanying explanations. They were read several times and assigned codes. The codes were then grouped under five general themes. In order to ensure reliability, the coding was conducted by two coders. The Interrater Reliability was calculated as 93% According to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Patton (2002), the level of consensus among coders should be at least 80%. Therefore, this value indicates that the internal consistency is high in this study.

Research Ethics

Prior to the study, ethical and administrative permissions were obtained. Since the data collection tools were sent via the Google form, the information on the consent form was also shared with the participants at the beginning of the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the research design, and it was stated that they were not asked for any information that would reveal their identities. It was also stated that the data of the study will only be used for scientific purposes and that due care will be taken to protect the anonymity of the data during the data analysis and reporting process. The initials of the English Language Teacher expression (i.e. ELT-1, ELT-2) are used as pseudonyms for the identities of the participants in the quotations provided in the study.

FINDINGS

How dependent are EFL teachers on coursebooks?

The first research question with regard to EFL teachers' dependency on coursebooks was determined through mean scores. Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019) identified the range of means so that EFL teachers' dependency can be classified into three groups labeled as high, medium and low. Depending on the CDQ developed on a seven-point Likert scale, the researchers argued that teachers with scores greater than 129 were regarded as high dependent and teachers who scored greater than 78 were considered as medium dependent while teachers with scores 78 and less were considered as low dependent on coursebooks. According to this classification, in this current study the number of EFL teachers identified as highly dependent on coursebooks was 16 which constitutes 16.2% of all the participants. The number of the medium dependent teachers was 73 which corresponds to 73.7%, while the last category included 10 teachers with 10.1 % who were found to be the least dependent on coursebooks. Table 2 shows the dependence categories in this study as well as the number of EFL teachers who fall into each category.

Table 2. Percentages of EFL Teachers in Coursebook Dependency Categories

	Frequency	Percent
HIGH	16	16.2
MEDIUM	73	73.7
LOW	10	10.1
Total	99	100

Is there a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and their years of experience?

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests highlighted no significant differences for the years of experience variables for skill-based dependence dimension ($\chi^2(4) = 5.40$, $p = .25$), practicality-based independence dimension ($\chi^2(4) = 2.50$, $p = .65$), skill-based independence dimension ($\chi^2(4) = 4.86$, $p = .30$), structure-based dependence dimension ($\chi^2(4) = 6.64$, $p = .16$), and for the whole scale ($\chi^2(4) = 6.89$, $p = .14$). However, the results indicated a significant difference for practicality-based dependence dimension ($\chi^2(4) = 10.19$, $p = .04$). Dunn's post hoc test was conducted to locate the differences. The results indicated significant differences between those with an experience of one to five years and those with an experience of 15 to 20 years ($p = .006$), between those with an experience of 5 to 10 years and those with an experience of 15 to 20 years ($p = .007$), and those with an experience of 20 or more years and those with an experience of 15 to 20 years ($p = .035$). Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for the years of experience.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Years of Experience Variable

Experience	N	Practicality-based dependence Mean (SD)	Skill-based dependence Mean (SD)	Practicality-based independence Mean (SD)	Skill-based independence Mean (SD)	Structure-based dependence Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)
1-5	18	32.61 (9.83)	23.33 (6.89)	12.22 (4.48)	16.72 (6.41)	11.67 (3.09)	96.56 (26.66)
5-10	23	34.00 (7.44)	22.96 (5.57)	13.09 (3.04)	19.57 (5.85)	12.43 (2.97)	102.04 (14.91)
10-15	22	37.05 (8.22)	24.77 (5.29)	13.00 (4.99)	19.73 (7.10)	12.73 (3.27)	107.27 (21.14)
15-20	16	40.81 (8.12)	27.75 (7.34)	14.75 (5.59)	19.88 (6.15)	14.19 (4.29)	117.38 (25.26)
20 and Above	20	34.85 (8.42)	25.50 (5.75)	13.00 (4.01)	20.20 (5.44)	13.75 (2.86)	107.30 (21.07)

Is there a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and their program of graduation?

The results of the six independent samples T-tests indicated that all of the dimensions assumed the Levene's test for equality of variances ($p > .05$). The results further highlighted no significant differences for the program of graduation variable for practicality-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = -.17$, $p = .86$), skill-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = .43$, $p = .67$), practicality-based independence dimension ($t(97) = .94$, $p = .35$), skill-based independence dimension ($t(97) = .40$, $p = .69$), structure-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = -1.22$, $p = .23$), and overall scale ($t(97) = .17$, $p = .87$). Table 4 displays descriptive statistics for the graduated program.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Graduated Program Variable

Graduation	N	Practicality-based dependence Mean (SD)	Skill-based dependence Mean (SD)	Practicality-based independence Mean (SD)	Skill-based independence Mean (SD)	Structure-based dependence Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)
ELT	66	35.59 (8.79)	24.91(6.21)	13.45 (4.27)	19.44 (6.46)	12.62 (3.31)	106.02 (22.49)
Non-ELT	33	35.91 (8.48)	24.33(6.30)	12.58 (4.68)	18.91 (5.78)	13.48 (3.35)	105.21 (22.06)

Is there a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and their graduation degree?

The results of the six independent samples Mann-Whitney U test highlighted no significant differences between graduate and undergraduate participants for practicality-based dependence dimension ($U = 853.00$, $z = -1.10$, $p = .27$), skill-based dependence dimension ($U = 846.50$, $z = -1.15$, $p = .25$), practicality-based independence dimension ($U = 921.00$, $z = -.57$, $p = .57$), skill-based independence dimension ($U = 869.50$, $z = -.97$, $p = .33$), structure-based dependence dimension ($U = 925.00$, $z = -.54$, $p = .59$), and overall scale ($U = 941.50$, $z = -.41$, $p = .68$). Table 5 shows descriptive statistics for the degree of graduation variable.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Degree of Graduation Variable

Degree	N	Practicality-based dependence Mean (SD)	Skill-based dependence Mean (SD)	Practicality-based independence Mean (SD)	Skill-based independence Mean (SD)	Structure-based dependence Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)
Undergraduate (BA)	71	35.08 (9.14)	24.37 (6.63)	12.94 (4.38)	19.69 (6.06)	13.03 (3.48)	105.11 (23.21)
Graduate (MA & PhD)	28	37.25 (7.15)	25.61 (5.01)	13.71 (4.50)	18.18 (6.58)	12.61 (2.95)	107.36 (19.86)

Is there a statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and the school level they work?

Finally, the last six independent samples T-tests indicated that all of the dimensions assumed the Levene's test for equality of variances for the school level variable ($p > .05$). Further, there were no significant differences for practicality-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = .39$, $p = .70$), skill-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = .16$, $p = .88$), practicality-based independence dimension ($t(97) = .37$, $p = .71$), skill-based independence dimension ($t(97) = .76$, $p = .45$), structure-based dependence dimension ($t(97) = -.90$, $p = .37$), and overall scale ($t(97) = .35$, $p = .73$). Table 6 shows descriptive statistics for the school level variable.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for the school level variable

School Level	N	Practicality-based dependence Mean (SD)	Skill-based dependence Mean (SD)	Practicality-based independence Mean (SD)	Skill-based independence Mean (SD)	Structure-based dependence Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)
Grades (2-8)	38	36.13 (8.61)	24.84 (6.15)	13.37 (4.38)	19.87 (6.65)	12.53(3.88)	106.74 (22.58)
Grades (9-12)	61	35.41 (8.73)	24.64 (6.30)	13.03 (4.45)	18.89 (5.95)	13.15 (2.94)	105.13 (22.19)

In-service Teachers' Coursebook Metaphors

86 EFL teachers produced 53 different metaphors with regard to coursebooks and these metaphors are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. EFL Teachers' Coursebook Metaphors

Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
An annual plan	1	Fruit garden	1	Primary source	2
An assistant	6	Greengrocery	1	Rabbit shit	1
Band-Aid	1	Guide	14	Recipe	1
Blinkers	1	Hollow plate	1	Refrigerator	1
Brochure	1	House	1	River	1
Building foundation	1	Lighthouse	2	Stairs	3
Calendar	2	Life buoy	1	Story	2
Candle	3	A little tasty food	1	Suitcase	1
Cellar	1	Main course	1	Symphonic music	1
Compass	2	Map	4	A thorny road	1
Constitution	1	Map without compass	1	Unfurnished house	1
Cookbook	1	Menu	1	A user manual	1
Cornerstone	1	Mind-map	1	Vehicle	2
Dinner table	1	Mirror	1	Waste of time	1
A drop of water in the desert	1	Mold	1	Water	1
An empty box	2	Navigation	1	Window	1
Fellow traveler	1	Ocean	1	Worksheet	1
First-aid kit	1	Photo frame	2		

Thematic Classification of EFL Teachers' Metaphors for ELT Coursebooks

The metaphorical images produced by the EFL teachers with regard to the coursebooks have been assigned to five themes: *Resource, Support, Guidance, Choice* and *Limitations*. These themes are displayed in Table 8. EFL teachers were found to produce mostly positive metaphorical images for coursebooks (n=70) that include the images grouped under the first four categories shown in Table 8, while the negative images created by the participants fall under the category of *Limitations* (n=16).

Table 8. A Thematic Classification of Coursebook Metaphors Produced by EFL Teachers

Themes	f	Metaphors
Guidance	31	Brochure, calendar (2), candle (3), compass (2), guide (14), lighthouse (2), map (4), mind-map, navigation, recipe
Support	23	an assistant (6), Band-Aid, building foundation, cookbook, dinner table, fellow traveler, first-aid kit, house, life buoy, photo frame (2), mirror, stairs (3), vehicle (2), window
Resource	8	The Constitution, cornerstone, main course, ocean, primary source (2), river, water
Choice	8	cellar, fruit garden, greengrocery, menu, refrigerator, story (2), symphonic music
Limitations	16	an annual plan, blinkers, a drop of water in the desert, an empty box (2), a little tasty food, hollow plate, map without compass, mold, rabbit shit, suitcase, a thorny road, unfurnished house, a user manual, waste of time, worksheet

Among these five categories created by EFL teachers' metaphorical images for coursebooks, the categories with the highest number of metaphors were Guidance (n=31), Support (n=23) and Limitations (n=16) respectively. The categories with the lowest number of metaphors were Resource (n=8) and Choice (n=8).

Of all the total number of 86 metaphors analyzed, there were 31 metaphors (36,04 %) in the category of *Guidance*. The most frequently stated metaphors in this category were 'guide', 'map', 'candle', 'calendar', 'compass' and 'lighthouse'. EFL teachers considered course books as a guide in foreign language teaching as the following metaphors with the accompanying explanations provided by the participants display:

"Personally, I find a coursebook extremely helpful, as it guides me on what and how to teach, giving me some useful advice on the best techniques for presenting the material. Someone once said that a bad coursebook is better than none". ELT-95

"A coursebook is like a compass. It shows your way and lets you find your way when you get lost". ELT-25

Not all the teachers in this category seemed to agree on the strength of coursebooks as guide. For example, three teachers who have chosen 'the candle' as a metaphor emphasized the fact that candles were not powerful enough to enlighten the environment since it was a weak form of light. However, in case of emergency it might help. Similarly, coursebooks also provided minimal guidance, like a candle. Two teachers, who used 'the calendar' metaphor, considered coursebooks only as a reminder that they follow the program and objectives.

The category of *Support* consists of 14 metaphors obtained from 23 EFL teachers and participants consider coursebooks as an element that contributes to the development of students. Especially the metaphors 'stairs', 'mirror', vehicle' and 'window' revealed that coursebooks were considered as tools that might help learners reach their goals and information. On the other hand, some teachers who used the metaphors of 'house', 'building foundation', 'photo frame', 'cookbook' and 'dinner table' emphasized the contribution of coursebooks to education by stating that teaching can be improved based on the coursebook:

"A coursebook is like a dinner table because you basically need a table to set the table. The teacher himself decides what kind of starters, snacks, main courses and desserts to put on it, with the activities he designed". ELT-88

"A textbook is like a cookbook because it gives you what to do and the ingredients. But just as everyone's taste is different from each other, the way of teaching is also different". ELT-80

The metaphor of 'assistant', which is the most frequently cited metaphor in this category, is important because it shows the role that textbooks play in the education process for teachers:

"A coursebook is like an assistant because it makes it easier for the teacher to be prepared for the lesson". ELT-94

"The textbook is like an assistant because it is a helper, but it is never everything to the lesson. The teacher always has extra work in language teaching, the textbook alone is not enough, but it helps". ELT-23

However, the metaphors of first-aid kit, Band-Aid and life buoy used in this category show a different view of support than other metaphors. Teachers using these metaphors stated that textbooks were not a source that was normally used, but a support that was used when they had to:

"A coursebook is like a Band-Aid. I only use it when needed". ELT-49

"A coursebook is like a life buoy because it is always there to save the day". ELT-40

The category of *Resource* includes 8 metaphors obtained from 7 English language teachers. In this category, the participants considered the coursebook as the source of the lessons and the activities. The metaphors of Constitution, cornerstone, primary source and main course might be regarded as strong resources while the metaphors of water, ocean and river might be considered as natural life resources suggesting that coursebooks might be viewed as an organic element of the teaching and learning process.

The category of *Choice* has also 8 metaphors from 7 EFL teachers. When these metaphors were examined, it was found that the participants saw the coursebook as a resource that contained many materials. Just as described in metaphors such as a greengrocer, fruit garden or cellar, teachers might use the coursebooks by choosing whatever they want.

Apart from the afore-mentioned categories, the last category, *Restrictions*, with 19 metaphors produced by 20 in-service teachers includes negative views on coursebooks. When the metaphors as well as the explanations were analyzed, the coursebooks were found to be regarded as insufficient in terms of content and activities to develop especially the productive language skills although their visual and external features were relatively good. They were boring and they did not meet the learner needs. In this sense, the metaphors of 'a full but light suitcase', 'unfurnished house', 'empty box', 'hollow plate' and 'a map without a compass' in this category drew attention to the dysfunctionality of coursebooks:

"The coursebook is like a full but light suitcase because the pages are filled in order to look full, away from realism and creativity". ELT-3

"The coursebook is like an unfurnished house because there is a frame but the content is empty and inadequate". ELT-63

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite technological advances and the availability of different digital tools, coursebooks are still the most widely used language materials today. In this study, in line with the literature, the English language teachers were found to be moderately dependent on coursebooks as nearly three-quarters (73.7%) of EFL teachers had a medium level of dependence on coursebooks. This result is in line with the findings of the study by Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019). Of 324 English language teachers working at secondary and tertiary-level schools in Turkey, 223 teachers with 68.8% of all were found to have medium level of coursebook dependency. Similar results were also cited in the literature. For example, according to a 2008 survey by the British Council, cited by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), 65% of respondents reported using a coursebook while only 6% of teachers reported never using one. In a study by Çakır (2015) that examined the choices of instructional materials made by EFL teachers at the primary level, it was found that coursebooks were the most commonly used type of material.

When the thematic categories that arose as a result of the analysis of metaphors were examined, it can be said that teachers' views on coursebooks were consistent with the results of the levels of the coursebook dependency that emerged in this study. Similar to the interpretation stated by McGrath (2002) as for the metaphor analysis in his book, the positive images grouped under the thematic groups in this study can be put on a continuum with two opposing themes of "*control* and *choice,* with that of *support* being somewhere between the two*" (p. 8). In this regard, the categories of *Support* and *Guidance* included 63% of all the responses meaning that majority of the teachers' metaphorical images were in line with the finding indicating the moderate level of teachers' coursebook dependency. McGrath's (2006) study that examined the views of Brazilian teachers of English on coursebooks through metaphor analysis revealed that analysis over 200 images suggested varying degrees of coursebook dependence and he argued that "the thematic progression from guidance to resource posited … can be seen as a continuum ranging from control *by* textbook to control *of* textbook, with the latter expressing itself as *criticality* and a *willingness to be autonomous*" (p. 313).

The current study revealed no statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' level of dependence on coursebooks and their years of teaching experience. However, there appears to be a significant difference in the sub-dimension 'practicality-based dependence' in favor of those with an experience of 15 to 20 years. This is in line with the findings of Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019), but it contradicts some other research that suggests otherwise (Allen, 2015; Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Tomlinson, 2012; Tsui, 2003). Tomlinson (2012) argues that as teachers gain more experience, they tend to rely less on coursebooks. Grossman and Thompson's (2008) longitudinal study followed new teachers for their first three years after graduation and found evidence to support this idea that new teachers tend to closely follow the materials available. As they gain more

experience and knowledge about their students and the curriculum, they begin to adapt and tailor their use of the materials. This finding was also supported by Allen's (2015) study where the use of coursebook by both pre-service Swedish EFL teachers and in-service teachers were examined. More experienced in-service EFL teachers were increasingly turning to independent digital sources instead of coursebooks. They viewed coursebooks as a potential contingency plan and as a "fall-back position" (Allen, 2015, p. 249). However, the inexperienced but digitally native pre-service teachers relied on coursebook packages to structure their lessons during practicum and to provide their learners with extended reading practice. These findings were in contrast to the current study, which found no significant relationship between teachers' experience and their levels of dependence on coursebooks.

How can we explain this contradictory finding? One possible explanation might derive from the fact that as McGrath (2006) states, the preference of the term 'coursebook' over 'textbook' might be the reflection of the popularity of coursebooks in teaching which suggests that "the course book *is* the course: teachers are expected to follow (an ordinary enough term, but itself metaphorical in derivation) the book, and learners are tested on their knowledge of the book" (p. 307). However, Littlejohn (1992) argues that when teachers rely heavily on coursebooks, they may find it difficult to break away from them, which can create a cycle that ultimately leads to a loss of teaching skill. This might result into an understanding that views coursebooks as the syllabus of the course rather than the materials chosen in accordance with the learning goals and might contribute to teachers' level of dependence on coursebooks.

This finding suggesting that coursebook dependency does not change over experience does not also mean that more experienced EFL teachers are satisfied with the coursebooks they use, especially when we consider some coursebook evaluation studies conducted based on Turkish EFL teachers' opinions (Kayapınar, 2009; Kütük & Su-Bergil, 2021; Şahin, 2022; Şener & Mulcar, 2018). Coursebooks were reported as having some problems with regard to design, layout and activities (Kütük & Su-Bergil, 2021) and as being incapable of meeting neither teachers' expectations nor learners' needs (Kayapınar, 2009), however, they continue to preserve their central place in language teaching. One possible explanation might derive from the fact that coursebooks used at all grades are centrally selected for the entire country in Turkey and sent to all students for free. Turkish teachers of English especially working at state schools might well feel obliged to use those books and follow the ELT curriculum. Another possible reason that might explain their coursebook dependency might be the testing procedures followed at schools. In accordance with the regulations in Turkey, written and practical exams of all courses taught in more than one class in the same grade are held and evaluated jointly in order to allow teachers to make joint assessments. Thus, it may be inevitable for teachers working at the same grade level to follow the coursebook because their students will be tested with these common exams. Moreover, Çakır (2015) found that many teachers in his study were hesitant to use materials other than the coursebook due to factors such as large class sizes, limited technological knowledge, lack of time, curricular constraints, heavy workload, and burnout (p. 69). With all these in mind, it is possible to state that most teachers are dependent on coursebooks, which is supported by the results of the current study.

This study indicated no statistically significant relationship between EFL teachers' level of coursebook dependency and the school type they work at. Moreover, there was not a statistically significant relationship between teachers' coursebook dependency and their program and degree of graduation. Özen-Tosun and Cinkara (2019) also found no relationship between the level of education of teachers (such as holding a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree) and their dependence on coursebooks. This is consistent with the findings of the current study.

This study investigates EFL teachers' coursebook dependency and it has significant implications both for pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training programs. In this regard, teachers' opinions about coursebooks might yield insights into how they make use of these materials in language teaching. Exploring teachers' coursebook dependence is significant in that teachers might become more aware of their practices and critical of their dependence on coursebooks. Since heavy dependence on coursebooks might lead to the loss of teacher empowerment and deskilling of teachers (Littlejohn, 1998; Masuhara, 1998), teachers should also be encouraged to use other materials to better suit the learner needs. In this regard, in-service teacher trainings might be administered to foster teacher autonomy so that EFL teachers might take responsibility of their own teaching by choosing the appropriate language materials and adapting those materials to better suit their own teaching learning contexts.

Although this convergent mixed-methods study includes both quantitative and qualitative data to investigate EFL teachers' opinions about the coursebooks, it is limited to teachers' perceptions. What matters in terms of learning is the interaction between the teacher, the learner, and the material. Thus, we need more research studies which explores the classroom dynamics as well as the learners' opinions on the coursebooks used at

different contexts. Moreover, further research designs with observational evidence from the classrooms might help us explore the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices.

Statements of Publication Ethics

Ethical permission of the research was approved by Sivas Cumhuriyet University Educational Sciences Ethics Committee. Ethics committee document number is E-50704946-100-269687.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The study was conducted and reported by the corresponding author.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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