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A Global Perspective on the Evaluation of English Coursebooks

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Abstract

Research Article

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Coursebooks play a central role in English language instruction worldwide. However, variations in educational goals, curriculum standards, and cultural contexts often lead to differences in coursebook design and content. This study adopts a global perspective to evaluate English coursebooks used in the third year of English language learning across four countries; Uzbekistan, Iraq, Ukraine, and Türkiye. Using a Coursebook Evaluation Template (CET), the analysis focuses on key aspects; coursebook components, language skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation. The findings reveal that while each coursebook reflects its country's national educational priorities, they consistently feature themes related to children's everyday lives, support language learning through familiar contexts, and offer engaging materials that foster communication skills. All four coursebooks effectively use appealing visuals, relatable topics, and age-appropriate activities to capture students' interest and enhance their learning experience. Some differences are also evident, such as variations in gender representation. Türkiye, in particular, shows the most balanced portrayal of male and female characters in both text and illustrations. By analysing third-year of English learning coursebooks from four countries, this study highlights the role of coursebooks in shaping language education globally. It also underscores the need for future research that includes learners' perspectives and longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term impact of coursebook use on students' language development and cultural awareness.

İngilizce Ders Kitaplarının Değerlendirilmesine Küresel Bir Bakış

Özet

Araştırma Makalesi

Makale Geçmişi

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Anahtar Kelimeler

Ders kitabı
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Ders kitapları, dünya çapında İngilizce eğitiminde merkezi bir rol oynamaktadır. Ancak, eğitim hedefleri, müfredat standartları ve kültürel farklılıklar, ders kitabı tasarımı ve içeriğinde de farklılıklara yol açmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Özbekistan, Irak, Ukrayna ve Türkiye olmak üzere dört ülkede İngilizce öğreniminin üçüncü yılında kullanılan İngilizce ders kitaplarını değerlendirmek için küresel bir bakış açısı benimsemektedir. Ders Kitabı Değerlendirme Formu kullanılarak yapılan analiz, ders kitabı bileşenleri, dil becerileri ve etkinlikleri, pedagoji, kültürel ve cinsiyet temsili gibi temel unsurlara odaklanmaktadır. Bulgular, her bir ders kitabının kendi ülkesinin ulusal eğitim önceliklerini yansıtırken, çocukların günlük yaşamlarıyla ilgili temalara yer verdiğini, tanıdık bağlamlar aracılığıyla dil öğrenimini desteklediğini ve iletişim becerilerini geliştiren ilgi çekici materyaller sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Dört ders kitabı da çekici görselleri, ilişkilendirilebilir konuları ve yaşa uygun etkinlikleri etkili bir şekilde kullanmaktadır. Cinsiyet temsili bakımından özellikle Türkiye, metin ve resimlerde erkek ve kadın karakterlerin en dengeli tasvirini göstermektedir. Dört ülkeden İngilizce ders kitaplarını değerlendiren bu çalışma, ders kitaplarının küresel olarak dil eğitimi şekillendirmedeki rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, ders kitabı kullanımının öğrencilerin dil gelişimi ve kültürel farkındalıkları üzerindeki uzun vadeli etkilerini daha iyi anlayabilmek için, öğrencilerin bakış açılarını ve boylamsal araştırmaları içeren gelecekteki çalışmalara duyulan ihtiyacın altını çizmektedir.

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1. Introduction

Coursebooks, also referred to as textbooks, are among the most essential components of any language program (Harwood, 2016; McDonough et al., 2013). They function as a mediator for the transmission of curriculum knowledge, and play a pivotal role in shaping language instruction. By presenting logically sequenced explanations and language samples, coursebooks contribute to minimizing unpredictability in classroom instruction, frequently functioning as the foundational component of language programs. Specifically, English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks are widely recognized as essential sources of input, enhancing potential for learner intake and facilitating purposeful language production (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017).

Tomlinson (2001) broadly defines materials as “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language” (p. 66). Within this framework, coursebooks serve not only as primary content resources and supplementary tools for teachers but also as effective means for learners’ self-study. Globally, many teachers rely on coursebooks as their primary classroom resource and report feeling more confident and prepared when teaching with a coursebook at hand. The availability and use of a wide range of coursebooks and supplementary materials empower teachers to deliver instruction more effectively across diverse educational contexts.

Calvet-Terré and Llurda (2025) observe that although coursebooks are welcomed by some and criticized by others, they remain a central element in ELT, serving as a key resource for both teachers and learners. Given the widespread use of coursebooks and their central role in shaping classroom instruction, it is essential to ensure that these materials meet learners’ needs and align with pedagogical goals (Waltermann & Forel, 2015). Additionally, the systematic evaluation of coursebooks is essential for maintaining the relevance, quality, and pedagogical effectiveness of teaching materials.

1.1. Coursebook Evaluation

Evaluation is a dynamic process aimed at assessing the suitability and appropriateness of existing practices (Litz, 2005). In the field of ELT, coursebook evaluation is widely recognized as a critical tool for enhancing the effectiveness of language instruction. With the growing availability of instructional materials, effective evaluation ensures that coursebooks align with learners’ needs, as poor selection can lead to wasted resources reducing learner motivation (McDonough et al., 2013). Coursebook evaluation allows educators and curriculum designers to determine whether materials meet the diverse needs of all stakeholders. It provides teachers with valuable insights into the pedagogical strengths and limitations of the coursebook, promoting informed decision-making in instructional planning (Litz, 2005).

Approaches to coursebook evaluation vary, shaped by differing theoretical perspectives, which underscore the importance of contextually grounded, theoretically informed evaluation practices (Harmer, 2010). Research highlights the pivotal role that textbook evaluation plays in ensuring the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of ELT materials (McDonough et al., 2013). Scholars emphasize the importance of rigorous evaluation frameworks, which are essential for determining whether materials align with learning objectives and are appropriate for the cultural context of the learners, thereby ensuring their adaptability across diverse educational settings.

1.2. Coursebook Evaluation Methods

While various methods have been proposed for coursebook evaluation, such as the use of structured checklists and templates there remains no universally accepted standard. A well-constructed coursebook evaluation checklist typically incorporates several key components to ensure that instructional materials align with teaching objectives and effectively address learners’ needs. *Content evaluation* focuses on the relevance, accuracy, and cultural appropriateness of language, ensuring the balanced and progressive development of vocabulary, grammar, and communicative skills. *The organization and layout* of the textbook are assessed in terms of the clarity of learning objectives, the logical sequencing of content, and visual appeal, factors that significantly enhance learner engagement. In addition, *effective activities* should offer variety, encourage interaction, and provide opportunities for skill integration and self-assessment. *Teacher support materials* are essential in providing guidance, answer keys, and flexibility for various instructional contexts. *Practical factors* such as cost and availability significantly affect the accessibility and usability of instructional materials. Evaluation extends beyond printed textbooks to encompass a broad range of resources, including videos, DVDs, and other multimedia tools used in language learning (Litz, 2005). Furthermore, attention to *cultural sensitivity* is essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment (Kırkgöz & Ağçam, 2011). Additional considerations, such as *gender representation*, can also play a critical role in shaping a comprehensive and equitable textbook evaluation framework.

Once evaluation criteria are established, it is essential to test them for reliability and effectiveness. Mukundan et al. (2011) conducted a study outlining key considerations in the development of provisional checklists for evaluating English language textbooks. In constructing these instruments, the authors emphasized the importance of ensuring validity, reliability, and practicality. Later, Mukundan and colleagues refined their initial checklist through a focus group

study, which led to the addition of new items to the original checklist. These improvements increased the checklist's scope, contextual suitability, and practical usefulness, enhancing its effectiveness as a tool for evaluating ELT materials.

1.3. Research on Coursebook Evaluation

Most scholars contend that classroom teachers are uniquely positioned to serve as coursebook evaluators due to their intimate knowledge of instructional contexts and their active role in the implementation, adaptation and assessment of teaching materials (McDonough et al., 2013). Brown (2001) supports this perspective by arguing that as the primary users of coursebooks, teachers play a crucial role in determining their effectiveness; therefore, their evaluations are of significant value. Consequently, most coursebook evaluation studies are conducted from the perspectives of teachers and students, as their insights are considered central to understanding the effectiveness and appropriateness of the coursebooks. For example, Kirkgöz (2011) evaluated four locally produced English coursebooks used in Grade-4 and Grade-5 classes in state primary schools. A total of 816 students and 124 teachers participated in the evaluation by completing the Smiley Questionnaire, which was supplemented with interviews. The findings indicated that the coursebooks are well designed to meet students' needs.

With the proliferation of newly published English coursebooks, evaluation has become a critical area of focus in ELT. The *Sunrise* series, developed by Macmillan for use in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) since 2007, has been evaluated by several researchers. Sultan and Sharif (2013) evaluated the listening activities, while Ebadi and Hasan (2016) examined the teaching tasks in the Grade 12 coursebook, concluding that it was well-designed for foreign language instruction. In contrast to these earlier investigations, which focused on evaluating one dimension of the coursebooks, Saeed (2021) examined English teachers' perceptions about different aspects of the *Sunrise* coursebooks, for Grades 7, 8, and 9. The questionnaire used by the researcher examined several elements, including the accessibility of the coursebook, layout and design, activities, skills, and subject matter and content. The findings revealed that the Sunrise coursebooks are suitable for the middle school level.

In the context of Uzbekistan, Tajibayev (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of the *Kids English* coursebooks in supporting the English language development of primary school learners in Grades 1–4. The study examined whether the exercises and tasks in the coursebooks effectively promote language acquisition and provide sufficient variety to meet the diverse needs of learners. The findings revealed that the majority of exercises in the *Kids English* series focus on developing learners' language competence, with a strong emphasis on building core skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and grammar. Tajibayev (2020) also offers a practical set of recommendations for evaluating English coursebooks for young learners. These include assessing whether the textbook aligns with course objectives and is appropriate for the learners' age, background, language level, and motivation. He further emphasizes the importance of the coursebook's underlying teaching approach, the balance it offers across the four language skills, its reflection of current understanding in language learning, and the quality of exercises. Other key factors include the organization of the textbook and the availability of supplementary materials.

In Ukraine, the evaluation of English coursebooks for young learners has received increasing attention in recent years, particularly with the shift towards communicative and competency-based approaches in language education. Mariuts (2017) provides a comprehensive examination of foreign language textbook evaluation from both Ukrainian and international perspectives, reviewing criteria such as linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance, pedagogical effectiveness, and alignment with a competency-based curriculum. The researcher emphasizes the need for materials that not only develop all language skills but also engage learners through meaningful and contextually appropriate content. Similarly, Lisna (2016) highlights the value of retrospective evaluations in understanding the long-term impact of coursebooks on teaching and learning.

This is particularly relevant when examining the cultural content of ELT coursebooks. Several studies have explored this aspect, including Kirkgöz and Ağçam (2011), who analysed 18 locally published English textbooks used in Turkish primary schools; eight published after the 1997 curriculum reform and ten following the 2005 curriculum update. Their findings showed that these textbooks offered a balanced representation of local culture, the target language culture, and international cultures. Similarly, Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) investigated cultural representation in dialogues and reading passages of both international and localized English textbooks used in Iran. They found that localized textbooks largely contained culturally neutral content with limited references to the target language or other cultures, whereas international textbooks emphasized intercultural and target language cultural elements, with minimal culturally neutral material.

Among the many studies on gender in ELT coursebooks, a notable one by Dahmardeh et al. (2025) examined gender representation in 64 ELT coursebooks used in schools across seven Middle Eastern countries (Egypt, Iran, Iraq [Kurdistan], Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the UAE). The study examined whether these materials align with official curriculum goals of promoting gender equality. Using content analysis of texts, visuals, and themes, the researchers

found a clear gender imbalance: males were often depicted in dominant and diverse roles, while females appeared in limited, stereotypical ones. Gender-biased language and imagery were widespread, potentially shaping students' self-perception and social development. The findings suggest that schools in these countries are falling short in promoting gender equality through course materials, and highlights the urgent need for more inclusive ELT resources to support equality in classrooms.

As outlined in the preceding section, while numerous studies have examined ELT coursebooks and made valuable contributions to the field, there remains a significant gap in comprehensive and systematic evaluations of English coursebooks specifically designed for primary education. In the context of Ukraine, existing research (see Mariuts, 2017) tends to either take a broad approach to foreign language materials or focus primarily on format, often overlooking deeper pedagogical considerations. A similar pattern can be observed in Iraq, where studies such as Saeed (2020) concentrate on evaluating exercises and tasks, with an emphasis on linguistic content and curriculum alignment. Although such work is important, it leaves other critical dimensions, such as language, skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation, largely unexplored.

This observation highlights a clear gap in the literature and emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive evaluation framework that considers not only language acquisition but also the pedagogical and sociocultural factors shaping young learners' classroom experiences. It further underscores the importance of targeted, context-sensitive research that rigorously assesses the quality, effectiveness, and classroom applicability of English coursebooks used in primary education across different national settings. Addressing this gap would offer valuable insights to educators and policymakers in selecting and developing materials that better align with educational goals and more effectively address the diverse needs of learners.

Furthermore, much of the research has focused on evaluating materials used within a single-country context. What remains underexplored is the investigation of ELT coursebooks published and used across different countries and cultural settings. Existing studies often concentrate on specific national contexts, making it difficult to identify common patterns or key differences in the inclusion of ELT coursebook elements. A cross-national comparison would enable an analysis of how these elements are represented across diverse contexts and how cultural factors influence the portrayal of English use. This approach could reveal recurring trends as well as unique national characteristics in coursebook design, offering valuable insights into how English is conceptualized and taught across different national contexts.

In light of these aims, the following research question guided this study:

How do English coursebooks used in the third year of language learning across Uzbekistan, Iraq, Ukraine, and Türkiye address key aspects such as coursebook components, language skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation?

2. Method

2.1. Model of the Research

This study employs a mixed-methods comparative content analysis approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of the selected coursebooks. It combines qualitative analysis (thematic content analysis) with quantitative data such as frequency counts of activities in the third-year English coursebooks from four countries.

2.2. Coursebooks

The present study was conducted as a part of the Future of English (FoE) Project. The data analysed in this study were drawn from four English coursebooks used in primary schools in four countries. These include: *Primary School English* by Evrim Birincioğlu Kaldar (Türkiye); *Guess What* by Susannah Reed and Kay Bentley (Uzbekistan); *Sunrise 3*, published by Cambridge University Press (Iraq); and *English* by Oksana Karpyuk (Ukraine). All coursebooks are student editions officially approved by the Ministries of National Education in their respective countries, and are used for teaching English to third-year of learning English to primary school students. The selection of countries for this study was based on their inclusion in the FoE Project.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

To gather data, a Coursebook Evaluation Template (CET) specifically developed for the present study was utilized. The CET consisted of five main parts. Part 1 of the CET explored grade in each country corresponding to the third year of learning English, age of pupils using the book and coursebook components available.

Part 2 focused on evaluating the content of the coursebooks. The CET asked the evaluator to identify whether the materials included topics related to the following areas: the local context; children's daily lives (e.g., school, family,

home life, play, and friends); daily life in general (e.g., work, jobs, travel, and transport); children's interests and realities; and academic study (e.g., lessons, school subjects, classrooms, teachers, and school routines).

The CET also examined the representation of cultural elements in terms of how culture is presented across the coursebooks. According to Risager (2023), textbook cultural content includes "the various textual and visual representations of a potentially wide spectrum of aspects such as people, everyday life and communication, ideas and concerns, languages, institutions, geography, and history" (p.1). The CET asked whether the coursebooks addressed both national and international culture, places, attitudes and values, and other unspecified topics beyond those listed.

Furthermore, this section of the CET asked the evaluator to identify the number of illustrations (photos, drawings, graphs, maps, etc.) in the coursebooks. Specifically, they were to assess whether the images reflected the local context, depicted English-speaking countries, and connected with children's everyday experiences. Evaluators were also asked to estimate approximately what percentage of the illustrations were integral to learning, meaning that learners would be unable to complete the activity without them.

Part 3 of the CET focused on pedagogy. This part explored the number of activities in the first and every third unit of the coursebook from a given list, which included gap-fill, drills, completing sentences, formulating sentences, matching, colouring, drawing, ordering/ranking/sorting, role play, games, singing/chanting, two-option questions, comprehension questions, multiple choice questions, punctuation, dictation, true/false, unscramble activities, crossword puzzles, making dialogues, repeating, and other activity types.

Part 4 was of the CET asked questions about language; the number of activities that focused on the following language areas and skills: reading, speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, handwriting, and metacognition (i.e., learning how to learn and developing awareness of one's own thought processes).

Part 5 of the CET focused on gender. Evaluators were asked to examine the coursebooks for the following:

- a) Are there any examples of characters whose gender is unclear or not stated (e.g.: Animal characters, smiley faces, names that could be used for both girls and boys, etc.).
- b) Are there any examples (in the illustrations or text) of male and female characters undertaking traditional roles?
- c) Are there any examples (in the illustrations or text) of male and female characters fulfilling non-traditional roles?

Additionally, evaluators were asked to analyse the dialogues appearing either within the units or in the listening transcripts in order to determine the following: the number of dialogues initiated by female characters; the number of dialogues initiated by male characters; and the number of dialogues initiated by characters of unspecified gender.

To validate the instrument, a multi-phase evaluation process was implemented. Initially, each primary researcher within the FoE project team reviewed the CET for relevance, clarity, and comprehensibility, while also providing suggestions for improvement. These suggestions were subsequently discussed during a focus-group meeting, and the necessary revisions were incorporated into the provisional version of the CET. In the second phase, the instrument was shared with researchers from diverse countries working on the FoE Project for further assessment and feedback. In the final phase, the compiled evaluations were carefully reviewed, resulting in the addition of new items to the provisional CET. These revisions enhanced the instrument's comprehensiveness, contextual relevance, and overall applicability, ultimately establishing it as a valid and reliable tool for evaluating English coursebooks (Mukundan et al., 2011). The high level of agreement observed across individual assessments and the synthesized evaluation provides strong evidence of inter-rater reliability, underscoring the instrument's consistency and dependability across different national contexts.

2.4. Procedure

The coursebook evaluation was conducted through a collaborative process comprising three phases. In the first phase, the researcher/evaluator from each country independently completed the CET for the English coursebook used in their respective country and provided written comments. Each coursebook consisted of ten units, of which four units (Units 1, 4, 7, and 10) were selected for evaluation. In the second phase, these evaluations were submitted to the lead author of the present study, who collated the analyses to produce a country-specific coursebook evaluation. In the third phase, the compiled evaluation was shared with each researcher for review and verification, an essential step for ensuring member checking. A high level of agreement was observed between the individual evaluations and the synthesized assessment. Finally, the lead author conducted a cross-national comparative analysis of the English coursebooks used in the third year of learning English, the findings of which are presented in this article.

2.5. Coursebook Analysis

A systematic count of all activities in the first and every third unit of each coursebook was conducted. This included counting language activities, references to people and places, identifying cultural references, and examining gender-related issues. In addition, the units analysed were subjected to a detailed thematic content analysis. Once data collection was completed, key examples were selected for illustrative purposes.

3. Results

This section presents the results obtained through the administration of the CET to address the research question: *How do English coursebooks used in the third year of primary education across Uzbekistan, Iraq, Ukraine, and Türkiye address key aspects such as coursebook components, language skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation?* The findings are organised according to each component of the CET, highlighting both common patterns and notable variations among the evaluated coursebooks.

3.1. Grade, Age of Pupils and Coursebook Components

Part 1 of the CET evaluated the grade level in each country corresponding to the third year of English language learning, the age of pupils using the coursebook, and the coursebook components available.

Table 1. *Grade Level and Age of Pupils across Countries*

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Grade	3	3	3	4
Age	8,5	8	8	9

As Table 1 illustrates, the age of pupils using the coursebook varies slightly across countries. In Uzbekistan and Ukraine, students are typically between 8.5 and 9 years old; in Iraq, they are around 8; and in Türkiye, the average age is approximately 9. This variation is attributable to differences in the starting age for English language learning: in Türkiye, English instruction begins in Grade 2. Consequently, the third year of English language learning corresponds to Grade 4 in Türkiye, and to Grade 3 in all other countries.

In all four countries, the core materials provided to teachers include the Student's Book, accompanying audio materials (CD or DVD), and a workbook. Additionally, all countries, except Türkiye, provide a Teacher's Book or Guide. Various supplementary materials are also available to support English learning. For example, Uzbekistan offers videos and interactive whiteboard materials; Iraq provides flashcards; Ukraine includes a Resource Book; and Türkiye offers online and interactive whiteboard resources.

3.2. Evaluation of Content

3.2.1. Topics Related to Children's Everyday Life

Content analysis revealed that the English coursebooks investigated across all four countries include topics that reflect children's daily lives, such as school, family, home life, play, and friendships. In the Uzbekistan coursebook, children engage with content related to their everyday surroundings; for example, identifying animals, insects, and plants they might see outdoors. They also learn to talk about their daily routines and common fruits and vegetables. In Iraq, the coursebook includes activities such as describing one another, discussing actions and objects, and using vocabulary that reflects children's day-to-day experiences. The Ukrainian coursebook includes topics such as visiting the hospital, where children learn health-related vocabulary. They also practise using numbers to express age and describe rooms in their homes, building language around familiar environments. In Türkiye, the coursebook covers a wide range of daily-life topics, including classroom objects and rules, playing chess, hobbies, jobs, daily routines, breakfast items, drinks, fast food, and restaurant menus. These topics help learners connect language learning with familiar experiences from their everyday lives.

The coursebooks also include topics related to children's interests and everyday realities, helping to engage them through familiar and enjoyable content. In Uzbekistan, examples include activities such as drawing, singing songs, and doing exercises while singing, encouraging both creativity and physical movement. In Iraq, the coursebook offers a variety of interactive and playful tasks. These include pointing at and naming animals or toys, playing language and spelling games with friends, listening to and singing the alphabet song, and practicing adjectives like *tall*, *old*, and *young*. Other engaging activities include *observing pets' actions*, *learning action words*, *naming drinks*, learning house furniture vocabulary, and singing along to songs throughout the book. In the Ukrainian coursebook, topics such as *musical instruments* allow children to explore different types of music and instruments, tapping into a common area of interest for this age group. In Türkiye, the coursebook includes themes such as school life, where children talk about

typical hobbies such as collecting coins, playing chess, and watching cartoons. Other lessons focus on discussing favourite foods and drinks, topics that are relatable and engaging for most learners.

The English coursebooks used in Uzbekistan and Iraq do not incorporate topics related to the local context. In contrast, the coursebooks in Ukraine and Türkiye do include culturally relevant content. For instance, the Ukrainian coursebook features topics such as Days of the Week and House and Home. In the Days of the Week unit, children learn to name the days, talk about their favourite day, and describe their weekly routines. In the House and Home unit, students identify and spell parts of a home, ask and answer questions about where people are in the house, and describe people's locations within it. The unit concludes with students giving verbal descriptions of their own homes, reinforcing vocabulary and spatial language.

The coursebooks also cover themes related to academic study, including school subjects, classrooms, teachers, and school routines. In the Uzbekistan coursebook, students are encouraged to develop academic skills through activities such as writing about their favourite bug, with a further focus on practising and extending these core skills across various topics. In the Turkish coursebook, academic content includes learning the names of classroom objects, understanding classroom rules, recognising the importance of completing work on time, and developing language skills through the study of English.

3.2.2. Illustrations

Illustrations such as photos, drawings, graphs and maps are an essential part of any coursebook (Kırkgöz, 2009). Regarding the extent to which illustrations reflect the local context, the coursebooks from the KRI and Türkiye prominently feature images that represent their respective cultures. In the Iraqi coursebook, illustrations include children dressed in traditional Kurdish clothing and depictions of plains and mountains that reflect the Kurdish landscape. The Turkish coursebook includes visuals such as a portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, his address to the Turkish youth, and the Turkish national anthem. It also includes images of children in classrooms raising their hands and following classroom rules, helping students connect with the cultural context of Turkish education.

Additionally, the illustrations in the coursebooks depict scenes from English-speaking countries. For example, in the Uzbekistan coursebook, there is a photograph showing two schoolgirls walking home along a mountain road in Nepal. In the KRI coursebook, the illustrations include images such as the King and the Old Lady, while in Ukraine children are depicted in a British school library and at an entertainment park in Britain. The illustrations are also closely connected to children's everyday lives. In Uzbekistan, illustrations feature everyday living beings and objects that children might encounter in the yard, street, or elsewhere. In Iraq, the illustrations focus on activities such as interacting with friends, playing together, drawing, riding bikes, dancing, and practising actions such as in, on, and at, as well as daily routines including running, walking, singing, eating, drinking, writing, swimming, and sharing items with others. In Ukraine, children are shown in familiar settings such as school corridors, engaging in sports, or participating in daily activities like playing in the park. Illustrations also include different types of houses with labelled rooms, as well as a picture story about a boy who played basketball, injured his arm, and visited the doctor. In Türkiye, the coursebook illustrations cover a wide range of daily life activities, including classroom objects and rules, asking for permission, making requests, drawing, playing sports, engaging in hobbies, and participating in group games.

Table 2. Illustrations Integral to Learning in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Illustrations integral to learning	100%	90%	40%	75%

Regarding the role of illustrations in the learning process, the coursebooks from each country differ in how essential visuals are to the activities. As shown in Table 2, in Uzbekistan, nearly all illustrations are integral to learning, meaning students cannot complete the activities without them. In KRI, approximately 90% of the illustrations are essential for the tasks, while in Ukraine, only about 40% are considered critical to the learning process. In Türkiye, around 85% of the visuals are deemed vital for the activities.

Table 3. Decorative Illustrations in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Decorative illustrations	0	10%	60%	25%

Not all illustrations are integral to learning. As shown in Table 3, the approximate percentage of purely decorative illustrations varies across countries. In Uzbekistan, none of the illustrations are purely decorative, while in Iraq, approximately 10% are decorative. In Ukraine, around 60% of the illustrations are decorative, and in Türkiye, the proportion of decorative illustrations is estimated at between 15% and 20%.

3.2.4. Culture

The coursebooks examined also include references to both national and international cultures, helping to broaden students' cultural awareness. The third-year English coursebook in Uzbekistan does not include specific references to national culture; however, it incorporates international cultural elements. For example, the coursebook *Guess What!* is written for an international audience and features photographs of children from around the world, providing a broad international perspective. In Iraq, there are references to national culture such as Kurdish names, alongside international elements such as English names (e.g., Lucky) and imagery of girls riding bicycles. The Ukrainian coursebook includes national cultural references such as Defender of Ukraine Day, along with international cultural topics. For example, students learn about Christmas traditions in the UK and compare them with Ukrainian customs. In Türkiye, the coursebook features multiple references to national culture, including traditional games such as playing marbles, national symbols such as the Turkish flag, and cultural imagery such as a traditional Turkish family in which the grandmother is shown wearing a hijab. Additionally, popular local foods such as kebab, Turkish delight, and ayran are mentioned, along with a portrait of Atatürk, connecting language learning with culturally familiar elements.

Regarding attitudes and values, all four coursebooks promote positive social and personal development. In the Uzbekistan coursebook, values such as respecting and listening to others and reusing old items are emphasised, encouraging responsibility and healthy habits. The Iraqi coursebook introduces topics related to empathy and kindness, with examples including playing gently with a rabbit and sharing possessions with others, fostering compassion and cooperation among students. The Turkish coursebook places particular emphasis on values education, addressing a wide range of topics such as appropriate classroom behaviour, taking responsibility, fairness in maintaining clean spaces, helping friends and parents, and mutual respect. It also encourages children to manage their emotions positively and promotes core values such as honesty, patience, social responsibility, following rules, protecting others, and caring for nature.

3.3. Pedagogy

Table 4 presents the number of pedagogical activities included in each coursebook. Overall, the third-year of English coursebooks offer a sufficient range of pedagogical tasks. These include comprehension questions, gap-fill exercises, drills, sentence completion and formulation, matching, colouring, drawing, and ordering/ranking/sorting activities.

Table 4. Pedagogical Activities in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Comprehension questions	76	1	36	3
Gap fill	9	1	0	5
Drills	59	18	40	2
Completing sentences	13	0	6	3
Formulating sentences	9	6	42	23
Matching	16	1	27	12
Coloring	2	0	0	2
Drawing	5	0	17	7
Ordering/Ranking/Sorting	15	0	8	12

As shown in Table 4, comprehension questions are the most frequently used activity across the four countries, with 116 occurrences, reflecting a strong emphasis on reading comprehension and text understanding. Drills follow with 119 instances, indicating a continued focus on repetitive practice as a method for language acquisition. Formulating sentences appears 80 times, highlighting the importance placed on developing productive language skills. Matching activities, with 56 occurrences, support vocabulary development and recognition. Completing sentences is found 22 times, while ordering, ranking, and sorting activities appear 35 times, suggesting some integration of logical thinking tasks. Gap-fill exercises are less common, with only 15 instances. Drawing activities are included 29 times, mostly in the Ukrainian and Turkish coursebooks indicating some attention to creativity. Finally, colouring is the least used activity, appearing only 4 times, suggesting that visual learning tasks are not a significant focus in these educational materials.

Regarding the distribution of these activities across countries, Uzbekistan (n=76) and Ukraine (n=36) make extensive use of comprehension questions, whereas Türkiye (n=3) and Iraq (n=1) use them minimally. Drills are also heavily

emphasized in Uzbekistan (n=59) and Ukraine (n=40), while Türkiye uses them the least (n=2). Formulating sentences, which support productive language skills, is most prevalent in Ukraine (n=42) and Türkiye (n=23). Matching and ordering activities are used consistently in Türkiye and Ukraine but are scarcely present in Iraqi materials. Creative tasks such as drawing and colouring are found primarily in the Ukrainian and Turkish coursebooks, while they are nearly absent in the Iraqi materials.

Table 5, presented below, highlights the number of interactive activities in the English coursebooks evaluated.

Table 5. Interactive Activities in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Role play	17	1	5	6
Games	30	5	27	8
Singing/chanting	5	5	8	3

As Table 5 demonstrates, the English coursebooks also incorporate interactive activities, namely role-plays, games and singing/chanting. Overall, games are the most widely used, followed by role-play, while singing/chanting is used more modestly, suggesting it serves a supplementary role likely aimed at younger learners or for memory reinforcement. Regarding the distribution across countries, Uzbekistan uses role-play (n=17) far more than the other countries, suggesting a strong emphasis on communicative and performance-based learning. Türkiye (n=6), and Ukraine (n=5) use it moderately, while Iraq (n=1) shows minimal use, possibly due to cultural or curriculum constraints. Games are widely used in Uzbekistan (n=30) and Ukraine (n=27), reflecting a preference for engaging and motivating methods in these educational systems. Türkiye (n=8) uses games occasionally, while Iraq (n=5) shows limited application. As for singing and chanting, a relatively balanced distribution is observed across the four countries, with Ukraine (n = 8) leading slightly, followed by Uzbekistan (n = 5), Iraq (n = 5), and Türkiye (n = 3).

Overall, Uzbekistan appears to prioritize interactive and engaging activities such as role-play and games more than the other countries, reflecting a dynamic, communicative teaching approach. Ukraine also integrates games and singing considerably, suggesting a blend of enjoyable and functional language use. Türkiye and Iraq, while incorporating these activities to some extent, seem to place less emphasis on them, possibly due to differing educational priorities or contextual constraints. Additionally, the Uzbekistan coursebook includes a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) component, where language learning is embedded within subject-matter content. For instance, in Unit 1, students explore different habitats within a science context, while in Unit 4, topics such as *"What time is it around the world?"* and *"What parts of plants can we eat?"* are introduced, effectively integrating both language and content learning.

Table 6 highlights less frequently used or supplementary activities found in the coursebooks across the four countries. As shown in the table, the evaluated coursebooks include a small number of varied activity types, such as multiple-choice questions, punctuation exercises, dictation, true/false tasks, unscrambling activities, crossword puzzles, dialogue creation, and repetition tasks.

Table 6. Supplementary Activities in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Comprehension Question	0	1	0	0
Multiple Choice Question	0	1	0	0
Punctuation	0	2	0	0
Dictation	0	0	3	0
True/False	0	0	0	2
Unscramble Activity	0	0	0	1
Crossword Puzzle	0	0	0	2
Make Dialogues	0	0	0	1
Repeating	0	0	0	1

Overall, the numbers are very low, indicating that these activities are not widely incorporated into regular instruction. As shown in Table 6, Iraq is the only country with more than one activity type in this category, using comprehension

questions ($n = 1$), multiple-choice questions ($n = 1$), and punctuation correction ($n = 2$), suggesting some reliance on traditional written language tasks, though still minimal overall. Ukraine includes dictation ($n = 3$), which may reflect an attention to listening and writing accuracy, even if in a limited capacity. Türkiye applies a variety of activities once each, including true/false tasks, unscrambling, crossword puzzles, dialogue creation, and repetition, demonstrating some effort to diversify task types, though not consistently. Uzbekistan records no use of these specific activities, which may reflect either a focus on other activity types, as evidenced in previous tables, or differing categorization practices.

3.4. Language

The number of activities with a language skills focus varied across the evaluated coursebooks. As demonstrated in Table 7, reading activities ranged from 3 to 14, with Türkiye recording the fewest ($n = 3$), followed by Iraq ($n = 11$), Uzbekistan ($n = 14$), and Ukraine the most ($n = 31$). Regarding speaking activities, Uzbekistan had the highest number ($n = 38$), followed by Türkiye ($n = 24$), Ukraine ($n = 19$), and Iraq ($n = 7$). Similarly, listening activities followed the same distribution, with Uzbekistan ($n = 38$), Türkiye ($n = 24$), Ukraine ($n = 19$), and Iraq ($n = 7$).

Table 7. *Language Activities in the Coursebooks*

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Reading	14	11	31	3
Speaking	38	7	19	24
Listening	38	7	19	24
Writing	19	2	24	9
Grammar	18	15	24	15
Pronunciation	10	5	31	6
Spelling	2	4	7	0
Handwriting	0	0	0	0
Metacognition	24	0	4	9

Table 7 presents the number of language activities across the evaluated coursebooks. Regarding writing activities, Iraq recorded the fewest ($n = 2$), followed by Türkiye ($n = 9$), Uzbekistan ($n = 19$), and Ukraine ($n = 24$). For vocabulary activities, Türkiye had the lowest number ($n = 5$), followed by Iraq ($n = 10$), Uzbekistan ($n = 11$), and Ukraine the highest ($n = 36$). Regarding grammar activities, Iraq and Türkiye recorded equal numbers ($n = 15$ each), followed by Uzbekistan ($n = 18$) and Ukraine ($n = 24$). Pronunciation activities were present in all coursebooks, ranging from Iraq ($n = 5$) and Türkiye ($n = 6$) to Uzbekistan ($n = 10$) and Ukraine ($n = 31$). Spelling activities were identified in Uzbekistan ($n = 2$), Iraq ($n = 4$), and Ukraine ($n = 7$), with no spelling activities recorded in the Turkish coursebook. Handwriting activities were present only in the Turkish coursebook, in the form of vocabulary-level classroom rules. Metacognition activities, focusing on learning to learn and developing awareness of students' own thought processes, were included in all coursebooks except the Iraqi one. The Ukrainian coursebook contained 4 such activities, Türkiye 9, and Uzbekistan the highest number with 24.

3.5. Gender in Coursebooks

The coursebooks also reflect gender representation in both characters and illustrations. Regarding featured characters (excluding illustrations), Türkiye had the highest number of female characters ($n = 13$) slightly exceeding male characters ($n = 11$), suggesting a relatively balanced or even female-leaning representation. Uzbekistan featured 6 female and 9 male characters, while Iraq had 2 female and 5 male characters, indicating a notable male dominance in both cases. Ukraine showed the most balanced representation, with equal numbers of female and male characters ($n = 2$ each).

Regarding gender representation in illustrations, Türkiye again had the highest overall figures, with 136 male and 116 female characters, reflecting a male-leaning but relatively proportionate distribution. Iraq showed the most balanced illustration representation, with 41 male and 40 female characters. Uzbekistan depicted 27 male and 19 female characters, while Ukraine had 26 male and 21 female characters. Across all four coursebooks, male characters consistently outnumbered female characters in illustrations, suggesting that full gender parity in visual representation has yet to be achieved in these educational materials.

Table 8. The Number of Gender Characters in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
How many male characters feature in the book (excluding illustrations)?	9	5	2	11
How many female characters feature in the book (excluding illustrations)?	6	2	2	13
How many males are pictured in the illustrations?	27	41	26	136
How many females are pictured in the illustrations?	19	40	21	116

The third-year English coursebooks also include characters whose gender is unclear or unspecified, such as animal characters, smiley faces, or names applicable to both girls and boys. In Uzbekistan, such characters include a variety of animals, namely camels, bugs, rabbits, pets, whales, and chipmunks. In Iraq, 17 animal characters appear in the illustrations, all of unspecified gender. In Ukraine, gender-neutral characters include a dog used to present grammar content, aliens introduced in phonics sections, and various monsters featured in listening and grammar activities. In Türkiye, a small number of gender-ambiguous characters appear, such as smiley faces and animal figures.

Regarding the representation of characters in traditional gender roles, the coursebooks from Uzbekistan and Ukraine do not feature any such examples. In Iraq, one illustration depicts a male horse rider, while in Türkiye, examples include male characters playing football and basketball. As for non-traditional gender roles, no examples were identified in the coursebooks from Uzbekistan or Ukraine. In Iraq, however, illustrations feature both male and female dancers, a female horse rider, and a female cyclist. In Türkiye, one example of a male character dancing and singing is present.

Table 9. Distribution of Dialogue Openings by Gender in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Number of females opening the dialogue	0	5	9	14
Number of males opening the dialogue	4	4	16	14
Number of gender-unspecified characters opening the dialogue	0	0	0	2

Table 9 presents the number of female and male characters who open dialogues across the evaluated coursebooks. The data reveals varying patterns among the four countries. In the third-year English coursebook used in Uzbekistan, no instances of female characters opening dialogues were identified. In contrast, Iraq recorded 5 such instances, Ukraine 9, and Türkiye 14. Regarding male characters opening dialogues, Uzbekistan and Iraq each recorded 4 instances, while Ukraine had 16 and Türkiye 14. Additionally, Türkiye is the only country in which gender-unspecified characters were found opening dialogues, with 2 such instances recorded.

In the dialogues found in the listening transcripts, which feature interactions between male and female characters, patterns vary across the evaluated coursebooks. In the third-year English coursebook used in Uzbekistan, no instances of female characters opening dialogues were identified. In contrast, Iraq recorded 5 such instances, Ukraine 9, and Türkiye 14. Regarding male characters opening dialogues, Uzbekistan and Iraq each recorded 4 instances, while Türkiye had 14 and Ukraine 16. Additionally, Türkiye is the only country in which gender-unspecified characters were found initiating dialogues, with 2 such instances recorded.

Table 10. Distribution of Questions by Gender in the Coursebooks

Category	Uzbekistan	Iraq	Ukraine	Türkiye
Number of questions asked by females	14	7	15	9
Number of questions asked by males	12	5	34	7
Number of questions asked by characters with unspecified/unclear gender	0	1	0	2

Table 10 presents the distribution of questions asked by characters in the evaluated coursebooks, categorized by gender across the four countries. In the Uzbekistan coursebook, female characters asked slightly more questions ($n = 14$) than male characters ($n = 12$), with no questions posed by characters of unspecified gender. In Ukraine, however, male characters asked considerably more questions ($n = 34$) than female characters ($n = 15$), indicating a marked male-dominant representation in question-asking roles. In Iraq, female characters asked more questions ($n = 7$) than male characters ($n = 5$), with one question posed by a character of unspecified gender. In Türkiye, the distribution was more balanced, with female characters asking 9 questions and male characters 7, alongside 2 questions posed by characters of unspecified gender.

Overall, the data suggest differing patterns of gender representation in classroom discourse roles across the four countries. Ukraine displays the greatest imbalance, strongly favouring male characters in question-asking roles, while Uzbekistan, Iraq, and Türkiye demonstrate comparatively more equitable distributions.

4. Discussion

The analysis reveals that the English coursebooks across the four examined countries consistently incorporate themes related to children's daily lives, thereby supporting language learning through familiar and meaningful contexts. Each coursebook provides valuable tools for developing communication skills while ensuring that children engage with and enjoy their English learning journey. Furthermore, the coursebooks from all four countries effectively integrate engaging visuals, relatable topics, and age-appropriate activities to capture students' attention and sustain their learning.

While each country tailors its content to local contexts, cultural references, and the specific educational needs of its students, shared goals are evident across all four coursebooks, namely fostering language skills, promoting positive values, and encouraging interactive learning experiences. The coursebooks from Türkiye and Iraq effectively incorporate cultural elements, helping children connect language learning to their national identity. In contrast, the Uzbekistan and Ukraine coursebooks appear to focus more on global themes, which may limit opportunities for deeper cultural engagement and local identity development.

All four coursebooks balance local and global contexts by incorporating scenes from both students' everyday lives and English-speaking countries, thereby promoting cultural relevance alongside international awareness. The extent to which illustrations support learning varies across the four countries: Uzbekistan and Iraq rely most heavily on visuals for activity completion, while Ukraine employs them more for supplementary support than necessity, and Türkiye falls closer to Iraq in emphasizing their instructional value. These findings align with previous research on coursebook evaluation. Kırkgöz (2011) similarly found that English coursebooks address students' interests and learning needs in order to ensure greater engagement and effectiveness in language acquisition.

The coursebooks analysed incorporate both national and international cultural elements, helping to broaden students' global awareness while reinforcing local identity. Notably, the Uzbek coursebook lacks national cultural references but compensates with strong international content that introduces students to diverse cultures and global perspectives. In contrast, the Turkish and Ukrainian coursebooks strike a balance between local traditions and global topics, such as UK holidays and international cuisine. Cultural learning is further enhanced through personalised characters and relatable scenarios, which deepen student engagement with the material. Additionally, all four coursebooks promote positive values such as empathy, respect, and responsibility, with Türkiye placing a particularly strong emphasis on values education as an integral part of language learning.

In this respect, the present study supports the findings of Kırkgöz and Ağçam (2011), who demonstrated a balanced inclusion of local and international cultural elements, as similarly observed in the Turkish and Ukrainian coursebooks analysed here. It also reflects Tajeddin and Teimournezhad's (2015) observation regarding culturally neutral content in localised materials, as evidenced in the Uzbek coursebook.

The analysis of activity types across the four countries reveals distinct pedagogical approaches. Uzbekistan and Ukraine place a strong emphasis on comprehension and drill-based activities, reflecting a more traditional, form-focused pedagogy aimed at reinforcing accuracy and reading skills. In contrast, Ukraine and Türkiye demonstrate a more balanced and communicative approach by incorporating a wider variety of task types, including sentence formulation, matching, ordering, and creative activities such as drawing, which support both language production and learner engagement. Türkiye, in particular, integrates interactive and meaningful tasks that foster creativity and real-life communication, aligning with learner-centred methodologies. Iraq, however, shows limited task variety and minimal use of interactive or creative activities, suggesting a more constrained and potentially less engaging pedagogical model. While interactive elements such as games are present across all four coursebooks, their frequency varies according to each country's pedagogical priorities and educational context.

The distribution of language and skills-based activities highlights considerable variation in pedagogical focus across the four coursebooks. Uzbekistan places a strong emphasis on speaking, listening, and integrated CLIL tasks, suggesting a communicative and interdisciplinary approach to language learning. Ukraine leads in reading, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing activities, reflecting a well-rounded focus on all core language skills. In contrast, Iraq shows limited attention to writing, vocabulary, and metacognitive skills, indicating a more traditional and potentially less learner-centred pedagogical approach. Türkiye offers moderate coverage across most skill areas, with the unique inclusion of handwriting activities and a notable emphasis on metacognitive tasks.

Gender representation in the coursebooks shows varying levels of balance across the four countries, with Türkiye displaying the most equitable distribution of male and female characters in both text and illustrations. While Iraq, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan show some degree of imbalance, particularly in character inclusion, visual representations tend to be more balanced, suggesting a conscious effort to promote gender inclusivity through imagery. The evaluated coursebooks also incorporate gender-neutral characters, such as animals and abstract figures, providing inclusive representation across all four countries. Traditional gender roles are largely absent in Uzbekistan and Ukraine, whereas Iraq and Türkiye include some examples of both traditional and non-traditional roles, indicating greater gender role diversity in these educational contexts. These findings, which reveal varying efforts toward gender inclusivity, partially contradict those of Dahmardeh et al. (2025), who identified gender imbalances and stereotypical portrayals in ELT coursebooks across several Middle Eastern countries.

The present study addresses a notable gap in the literature, namely the lack of comprehensive and context-sensitive evaluations of English coursebooks designed for primary education. While previous studies have often focused on isolated aspects of coursebooks, such as Tajibayev's (2020) analysis of exercises and tasks in the Uzbek context, there remains a need for more holistic evaluations that consider multiple pedagogical and cultural dimensions simultaneously. The present study responds to that need by employing a comprehensive coursebook evaluation framework that examines a range of components, including coursebook structure, language skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation. In doing so, it aligns with the calls for broader and more integrative evaluative approaches advocated by scholars such as Tajibayev (2020), Mariuts (2017), and Lisna (2020).

Within the Iraqi context, while previous studies have explored specific aspects of *the Sunrise* series, such as listening activities (Sultan & Sharif, 2013), teaching tasks (Ebadi & Hasan, 2016), and teacher perceptions at the middle school level (Saeed, 2021), these investigations have typically focused on individual components or higher-grade levels. In contrast, the present study offers a comprehensive evaluation of Sunrise 3, a coursebook designed for primary-level learners. By examining multiple dimensions beyond isolated features, this study addresses the lack of in-depth, holistic evaluations of English coursebooks at the primary education level in the KRI context. In doing so, it fills a critical gap by providing insights into how Sunrise 3 supports young learners and aligns with broader educational objectives, thereby contributing to a more complete understanding of ELT materials used in the region.

Finally, the present study addresses the lack of cross-national comparative analyses by examining ELT coursebooks used across four distinct national contexts. In doing so, it offers a broader perspective on how English language materials are conceptualised and implemented across diverse educational settings. The research uncovers both shared trends and culturally specific variations in key pedagogical and design elements, such as language use, visual representation, and cultural content. This comparative approach enables a more nuanced understanding of how English is positioned not only as an academic subject, but also as a tool for global communication within differing socio-political and educational frameworks.

By highlighting both similarities and differences in how English is presented to young learners across countries, the study contributes to the global discourse on ELT material development and offers evidence-based insights to support more inclusive and contextually responsive coursebook design. In this way, it extends the scope of existing research beyond single-country analyses and helps pave the way for more globally informed approaches to ELT coursebook evaluation.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated a cross-national evaluation of third-year English coursebooks used in primary education across Uzbekistan, Iraq (KRI), Ukraine, and Türkiye. It aimed to examine how these coursebooks address key aspects such as coursebook components, language skills and activities, cultural representation, pedagogy, and gender representation. The findings offer a global perspective on various dimensions of the English coursebooks, revealing both shared features and notable differences among the four countries. By examining third-year English coursebooks used with young learners in four countries, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role coursebooks play in shaping language education within diverse educational and cultural contexts. Furthermore, it enriches the field of coursebook analysis by incorporating multiple national perspectives, thereby broadening the scope of research on coursebook evaluation in English language teaching.

6. Recommendations

For future research, it would be valuable to explore the perspectives of learners using these coursebooks. Investigating learners' views could provide additional insights into how they perceive the different components of the materials and would complement the findings of the present study. Furthermore, longitudinal research could examine how sustained exposure to these coursebooks influences students' language proficiency, cultural awareness, and attitudes toward the

content. Such studies would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of coursebook use in the classroom.

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Geniş Özet

1. Giriş

Ders kitapları, bir dil programının en temel bileşenlerinden biri olup (Harwood, 2016), müfredat bilgisinin aktarılmasında aracılık etmekte ve dil öğretiminin şekillenmesinde kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Özellikle İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (ELT) ders kitapları, temel kaynaklar olarak kabul edilmekte ve öğrencilerin amaçlı dil üretimini kolaylaştırmaktadır (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Ders kitapları, sınıf içi öğretime rehberlik etmekle kalmaz; öğrenci katılımını artırır ve hem öğrenciler hem de öğretmenler için kendi kendine öğrenme süreçlerinde kaynak sunar. Mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenler için ders kitapları, açıkça tanımlanmış dil hedeflerine sahip yapılandırılmış bir müfredat sağlayarak sistematik ders planlamasını destekleyen temel eğitim araçlarıdır.

Değerlendirme, mevcut uygulamaların uygunluğunu belirlemeyi amaçlayan dinamik bir süreçtir. ELT alanında ders kitabı değerlendirmesi, dil öğretiminin etkinliğini artırmak açısından kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Öğretim materyallerinin artan kullanılabilirliğiyle birlikte etkili değerlendirme, ders kitaplarının öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarına uygun olmasını sağlar. Ders kitabı değerlendirmesi; eğitimcilerin, yöneticilerin ve müfredat tasarımcılarının materyallerin farklı ihtiyaçlarını karşılayıp karşılamadığını belirlemelerine olanak tanır. Öğretmenlere bir ders kitabının pedagojik açıdan güçlü yönleri ve sınırlılıkları hakkında değerli bilgiler sağlayarak öğretim planlamasında bilinçli karar vermeyi teşvik eder (Litz, 2005).

Ders kitabı değerlendirme yaklaşımları, farklı teorik perspektiflerle şekillenerek çeşitlilik gösterir. Ders kitabı değerlendirmesinde yapılandırılmış kontrol listeleri ve değerlendirme formları gibi çeşitli yöntemler önerilse de genel kabul görmüş tek bir standart bulunmamaktadır. İyi yapılandırılmış bir ders kitabı değerlendirme kontrol listesi, öğretim materyallerinin öğretim hedefleriyle uyumlu olmasını ve öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını etkili biçimde karşılamasını sağlamak için birkaç temel bileşen içerir.

Birçok araştırmacı öğretmenlerinin ders kitabı değerlendircisi olarak eşsiz bir konumda bulunduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bunun temel nedeni, öğretmenlerin öğretim bağlamlarına ilişkin derin bilgiye sahip olmaları ve öğretim materyallerinin uygulanması, uyarlanması ile değerlendirilmesinde etkin rol oynamalarıdır (McDonough ve ark., 2013). Brown (2001) bu görüşü destekleyerek ders kitaplarının birincil kullanıcıları olan öğretmenlerin, materyallerin etkinliğini belirlemede kritik bir rol üstlendiğini ve bu nedenle değerlendirmelerinin büyük önem taşıdığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, ders kitabı değerlendirme çalışmalarının büyük çoğunluğu öğretmen ve öğrenci perspektiflerinden yürütülmektedir.

Yeni yayımlanan İngilizce ders kitaplarının sayısının artmasıyla birlikte, değerlendirme ELT alanında giderek daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Örneğin Irak'ın Kürdistan Bölgesi'nde kullanılan Sunrise serisi, pek çok araştırmacı tarafından incelenmiştir. Sultan ve Sharif (2013) dinleme etkinliklerini, Ebadi ve Hasan (2016) ise 12. sınıf ders kitabındaki öğretim görevlerini ele almıştır. Saeed (2021) ise daha kapsamlı bir yaklaşımla 7., 8. ve 9. sınıf Sunrise ders kitaplarını erişilebilirlik, tasarım, etkinlikler, beceriler ve içerik boyutlarıyla değerlendirmiş; bu kitapların ortaokul düzeyinde uygun olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Özbekistan bağlamında Tajibayev (2020), Kids English serisi ders kitaplarının dil edinimini destekleme etkinliğini incelemiş; alıştırma büyük çoğunluğunun kelime bilgisi, telaffuz, yazım ve dilbilgisi gibi temel becerilere odaklandığını saptamıştır. Ukrayna'da ise Mariuts (2017), yabancı dil ders kitabı değerlendirmesini dilbilgisel doğruluk, kültürel uygunluk ve pedagojik etkinlik gibi ölçütler açısından kapsamlı biçimde ele almıştır.

Kültürel içerik açısından bakıldığında, Kırkgöz ve Ağçam (2011) Türk ilkokullarında kullanılan 18 yerel İngilizce ders kitabını incelemiş; bu kitapların yerel, hedef dil ve uluslararası kültürleri dengeli biçimde yansıttığını belirlemiştir. Cinsiyet temsili konusunda ise Dahmardeh ve ark. (2025), Orta Doğu'daki yedi ülkede kullanılan 64 ELT ders kitabını analiz etmiş ve belirgin bir cinsiyet dengesizliği saptamıştır. Erkekler çoğunlukla baskın ve çeşitli rollerde tasvir edilirken, kadınlar sınırlı ve kalıplaşmış rollerde yer almaktadır. Bu durum, öğrencilerin benlik algısını ve toplumsal gelişimini olumsuz etkileyebilecek bir öğretim ortamı yarattığına işaret etmektedir.

Çok sayıda çalışma İngilizce ders kitaplarını değerlendirmiş olsa da bu araştırmalar genellikle tek bir ülke bağlamındaki materyallere odaklanmaktadır (Ghorbanchian vd., 2014; Kırkgöz, 2011). Farklı ülkelerde kullanılan ELT ders kitaplarının karşılaştırmalı incelenmesi ise oldukça sınırlı kalmaktadır. Oysa ülkeler arası bir analiz, çeşitli bağlamsal faktörlerin İngilizce kullanımını nasıl etkilediğini ve bu durumun ders kitaplarına nasıl yansıdığını ortaya koyabilir; hem ortak eğilimleri hem de ulusal özgünlükleri gözler önüne sererek İngilizcenin farklı ortamlarda nasıl öğretildiğine dair önemli bilgiler sunabilir. Öte yandan mevcut araştırmalarda, özellikle ilkökul düzeyine yönelik kapsamlı ve sistematik değerlendirmeler açısından önemli bir boşluk göze çarpmaktadır. Bu boşluğun giderilmesi, ders kitabı tasarımındaki ortak örüntüleri ve ulusal farklılıkları ortaya çıkararak eğitimcilere ve politika yapıcılara materyallerin seçimi ve geliştirilmesi konusunda son derece değerli bilgiler sunabilir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye, Özbekistan, Irak ve Ukrayna olmak üzere dört ülkedeki ilkokulların 3. sınıfında İngilizce öğretmek amacıyla kullanılan ders kitaplarını inceleyerek alandaki bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır.

2. Yöntem

Bu araştırmada, belirlenen ders kitaplarının kapsamlı biçimde analiz edilebilmesi için karma yöntemli karşılaştırmalı içerik analizi yaklaşımından yararlanılmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım; dört ülkede ilkokulların 3. sınıfında İngilizce öğretiminde kullanılan ders kitaplarındaki etkinliklere ilişkin frekans sayımları gibi nicel verileri nitel analizle (tematik içerik analizi) bir araya getirmektedir. İncelenen ders kitaplarının tamamı, ilgili ülkelerin devlet okullarında kullanılan ve Millî Eğitim Bakanlıkları tarafından resmi olarak onaylanmış öğrenci baskılarıdır.

Veri toplamak amacıyla bu çalışma için özel olarak geliştirilen Ders Kitabı Değerlendirme Formu (CET) kullanılmıştır. CET, beş ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Formun ilk bölümü her ülkede İngilizce öğreniminin üçüncü yılına karşılık gelen sınıf düzeyi, öğrencilerin yaşı ve ders kitabı bileşenleri hakkında genel bilgi toplamaktadır.

İkinci bölüm ders kitaplarının içeriğini ele almakta; yerel bağlam, çocukların günlük yaşamları, genel yaşam konuları ve akademik çalışma gibi temaların materyallerde yer alıp almadığını sorgulamaktadır. Bu bölüm aynı zamanda ulusal ve uluslararası kültürel unsurların, değerlerin ve görsellerin nasıl temsil edildiğini de incelemektedir.

Üçüncü bölüm pedagojiye odaklanmakta; boşluk doldurma, eşleştirme, rol yapma, oyun ve şarkı söyleme gibi çeşitli etkinlik türlerinin ders kitaplarındaki dağılımını incelemektedir. Dördüncü bölüm dil becerilerini kapsamakta; okuma, yazma, dinleme, konuşma, kelime bilgisi, dilbilgisi ve üstbilgi gibi alanlara yönelik etkinliklerin sayısını değerlendirmektedir. Beşinci ve son bölüm ise ders kitaplarındaki cinsiyet temsiline ilişkin sorular içermektedir.

3. Bulgular

Araştırma bulguları, dört ülkede de öğretmenlere öğrenci kitabı, ses materyalleri (CD veya DVD) ve çalışma kitapları gibi temel materyallerin sağlandığını göstermektedir. İçerik analizi, tüm ülkelerdeki İngilizce ders kitaplarının çocukların günlük yaşamlarına dair okul, aile, ev hayatı, oyun ve arkadaşlık gibi konuları içerdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Özbekistan'da çevre ve doğayla ilgili içerikler; Irak'ta günlük deneyimlere dayalı kelime dağarcığı; Ukrayna'da sağlık, sayılar ve evle ilgili temalar; Türkiye'de ise sınıf eşyalarından yiyeceklerle, hobilerden işlere kadar geniş bir yelpazede günlük yaşam konuları yer almaktadır.

İncelenen ders kitapları, hem ulusal hem de uluslararası kültürlere atıfta bulunarak öğrencilerin kültürel farkındalığını artırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Özbekistan İngilizce kitabı ulusal kültüre yer vermese de, uluslararası çocuk fotoğraflarıyla küresel bir bakış sunar. Irak kitabında Kürtçe isimler gibi ulusal referanslar bulunurken, bisiklete binen kızlar gibi uluslararası öğeler de yer alır. Ukrayna kitabı hem uluslararası kültürel konulara hem de ulusal temalara değinir; öğrenciler İngiltere'nin Noel gelenekleriyle kendi kültürlerini karşılaştırır. Türkiye kitabı ise misket oyunu ve Türk bayrağı gibi birçok ulusal simgeyi içerir.

Etkinlik dağılımına göre, anlama soruları Özbekistan ve Ukrayna'da sık kullanılırken, Türkiye ve Irak'ta azdır. Alıştırma Özbekistan ve Ukrayna'da yaygın, Türkiye'de ise en azdır. Üretken dil becerileri için cümle kurma en çok Ukrayna ve Türkiye'de görülmektedir. Eşleştirme ve sıralama Türkiye ile Ukrayna'da tutarlı, Irak'ta ise neredeyse yoktur. Çizim ve boyama gibi yaratıcı etkinlikler ağırlıklı olarak Ukrayna ve Türkiye kitaplarındadır, Irak materyallerinde ise nadirdir. Kitaplardaki cinsiyet konusu incelendiğinde ülkeler arasında sınıf içi söylem rollerine yönelik cinsiyet rollerinde farklılıklar belirlenmiştir. Örneğin, Ukrayna, erkek karakterlerin belirgin şekilde üstünlüğünü gösteren en belirgin cinsiyet eşitsizliğini sergilerken, diğer ülkelerde cinsiyet dağılımı daha eşitlikçi veya karmaşık bir yapı göstermektedir.

4. Sonuç ve Öneriler

Bu çalışma, Özbekistan, Irak, Ukrayna ve Türkiye'de ilkokul eğitimlerinin 3. yılında kullanılan İngilizce ders kitaplarının ülkeler arası değerlendirmesini yaparak, bu materyallere küresel bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Araştırma, incelenen kitapların çocukların günlük yaşamlarını yansıtan temalar içerdiğini ve tanıdık bağlamlar aracılığıyla dil öğrenimini desteklediğini göstermektedir. Her ders kitabı, iletişim becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik önemli etkinlikler sunarken, çocukların İngilizce öğrenme sürecinden keyif almalarını sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, dört ülkenin ders kitapları, öğrencilerin dikkatini çekmek ve öğrenmelerini kolaylaştırmak amacıyla ilgi çekici görseller, ilişkilendirilebilir konular ve yaşa uygun etkinlikleri etkili biçimde bir araya getirmektedir.

Her ülke, içeriklerini yerel bağlam, kültürel referanslar ve öğrencilerinin eğitim ihtiyaçlarına göre şekillendirirken; dil becerilerini geliştirmek, olumlu değerleri teşvik etmek ve ders kitabı materyallerinin kullanımıyla etkileşimli öğrenme deneyimleri sunmak gibi ortak hedeflere sahiptir. Türkiye ve Irak ders kitapları, kültürel unsurları görseller ve içerik aracılığıyla etkili biçimde dâhil ederek öğrencilerin dil öğrenimini ulusal kimlikleriyle ilişkilendirmelerine olanak tanıırken Özbekistan ve Ukrayna ders kitapları daha çok küresel temalara odaklanmakta ve bu durum daha derin kültürel

etkileşim fırsatlarını sınırlandırabilmektedir. Kültürel temsil açısından ise tüm ders kitaplarının empati, saygı ve sorumluluk gibi evrensel değerleri ön plana çıkardığı görülmekte; bu değerlerin öğretimine en güçlü vurguyu Türkiye'nin yaptığı dikkat çekmektedir.

Pedagojik yaklaşımlar incelendiğinde ülkelerin pedagojik yaklaşımları arasında belirgin farklılıklar dikkat çekmektedir. Özbekistan konuşma, dinleme ve CLIL görevlerine; Ukrayna okuma, kelime bilgisi, telaffuz ve yazma becerilerine yönelik alıştırma tabanlı etkinliklere ağırlık vererek daha geleneksel bir yönelim benimsemektedir. Türkiye ise cümle kurma, eşleştirme, sıralama ve çizim gibi yaratıcı etkinliklerle öğrenci merkezli ve iletişim odaklı bir yaklaşım sergilemektedir. Bu anlayış, öğrenci merkezli yöntemlerle örtüşmekte ve gerçek yaşam iletişimini desteklemektedir. Irak'ta ise etkinlik çeşitliliğinin sınırlı kaldığı ve etkileşimli içeriklerin görece az yer bulduğu gözlemlenmektedir.

İncelenen İngilizce ders kitaplarında cinsiyet dağılımı bakımından en dengeli yaklaşımı Türkiye sergilemekte; hem metin hem de görsellerde erkek ve kadın karakterlere eşit yer vermektedir. Diğer ülkelerde ise karakter düzeyinde bazı dengesizlikler gözlemlenmekle birlikte görsellerde kapsayıcılığa genel olarak önem verildiği görülmektedir. Geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine Özbekistan ve Ukrayna'da neredeyse hiç yer verilmezken Irak ve Türkiye hem geleneksel hem de geleneksel olmayan rollere yer açmaktadır. Bu bulgular, Orta Doğu'daki ELT ders kitaplarında belirgin cinsiyet dengesizlikleri saptayan Dahmardeh ve ark.'nın (2025) bulgularıyla çalışmakta ve incelenen ülkelerin kapsayıcılık konusunda kayda değer çabalar sergilediğine işaret etmektedir.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, birden fazla ulusal boyutu bir araya getirerek dört ülkenin ilkökul düzeyinde kullandığı İngilizce ders kitaplarına ilişkin kapsamlı ve karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirme sunmaktadır. Bulgular, hem ortak eğilimleri hem de kültüre özgü farklılıkları gün yüzüne çıkararak ders kitabı değerlendirmesi alanındaki karşılaştırmalı araştırmaların kapsamının genişletilmesine önemli katkılar sağlamaktadır. Çalışma aynı zamanda daha kapsayıcı ve bağlama duyarlı ELT materyallerinin geliştirilmesine yönelik somut ve kanıta dayalı öngörüler sunmaktadır.

Gelecekteki araştırmalar, bu kitapları kullanan öğrencilerin görüşlerini incelemeyebilir. Öğrenci görüşlerinin araştırılması, materyallerin farklı bileşenlerinin nasıl algılandığına dair ek bilgiler sunabilir ve mevcut çalışmanın bulgularını tamamlayıcı bir nitelik taşıyabilir. Bu bağlamda, öğrencilerin ders kitabı içeriklerine, kültürel temsillere ve pedagojik etkinliklere ilişkin deneyimlerini doğrudan aktardıkları nitel çalışmalar, araştırmacılara daha bütüncül bir değerlendirme imkânı sunacaktır. Ayrıca boylamsal araştırmalar, ders kitaplarına sürekli maruz kalmanın öğrencilerin dil yeterlilikleri, kültürel farkındalıkları ve içeriğe yönelik tutumları üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koyabilir. Bu tür çalışmalar, ders kitabı kullanımının uzun vadeli sonuçlarına ilişkin derinlemesine bir anlayış sunarak alana önemli katkılar sağlayabilir. Son olarak, ülkeler arası karşılaştırmalı araştırmaların farklı sınıf düzeyleri ve yaş gruplarını kapsayacak biçimde genişletilmesi, ders kitabı tasarımıındaki özelliklerin daha geniş bir çerçevede değerlendirilmesine olanak tanıyabilir.

Ethics Approval

This research is based on coursebook evaluation. As the research was not conducted on human subjects, its methodology and scope do not require approval from an ethics committee. Throughout the entire process, from the planning and implementation of the research to the collection and analysis of data, all rules specified in the "Guidelines on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics for Higher Education Institutions" have been adhered to. None of the actions listed under the heading "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" in the second section of the Guidelines have been carried out. During the writing of this research, scientific, ethical, and citation rules have been followed, and no alterations have been made to the collected data. The study has not been submitted to any other academic publication for review.

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Conflict of Interest

As the research involves the analysis of coursebooks, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest with the publishers and institutions whose materials were examined. Throughout the planning, data collection, analysis, and reporting stages of this study, no competing interests, financial or otherwise, arose with any institution, organisation, or individual that could have influenced the outcomes of the research. The study was conducted independently, and all findings are reported in accordance with the scientific principles.