

TEACHER-MADE MATERIALS IN ELT CLASSES: TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS

İNGİLİZCE SINIFLARINDA ÖĞRETMEN TARAFINDAN HAZIRLANAN MATERYALLER: ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

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Abstract

Instructional materials are among the key elements which contribute to effective foreign language teaching. Currently, although there is a great variety of materials for instructing languages, coursebooks still remain main materials in many language classes throughout the world. However, there are many reasons why language teachers should avoid the direct use of coursebooks and, instead, make their own materials. Based on these reasons, this paper discusses the use of teacher-made worksheets instead of coursebooks in EFL classes. In the study, qualitative data were collected through observations and open-ended questions. The participants consisted of eight EFL teachers and their students at a private school in Turkey. Findings of the study revealed both the process of materials development and teachers' and students' views about the use of teacher-made worksheets in their language classes.

Key Words: EFL teaching, materials development, teacher-made materials, worksheet

Özet

Öğretim materyalleri, etkili yabancı dil eğitimine katkıda bulunan temel hususlar arasındadır. Günümüzde, dil eğitimi için pekçok materyal bulunmasına rağmen ders kitapları halen dünya genelinde ana materyal durumundadır. Bununla birlikte, dil öğretmenlerinin doğrudan ders kitaplarını kullanmak yerine kendi materyallerini hazırlamalarını gerektiren bir takım sebepler bulunmaktadır. İşte bu sebeplere dayanarak, bu çalışma İngilizce'nin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği sınıflarda ders kitabı yerine öğretmen tarafından hazırlanan çalışma yapraklarının kullanımını tartışmaktadır. Çalışmada, gözlemler ve açık uçlu sorular vasıtasıyla nitel veri toplanmış olup katılımcılar Türkiye'deki özel bir okulun sekiz İngilizce öğretmeni ve öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları, materyal geliştirme sürecini ve öğretmen tarafından hazırlanan çalışma kağıtları hakkındaki öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerini sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi, materyal geliştirme, öğretmen tarafından hazırlanan materyaller, çalışma kağıdı

INTRODUCTION

Instructional materials are essential tools in English language teaching (ELT) classes. They are among the primary resources for English teachers and they have a certain influence on the learning of students. This is why considerable attention should be paid to the selection and use of these materials in classes.

The selection of proper material for instructing the target language seems to be demanding for the teacher since there are a variety of instructional materials for ELT. Every material which serves the purpose of language teaching and learning can be used as an instructional material in ELT classes. However, coursebooks seem to have a distinguishable place among all other materials. They are preferred mostly because they are considered advantageous in terms of accessibility, clearness, consistency, continuity, and time. However, direct use of coursebooks is generally claimed to be disadvantageous due to several reasons such as being firmly structured and inadequate to meet the diverse needs of individual students. Therefore, it is commonly suggested to use coursebooks not directly but after making some adjustments. However, there seems to be inadequate research in the related literature on how to achieve this in real school life situations.

This study aims to contribute to the efforts to fill this gap in the literature. Based on a qualitative study, it reveals the process of materials adjustment and development. It also discusses that English teaching and learning would be easier and more effective with the use of teacher-made worksheets rather than the direct use of coursebooks.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Instructional materials can refer to anything used for the purpose of teaching and learning of the target language. Therefore, the term covers a large range of materials from printed materials to smart phones, and there are several classifications of these materials in the related literature (e.g., Çakır, 2015; Ellington, 1987; Pakkan, 1997; Tok, 2010; Tomlinson, 2012). Broadly, instructional materials can be categorized in three groups: traditional (e.g., board, coursebook, worksheet, chart, realia, flashcard, teacher-made materials); audio and visual (e.g., video player, audio materials, video camera, computer, projection device); and ICT based materials (e.g., interactive white boards, tablet computers, the internet, smart phone) (Çakır, 2015, 3).

Of these materials, coursebooks have a widespread use around the world and they are generally regarded as an indispensable part of language instruction. Although many new materials have been brought to ELT classes as a result of technological advancements of the age, coursebooks still seem to be the basic material in many ELT classes. Of the recent studies showing the common use of coursebooks, Çakır (2015) has shown that teachers in the studied school are heavily dependent on the traditional materials and coursebook is used by every teacher in the study. This finding was also supported by the study of Rivera Cuayahuitl and Pérez Carranza (2015). They have found that almost all teachers in the study used textbooks as central materials and their decisions about their lessons were based on the official textbook.

In general, discussions on the use of coursebooks in ELT classes include the advantages and disadvantages of these materials (e.g., Allwright, 1981; Amiryousefi & Ketabi, 2011; Çakır, 2015; Cunningsworth, 1984, 1995; Harmer, 1991; Harwood, 2005; Pakkan, 1997; Richards, 1993, 2001; Rivera Cuayahuitl & Pérez Carranza, 2015; Sheldon, 1988; Sousa & Hurst, 2010; Tomlinson, 2008; Tsiprakides, 2011; Ur, 1996).

The advantages, most of which are also given as reasons for the widespread use of ELT coursebooks, include factors such as being systematic, efficient, well-designed, rich in content, visually attractive, psychologically comforting, and time-saving. Coursebooks are considered favorable mainly because they are written by professionals in the field, they are based on systematic and balanced syllabuses, they provide consistency in courses and continuity between grade levels, and additionally they save teachers' time for making materials (Cunningsworth, 1984; Harwood, 2005; Pakkan, 1997). On the other hand, they are criticized for many reasons such as being inflexible because of fixed syllabus, reflecting the preferences and biases of their authors, containing inauthentic language, being inadequate to meet the learners' diverse needs, and being unsuitable to the learners' levels and styles (Lynch, 2005; Richards, 2001; Tsiprakides, 2011). Ramsden (2003) writes, "no wonder some students develop a negative attitude to the subject and to their own abilities as learners of it through studying textbooks. In brief, textbooks are often poor teachers – because they are written using an inappropriate approach to teaching" (p. 154).

As one of the ways to both take the advantages of using coursebooks and avoid their disadvantages, the careful selection and adaptation of these materials is suggested in many studies (e.g., Çakır, 2010; Richards, 2001; Tsiprakides, 2011). To make coursebooks more suitable to the particular objectives of the course, the individual level and style of the learners, and the specific context of learning, their adaptation is considered a need. For example, Cunningsworth (1995) states that "no coursebook designed for a general market will be absolutely ideal for your particular group of learners, but the aim is to find the best possible fit, together with potential for adapting or supplementing parts of the material where it is inadequate or unsuitable" (p.5). Tsiprakides (2011), however, regards the adaptation of coursebooks almost unavoidable because "a coursebook is not designed and written with a particular classroom of students in mind, and as a result, it may contain materials and tasks that the teacher feels

are not suitable for his/her teaching situation” (p.761). Similarly, Richards (2001) emphasizes the crucial need for adaptation and states, “commercial textbooks can seldom be used without some form of adaptation to make them suitable for the particular context in which they will be used” (p. 4).

Many studies, however, suggest to support or replace coursebooks with teacher-made materials. For example, Block (1991) argues in favour of teacher-made materials. He states the importance of materials design and gives three reasons – contextualization, timeliness, personal touch- why teachers should produce their own materials. He writes, “I would like to offer three reasons for believing that, for at least part of the time, teachers should replace the commercial coursebook with a contribution of their own” (Block, 1991, p. 213). Howard and Major (2005) give similar reasons to those of Block, and assert that teacher-designed materials are advantageous mainly because “they avoid the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach of most commercial materials” (p. 102). The four reasons they give consist of contextualization, individual needs, personalization, and timeliness. Roessing and Johnson (2004) suggest that teachers can prepare their own materials following a principled approach. In their study, they provide principles and examples for preparing materials and emphasize that by preparing materials teachers can both enhance their intermediate-level students’ language development and contribute to their own professional development. This is also emphasized by Núñez Pardo and Téllez-Téllez (2009). They argue that all teachers have capability of developing materials and teacher-made materials not only enhance students’ learning but also teachers’ activities.

However, teacher-made materials are also warned to have possible disadvantages, like coursebooks. First of all, they may lack the organization and quality the published coursebooks have, when prepared unprofessionally. Besides, they may take much time to design, which is one of the possible factors preventing teachers from producing their own materials (Howard & Major, 2005). Additionally, for students, they often have less prestige than published textbooks (Sheldon, 1988). Nevertheless, studies show that despite the problems of material design, many teachers prefer using the materials they made or at least using a combination of coursebooks and alternative materials including teacher-made ones. For example, Johansson (2006) found that teachers in the study used either alternative materials, or a combination of coursebooks and alternative materials. The interviews in this study showed that alternative materials were found advantageous and often preferred by the students. The reasons for using these materials, included factors such as being funnier and more interesting than coursebooks which were also used mainly because they provide a clear organization and structure. Similarly, Rivera Cuayahuitl and Pérez Carranza (2015) found that teachers in the studied school used alternative and complementary materials. They showed that although textbooks were used as central materials, teachers in the study used two main groups of materials: the ones for complementing the textbook and the ones for replacing the textbook. Of these materials, worksheets were found to be used both to complement and replace textbooks.

The related literature provides teachers with clear steps and principles of materials development. As ordered by Núñez Pardo and Téllez-Téllez (2009), the steps include needs assessment, setting goals and objectives, specifying the content, selecting and developing materials and activities, organising content and activities, evaluation, resources and constraints. Like links in a chain, these steps are interrelated and each step is affected by the other (Pakkan, 1997). Principles, however, are similar to those for coursebooks. First of all, they should fit the learners’ needs, levels, styles and interests. Secondly, they should correspond to the objectives of the course and should be organized around a syllabus. Also, they should be rich and variable in content but at the same time free of unnecessary details. They should include adequate, appropriate, and different kinds of activities aiming the development of four main language skills. Besides, the language in these materials should be clear and authentic; and, the grammatical and lexical items should be sequenced in a principled order and recycled in different contexts. These basic principles and many others are given place in several studies on materials evaluation, adaptation, and development (e.g., Howard & Major, 2005; McDonough, Shaw & Masuhara, 2013; Núñez Pardo & Téllez-Téllez, 2009; Pakkan, 1997; Roessing & Johnson, 2004; Sheldon, 1988; Tekir & Arkan, 2007; Tok,

2010; Tomlinson, 2010, 2012; Tsiplakides, 2011). However, there seems to be inadequate research illustrating the way to put principles into practice in actual teaching and learning contexts. Moreover, little has been disseminated about teacher-made materials (Roessing & Johnson, 2004), and there is little research on the effects of materials on their users (Tomlinson, 2012).

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This qualitative study was carried out with the EFL teachers and learners of a private school in Turkey. The school was selected to be studied because its language teaching system was based on teacher-made materials rather than coursebooks. The participants consisted of 8 EFL teachers (4 female and 4 male) and 70 of their 8th - grade students. At the time of the study, of the 8 participating teachers, 3 were teaching in the high school department and 5 were teaching in both primary and secondary departments of the school. However, all of them had teaching experience in all three departments. The table below provides information about the students of these teachers, who participated in this study.

Table 1

Group Profile of Student Participants

	%	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
22 Female	31	4	6	6	6
48 Male	69	17	8	11	12
Total	100	21	14	17	18

Instruments

The data consisted of observations and open-ended questions. The observations included the detailed description of the process of materials development and use in the school. Open-ended questions, however, served to elicit the teachers' and students' views of the teacher-made materials used in their language classes. The questions were asked and answered in the native language of the participants, Turkish, so that the participants were able to express their ideas without the restrictions of foreign language. Participant teachers answered the question at home whereas the students answered it during class time. For observations and questions, the school administration was contacted first; the study was explained and the permission necessary was obtained.

Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data ... for analysis, then reducing the data into themes ... and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. Across many books on qualitative research, this is the general process that researchers use. Undoubtedly, there will be some variations in this approach (Creswell, 2007, p. 148).

In this qualitative study, the analysis consisted of observations and open-ended questions. As analyzing the data, the above described process was followed and all the data collected were analyzed systematically. For the analysis of the observational data, first codes and themes were identified and then a table was provided in order to make the textual data easy to understand.

For the analysis of the questions, however, the given answers were read cyclically. In this process, all the mentioned themes were noted, listed, and then grouped as recurrent ones and unique ones. Also, the recurrent ones were subsumed under main categories. For a better understanding, a table was produced and illustrative quotes were presented. Finally, all the answers were translated into English since the questions were answered in Turkish.

RESULTS

Observational Data

In the school studied, teachers of the English department were observed to avoid the direct use of coursebooks in their classes and instead present the material in forms of worksheets they made.

Before the beginning of the academic term, the language teachers themselves made worksheets and other supplementary or supporting materials with the help of all materials available (e.g., different coursebooks, workbooks, newspapers, and magazines). The steps they were observed to follow before, during, and after making their materials, were given below:

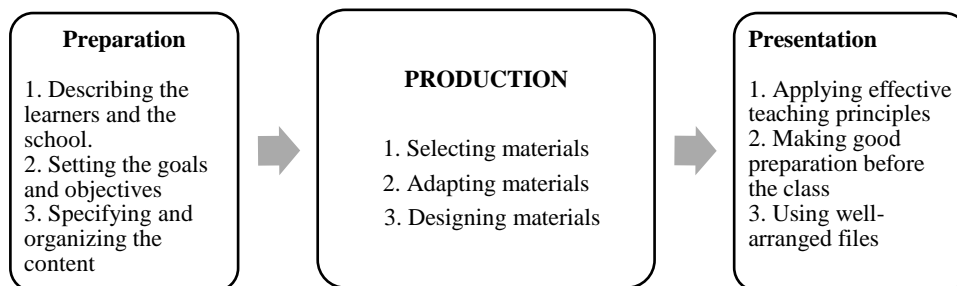


Figure 1 Observed steps to make and use materials

As the figure above indicates, teachers were observed to take three steps as producing their materials: selection, adaptation, and design. However, this step of production was preceded by the step of preparation and followed by the step of presentation with its own principles. The activities started about two months before the term and were done at the school with the participation of all the teachers of English of the school. The head of the English department, who was also the designer of the worksheet-based system in the school, guided the teachers during the process, with his experience in materials development. He was an English teacher of twenty-five years and had many materials he made for his classes. He had several files of worksheets, which he arranged for the each level he taught. In the meetings, he shared his materials with other teachers and he made detailed explanations of how he created, arranged, and use these worksheets for ELT.

The preparation step began with the description of the learners and the school. During this step, both the learners and the school were described in terms of their characteristics. That is, first, learners' age, proficiency level in English, interests, previously studied subjects (especially lasts term's studies) were identified. Then, the school's educational objectives, facilities (e.g., copier room, language laboratory, projectors), and physical environment (e.g., classroom size, seating arrangement) were described. Based on these descriptions, the goals and the objectives were set. At this step, the descriptions at the previous step, were taken as a base. Additionally, the official syllabus, the coursebook suggested by the Ministry of Education, and the time (hours perweek) allocated to the study of English were considered. As the following step, content was specified and organized. This step included the description of what would be taught (e.g., language skills, topics, exercises, and texts). As organizing the content, three main criteria were considered: well-known principles to sequence (from familiar to unfamiliar, from simple to complex, from easy to difficult, from known to unknown); clear presentation and adequate exercises of new items, structures and vocabulary; and recycling of already learned material in different texts.

After organizing the content, what to do the next was the production of worksheets, which should take three main steps: Materials selection, materials adaptation, and materials design. For these activities, a special room with different kinds of materials was provided by the school administration. At the first step, materials selection, best materials among a large variety of existing materials were selected. At the second step, materials adaptation, necessary changes and rearrangements on the

selected materials were made according to the needs. For example, many activities were omitted whereas many others were added; size and colour of many pictures were changed, students' photos and names were added to the content to take interest, some exercises were simplified and content of the reading passages were rearranged. At the third step, design, all these rearranged or changed materials were put together and they were used for designing new materials. During the step, teachers especially considered the levels and age of the students. At the school, there was also a system which groups the students according to their English proficiency levels. Therefore, according to these levels, different worksheets and other materials (e.g., word or picture flashcards) were prepared. Additionally, much attention was paid to make the materials clear and simple but rich in content. For example, teachers provided many activities, exercises, and texts but avoided unnecessary details and visuals.

The last step in the process was presentation. This step was considered as important as the preparation and production steps. For the teachers, it was strongly important that the worksheets should be presented according to the principles of effective teaching and learning. Among these principles, there were especially two issues central and crucial to their courses: preparation before the class, and use of files. In almost all meetings, teachers' good preparation before the class was emphasized by the head of the English department. He repeated many times that students would be motivated and take the class more seriously when they witness the efforts of their teachers to make their best. The other principle, however, was the use of files to keep the worksheets together. Both teachers and students had their own files. Teachers put the worksheets they made in separate files and arranged them in a certain order (grade by grade and topic by topic). Students were also required to have their files. They were asked and checked to keep the worksheets which the teacher hand out each lesson in their files. At the end of each month, the files were checked and graded by the teacher on a certain criteria such as sequence and tidiness.

Open-Ended Questions

Teachers' views. The teachers were asked the question of 'What do you think about the use of teacher-made worksheets for ELT?' As an answer to the question, 2 participants explained why instructing with teacher-made worksheets was useful whereas 6 participants explained how these worksheets would be useful or effective. The table below shows the themes emerged:

Table 2

Teachers' Views of The Use of Teacher-Made Worksheets For ELT

	f	
Why to use worksheets	5	appropriate to the students' specific needs and characteristics interesting attractive not boring
How to use worksheets	6 75	using well-prepared worksheets, in terms of content and design developing all four language skills involving different kinds of activities doing many listening exercises being colorful and attractive

The basic reasons why worksheets should be used as instructional materials in ELT classes were given in the following comments:

In a month, the student looks through the English coursebook in his/her hand page by page, he/she gets to know it well and gets bored with it. On the other hand, each new worksheet given in each lesson, attracts the learner's attention with both its content and design; and the student develops an interest in it (Teacher 7).

It is very useful that the teacher creates worksheets, prepares quizzes and

evaluates them. I wish we had, at the very least, the opportunity to divide the coursebooks into several parts, and, then hand them out page by page. Because, the students look through the material in their hands quickly, and, when the following topic is to be studied, these pages do not attract the students' attention any more (Teacher 6).

The head of the English department of the school emphasized that teacher-made worksheets were effective mainly because they were prepared according to the students' needs. He commented:

Worksheets are made and presented according to the students' needs and learning deficiencies appeared in the previous lesson. The teacher treats like a doctor and prescribes the needed medicine according to the process of recovery of his patient. If the majority of the students cannot learn the material, then, this material is instructed again in the next lesson, with a different kind of presentation and with a new worksheet (Teacher 5).

Teachers who explained the factors influencing the usefulness or effectiveness of worksheets, however, made comments like "It is a must that different activities be inserted between the worksheet-based ones" (Teacher 2), "If worksheets develop four skills (listening, speaking, writing, reading) of the students, then, they become useful" (Teacher 8), and "... there should certainly be listening exercises accompanying the sheets" (Teacher 4). Comments of the same kind also included:

It (the effect) varies according to the material prepared. A 50-word worksheet without any colour or visual becomes useless in the long run. It would be boring for both the students and the teacher, if the worksheet is the only material to be used every day. The class environment and the materials should be variable, attractive and of the kind which arouses interest in the subject (Teacher 1).

Sometimes worksheets become more entertaining with a popular character, especially for the primary school student. When the student finds his favourite comic hero on the worksheet, he/she answers the questions with pleasure. Besides, ... the principle 'one topic at one time' principle should be on practice (Teacher 3).

Students' views. The students were asked the question of 'Do you think that it is useful to study with teacher-made worksheets as learning English? Why?' The analysis of the answers revealed that participant students' views can be grouped under three main headings: (1) positive, (2) partially positive, (3) and negative. The table below shows these groups and the themes emerged:

Table 3

Students' Views of the Use of Teacher-Made Worksheets for ELT

	ff	%	
Positive Views	65	93	enjoyable and enhancing motivating better for studying exams efficient easier to study than coursebooks more comprehensible than coursebooks not include unnecessary details better for learning not boring not complicated as coursebooks detailed good for easier and better understanding of the material helpful for learning vocabulary
Partially Positive Views	3	4	easy to lose but better to study useful to study but difficult to keep together partially useful and partially not
Negative Views	2	3	Not enjoyable and instructive as coursebooks Not good as coursebooks for studying

As shown in Table 3, except for 2 negative and 3 partially positive comments, all comments about the use of teacher-made worksheets were positive. Negative

comments were “Personally, I don’t find them useful. Learning with coursebooks is more enjoyable, more instructive...” (Student 41), and “No. It is better to study with coursebooks” (Student 14). The partially positive comments, on the other hand, consisted of the following:

Worksheets have both advantages and disadvantages. Worksheets can get lost easily. This is the disadvantage. However, the material is studied better. This is the advantage. ... (Student 42).

It is useful and advantageous to study with worksheets. But, ... although we can collect them during the school year, in the subsequent years, it becomes difficult to keep them since there are a lot of worksheets in hand. Also, we can experience difficulties in connecting subjects since they are presented separately with worksheets (Student 15).

It is partially useful (Student 43).

All other comments were positive. One student wrote, for instance:

I strongly think that it is useful. With worksheets, not only the classes become enjoyable but also our learning is enhanced. Besides, when we realize how much trouble our teacher has gone to, we become more interested in the subject. At the same time, the worksheets help us study for the exams better (Student 25).

Several unique and short comments also expressed the idea that learning with worksheets is efficient: “I think it is efficient” (Student 1), “Yes, it is very useful. It helps me study efficiently” (Student 24).

Among these positive comments, three advantages of studying with teacher-made worksheets were mentioned most often: (a) it is much better than coursebook-followed instruction (21 participants), (b) it helps to get a better and easier learning of the material (14 participants) and (c) it enhances the learning of vocabulary (11 participants). The students who compared teacher-made worksheets to coursebooks made comments like:

Worksheet-based system is better because worksheet is easier to study and more comprehensible than the coursebook (Student 44).

Yes. Since it (worksheet) is just like the summary of the material in coursebook, we do not study the unnecessary parts in the coursebook. When we study with coursebook, I can’t understand anything, I become sleepy. When we study with worksheets, not only I learn the material better but also the lesson does not become boring (Student 45).

Yes. Because, we think that the coursebooks prepared by the Ministry of Education are inefficient. We can comprehend the material, especially the grammar, better with worksheet-based system (Student 34).

Yes. Because, the coursebook is very complicated (Student 18).

I think it is useful. With coursebooks it (the lesson) is boring, but with worksheets, it is enjoyable (Student 46).

Absolutely, yes! As all my teachers, I find the coursebook by the Ministry of Education inefficient, and even some parts of it unnecessary. I like the worksheets prepared meticulously by my teacher (Student 39).

Of course :) it is useful. In our coursebook, it is not that everything is in detail. But, in worksheets, there is everything we need (Student 13).

14 students stated that they enjoyed learning with worksheets because worksheets made the task of learning easier and the material to be learned more comprehensible. These students made very clear comments such as “Yes. Because we can understand easier with worksheets” (Student 47), and “Yes. It helps us get a better understanding of the material” (Student 48).

11 participants, however, hold the positive view that learning with worksheets is useful because worksheets enhance their learning of new vocabulary. Comments regarding this idea included:

Yes, I do. We comprehend the unknown words quickly (Student 33).

I think that studying with worksheets useful for me. Because, I memorize vocabulary and learn the sentences more quickly (Student 38).

Yes, I think that it is useful. Because, I can learn the meanings of the words better and can use them in sentences easier (Student 27).

DISCUSSION

The appropriate choice and use of instructional materials is of high importance for effective ELT. Among a great variety of materials, coursebooks seem to be used widely as central materials in many ELT classrooms throughout the world. Despite many advantages they offer for ELT, coursebooks have also been criticized for several reasons. Based on these reasons, many researchers discuss the need for adaptation of coursebooks, or use of teacher-made materials.

This study presented a qualitative study into the production and use of teacher-made worksheets in ELT classes. The process of materials adaptation and production was explored and teachers' and students' views on the use of teacher-made worksheets were provided. The data included observations and open-ended questions. Observations provided the data for the process whereas open-ended questions revealed the teachers' and students' views.

The observational data supported what was emphasized in the previous literature on the process of materials adaptation and production. The steps taken, factors considered, and the techniques used by the observed teachers as adapting and producing materials provided support for what was indicated in many other studies. First of all, the teachers followed three main steps -preparation, production, and presentation- of materials design. Secondly, they considered many factors as designing their materials (e.g., characteristics of the learners, facilities of the institution, official curriculum to be followed and the coursebook offered). Besides, they used techniques such as adding, omitting, extending, simplifying, and replacing during the process of materials adaptation. All these activities were consistent with the basic steps, factors, and techniques emphasized in the related literature (e.g., Howard & Major, 1995; Pakkan, 1997).

The views of teachers and students, on the other hand, provided strong support for the use of teacher-made worksheets in their EFL classes. Many participants compared teacher-made worksheets with coursebooks and majority of them found worksheets more enhancing for learning and more effective in meeting students' individual needs than coursebooks. The notion that students appreciate the materials made by their teachers was also clear in the data. It was among both teachers' and students' reasons why worksheets are motivational. This data was inconsistent with the arguments that teacher-made materials often have less prestige than published textbooks (e.g., Sheldon, 1988). However, consistent with the writings of many researchers (e.g., Block, 1991), it was put among the reasons why teachers should produce their own materials. It was also found that studying with worksheets was preferred by participant students mainly because worksheets were better than coursebooks in terms of content, organization, and their contribution to the enjoyment of the lesson. Students found instruction with worksheets effective since worksheets were clear and free of unnecessary details.

Not only the advantages but also the disadvantages of teacher-produced worksheets were among the important data. Difficulties in keeping large number of worksheets together and in connecting the subjects taught in parts were mentioned by a few students as the disadvantages of using worksheets. Additionally, teachers related the efficacy of the worksheet-based instruction to many essentials, such as doing different kinds of activities and providing quality in terms of colour, content, and design. Therefore, it can be argued that success of the teacher-made worksheets in language teaching partly depends on the teachers' success in the design of these materials.

Among all the data gathered, especially two points seem to be important. First of all, according to data, producing and using worksheets in ELT classes has its own

steps and principles. The steps are interrelated and considering certain principles during the process is essential for the efficacy of the use of teacher-made worksheets as instructional materials. Secondly, worksheets are mostly regarded as more advantageous than coursebooks. However, they are not without disadvantages. Although the disadvantages are fewer in number than the advantages, they should also be considered before planning a worksheet-based language course.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed not only the process of producing materials for ELT but also teachers' and students' views of using teacher-made worksheets instead of published coursebooks in their classes. In the light of the data found, it can be concluded that worksheets can practically be made by teachers themselves and can be used effectively as instructional materials in ELT classes. The use of teacher-made worksheets instead of coursebooks would especially help to avoid the disadvantages of the direct use of coursebooks and to base ELT courses on the individual characteristics and needs of the learners. However, the disadvantages of worksheets should not be ignored and many principles should be followed in worksheet-based language courses.

Further Research

This study was conducted in a private school. Further studies can investigate the issue in different language teaching institutions, especially in public schools having different conditions from private schools.

Author Note

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