BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
MASTER'S PROGRAM WITH THESIS

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ALIGNMENT OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS IN TURKISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH THE 21st CENTURY SKILLS

PREPARED BY

ZİYA GÖRKEM CELASUN

MASTER'S THESIS

ANKARA – 2025

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THESIS ADVISOR

ASSOC. PROF. DR. SENEM ÜSTÜN KAYA

ANKARA – 2025

BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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ÖZET

Ziya Görkem CELASUN

Türkiye'deki Devlet İlkokullarında Kullanılan İngilizce Ders Kitaplarının 21. Yüzyıl Becerileri İle Uyumunun Analizi

Başkent Üniversitesi
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21. yüzyılda eğitim sistemini değiştirme ve geleceğe uygun hale getirme ihtiyacı vardır. Eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcılık, iletişim ve iş birliği gibi bu beceriler modern pedagojik çerçevelerin merkezinde yer alır, bu nedenle birçok ülke bunları pedagojik çerçevelerinde benimsemiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Türk devlet ilkokulları 2., 3. ve 4. sınıflar için İngilizce ders kitaplarının 21. yüzyıl eğitiminin hedeflerini ne kadar iyi yansıttığını araştırmaktadır. Bu amaçla, bu araştırma yapılandırılmış bir kontrol listesi kullanarak sistematik bir içerik analizi uygulayarak bu ders kitaplarının bu yeterlilikleri geliştirmeyi amaçlayan etkinlikleri, çizimleri ve alıştırmaları ne kadar etkili bir şekilde birleştirdiğini incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, seçilen ders kitaplarının 21. yüzyıl becerilerini ne ölçüde geliştirdiğini analiz etmektir. Bazı ders kitapları eleştirel düşünme ve iş birliğine dayalı etkinlikleri bütünleştirme potansiyeline sahipken, diğer ders kitapları üst düzey bilişsel becerilerin ve doğal dil iletişiminin gelişimini engelleyen ezberci öğrenme ve mekanik alıştırmalarla karakterize edilmektedir. Ayrıca, çalışma ders kitaplarının esnek öğrenme, problem çözme ve kültürel anlayışa gerçek ve canlı içerikle yardımcı olmak için nasıl iyileştirilebileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulguların müfredat geliştiricileri, eğitimciler ve politika yapıcıların uluslararası standartlarla tutarlı öğretim ve öğrenme materyalleri tasarlamaları veya seçmeleri için yararlı olması beklenmektedir.Ayrıca, çalışma ders kitabının yeni dünyanın beceri talepleriyle uyumunu iyileştirmek için öneriler sunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu katkılar ayrıca dil eğitiminde öğretim materyallerinin artan önemini ve öğrencilerin yaşamları boyunca ihtiyaç duyacakları becerileri geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmada oynadıkları önemli rolü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *21. yüzyıl becerileri, iletişim, işbirliği, eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcılık, ders kitaplarının analizi, İngilizce dil öğretim kitapları*

ABSTRACT

Ziya Görkem CELASUN

An Analysis of the Alignment of English Textbooks in Turkish Primary Schools with the 21st Century Skills

Başkent University
Institute of Educational Sciences
Department of Foreign Languages
Master's Program in English Language Teaching with Thesis
2025

In the 21st century, there is a need to change the education system and make it fit for the future. These skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration are central to modern pedagogical frameworks hence, many countries have adopted them in their pedagogical frameworks. In this context, this study investigates how well English textbooks for Turkish public primary schools' grades 2, 3, and 4 reflect the goals of the 21st century education. To this end, this research applies a systematic content analysis using a structured checklist to examine the effectiveness with which these textbooks incorporate activities, illustrations, and exercises meant to develop these competencies. This study aims to analyze how the selected textbooks promote the 21st century skills. Some of the textbooks possess the potential to integrate critical thinking and collaborative activities but other textbooks are characterized by rote learning and mechanical exercises that prevent the development of higher-order cognitive skills and natural language communication. Moreover, the study reveals how textbooks could be improved to help flexible learning, problem-solving, and cultural understanding with real and lively content. The findings are expected to be useful for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers to design or select teaching and learning materials that are consistent with international standards. In addition, the study offers suggestions for improving the textbook congruence with the skill demands of the new world. As a result, these contributions also reveal the growing significance of teaching materials in language education and the important role they play in helping students develop the skills they would need throughout their lives.

Keywords: *21st century skills, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, content analysis, evaluation, ELT course book*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the integration of 21st century skills into language learning has become increasingly significant. As global communication, collaboration, and critical thinking grow more important in daily life and the workplace, English language teaching in primary education must adapt accordingly. In Türkiye, English has been introduced as a mandatory subject starting from the second grade, positioning it as a foundational component of the national curriculum. Given the essential role that textbooks play in shaping classroom instruction and student learning outcomes, it is crucial to examine whether these materials align with contemporary educational goals. This study aims to analyze the alignment of Turkish public primary school English textbooks with 21st-century skills, focusing on how effectively these skills are integrated into the content and activities presented across grades 2, 3, and 4.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The present century is described by technological advancements changing communities and globalization. This situation teaches students the lesson objectives and compels them to learn critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. These abilities are known as the 21st century skills and are crucial in today's interconnected and rapidly changing global world (Rusmin, Misrahayu, Pongpalilu, & Radiansyah, 2024). Textbooks, used in educational processes, become prominent in integrating these skills into learning processes (Tomlinson, 2012). They are seen as a primary source of information and knowledge by both students and teachers and that is the reason they could determine which learning approaches might be beneficial (McGrath, 2020).

Ministry of National Education in Türkiye has also included the 21st century skills in the curriculum by considering their importance, however, the success rate of these reforms is mostly adhered to the learning materials being compatible with the proposed educational

changes (González-Salamanca, Agudelo, & Salinas, 2020). The textbooks used in Turkish public primary schools not only serve to improve the linguistic abilities of the learners but also aim to enhance critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and other skills. Despite these suggestions, there are very few studies on this topic in general (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017).

Türkiye based studies on teaching English as a foreign language show that the focal point has mainly been on grammar and vocabulary studies (Kızıldağ, 2009). However, these features, which occupy an important role in language learning, do not help learners develop critical thinking skills and solve problems (Işıklı, 2021). Textbooks are generally based on memorization and repetition tasks which are useful for learning basic language skills, however, they do not include learners in meaningful skill-based activities. The overemphasis on language accuracy might hinder information application, identifying problems, collaboration, and concept development (van Laar, van Deursen, van Dijk, & de Haan, 2017).

The discrepancy between the content of textbooks and the principle of the modern world raises certain questions. If textbooks do not deliver compatible content with the 21st century, then students might not develop skills to make them successful in the academic and professional world. This void is significant for primary education where the foundation is laid, and textbooks are the primary source of information for new concepts and perspectives (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

In this respect, this study aims to carry out a systematic analysis of second, third, and fourth grade English textbooks in Turkish primary schools in the context of the 21st century skills. It assesses how these textbooks incorporate critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, which are essential competencies for students to learn at school and, later, use in their daily lives and at work in the context of globalization. It includes a systematic analysis of different aspects of the textbooks, such as exercises, activities, illustrations, dialogues, and task designs to determine their potential to promote these higher order cognitive and interpersonal skills. The research converges on the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen textbooks, and the good and the absence, especially about the 21st century competencies (Larson & Miller, 2011). In particular, it examines whether the materials used are interesting to students, whether they help students to solve problems, whether they promote cooperative learning, and whether they provide real life language use situations, all of which are important in today's classroom. Furthermore, this study offers a detailed assessment of the extent to which these textbooks are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of the new pedagogical orientations and the views of educators, curriculum writers, and policymakers. The research thus informs curriculum

developers and textbook writers about specific parts of the curriculum and particular approaches to teaching that might help or obstruct the development of the targeted skills. The findings of this study are expected to be useful to the current reform initiatives in English language teaching, particularly in terms of understanding how well or poorly current textbooks meet the skill requirements of the 21st century. The results of this study could be used in future editions of textbooks, teacher training programs, and revisions of educational policies to ensure that primary school children are prepared for the future challenges of the academic and professional world.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate English textbooks used in second, third and fourth grade in Turkish public primary schools in the context of the 21st century educational principles. As important as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration in the contemporary education system, it is crucial to find out how well these competencies are incorporated into teaching materials. Textbooks are very important in the learning process and are usually used by both teachers and learners to guide their learning and teaching respectively (Harwood, 2018). Hence, their content must be investigated for how good or bad it is in promoting higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving, and real-life language use.

In this regard, the study shall examine different aspects of these textbooks such as exercises, activities, illustrations, dialogues, and task designs to determine their potential to promote the 21st century skills. By realizing both the good and the bad in the selected textbooks, this research hopes to offer a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the textbooks in getting students ready for the future. Moreover, the study investigates whether these textbooks are consistent with theoretical developments in language education and the perceptions of teachers, curriculum writers, and policymakers (Richards, 2001). Based on the findings of this study, this paper would offer some suggestions for improving curriculum development and textbook development. The results of this study are hoped to be useful in the ongoing educational reforms in English language teaching and might be used to improve the next editions of English textbooks, teacher training programs, and national educational policies so that primary school students are prepared for the world that demands them to possess the essential skills of the globalization and technology. This research looks at how much these skills and their components are covered in English textbooks using a structured checklist. It investigates

whether these textbooks include creative expression, cooperative learning, and meaningful problem-solving through language activities and illustrations and the whole textbook. This research might reveal what is good, and what is lacking in existing materials.

1.3 Research Questions

The 21st century skills emphasize the need to equip learners with the necessary skills to succeed in a globalized world. These questions emphasize how much the current textbooks are in alignment with the principles of modern education and how they could contribute to the development of critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. This study will focus on the following questions to investigate to what extent English textbooks incorporate the 21st century education goals:

RQ1: How much do the English textbooks used in the second, third, and fourth grade English classes in Turkish primary schools include content that promotes the 21st century skills?

RQ2: How are the 21st century skills presented with various exercises, illustrations, and other materials in the selected textbooks?

RQ3: What are the positive and negative aspects of English textbooks in Turkish primary schools in terms of maintaining the 21st century skills?

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research might make a significant contribution to the present and future English language teaching materials suitable for educational trends. There is a strong need for learners to think critically, write and speak language accurately, work in groups, and find creative solutions to problems in today's world (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). Therefore, how these skills are developed through educational materials, such as textbooks, is significantly important (Rusmin et al., 2024).

This research investigates if the textbooks used in primary education provide the necessary language input. The results of this study might provide some valuable information about the integration of the 21st century skills to curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. Moreover, it might also contribute to the field of education reforms and English language

teaching. This study represents the strengths of textbooks and might also form a basis for the design of new materials that would address the deficiencies in teaching the 21st century skills. These improvements could be beneficial for students to achieve their academic goals and enable them to respond effectively to the challenges of the modern world (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Some suggestions could be made on how it could assist in achieving the educational goals of the 21st century but there are still some restrictions that might restrict the generalization of the findings. The study is based on the English textbooks applied in second, third, and fourth grade public schools and hence the results couldn't be extended to other grades, subjects, or even schools. Although it offers a rather detailed analysis, it couldn't be transferred to other cases. This research only looks at the content of the textbooks but does not consider what educators do with these texts in practice. Methods of teaching, including how textbooks are used, modified, or enlarged by teachers might be important for the development of the 21st century skills, but this research investigates the content of the texts in the classroom context. As a result of this fact, it couldn't provide any direct evidence that shows how this is reflected in the learning environment. Finally, due to time limitations, analysis is limited by limited resources. Although the selected textbooks are approved by the Ministry of Education, the results of this research might not cover the full scope of the teaching materials. Researchers in the future might overcome this issue by including the materials of other grades, lessons, and private schools. Studies combined with classroom observations might present the impact of textbooks on the development of the 21st century skills.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

The integration of 21st century skills into education has recently garnered significant attention, placing it at the center of attention in Türkiye as well as worldwide (Binkley, Erstad, Herman, Raizen, Ripley, Miller-Ricci, & Rumble, 2011). There is an increasing effort to include critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration into the curriculum (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). These skills are critically important in preparing students for an ever-changing world and English Language Teaching (ELT) has become a significant area where these skills could be improved (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). The current studies based in Türkiye emphasize that ELT needs to be in alignment with the goals of the 21st century. Can and Yeni (2022), who analyzed foreign language teaching and related programs found that there was some compatibility with these skills, however, there was a strong need for higher-order skills and student participation to be improved. Akyıldız and Şahin (2024) who analyzed the textbooks prepared for international students found that there were some serious gaps in critical thinking and creativity. On the other hand, Bulut Özek and Kalemkuş (2022) adapted a 21st century scale to the Turkish context and suggested it be used for native and foreign language education. Additionally, Uyar (2023) evaluated how pre-service teachers might integrate these skills into the curriculum and suggested the integration of these skills within classroom activities. Finally, Solhi, Sak, Şahin, and Yılmaz (2020) compared the Turkish and English textbooks with the 21st century skills and found that none of them could fully address the needs and the skills. The findings also showed that both textbooks were insufficient at improving collaboration and problem-solving.

This research is based on existing literature on the 21st century skills, their integration, and the role of textbooks. This section also aims to contribute to the development of future research and curriculum developments by determining the extent to which textbooks support the development of critical competencies.

2.2 Terms and Definitions

21st Century Skills

A set of key competencies including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration that are essential for students to succeed in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world.

21st Century Educational Framework

Theoretical models, such as the Partnership for the 21st Century Learning (P21), outline the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in the modern world.

Adaptability

The ability to adjust to new circumstances, challenges, and environments is increasingly important in modern education.

Authentic Materials

Real-world resources such as texts, videos, and audio recordings are used in education to make learning more natural and effective.

Blended Learning

A learning model that combines face-to-face teaching with digital resources, offering flexible and interactive learning experiences.

Checklist

A structured tool or framework used to assess specific criteria.

Collaboration

The process of working effectively with others to achieve common goals, emphasizing teamwork, shared responsibilities, and interpersonal skills.

Communication

The ability to convey thoughts, ideas, and information effectively through verbal, written, or digital means in various contexts.

Content Analysis

A qualitative research method used to systematically analyze and interpret textual, visual, or activity-based materials to identify themes, patterns, and alignment with educational goals.

Creativity

The capacity to generate new ideas, solve problems innovatively, and approach challenges with originality and imagination.

Critical Thinking

The ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to solve problems, form reasoned judgments, and make decisions.

Cultural Competence

The ability to understand, respect, and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Digital Tools

Applications, software, and technology-based resources that facilitate and enhance learning.

Educational Policy

Guidelines and regulations developed by authorities, such as ministries of education, to shape curriculum design and teaching practices.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

The teaching and learning of English in contexts where it is not the primary language spoken by the population.

Extensive Reading

An approach to language learning that involves reading large quantities of material for general understanding, enjoyment, and vocabulary building.

Formative Assessment

A method of evaluating student learning during the instructional process, providing feedback to improve understanding and performance.

Globalization

The process of increased interconnectedness and interdependence among countries, driven by advances in technology, communication, and trade.

Integrated Skills Approach

An instructional method that combines listening, speaking, reading, and writing to create a cohesive language learning experience.

Interactive Learning

An approach that actively engages students through participation, collaboration, and interaction with peers and materials.

Intercultural Communication

The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of different cultural backgrounds.

Linguistic Competence

The ability to effectively use and understand language, including grammatical, phonological, and pragmatic aspects.

Multimodal Resources

Educational materials that incorporate visual, auditory, textual, and digital elements to enrich learning experiences.

Primary Education

The initial stage of formal education, typically encompassing grades 1 to 4, focusing on foundational skills and knowledge.

Problem-solving

The ability to identify, analyze, and resolve issues effectively using logical and innovative approaches.

Project-based Learning (PBL)

A teaching method where students work on real-world problems or projects to develop skills and knowledge through active exploration.

Qualitative Research

A research method focused on exploring and understanding phenomena through non-numerical data, often involving detailed descriptions and thematic analysis.

Scaffolding

An instructional strategy where teachers provide temporary support to help students achieve learning goals, gradually reducing assistance as students gain independence.

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

An approach to language instruction that uses real-world tasks as the central focus of learning activities.

Teaching Materials

Resources such as textbooks, workbooks, and digital content used to facilitate learning in educational settings.

Textbook Evaluation

A systematic process to analyze instructional materials for their effectiveness, alignment with curriculum objectives, and the inclusion of key skills like 21st century competencies.

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)

Digital platforms or tools that support online education and create interactive learning spaces for students.

21st Century Literacy

The ability to effectively navigate and use digital and information resources in a globalized, technology-driven world.

2.3 Core Linguistic Skills in English Language Teaching

Language learning is built upon four core skills. These interconnected skills are significantly important in building effective communication in English and greatly important in supporting broader cognitive and social competencies compatible with the 21st century educational priorities. The context in which these skills are taught effectively and meaningfully need to be competent and critically engaged (Eker Uka & Bedir, 2023). Listening and speaking are for real-time collaboration and interaction while reading and writing are based on literacy and self-expression. Researchers (Hyland, 2022; Farr & Lenko-Szymanska, 2024) aim to increase students' adaptation and preparedness for global challenges skills with innovative teaching practices.

The four core skills, as they are all important on their own, are deeply interconnected and are dependent on each other. Listening provides the primary input for speaking and reading introduces the vocabulary and grammatical structures that provide information for writing (Richards, 2009). For instance, tasks that require students to listen to a passage, discuss its content, and then write a response increase the students' overall understanding and application of the language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This situation becomes evident in real-world communication where language is rarely used alone without other skills. For instance, a speaker in a conversation must understand the input first to produce a correct verbal response (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012). In general, effective academic writing relies on the ability to understand complicated texts and synthesize information (Hyland, 2022). These skills, when integrated, assist in preparing students for communication (Richards, 2006). This difference is the integration of the 21st century skills with the priorities of education. The old ways of memorization and repetition are being replaced by critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. For instance, students who read articles about global warming argue about the possible solutions collaboratively and present the findings in oral and written forms not only increase their proficiency in language but also learn essential life skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Online discussion forums, collaborative writing platforms, and interactive multimedia tools allow students to apply these skills in innovative ways (Kern, 2022). Godwin-Jones (2023) stresses how technology could be used to create language learning environments that might mimic real-life communication scenarios and have students participate and adapt to these environments. As it is important, some issues could hinder the effective teaching process of a

foreign language. For instance, a compartmentalized approach which could be found in traditional curricula might pose a significant challenge as listening activities are presented alone or reading comprehension and listening activities are left without any integration between them (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This fragmented approach shows that students' ability to transfer these skills to real life has been hindered (Harmer, 2021). Another challenge is the lack of authentic materials with different accents, the variety of speech rates, and the cultural language environments in globalized contexts (Gilmore, 2007**).** It seems important to build up authentic, practical communication texts instead of over-relying on artificial dialogues and scripted exercises (Selvi & Galloway, 2024). Additionally, speaking assessments and practice exercises overemphasize accuracy at the expense of fluency, which might reduce the desire for language use. Rather than focusing on errors, there is a need for an assessment approach that might provide formative and summative feedback on the strengths and weaknesses (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). This is because including peer assessment and self-evaluation could help students to take responsibility for their learning (Andrade & Brookhart, 2016). Activities that educators design for students might determine students' motivation and progress (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). For example, including recent news in reading passages could make the lessons more interesting and meaningful. In addition, using teaching approaches that provide sentence starters or visual aids enable students of all levels of language proficiency to participate confidently. Textbooks and other educational resources have a significant impact on how language is taught. Good textbooks with various types of reading and interactive activities could increase student engagement and competence by offering diversity. However, a critical evaluation of these materials is necessary to make them compatible with modern educational communicative and skill-oriented goals (Littlejohn, 2011). For instance, textbooks full of mechanical exercises with little or no communication couldn't be beneficial for students.

Research and applications of the future might benefit from the following strategies. First, the integration of videos, podcasts, and interactive games could enrich the learning experience and meet the needs of different students (Pegrum, 2019). To enhance learning, the first step is to move from the traditional lecturing method to more interactive methods, such as problem-based and project-based learning (Thomas, 2000). The third change is the continuous professional training for educators to teach the 21st century skills innovatively (Voogt et al., 2015). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four core skills that make teaching English more meaningful and authentic. These skills need to be integrated to improve the learning experience and prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. Therefore, it is possible

to design a future by combining the needs of the students and the requirements of the 21st century.

2.3.1 Listening Skills

Listening is a vital part of language teaching and helps learners to understand life, identify patterns, and allows them to respond correctly. Structured listening tasks, especially in primary education, meet the students with grammar and pronunciation and particularly provide a solid foundation. However, they are often inadequate as traditional listening exercises are generally based on written dialogues that do not reflect real life. They should include different accents, speech rates, and conversational formats and make use of new tools like podcasts to make learning more engaging and realistic (Gilmore, 2007).

Listening is the first skill to develop in native and foreign languages and learners develop a mental repository of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and phonological patterns by being exposed to authentic language use. Research demonstrates that continuous and meaningful listening practices improve fluency and accuracy of understanding (Richards, 2009). Research also points out listening skills are not developed in isolation, but rather do it as a part of a set of competencies (Field, 2008). Moreover, there is a positive relationship between listening skills and reading fluency as both input skills involve processes of making sense (Grabe, 2008). Despite its importance, listening is one of the most challenging skills to teach and assess because learners must process information in real time with no opportunity to review the input. This feature places a demand on learners, especially in the early stages of language acquisition (Buck, 2001). Other challenging difficulties could be listed as various accents, speech rates, and background noises which might make understanding difficult, especially for unfamiliar learners (Rost, 2011). Another challenge is the design of instructional materials. The design of many textbooks is based on scripted and artificial dialogues that do not reflect the complexity and unpredictability of the natural world. These materials present the language in simple contexts and learners are not adequately prepared for real-world communication.

2.3.1.1 Innovative Approaches to Listening Instruction

Some recommendations for improving listening might include the use of multimodal sources and task-based activities. For example, from videos that come with subtitles or from podcasts that have transcripts, learners could receive information based on visual and textual cues (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). This approach has been improving comprehension skills by reducing cognitive load and increasing learners' confidence in dealing with complex input (Godwin-Jones, 2023). Task-based listening activities and communicative language teaching approaches are compatible with purposeful and meaningful interaction with audio materials. After listening, students might fill in the gaps in the text with new ideas, complete questions, or even share their comments with their peers in a group activity. These exercises are useful for comprehension skills and promote critical thinking and collaborative learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The use of digital media has also expanded the possibilities of teaching listening. Some applications such as Duolingo and Rosetta Stone could adjust themselves to the levels of learners and produce personalized feedback on pronunciation and comprehension. On the other hand, virtual reality (VR) environments in which students might order in a restaurant or be in a meeting help them gain linguistic and cultural competence. Additionally, speech recognition technology in practicing and refining pronunciation addresses one of the challenging listening instructions (Godwin-Jones, 2024).

2.3.1.2 Types of Listening in Language Learning

Extensive and intensive listening activities are important in language acquisition and listening activities are generally classified into these two. Extensive listening refers to podcasts for general purposes, audiobooks, and videos. Extensive listening could improve the vocabulary, and ability to speak with different accents (Intan, Purnawarman, & Gunawan, 2021). Moreover, it motivates students to choose something they are fond of which makes the practice more enjoyable and permanent. While extensive listening generally focuses on exposure, intensive listening involves close analysis of certain parts. Activities such as identifying key patterns, dialogue transcription, and analyzing speech patterns develop student's ability to analyze accurately (Rost, 2011). Extensive listening emphasizes fluency while intensive listening tunes accuracy, so they are not rivals but complementary to each other.

2.3.1.3 Listening and the 21st Century Skills

The 21st century skills aligned with critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity become compatible with foreign language teaching. These skills promote analyzing arguments and participating in group discussions because these activities require using language at multiple levels. For instance, students listening to a podcast about global warming and discussing the results could combine critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Also, listening tracks combined with digital tools enable students to be ready for the reality of the world they are living in which is an audiovisual world and where most of the interaction is through the internet. By subjecting them to different formats and contexts, educators prepare them in the best possible way for the challenges of communication in the age of globalization.

2.3.2 Speaking Skills

The skills for speaking are needed for participating in various situations like sharing information and listening. In primary education, speaking is included to help improve the pronunciation, forming of sentences, and speaking skills of students for improving fluency and gaining self-confidence. Traditional approaches such as written dialogues and mechanical repetitions might limit the opportunities for more spontaneous use of language. Recent studies show that language games and group discussions are needed to develop communicative competence and adaptation skills (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020; Richards, 2006).

2.3.2.1 Speaking in Language Learning

Not only is speaking a method of communication, but it also serves as a tool for development. It helps students to choose the correct language use to express their ideas coherently, to negotiate the meaning, and to develop confidence in language use. Speaking skills reduce the time it takes for learners to internalize language structures because they receive feedback from listeners in real time, thus enhancing their language use (Field, 2008). Additionally, researchers have also found that speaking improves the vocabulary, grammar, and

listening skills of learners in a general way, that is, it contributes to the overall language proficiency. (Thornbury, 2007). Discussions, role plays, and debates develop the student's language proficiency as well as critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal skills. This is compatible with the 21st century education goals that include communication as a core competence for success in contexts.

2.3.2.2 Challenges of Teaching Speaking Skills

Teaching speaking skills might challenge educators in situations such as a high number of students and low resources. One of the other challenges is the fear of being bullied by classmates whenever a mistake is made, which could hinder the possibility of full participation or learning to the fullest (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). In this respect, educators must provide an environment in which students not only try to achieve perfection but also take risks and make efforts to learn the language. In classrooms, even though textbooks are generally made of dialogues and roleplay activities, they mainly have a written structure and fall short of providing the naturality and spontaneity of real life (Richards, 2006). Moreover, students might also have a hard time with the aspects of language that are usually not covered in traditional teaching materials such as connected speech, idiomatic expressions, and accents (Field, 2008).

2.3.2.3 Approaches to Teaching Speaking Skills

Approaches such as role-plays, group discussions, communicative activities, and presentations encourage interactive learning and focus on learners while keeping teachers in a more controlling role. To enhance speaking skills, they could link task-based language teaching (TBLT), problem-solving, event planning, or interviewing with effective speaking activities. Through such tasks students are encouraged to use language in a more authentic and meaningful way, thus filling the gap between theoretical teaching and real-life applications (Willis & Willis, 2007). Role plays and storytelling-related drama-based activities are beneficial for learners. These activities are intended to develop the speaking skills of learners to meet specific purposes, such as introducing themselves at a conference, ordering a meal in a restaurant, or telling a story to an audience. Drama based activities are important for both fluency, confidence, and creativity (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Speaking skills teaching has been revolutionized in recent years. For example, artificial intelligence integrated learning applications enhance speakers'

skills by giving sudden feedback on pronunciation and fluency (Font de la Vall & Gonzalez Araya, 2023). Thanks to other online platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, learners might come together with peers from different cultural backgrounds. Also, artificial intelligence platforms enable learners to simulate real-life conversations in relatively low stress and immersive environments.

2.3.2.4 Speaking and the 21st Century Skills

These speaking skills are also linked to communication, collaboration, and creativity. It helps them in developing their ideas, and in giving their opinions. For instance, developing a travel plan and presenting as a group enhance their problem-solving and speaking skills (Richards, 2006). Collaborative speaking activities reflect the effective nature of communication in professional and social life. These tasks improve the abilities of negotiation on meaning, conflict resolution, and consensus, and they are of critical importance in today's interconnected world (Nation & Newton, 2010). Moreover, creative speaking activities facilitate creativity and language more naturally (Stinson, 2011).

2.3.2.5 Assessment of Speaking Skills

The instruments and approaches involved in speaking assessment need to mirror its manifold nature. In this respect, tests or organized interviews rely on a definition of speaking emphasizing the correctness and fluency that is in practice at the cost of communicative and interactive criteria. In comparison, a richer assessment possibility would involve the use of portfolios, peer review, and self-evaluation. Speaking skills in realistic contexts could also be successfully assessed by performance-based tests involving roleplay, presentations, and group debates. It provides them with a real platform for demonstrating their skills. For example, students might debate a topic or make a presentation of their choice. These assessments also test self-confidence, creativity, and spontaneity apart from language ability itself (Thornbury, 2007).

2.3.2.6 Integration of Speaking Instruction

Teaching speaking skills integration has been improved recently. Including almost all artificial intelligence applications such as Google Assistant and Siri, learners have the freedom to explore and receive immediate feedback on their pronunciation and speaking practice. Moreover, even though they recently have gained popularity in Türkiye, VoiceThread, and Flipgrid provide a place for learners to receive immediate feedback on their speaking skills for collaborative learning (Godwin-Jones, 2023). Through Skype in the Classroom, which is a virtual exchange program, learners are allowed to meet with other students from all over the world in an authentic intercultural context. These applications not only improve speaking skills but also promote cultural awareness and global citizenship (Godwin-Jones, 2023). In addition, gamified platforms like Kahoot and Quizlet encourage learners to engage in interactive and entertaining ways.

2.3.3 Reading Skills

One of the four skills that should not be forgotten while learning any language is reading which deals with expanding vocabulary, enhancing comprehension, and exposing learners to various types of texts. Simplified texts are used in primary education to improve fluency and introduce cultural contexts (Day & Bamford, 1998). These activities support interpreting and analyzing information as well as critical thinking skills. However, general traditional textbook contents limit this feature by focusing on superficial understanding. Integration of inference-making and reflective activities might support the development of better comprehension and critical thinking skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

2.3.3.1 The Role of Reading in Language Learning

Reading has a crucial place in developing learners' vocabulary as well as grammar and exposing them to various text types. In contrast with speaking, written texts provide a permanent and structured position for a language discovery environment. This exposure improves the ability to recognize patterns, extract meaning, and analyze written content (Hyland, 2022). In addition, reading could also benefit both academic life and literacy skills that are necessary for the modern world. This vocabulary learning is also exceptionally valuable

for reading to facilitate. For instance, it has been found from research that encountering new words in meaningful contexts, for example, in articles, enhances the likelihood of retaining them, and improves understanding (Nation, 2001). In addition, learners who engage with authentic texts are exposed to cultural insights that assist them in understanding social norms that are characteristic of English-speaking communities (Richards, 2006).

2.3.3.2 Challenges in Teaching Reading Skills

As a common problem for learners who do not have the competence to analyze and understand written texts, teaching reading skills in language classes raises several issues. A frequent problem is the length of texts and the density of unfamiliar words and phrases or complex syntactic structures which could be frustrating for beginners and primary school students (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). However, for starters and primary school students, this complexity might hinder comprehension and could cause disappointment. Another issue is that there is no involvement with reading materials. They might not find textbooks and homework attractive, and the content might look rather outdated. This lack of motivation has a negative influence on willingness to learn and read proficiency (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). Furthermore, another research points out the difficulty of learners who are increasingly dependent on digital formats must put extra effort into understanding texts with visual and audio elements (Godwin-Jones, 2024).

2.3.3.3 Approaches to Teaching Reading Skills

The modern approach to reading comprehension stresses the integration of cognitive, linguistic, and affective strategies to promote effective understanding and interest. Such strategies include extensive and intensive reading and the use of digital resources to develop interactive and personalized learning materials (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). From extensive reading, in which the learner is exposed to a large amount of text, for comprehension and enjoyment, from novels, magazines, or even blogs online, it has been proven that extensive reading benefits the fluency of writing, expands the vocabulary and boosts the learners' confidence in handling different text types (Day & Bamford, 2002). Extensive reading also promotes intrinsic motivation and autonomy because it enables learners to choose materials based on their interests. Now, where intensive reading is concerned, this is where short texts

are broken down to analyze vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure, right down to the surface level, to understand what the text means. E-books, online articles, and educational apps offer the reader a choice of how to learn to read depending on their proficiency (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). For instance, digital platforms enhance engagement and prepare learners to navigate digital information in academic and professional contexts by adapting reading content to learners' skills and tracking progress.

2.3.3.4 Reading Strategies and Scaffolding

Different strategies and scaffolding techniques should be incorporated into the reading instruction to assist the learners in overcoming comprehension challenges. These include pre-reading activities like brainstorming, predicting, and discussing key vocabulary which activate the prior knowledge of learners and get them ready for the text. Skimming to find out the main ideas, scanning to find specific information, and annotating key points assist the learner in staying engaged and focused during reading. Activities like summarizing, discussing, and debating are used after reading to support reflection and a better understanding of the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). For example, educators might provide learners with guiding questions, glossaries, or even graphic organizers to help with decoding complex passages and scaffolding through challenging texts for learners.

2.3.3.5 Reading and 21st Century Skills

Reading skills are most closely related to the 21st century skills such as critical thinking and creativity. Activities such as analyzing arguments, interpreting themes, or comparing and contrasting different perspectives develop the capacity of learners to think critically and to evaluate information. To encourage reading, for example, a group of students might be asked to read and then compare their answers to form opinions, identify biases, and assess evidence. Through creative reading tasks such as changing the ending of a story, developing a visual summary, or writing a reflective response, learners could have exciting and productive interactions with texts. These activities not only enhance comprehension but also encourage learners to view reading as a dynamic and enjoyable process (Boyask et al., 2024).

2.3.3.6 Assessing Reading Skills

The assessment of reading skills requires a balanced approach to assess comprehension, fluency, and critical interaction with texts. Traditional evaluation methods such as multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions could provide measurable data on the ability to remember and understand. However, these methods fall short of getting higher-level reading skills, such as interpretation, analysis, and synthesis (Ur, 1996). Alternative evaluation approaches such as open-ended questions and project-based tasks offer rich content on students' comprehension skills. For example, asking students to summarize text, create an infographic, or present an argument appropriate to a reading passage reveals their ability to interact deeply with text (Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

2.3.4 Writing Skills

Through writing, learners could put their thoughts into perspective to convey information and use language. For primary education, writing activities aim to balance the student's creativity and accuracy, asking things like sentence completion as more structured tasks and storytelling as more independent tasks. Through research, it is recommended that open-ended tasks that include a more personal touch to the problems and require more communicative and analytical skills from students should be included to enhance the students' communicative and analytical abilities (Suastra & Menggo, 2020).

2.3.4.1 The Role of Writing in Language Learning

Through the process of language learning, writing is used in a variety of ways. It is a productive skill that helps learners organize their grammar and vocabulary knowledge base and put their ideas in a coherent order. Learners also have a solid document on how they are improving, which is useful for correcting their mistakes. The research also highlights the role of writing in cognitive development as a method that requires learners to think critically and develop their ideas in a meaningful way (Hyland, 2022; Nation, 2009). Besides its linguistic benefits, writing is also important in building learners' academic and professional competencies. Such academic writing skills as summarizing, paraphrasing, and composing essays are very important and are widely used in everyday learning, especially in secondary

and tertiary education. For instance, for the needs of modern employment, learners are prepared for the demands of workplace writing skills such as drafting emails, reports, and presentations (Richards, 2006).

2.3.4.2 Teaching Writing Skills and Challenges

A critical challenge of teaching writing skills is in L2 classrooms, where learners might face anxiety when producing written texts due to limited linguistic proficiency, fear of making mistakes, or lack of confidence. Anxiety frequently leads to avoidance behavior, reducing opportunities for practice and improvement (Bailey & Almusharraf, 2022). One of the challenges is the time-consuming process of writing an assessment and providing feedback to the learners as to what they have produced. Such issues as grammar errors incoherence and lack of clarity have to be addressed in the feedback that teachers give to the learners when they submit their work. Unfortunately, a common limitation of instructors in offering more individualized assistance is the generally large class sizes and the short working days, which hamper students' development (Nation & Macalister, 2019). Furthermore, students might consider writing assignments as boring due to the conventional approaches to writing education that emphasize correct language use at the expense of creative and engaging writing (Hyland, 2022).

2.3.4.3 Writing and 21st Century Skills

Critical thinking and creativity are aligned with the educational goals of the 21st century. Leading learners write argumentative essays or engage in debates on recent issues helps them to learn to assess evidence, formulate reasonable arguments, and express their points of view effectively. For instance, such exercises enable them with an opportunity to put their critical thinking skills into practice when analyzing the issue and recommending solutions for the problem. For instance, they could use the platform to share their stories, experiences, and opinions on various social issues. These activities do the learners a lot of good as well as help improve their linguistic competence and promote self-expression and emotional intelligence (Wang & Newell, 2025). For example, writing a story about overcoming difficulty allows learners to deal with real issues in a narrative framework while using narrative and descriptive language.

2.3.4.4 Assessing writing skills

To get an overall view of learners' writing skills it is important to use both formative and summative assessment strategies. Conventional methods of assessment include timed essays and standardized tests which are used to establish what learners could put into writing. However, these methods have several drawbacks including the fact that they focus a great deal on correct language use and ignore the process that is involved in writing since it is often a process that is done over time (Weigle, 2002). Through alternative assessment methods like portfolios, self-assessments, and peer reviews, a more holistic view of learners' writing abilities is obtained. For example, over a semester, learners could gather a portfolio of their written work and reflect on their development and the patterns of their strengths and weaknesses that they identify. Li and Zhang (2021) note that peer review activities, which are where learners provide constructive feedback on each other's drafts, foster collaborative learning and critical engagement with writing. Through performance-based assessments such as creating brochures, writing letters, or designing multimedia presentations learners' ability to apply writing skills in real-life situations is assessed. These assessments, in addition to measuring linguistic proficiency, also encourage creativity, problem-solving, and communication skills and are thus consistent with the 21st century educational goals (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

2.4 The Significance of the 21st Century Skills in Education

Given the fast-paced pace of the world we are living in, education systems should not only concentrate on academic knowledge but other skills that would assist the student in modern society. The 21st century skills are critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity have become crucial for learners to succeed in the society of the modern world, which is global and technology driven (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). These skills could help learners to solve problems, innovate, and collaborate as well as foster adaptability and lifelong learning, the skills being demanded in contemporary workplaces.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and objectively synthesize information to make reasonable decisions. The skill that contributes to the ability to make assumptions, approach problems to develop logical arguments is fundamental in education and it is crucial as it has been found that students who engage in critical thinking tasks are better placed to tackle

the complex real-world problems of the 21st century (Brookfield, 2012). The importance of teamwork and cooperative learning is emphasized by collaboration. It ensures that individuals engage in effective communication, treat different opinions with respect, and strive for the achievement of common objectives which both improve the social and interpersonal skills of students and in readiness for the professional world where teamwork is invaluable (Dörnyei, 2001). In education, collaboration is encouraged through group projects, peer-to-peer feedback, and problem-solving activities that necessitate collaboration.

The ability to share ideas, listen, and participate in conversations is what communication is all about. This skill, which involves verbal, written, and digital forms of communication, is crucial in today's interconnected world. Through structured dialogues, classroom discussions, writing exercises, and presentations, communication is developed in language education. For instance, students might engage in debates to practice communication essays and participate in simulated real-life scenarios like interviews or negotiations. These tasks assist in developing fluency and confidence and provide learners with the necessary tools for both academic and professional success (Richards, 2015). Creativity is the ability to come up with new ideas, find innovative solutions to problems, and think outside the box. It not only enriches the learning process but also makes the students feel that they are an integral part of the process and thus, makes them more interested in learning (Craft, 2005). In education, creative thinking helps the students to use their imagination to come up with answers to questions. The ways to enhance creativity include storytelling, poetry, dramatization, and project-based learning. In primary education, these four competencies act as the foundation of both lifelong learning and personal development. English language education is also a lively model for developing these skills since it is interactive, offers problem-solving activities, and promotes collaborative learning (Altan, 2017). However, this depends very much on how these competencies are integrated into educational materials, including textbooks, which vary widely, making further investigation necessary.

2.5 The Integration of 21st Century Skills in English Language Teaching

This has been a major issue in the recent past, as language education provides an effective platform to develop these competencies. These skills of the 21st century are critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, and they could be developed through English, which is a global lingua franca, and a medium through which students could develop

skills (Chu et al., 2017). The teaching of English, especially in primary schools, provides many ways to include these skills in the activities of the classroom, thus providing a holistic learning experience.

Critical thinking is particularly relevant in English language classrooms, where students are asked to analyze texts, and meanings, and interpret and express their perspectives. Critical thinking is, in fact, needed for language learning tasks such as reading comprehension, debates, and problem-solving exercises. For example, developing ideas to explain a character's actions in the story or developing arguments in the classroom discussion promotes higher-order thinking skills (Yıldırım Döner & Demir, 2024). Social and academic performance is also linked to critical thinking activities in language classes (Brookfield, 2012). Another skill that also naturally aligns with language teaching is collaboration. Such activities as group projects, peer editing, and role-plays tell students to work together, share ideas, and build on each other's contributions. These tasks improve language proficiency as well as teamwork and social interaction skills. This is particularly important for real-world situations in which effective collaboration is essential both in academic and personal life (Dörnyei, 2001).

Communication skills are central to language education and are closely related to the 21st century skills. Through activities that include dialogues, presentations, and letter writing students are given a chance to practice and improve their communication skills in oral and written form. English classes are there to assist the students in learning how to express themselves effectively. These tasks help students to express their ideas most coherently and confidently, depending on the situation, a skill highly useful for both academic and professional purposes (Hattie, 2012). Creativity is usually underestimated in conventional language teaching and should be considered as one of the essential 21st century skills. This is because language learning offers students numerous ways of expressing themselves through stories, poems, and drama. The research aims to show how creativity could be integrated into the English classroom, which not only makes learning fun but also assists in developing a new and unique capacity that could provide solutions to problems (Craft, 2005). While performing creative activities, students have the liberty of using the language in the most creative way to convey their message. The integration of the 21st century skills in English language teaching is possible, but the extent to which these skills are incorporated depends on the materials used in the classroom. Textbooks, which are the main resources in most learning environments, play a major part in deciding what kind of activities and content students are exposed to.

2.6 The Role of Textbooks in Language Education

Textbooks are a cornerstone of language education and are particularly used in primary schools as a structured guide for both teachers and students. They provide a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning and deal with the usual linguistic components such as vocabulary, grammar, and the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides their traditional role, textbooks have the potential to support the development of other educational goals, including the 21st century skills like critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Textbooks in English language teaching are usually the main source that provides the content for classroom instruction. They are organized to meet learning bjectives and contain meaningful activities, exercises, and examples. For example, dialogues and listening tasks provide input that targets vocabulary and grammar in use, and this is supported by reading passages and writing prompts to assist in concept development. This makes the content and structure of textbooks a significant factor in determining how well they achieve the development of linguistic competence as well as higher order thinking and social skills.

Research shows that textbooks are used in both language learning and skill development (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Such activities as open-ended questions, group projects, and reflective tasks require students to perform higher order cognitive processes like analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information. Moreover, textbooks that contain collaborative activities like pair work or group discussions support the development of teamwork and interpersonal skills that are so important for current and future educational and professional environments. From potential, many textbooks fail to integrate the 21st century skills into their design. Studies show that traditional textbooks tend to focus on rote learning and mechanical drills at the expense of creative and interactive activities. Thus, this emphasis on memorization and repetition might well prevent students from being able to use their language skills in real life or to think critically (Richards, 2015). In addition, the scarcity of authentic contexts in some textbooks limits the opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with the language, which is bad for communication skill development. In Türkiye, primary education textbooks which are accepted by the Ministry of Education are vital in the implementation of the learning process. These textbooks are supposed to meet the national curriculum requirements and the key educational priorities such as the development of the 21st century skills. Looking at these textbooks from the perspective of the 21st century educational goals could give a clear picture

of what they are good at and where they need improvement.

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities in Textbook Design for the 21st Century

Textbooks could be seen as the cornerstone of language education and are particularly used in primary schools as a structured guide for both teachers and students. They contain a complete scheme of work and deal with the usual linguistic components such as vocabulary, grammar, and the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Textbooks, when used in their traditional form, could only contribute to the attainment of other educational goals, including the 21st century skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. They are the primary source of information for teaching English language teaching. They are prepared to meet specific learning outcomes and contain daily exercises and activities, along with examples. For instance, dialogues and listening tasks contain vocabulary and grammar in context and reading passages and writing prompts help to bring together students' understanding of what has been learned. However, the content and structure of textbooks could make a big difference in whether they could enhance not only language competence but also higher order thinking and social skills.

Formerly, the textbooks have been structured to focus on rote memorization and mechanical drills and have a strong emphasis on accurate grammar and vocabulary (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). However, this has been overtaken by the growing emphasis on the 21st century education that has brought about the need for textbooks to contain more dynamic, interactive, and skill-based approaches. These are the characteristics that modern textbooks should have to be aligned with frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which focuses on communicative competence and real-world applications. Studies have shown that the textbooks of the 21st century have open-ended questions, project-based activities, and space for self-reflection (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). For instance, a study of Finnish and South Korean English textbooks found that both sets of textbooks were filled with interdisciplinary tasks such as designing a campaign for environmental conservation or conducting a survey within the community which develops language proficiency and critical thinking (Sahlberg, 2019; Kim, 2020).

Many textbooks, however, still provide limited or stereotypical representations of culture. For instance, a study on English textbooks in Türkiye found that most of them provide basic

information about cultural features such as food, festivals, and landmarks with little emphasis on such things as global interconnectedness or social justice (Kırkgöz & Ağçam, 2011).

Activities intended for individual practice are not easily transformed into collaborative or interactive tasks, so their usefulness in promoting teamwork and communication is limited. Additionally, market driven considerations also affect the design of the textbook. Publishers are likely to prefer content that could easily be standardized and tested, sometimes at the expense of innovative or creative activities. This tension could cause textbooks to overemphasize traditional language skills rather than more dynamic skill-based learning approaches (Christison & Murray, 2022). The dependence on textbooks as the main source in classrooms has the disadvantage of offering monotonous learning experience. Although textbooks offer sequence and order, they might not meet all the needs of the diverse students in terms of learning or abilities.

2.8 Previous Studies on Textbook Evaluation

The analysis of textbooks has been a significant area of study in language teaching for educational research. As major tools of instruction, textbooks are responsible for identifying what is to be taught to some extent and how it will be taught which in turn implies learning achievements. Analysis of the content of language textbooks is not only of linguistic interest but also in the context of other learning objectives, including the new millennium learning goals, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Several research examines how well textbooks meet the goals of the modern education system (Gonzalez-Perez & Ramirez-Montoya, 2022). For instance, current research has been directed toward how far textbooks assist in the development of higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information. The results of these studies show that while the textbooks do contain activities that are directed towards basic comprehension and grammar, they contain few tasks that require the student to use higher-order thinking skills. According to Tomlinson and Masuhara (2017), many textbooks offer limited or no opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking or tackle real-life problems, which are critical parts of the 21st century education. Similar findings were also reported by Ağçam and Babanoğlu (2019) who evaluated Turkish EFL teaching programs through SOLO taxonomy and found that teaching materials mostly lacked the necessary depth for fostering higher-order thinking skills.

Research has also been done on the integration of creativity in textbooks. Creativity, most often associated with activities like storytelling, role-playing, and open-ended writing, is considered important to develop innovative thinking in learners. However, researchers such as Richards (2015) have noted that many textbooks are characterized by repetitive exercises that crowd out creative tasks, thereby constraining the scope for students' self-expression and imaginative thinking.

In the Turkish context, several studies have been conducted on English language textbooks used in primary schools. This is because the strengths and weaknesses of textbooks in achieving the goals of the 21st century are usually highlighted in these studies. For example, based on the analysis of the content of the Ministry-approved English textbooks by Güzel Yüce and Emir (2020), it was revealed that although they provided good coverage of linguistic components, they lacked content that would help in developing critical thinking and creativity. Similarly, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2017) stressed the importance of textbooks containing more authentic tasks that reflect real life communication needs and problem-solving activities, alone and with others. The findings of this study highlight the importance of a systematic evaluation of textbooks to see how well they align with the skills of the 21st century.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study's research aims to evaluate English textbooks used in Turkish primary schools in second, third, and fourth grade. The present study examines how well the textbooks for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students meet the principles of the 21st century education, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Since this type of evaluation is systematic in regard to the contribution of these textbooks to the development of the key competencies presented in the 21st century educational frameworks; this chapter is a detailed explanation of the research methods employed to meet the objectives of the study, including textbook selection and analysis tools.

3.2 Research Design

The focus is on English textbooks that have been approved by the Turkish Ministry of Education (MEB) for 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades. These textbooks have been chosen because they are widely used in state primary schools and are the main sources for teaching the English language in Türkiye. They are included to ensure a more comprehensive and representative analysis of the materials used in the national curriculum. This study utilized the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" developed by Gamze Uluhan to assess the 21st century skills in educational materials. It is a structured tool to judge critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity in different parts of the textbooks such as activities, exercises, and other materials. This checklist is a detailed and systematic approach to examining the alignment of textbook content with the 21st century educational objectives. Using the checklist, the textbooks are analyzed systematically. Each activity, text, and visual component is carefully examined to see if it supports the four 21st century skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity that are being targeted.

The data collected from the analysis is categorized based on the four keys 21st century skills: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. This process gives an idea of

how well the selected textbooks align with modern educational priorities and gives insight into how they could help improve students' linguistic and cognitive development.

3.3 Data Collection

This research uses a structured framework developed by Gamze Uluhan to investigate the presence of the 21st century skills as could be described as four key components. The four key components of the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (2019) are critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. It is a systematic framework to use on textbook content including activities, exercises, texts, and illustrations to determine if they meet these essential skills. This process involves a detailed examination of each textbook through data collection. Each activity, text, and visual component is reviewed using the checklist to determine if they are relevant and effective in promoting the targeted the 21st century skills. This systematic approach to the analysis of the textbooks ensures that all relevant aspects of the textbooks are examined thoroughly, thus giving a complete perception of the textbooks' strengths and weaknesses. The analysis of these textbooks aims to identify patterns and themes across grade levels and to shed light on how English language teaching materials support the development of language competence and other educational goals.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the English textbooks for the second, third, and fourth grades were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This method allowed for an in-depth examination of how 21st century skills, specifically critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, were integrated into textbook activities, illustrations, and textual content. Each activity was reviewed systematically to determine whether it explicitly or implicitly promoted one or more of these skills. Descriptive statistics, including the frequency and distribution of activities related to each skill, were also utilized to support the qualitative findings. The results were categorized and presented in tables to provide a clear overview of the alignment between textbook content and 21st century skill dimensions.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described the overall methodology employed in the study, including the research design, data collection process, and data analysis procedures. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which 21st century skills are integrated into English textbooks used in Turkish primary schools. The methods described here provided a systematic framework for identifying and categorizing relevant content. The following chapter presents the results of this analysis in detail.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4. Examination of CT And PS Skills in Activities in Public Primary School English Course Books

This chapter is designed to evaluate the extent of integrating the 21st century critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills into the course book and how well they are represented across course books and units. All the activities from each unit have been analyzed and the results are as follows. The aim is to find out if the 4C's of the 21st century; Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity are included in primary level English course books and if they are, to what extent they are incorporated in the activities. The analysis is conducted as the reasons for assessing the book's activities and the pedagogical perspectives on skill integration will be explained. The evaluation of each unit will then be presented using a checklist to help answer the research questions. Finally, the results of this study concerning the match or mismatch of the course book with the new educational frameworks will be presented.

4.1 The Evaluation of Activities in the Course Book of the 2nd Grade MEB English Textbook

The second-grade English course book is mostly aimed at helping children learn basic phrases, vocabulary, and structures of a language. The activities in this course book are designed to help the learner reinforce basic language skills; however, the integration of critical thinking (CT) and problem solving (PS) along with the other the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, and creativity is partial and sporadic. When the 127 activities in the second-grade course book were analyzed, it was found that 51 activities (40.16%) are related to critical thinking and problem solving. However, the use of these skills is not uniform across the language areas. Productive language-focused activities are found to have the highest level of integration of CT and PS elements (64%) while productive language-focused activities have the least (16.67% each for grammar and vocabulary). Some activities might involve some form of analysis, comparison, and decision-making while many of the tasks are basic repetitive learning, pattern recognition, and recall based. The speaking and writing components hold some

promises for increasing the level of cognitive engagement than the listening and reading components which are more recognition-based than inference, synthesis, or analytical reasoning. Some of the activities include listening and repeating, matching and saying, tracing and saying among others, which are more like memory games than games that would help develop critical thinking.

The analysis of the second-grade course book according to units reveals the unequal distribution of critical thinking and problem-solving elements. There are some units, for example, Unit 2 (Friends) and Unit 4 (Numbers) which have more CT and PS activities in the productive skills strand (77.78% and 85.71% respectively) while others, such as Unit 3 (In the Classroom) and Unit 10 (Animals) have minimal integration of such skills (20% and 30.77% respectively). Those units that are rich in CT and PS components include decision-making tasks, structured dialogues, and hands-on activities like role-play, drawing, and group games while the other units focus on recognition and repetition. The analysis of the activities shows some good and bad features of the design of the course book. Some of them include role-play, miming, and storytelling which are fun and engaging as well as a good way of communicating. Several exercises permit the student to provide a reply in his or her own words, thus introducing rudimentary decision-making. Furthermore, several activities are cooperative such as 'Make a Badge and Say' or 'Make a Finger Puppet and Act Out' where students must work in pairs. However, the focus on mechanical repetition is insufficient to enable students to evaluate, analyze, or solve problems on their own. The lack of open-ended tasks prevents students from coming up with their responses in a creative manner and the unstructured teamwork reduces the opportunities for collaborative learning. Also, there are no real-life problem-solving scenarios given to the students which prevent them from using their language skills in the real world.

Even though the second-grade course book contains some aspects of the 21st century skills, especially in the speaking and writing components, the integration is partial and irregular. In the next update, the authors should try to eliminate monotonous drill and stimulus-based tasks and include more explorative and inquiry-based tasks. Promoting structured cooperation such as group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and cooperative projects would help in the development of teamwork and negotiation skills. To increase cognitive engagement, it is important to increase the level of complexity of the comprehension tasks from the recognition to the inference, prediction, and evaluation levels. Also, the integration of the 21st century skills

in all language domains is important to ensure that reading and listening tasks also promote critical thinking and not just mnemonic demand. Hence, in these areas, the second-grade course book could be improved to be in conformity with the present-day pedagogical strategies and provide a better steppingstone to the gradual development of higher-order thinking and communicative skills in young children.

4.1.1 The Analysis of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in Activities in the 2nd Grade MEB English Textbook

It is possible to state that applying well-chosen course books might significantly improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. A good course book does not just present language items in little exercises; it includes tasks that help the learner sort through, combine, and use information in a specific and meaningful way. Other activities include case studies, group discussions, real-life simulations, and analytical tasks which make the students relate what they are learning in class to the real world. That is why such kinds of tasks are cognitively demanding and help students develop the ability to consider several points of view, challenge common knowledge, and come up with a reasonable decision. Therefore, the students who solve such tasks not only improve their language skills but also learn how to solve problems, which are necessary for the development of the modern individual. The purpose of this study is to examine the existence and frequency of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in second grade English course books, specifically for productive skills. Table 4.1 shows the frequency and frequency distribution of the critical thinking and problem-solving skills assigned to the different categories of activities including listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and implicit tasks. A total of 127 activities were analyzed in the second-grade English course book, 51 of which were found to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This distribution, 40.16% of all activities, indicates that while the text includes some elements of higher-order thinking skills, there is still a strong emphasis on learning the basic language constructs.

Table 4.1 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in the 2nd Grade Course Book

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-solving	Ratio
Reading Focused	27	9	33.33%
Listening Focused	29	12	41.38%
Speaking Focused	14	6	42.86%
Writing Focused	25	16	64.00%
Grammar Focused	18	3	16.67%
Vocabulary Focused	10	2	20.00%
Open Based	4	3	75.00%
Total	127	51	40.16%

See Table 4.2 for how far the implementation of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities is monitored particularly in productive skills, speaking, and writing, as the major emphasis of this research is on these competencies.

Table 4.2 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	14	6	42.86%
Writing Focused	25	16	64.00%
Total Productive Skills	39	22	56.41%
Total Number of Activities in the Course Book	127	51	40.16%

As shown in the table, there are a total of 14 speaking activities in the course book, 6 of which involve critical thinking components. Nevertheless, compared to other skills, the percentage of CT and PS integration in speaking exercises is rather low. However, writing activities have a significantly higher proportion, 16 out of 25 writing tasks (64%) are designed to involve CT. In general, there are 39 productive skill activities in the course book, 22 of them (56.41%) are aimed at critical thinking and problem-solving. The examination of the rest of the course book activities reveals that productive skills make up 40.16% of the total length of the course book. These findings indicate that although the second-grade English course book includes several exercises that help to develop CT and PS skills, many activities are aimed at drilling and mechanical practice of language items, with limited high-order cognitive engagement.

4.1.1.1 The Analysis of Unit 1 in Terms of CT and PS

The first unit of the second-grade English course book is designed to help students expand their vocabulary and basic language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. This analysis will address the extent to which critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit as described in Table 4.3 and marked accordingly.

Table 4.3 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 1

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	6	3	50.00%
Writing Focused	4	2	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	10	5	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 1	10	5	50.00%

As shown in Table 4.3, 3 of the 6 speaking activities (50%) are aimed at developing critical thinking skills while 2 of the 4 writing activities (50%) are aimed at developing problem-solving skills. Such interactive activities help students to think, respond, and use knowledge in practice, thus promoting higher-order cognitive engagement.

However, several activities for example “Match and say,” “Listen and repeat,” and “Trace and say” do not involve higher-order thinking products and are more oriented towards repetition and memorization. This means that although there are some attempts to incorporate CT and PS in the implementation of Unit 1, it focuses more on the basic aspects of language development than on critical thinking. The analysis of the activities was also conducted based on the “Course Book Evaluation Checklist” (Uluhan, 2019) which offers an extra set of tools for analyzing the integration of the 21st century skills in language learning materials. The checklist revealed that Unit 1 is consistent with several key criteria that it fails to meet in some areas. The unit systematically introduces the vocabulary however, the activities are not diverse in their level of

difficulty and the students cannot solve the tasks in several ways. There are very few activities that involve looking for, interpreting, or assessing information. Most of the tasks are recognition and repetition-based, and not much research or inquiry is required for their solution. Some of the activities require students to come up with their answers and make the learning process more personal, helping to develop basic decision-making skills. The unit incorporates some interaction-based exercises such as making a finger puppet and acting out a part, thus making the students communicate with their peers in small groups. However, there is no explicit provision for structured collaborative problem-solving. Activities integrate an aspect of personal expression; however; creativity is restricted because tasks are instructed rather than open-ended. Moreover, the integration of CT and PS supporting activities in the unit was also analyzed based on whether they were integrated into different skill areas.

Figure 4.1 Talk About the Kids Activity in Unit 1

4.1.1.2 The analysis of Unit 2 in terms of CT and PS

The second unit from the second-grade English course book is "Friends." In this unit, learners are introduced to vocabulary and sentence patterns that enable them to discuss friendships and social relationships. These activities support the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Table 4.4 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 2

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	6	5	83.33%
Writing Focused	3	2	66.67%
Total Productive Skills	9	7	77.78%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 2	10	7	70.00%

In Unit 2, speaking activities, 5 out of 6 (83.33%), incorporate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; however, 2 of the 3 writing activities (66.67%) enhance problem-solving skills. The 'Ask and Answer' and 'Make a Badge and Say' tasks are speaking tasks that involve students in formulating responses, organizing ideas, and participating in semi-structured conversations. Other tasks such as 'Make a Paper Ball and Pass It', and 'Make a Finger Puppet and Act Out' make the students use their creativity, decide for themselves, and solve specific communicative problems thus enhancing their CT and PS skills. However, there are some activities such as 'Listen and Repeat', 'Trace and Say', and 'Match and Say' that involve simple repetition and do not involve the student in higher-order cognitive functioning. These exercises are geared toward the recognition of language rather than critical analysis, decision-making, or problem-solving. An assessment made based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (2019) shows that Unit 2 incorporates collaborative learning and peer interaction well through speaking activities. 'Ask and Answer' and 'Talk About the Kids' exercises help students to exercise decision making skills through the formation of responses and comparison.

Nevertheless, there is a need to put more emphasis on free play, individual investigation, and student-produced solutions to enhance the integration of the 21st century learning skills.

Figure 4.2 Make a Badge and Say Activity in Unit 2

The findings show that Unit 2 includes productive skill activities that are fairly demanding in terms of the level of critical engagement, the degree of structure in group interaction, and the amount of decision-making required. However, the increase in the level of independence in problem-solving tasks, the flexibility of problem-solving activities, and the degree of discussion would help students to use their language skills in a variety of ways.

4.1.1.3 The Analysis of Unit 3 in Terms of CT and PS

The third unit of the second-grade English course book is called “In the Classroom” to teach vocabulary and phrases about the classroom, classroom rules, and objects found in the learning area. The unit is filled with different activities that are meant to help students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The following is a section that seeks to establish the extent of critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are embedded in these activities. See Table 4.5 below which describes the activities of Unit 3 about CT and PS.

Table 4.5 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 3

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	3	2	66.67%
Writing Focused	1	0	0.00%
Total Productive Skills	4	2	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 3	10	2	20.00%

The speaking tasks, including "Listen and Act Out" and "Match and Act Out," are designed to promote role-playing and structured interaction, which force students to make decisions, understand verbally, and respond appropriately. These kinds of exercises help to foster students' cognitive engagement and solve problems because they demand the use of language in real-life situations. Most of the activities in this unit, including "Listen and Sing", "Listen and Say", "Match and Say," and "Trace and Say," are designed to enhance students' listening skills and provide them with an opportunity to repeat the text. These activities help to build the students' language recognition and could reinforce their learning, but they do not require the students to think critically, evaluate, reason, or solve problems. Based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (2019), it could be stated that Unit 3 provides few opportunities for the development of CT and PS skills. Nonetheless, the use of role-playing activities promotes group learning and real-life decision-making, while there are no student-initiated problems or open critical thinking. It would be possible to enhance the engagement of the 21st century skills in early language education through the inclusion of more exploratory speaking and writing tasks.

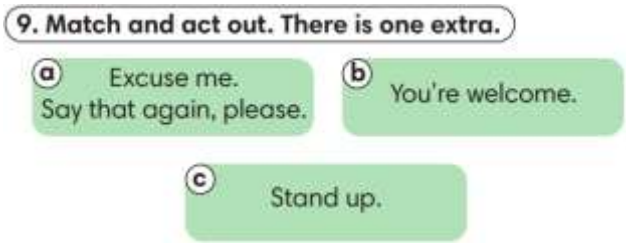


Figure 4.3 Match and Act Out Exercise in Unit 3

4.1.1.4 The Analysis of Unit 4 in Terms of CT and PS

In the fourth unit of the second-grade English course book, called “Numbers,” the topic focuses on vocabulary and expressions about counting, numerical recognition, and basic question structures for quantity. The activities in this unit are designed to help students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and are integrated with their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Table 4.6 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 4

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	4	80.00%
Writing Focused	2	2	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	6	85.71%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 4	18	8	44.44%

The results are presented in Table 4.7 which shows that 4 out of 5 speaking activities (80.00%) and 2 out of 2 writing activities (100%) are relevant to critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Such tasks as "Ask and Answer" and "Look and Act Out" make students think, understand, and use the input in a structured way. In addition, the following classroom games "Draw and Say", and "Cut, Stick and Say" help students develop innovative thinking and solve problems in different situations. However, all the following activities: "Listen and Sing", "Listen and Say", "Trace, Match and Say", and "Listen and Tick" are based on repetition and patterns, not on higher-order thinking. These exercises help to reinforce the language but do not require students to think critically, analyze, or synthesize information. Based on Gamze Uluhan’s “Course Book Evaluation Checklist” (2019), it could be stated that Unit 4 offers a good mix of mechanical practice and cognitive challenge. Such activities as "Find the Words in the Puzzle" develop students' ability to recognize patterns and make logical deductions and therefore help students to make connections between words and their meanings in context. Nevertheless, there is not much promotion of student-initiated research and flexible problem-solving strategies in the unit. The results show that Unit 4 includes several fun and engaging

activities that could help students develop their problem-solving, creative, and critical-thinking skills. Implementing more inquiry-based learning tasks and student-created problem-solving activities would help to better integrate the 21st century skills into English language teaching for primary level students.

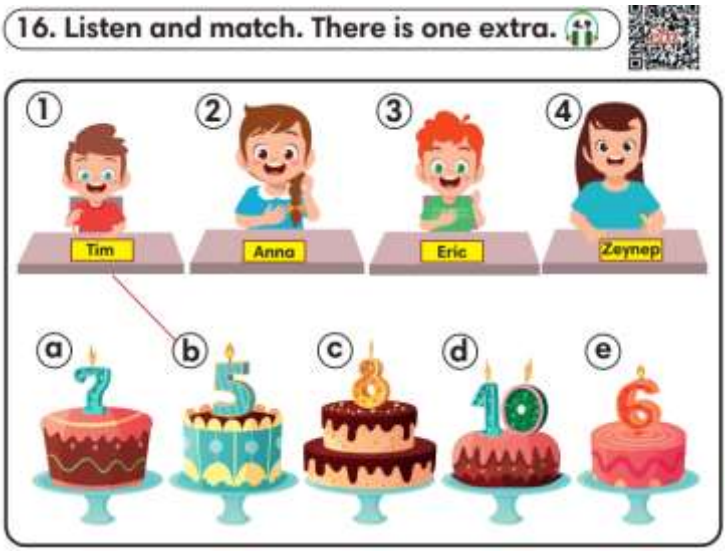


Figure 4.4 Listen and Match Activity in Unit 4

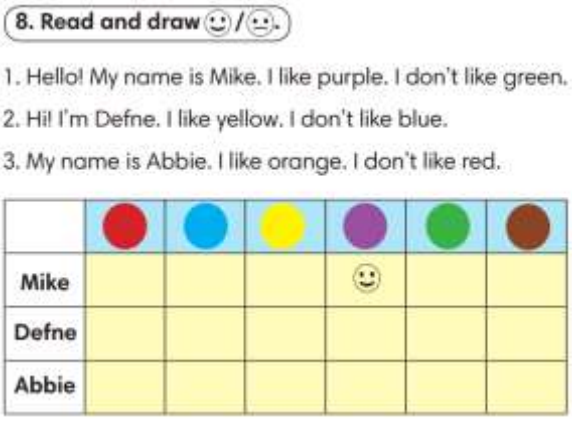
4.1.1.5 The Analysis of Unit 5 in Terms of CT and PS

In the fifth unit of the second-grade English course book, called "Colors," vocabulary and expressions about colors, preferences, and quantity descriptions are introduced. The activities in this unit are meant to help students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, furthermore, it is rich in CT and PS aspects.

Table 4.7 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 5

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	3	75.00%
Writing Focused	2	2	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	6	5	83.33%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 5	13	6	46.15%

Table 4.7 reveals that 75% of speaking activities and 100% of writing activities integrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, respectively. Students' tasks such as "Look at the Pictures and Act Out" and "Complete the Table and Say" direct them to provide opinions, compare patterns, and follow a structured conversation. "Read and Draw" and "Listen, Cut, and Stick" activities support decision-making and situational problem-solving because they demand students to interpret information to produce appropriate responses. The activities “Listen and Sing,” “Listen, Say, and Trace,” and “Match and Say” require students to show recognition rather than complex cognitive work. These tasks support students in their vocabulary development but fail to challenge them with problem-solving or analytical activities. According to the “Course Book Evaluation Checklist”, Unit 5 achieves moderate critical engagement through interactive and visual tasks. The educational "Read and Draw" activity supports independent thought processes but there is no place for open-ended inquiry or student-generated solutions. The research shows that Unit 5 features many organized interactive educational activities that promote pattern recognition together with analytical and problem-solving skills. The integration of more exploratory speaking tasks and independent reasoning tasks into the curriculum would strengthen the development of the 21st century skills for English language education.


8. Read and draw ☺/☹.

1. Hello! My name is Mike. I like purple. I don't like green.
2. Hi! I'm Defne. I like yellow. I don't like blue.
3. My name is Abbie. I like orange. I don't like red.

Mike				☺		
Defne						
Abbie						

Figure 4.5 Read and Draw Exercise in Unit 5

4.1.1.6 The Analysis of Unit 6 in Terms of CT and PS

The sixth unit of the second grade English course book is titled "At the Playground" and is directly related to the vocabulary and expressions of the playground and movement-based actions. The unit focuses on the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and also includes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The activities in Unit 6 are detailed in Table 4.8 to show their relation to CT and PS.

Table 4.8 CT & PS Analysis for Unit 6

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	4	100.00%
Writing Focused	0	0	0.00%
Total Productive Skills	4	4	100.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 6	11	6	54.55%

As shown in Table 4.8, all the speaking activities (100%) integrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and there are no writing tasks that are designed to enhance these skills. The "Ask and Answer" and "Look at the Pictures and Act Out" tasks are some of the speaking

tasks that help students make inferences, ask for information, and participate in guided conversations. Furthermore, tasks like "Miming Game" ask students to listen, think, and provide solutions to a given situation within the context, which enhances the students' problem-solving and decision-making skills. There are however other activities like "Listen and Sing" and "Listen, Point and Say" which are more basic and aimed at comprehension and pattern identification than cognitive engagement. These exercises help to reinforce language learning but do not require students to work in solitude to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information. "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" shows that Unit 6 uses both collaborative and kinesthetic learning strategies where students participate in role play, peer-to-peer interaction, and active engagement. However, a good example is the "Look at the Pictures and Act Out" task that helps in decision making and interpretation, but the unit has no provision for open-ended discussions or exploratory activities. The results show that Unit 6 effectively links movement-based learning with problem-solving, thus enabling students to apply language in actual life situations. It would be helpful to include more activities that are designed to help students work on their own, set their own goals, solve problems on their own, and ask questions in their way to foster the 21st century learning skills in early English language education.

Figure 4.6 Miming Game in Unit 6

4.1.1.7 The Analysis of Unit 7 in Terms of CT and PS

In the seventh unit of the second-grade English course book, titled "Body Parts," vocabulary and expressions about body parts and movement-based commands are introduced. The unit focuses on the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and includes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In Table 4.9, the activities of Unit 7 are detailed and their relation to CT and PS skills is explained. As shown in Table 4.9, 2 out of 3 speaking activities (66.67%) and 1 out of 1 writing activity (100%) are integrated with critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are encouraged to analyze the visual information, respond appropriately, and participate in guided conversations through tasks like "Ask and Answer" and "Look at the Pictures and Act Out". Furthermore, the following activities "Complete" and "Listen, Cut, Stick, and Say" help students solve problems in situations and make decisions. Although the majority of the components are quite interactive, it is possible to mention such tasks as "Listen and Sing" and "Listen, Say and Trace" which are based on the mechanical repetition of the text and do not require complex cognitive activities. These exercises help to solidify the language in the students' minds, but they do not ask students to work with information to evaluate, analyze, or synthesize it.

Table 4.9 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 7

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	3	2	66.67%
Writing Focused	1	1	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	4	3	75.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 7	13	5	38.46%

According to the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist", Unit 7 includes some organized learning activities with interactive features. Nevertheless, there is no independent work, flexible

thinking, and open-ended problem-solving discussions. The results show that Unit 7 presents physical movement and interaction-based activities that promote problem-solving and observational learning. Thus, the integration of more activities that need students to use their reason and solve complex problems would help to develop the 21st century learning skills in early English language education.

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4.1.1.8 The analysis of Unit 8 in terms of CT and PS

The eighth unit of the second-grade English course book is called "Pets" and it covers vocabulary and expressions about pets and their locations. The unit is designed to help students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Table 4.10 below shows the activities in Unit 8 and how they relate to CT and PS skills.

Table 4.10 CT and PS for Unit 8

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	3	75.00%
Writing Focused	1	1	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	5	4	80.00
Total Number of Activities in Unit 8	13	6	46.15%

As shown in Table 4.10, 3 out of 4 speaking activities (75%) and 1 out of 1 writing activity (100%) are embedded with critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The speaking tasks like "Look at the Pictures and Act Out" and "Act Out" ask students to describe the visual stimuli, explain the positions, and participate in the interactive dialogue. The written tasks like "Find, Point and Say" help the students to build up the information and use it in different situations. However, some of the activities like "Listen and Sing", "Listen, Say and Trace" and "Listen and Tick" are more oriented toward recognition and repetition than to critical thinking. These exercises help to fix the vocabulary in the students' long-term memory, but they do not always involve high-level problem-solving or decision-making. An assessment using the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" shows that Unit 8 has basic spatial reasoning tasks and some organized speaking tasks, but there are no complex problem-solving situations or open-ended critical thinking tasks. The results show that Unit 8 brings forward organized activities that require simple logical thinking and oral communication skills. More attention to independent exploration and student-generated reasoning would help to improve the 21st century skills in early English language education.

4.1.1.9 The Analysis of Unit 9 in Terms of CT and PS

In the ninth unit of the second-grade English course book, titled "Fruit," vocabulary and expressions about fruits, preferences, and basic commands are introduced. The unit is designed to help students improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and also, critical

thinking and problem-solving skills are incorporated into the unit. Table 4.11 below shows the activities in Unit 9 and how they relate to CT and PS skills.

Table 4.11 CT and PS for Unit 9

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	3	75.00%
Writing Focused	1	1	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	5	5	100.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 9	13	6	46.15%

As shown in Table 4.11 above, 3 out of 4 speaking activities (75%) and one of the writing activities (100%) incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For instance, speaking activities including "Look and Talk" and "Act Out" necessitate students to understand symbols and signs, give their own opinions, and participate in guided conversations. Tasks such as the "Read and Tick/Cross" writing prompt ask students to evaluate information and make decisions based on the given statements. However, some of the activities for instance, "Listen and Sing", "Listen, Say and Trace", and "Follow and Tick" are more geared toward students' ability to recognize patterns and mimic the models than to higher-order thinking. Although these exercises help to reinforce language learning, only a few of them are designed to promote problem-solving or decision-making in students. An assessment made with the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" shows that Unit 9 has included some form of assessment and simple logical reasoning tasks. However, there are no lessons that involve student-initiated investigations or discussions. The results show that Unit 9 brings structured activities that are based on observation, evaluation, and reasoning. However, the integration of more student-led problem-solving and critical inquiry tasks would add to the growth of the 21st century learning skills in early English language education.

Figure 4.7 Follow and Tick Exercise in Unit 9

4.1.1.10 The Analysis of Unit 10 in Terms of CT and PS

In the tenth unit of the second-grade English course book, titled "Animals," vocabulary and expressions are introduced about different animals, their characteristics, and their abilities. The unit is designed to enhance students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Table 4.12 CT and PS for Unit 10

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	3	2	66.67%
Writing Focused	1	0	0.00%
Total Productive Skills	4	2	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 10	13	4	30.77%

Table 4.12 is a breakdown of the activities in Unit 10 and how they relate to CT and PS. As shown in Table 4.12, 2 out of 3 speaking activities (66.67%) are related to critical thinking and problem-solving while none of the writing activities are associated with these skills. The speaking activities for instance, "Look at the Pictures and Act Out" and "Act Out" ask students to describe the pictures, respond appropriately, and participate in guided conversations. The "Unscramble" writing tasks, on the other hand, help the students to organize and transform information creatively. However, it is possible to identify several activities such as "Listen and Sing," "Listen, Say and Trace," and "Listen and Point and Say" which are more oriented

towards recognition and repetition than critical thinking. These tasks are quite useful for the students to get familiar with the vocabulary, but they do not need to solve any problems or make decisions. An assessment using the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" shows that Unit 10 includes simple problem-solving and some guided spoken language activities. Still, there are no complex problem-solving situations or unstructured discussions. The results show that Unit 10 offers a set of organized activities that need students to make observations, evaluations, and reasons. Thus, the integration of more student-led problem-solving tasks and open-ended questions into the lessons would help improve the growth of the 21st century learning skills in early English language education.

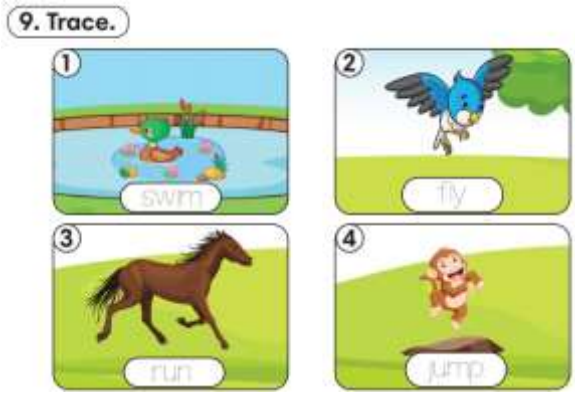

Figure 4.8 Trace Exercise in Unit 10

4.2 The Evaluation of Activities in the Course Book of the 3rd Grade MEB English Textbook

The third-grade English course book progresses students to a higher level of linguistic sophistication while gradually integrating aspects of critical thinking (CT), problem-solving (PS), communication, collaboration, and creativity. Compared to the second-grade course book, it has a moderate level of increase in complexity but the integration of the 21st century skills is partial and inconsistent across language domains. The analysis of the 160 activities in the third-grade course book shows that 54 activities (33.75%) contain elements of critical thinking and problem-solving. Speaking and writing tasks have the highest frequency of CT and PS components, 47.37% of speaking-focused activities and 51.72% of writing-focused activities seeking to have students think critically, evaluate, and come up with decisions. In contrast, grammar (15%) and vocabulary-focused exercises (16.67%) contribute the least to the type of learning as they are still based on repetition and memorization. Some activities are decision-making, logical reasoning, and personal expression but many continue to focus on pattern recognition and controlled language drills rather than higher-order cognitive engagement.

A unit-by-unit breakdown shows that the distribution of CT and PS skills is inconsistent. There are some units, for example, Unit 7 (In My City) and Unit 9 (Weather) that contain a relatively higher level of CT and PS activities (35.71% and 46.15%, respectively), while in other units, such as Unit 1 (Greeting) and Unit 5 (Toys and Games), students have limited opportunities to engage in meaningful problem solving (29.41% and 28.57%, respectively). The units with more reasoning-based exercises are those that involve spatial reasoning, role play, and interactive decision-making, while the other units rely on rote memorization, controlled dialogues, and set procedures that demand little or no thinking on the student's part.

This third-grade textbook, despite being slightly more advanced than the second-grade textbook, has certain disadvantages. Today's world is also represented by the speaking and writing components, which offer semi-structured opportunities for critical thinking and creativity, while the listening and reading components are represented by rather basic comprehension and recall exercises, with little or no requirement for interpretation, inference, or synthesis. Furthermore, collaboration is not well developed because most of the tasks are given for individual response rather than for group response or cooperative decision-making. The absence of many open-ended, inquiry-based tasks also prevents the students from using flexible and independent reasoning to solve the problems.

While the third-grade course book makes some attempts to incorporate the 21st century skills in communication and creativity, the overall approach is rather rigid and narrow. In the next revision, the focus should be to reduce mechanical repetition and increase the number of exploratory, open-ended tasks that do not simply require students to recall information but also to analyze, interpret, and synthesize it. Promoting collaborative learning such as peer discussions, cooperative problem-solving tasks, and decision-making projects would also help to improve students' teamwork and negotiation skills. Moreover, reading and listening activities should also contain more critical engagement components; move away from basic recognition-based exercises to higher order analytical tasks that entail the student to evaluate and compare information, make predictions, and come up with conclusions. These gaps could be closed to achieve a better balance in the development of language proficiency and cognitive skills so that the students are well-prepared to solve problems in the real world and communicate effectively.

4.2.1 The Analysis of CT and PS Skills in Activities in the 3rd Grade MEB English Textbook

The third-grade English textbook includes several parts that are designed to help children improve their language skills in different fields, such as auditory perception, speech production, reading, writing, and learning grammar and vocabulary. Out of the two, course books are also important in helping learners acquire language input while at the same time helping them to develop their critical thinking skills (CT) and problem-solving skills (PS) through the inclusion of thought-provoking tasks that ask students to think critically and make decisions about the information provided rather than simply recalling or repeating it. This paper aims to examine how CT and PS are integrated into the textbook across the various skill areas. Table 4.13 shows the total number of activities in the book, and the number and percentage of those that are oriented toward higher-order thinking skills.

Table 4.13 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in the 3rd Grade Course Book

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting CT and PS	Ratio
Reading Focused	10	4	40%
Listening Focused	53	10	18.87%
Speaking Focused	38	18	47.37%
Writing Focused	29	15	51.72%
Grammar Focused	20	3	15%
Vocabulary Focused	12	2	16.67%
Open Based	8	6	75%
Total	**160**	**54**	**33.75%**

A total of 160 activities were identified, out of which 54 (33.75%) were found to incorporate elements of CT and PS. Speaking and writing activities had the highest rate of integration of CT and PS, whereas grammar and vocabulary activities were sparse in their opportunities for these skills. The instances of reading-focused activities in the textbook are rather limited and could be counted as 10,40% of which are classified as CT and PS triggering tasks. The majority of these tasks could be classified as inference-making and conclusion-drawing. Listening activities are more frequent, giving 53 activities, but only 18.87% of them are oriented towards the development of CT and PS. Hence, the same is the case with vocabulary-focused and grammar-focused exercises that are quite rudimentary and do not involve much reasoning or problem-solving. Some of the productive skills, for instance, speaking and writing, contain more CT and PS-based tasks than the other language domains. Decision-making, reasoning, and logical thinking are encouraged in 47.37% of the speaking activities and 51.72% of the writing activities. Nonetheless, much of the book is still devoted to basic language drills rather than structured cognitive challenges. The results of the study show that the textbook under analysis integrates certain aspects of CT and PS, however, many activities are oriented towards controlled practice and not the development of higher-order thinking skills. Possible changes

in the future could be to include more open-ended discussions, problem-solving tasks, and cooperative activities where students would have to come up with solutions, explain their thinking, justify their decisions, and interact with their peers in a meaningful way.

Table 4.14 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in Speaking and Writing Skills

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	38	18	47.37%
Writing Focused	29	15	51.72%
Total Productive Skills	67	33	49.25%
Total Number of Activities in the Course Book	160	54	33.75%

4.2.1.1 The Analysis of Unit 1 in Terms of CT and PS

The first unit of the third-grade English textbook is called "Greeting", and it covers basic conversational skills like greetings, self-introduction, and number-related conversations. The unit is based on listening, speaking, and vocabulary exercises and the tasks involve repetition, matching, filling in the request, and tracing. Although these activities are useful in reinforcing the students' basic communication skills, they provide rather scant opportunities for more complex cognitive processing such as critical thinking (CT) and problem solving (PS). Some of the activities in this unit include talking and repeating dialogues, finishing and acting out conversations, singing songs, arranging letters and numbers, spelling names, recognizing numbers, and drawing words. Most of these exercises are of the associative and replicative type of learning and drill and practice where students are required to learn and respond with given responses instead of thinking or creating.

Table 4.15 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 1

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	2	40.00%
Writing Focused	3	1	33.33%
Total Productive Skills	8	3	37.50%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 1	17	5	29.41%

In Unit 1, 17 activities were analyzed, and 5 of them (29.41%) were found to enhance critical thinking and problem solving. These activities mainly involved role-play of dialogues, filling in the missing parts of a conversation, and a spelling game where the students had to use the knowledge that had been given to them rather than just repeating it. The evaluation of Unit 1 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (2019) is that the unit is rather limited in the number of opportunities for higher-order cognitive engagement. Many exercises are based on rote learning and repetition, with almost no requirements for inference, evaluation, or decision-making on the student's behalf. Some of the exercises are based on role play and dialogue practice, but they do not involve students in structured problem-solving or decision-making processes to any significant degree. Also, there is no explicit focus on collaborative problem-solving or tasks that would involve students in the interpretation, assessment, or integration of information from many sources. The first unit of the third-grade English textbook introduces basic linguistic skills but does so with limited opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving. While 29.41% of the activities integrated aspects of CT and PS, these are not fully integrated or developed throughout the unit. The unit could be strengthened through the inclusion of problem-solving group discussions, real-life scenario-based applications, and systematically integrated collaborative activities to enhance the level of higher order cognitive engagement.

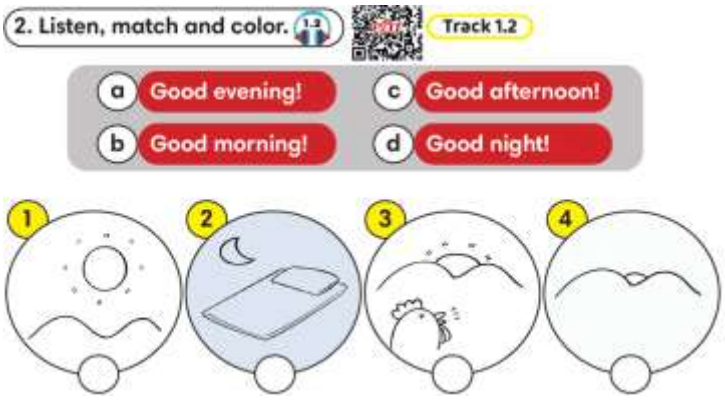

Figure 4.9 Listen, Match, and Color Exercise in Unit 1

4.2.1.2 The Analysis of Unit 2 in Terms of CT and PS

The third-grade English textbook's second unit is called "My Family" and it aims at assisting students to introduce and explain their family members to others. The unit consists of various listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary-based activities including identifying family members, completing dialogues, unscrambling words, and creating a family tree. Even though the activities help in the development of language skills, they do not incorporate CT and PS to a significant extent. The exercises in this part include listening to and repeating family-related words, matching activities, filling in the missing words, "who is he/she?" questions, unscrambling words, and describing one's own family. Most of the exercises are based on recognition and recall, however very little analysis or reasoning is required. However, there are a few tasks that ask students to come up with their responses and, therefore, involve some level of critical thinking.

In Unit 2, 14 activities were analyzed, and 4 activities (28.57%) were found to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Most of such activities involved making a family tree, writing compositions, describing family members, and acting out dialogues. Such exercises also involve decision-making and personal expression, which makes them different from mechanical drills.

Table 4.16 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 2

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	2	50.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	6	3	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 2	14	4	28.57%

The assessment of Unit 2 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" indicates that the unit is still rather formal and repetitive. Many of the exercises are repetitive and factual; there is little scope for using one's ideas or even common sense. Some exercises, for example, describing one's own family and engaging in short dialogues, are more complex than others, but they are not designed to involve problem-solving or collaborative decision-making in a complex way. The second unit of the third-grade English textbook is mostly focused on introducing basic family-related vocabulary and structures, but it does not pay much attention to critical thinking or problem-solving. CT and PS are incorporated into 28.57% of the activities, but they are not the main focus of the activities. To increase cognitive engagement, more open-ended writing tasks and discussion-based or scenario-based problem-solving could be introduced.

Figure 4.10 Match and Act Out Exercise in Unit 2

4.2.1.3 The Analysis of Unit 3 in Terms of CT and PS

The third unit of the third-grade English textbook is called "People I Love". The main goal of this unit is to help students describe people's physical characteristics and abilities. The unit consists of listening, speaking, and vocabulary-based activities, the latter of which mostly involve describing people, expressing abilities and inabilities, and using comparative adjectives. Most of the exercises are based on repetition, recognition, and controlled practice. However, some of the activities have students make choices and defend their choices, thus enhancing their critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills. Some of the activities in this unit include listening and repeating dialogues, describing people's physical traits, identifying and comparing abilities, filling in missing words, acting out dialogues, and a guessing game. Most of the tasks are based on drilling vocabulary and sentence structures, but a small number of activities involve students making decisions, describing real people, and participating in open-ended discussions, thus promoting higher-order thinking.

Table 4.17 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 3

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	3	60.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	4	57.14%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 3	15	5	33.33%

In Unit 3, 15 activities were analyzed, and 5 of them (33.33%) were found to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving. Most of such tasks included describing family members' abilities, playing the 'Guess Who' game, and participating in decision-making dialogues. Such exercises help students to reason, compare the characteristics of objects, and make decisions based on the best logical conclusion they could arrive at. The assessment of Unit 3 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" reveals that although the unit contains some open-ended speaking and writing tasks, most tasks are structured and guided. There is also low collateral

on collaborative problem solving because most exercises are individual practice-based and not group work. However, the unit does incorporate some tasks that ask students to describe and evaluate personal traits, which are consistent with higher-order cognitive engagement. The third unit of the third-grade English textbook introduces basic descriptive language and expressions of ability but offers rather limited opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. Even though 33.33% of the activities contain elements of CT and PS, many of them are centered on the practice of controlled language. It is possible to improve the unit by integrating more open-ended discussions, scenario-based tasks, and group decision-making tasks to increase the level of cognitive engagement.

Figure 4.11 Unscramble Exercise in Unit 3

4.2.1.4 The Analysis of Unit 4 in Terms of CT and PS

The fourth unit of the third-grade English textbook, called “Feelings”, helps students to learn how to express their feelings and make simple suggestions. The unit consists of listening, speaking, and vocabulary-based activities, the latter of which are primarily focused on emotions. Many of the exercises are repetitive, in the form of matching, and filling in dialogues, and a few require students to respond based on their own experiences, thus enhancing critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills. The activities in this unit include listening to dialogues, sorting emotions, finishing the dialogue, role-playing, making simple suggestions using the “let’s” structure, and a mimicking game. Most of the tasks are based on memorization and controlled practice, however, some tasks involve choice-making, role-play, and responding to open-ended prompts.

Table 4.18 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 4

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	3	60.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	4	57.14%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 4	14	5	35.71%

In Unit 4, 14 activities were analyzed, and 5 (35.71%) of these were found to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving. These tasks mainly involved the role-play of emotional responses, the suggestion-based conversations, and the miming game where students have to use their critical thinking skills, make decisions, and participate in a more meaningful way. The evaluation of Unit 4 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" reveals that the unit contains some semi-open-ended speaking and interaction but most of the activities are highly structured and controlled. There is a low emphasis on independent problem-solving because many exercises are based on recognition rather than on problem-solving. However, those exercises that make children act out different emotions and suggest what they should do involve higher-order thinking. The fourth unit of the third-grade English textbook introduces basic emotional expressions and simple suggestions, but the integration of critical thinking and problem-solving is moderate. While 35.71% of the activities in this unit incorporate aspects of CT and PS, it could be beneficial to include more discussion-based exercises, real-life problem-solving scenarios, and structured group interactions to increase cognitive engagement.

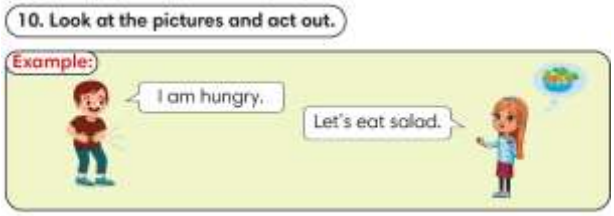

Figure 4.12 Act Out Exercise in Unit 4

4.2.1.5 The Analysis of Unit 5 in Terms of CT and PS

The fifth unit of the third-grade English textbook called "Toys and Games" is about quantity expression, color naming, and possessions talking. The unit is mainly based on listening, speaking, and vocabulary tasks with a focus on recognition, repetition, and straightforward question-answer routines. Most exercises are mechanical and are aimed at practicing language; some activities make students describe their toys and participate in the tasks with partners, which include basic critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) elements. The activities in this unit include role-playing or acting out dialogues, describing toys and their colors, completing and filling in the requests or questions, dialogues completion, coloring, and drawing, and talking about personal things. Many tasks are based on copying toy names and giving fixed answers to the questions, but several of them imply comparison, description, and decision making which lead to higher-order cognitive engagement.

Table 4.19 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 5

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	2	50.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	6	3	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 5	14	4	28.57%

In Unit 5, a total of 14 activities were analyzed, and 4 activities (28.57%) were found to promote critical thinking and problem solving. Most of these tasks included explaining and comparing toys, sharing personal belongings, and making reasonable inferences in a given dialogue. These exercises help students move beyond the level of memorization and use language in a meaningful way. Unit 5 is evaluated according to the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" and the result shows that although the unit contains some semi-structured and creative tasks, most of the exercises are rather rigid and are oriented towards the acquisition of lexical items. There is virtually no focus on cooperative problem-solving as many of the tasks are in the form of

individual productions rather than group discussions. However, some of the speaking activities that involve describing toys and expressing preferences contain some elements of independent thinking.

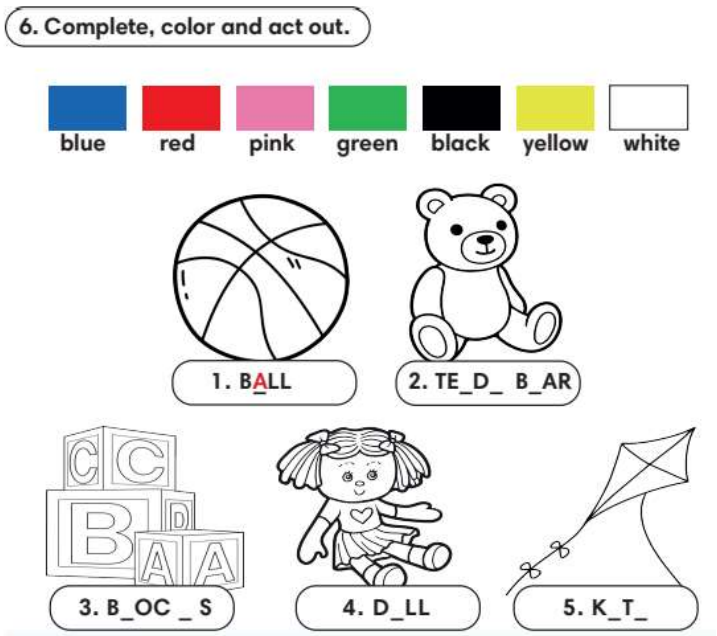

Figure 4.13 Complete, Color and Act Out Exercise in Unit 5

4.2.1.6 The Analysis of Unit 6 in Terms of CT and PS

The sixth unit of the third-grade English textbook, called "My House," is about identifying the sizes and shapes of objects, their locations, and the things that belong to people. The unit is mostly based on listening, speaking, and vocabulary exercises, with a particular focus on place prepositions, sizes and shapes adjectives, and household objects. Most exercises are recognition and repetition-based, as well as simple question-answer routines, with some tasks asking students to describe their own homes and thus requiring them to think critically (CT) and solve problems (PS). The exercises in this chapter include listening to dialogues, answering the "where is it?" questions, ordering sentences, finishing dialogues, describing objects, acting out the role of being involved in location-related conversations, and building a model house. Most tasks are basic and are based on rote learning; however, some tasks include decision-making, spatial ability, and cooperative labeling, thus increasing the cognitive complexity.

Table 4.20 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 6

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	3	60.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	4	57.14%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 6	15	5	33.33%

Fifteen activities were analyzed in Unit 6, and of these, 5 (33.33%) were found to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Most of these tasks focused on identifying and describing objects and locations, building and describing a model house, and solving problems based on spatial relations. These exercises help students develop their spatial reasoning skills, make decisions, and express themselves congruously. The assessment of unit 6 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" indicates that although the unit contains some spatial reasoning and descriptive components, most of the exercises are rather simple and rather regimented, with a strong emphasis on memorization. There is little concern with collaborative problem solving as most of the activities are individual work rather than group work. However, some of the speaking and writing activities that require the student to describe real-life spaces bring in some aspects of independent thinking. The sixth unit of the third-grade English textbook is a rather linear progression of lessons that help students discuss home-related topics and spatial relationships, but not a great deal of emphasis is placed on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Although 33.33% of the activities contain elements of CT and PS, the unit could be improved by incorporating more open-ended problem-solving tasks, group decision-making exercises, and real-life situations to increase the level of cognitive challenge.

4.2.1.7 The Analysis of Unit 7 in Terms of CT and PS

The seventh unit of the third-grade English textbook called "In My City" has some instances of people's and things' locations and basic request and response language as well as apologizing. The unit is mostly based on listening and speaking skills and vocabulary exercises, with the focus being on asking and answering questions about the places, giving directions, and explaining the locations. Most of the exercises are based on rote learning and repetitive question-answer routines, but some of them are quite reasoning-based and spatial as they involve elements of critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS). The activities in this unit include listening to dialogues, naming city places, answering questions, finishing dialogues, acting out role plays of location-based interactions, and creating a map of a living area. Most of the tasks are based on language drills and recognition, however, several of them imply spatial reasoning, inference-making, and logical response, thus implying higher-order cognitive engagement.

Table 4.21 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 7

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	3	60.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	4	57.14%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 7	14	5	35.71%

In Unit 7, 14 activities were evaluated, and 5 of these (35.71%) were found to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving. These tasks were mainly role-play of dialogues like giving and following directions, explaining how to get somewhere, and making a map of a living area, which therefore required students to use their spatial reasoning, decision-making, and logical organization of information. Unit 7 was evaluated according to the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" and it was found that although the unit contains some spatial reasoning and descriptive aspects, most of the exercises are rather formal and routine, and rather controlled.

There is little focus on collaborative problem-solving since most of the activities are individual or pair work, rather than group discussions. However, some speaking and writing tasks involve giving and following directions and describing objects and places which involve some level of independent thinking.

Figure 4.14 Listen to the Dialogue and Repeat Exercise in Unit 7

4.2.1.8 The Analysis of Unit 8 in Terms of CT and PS

The eighth unit of the third-grade English textbook is called "Transportation" and it is aimed at enabling the students to talk about the locations of objects and people, make simple requests, and exchange information about transportation. The unit is mainly based on the following components; listening, speaking, and vocabulary and the unit activities focus on naming different means of transportation, giving their locations, and answering travel questions. While many exercises are based on rote learning and question-and-answer routines, some tasks are designed to make students think about their travel preferences and spatial configurations, thus involving elements of critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS). Some of the activities in this unit include listening to dialogues, recognizing and naming different types of transportation, answering questions, sorting words, finishing dialogues, dramatizing the interactions, and directing students on how to link items with their

corresponding transportation. Most of the tasks are straightforward and involve simple recall and recognition while a few involve making travel decisions and interpreting directional information for more complex cognitive engagement.

Table 4.22 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 8

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	5	3	60.00%
Writing Focused	2	1	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	7	4	57.14%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 8	15	5	33.33%

Fifteen activities were analyzed in Unit 8, and 5 of them (33.33%) were found to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving. These tasks mainly involved choosing the right means of transportation to certain places, learning directions, and role-playing conversations related to travel choices, which called for the students' logic, spatial reasoning, and decision-making skills. The assessment of Unit 8 based on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" reveals that while the frequency of reasoning tasks is low, most of the exercises are rather straightforward and controlled. There is hardly any emphasis on collaborative problem-solving since most of the activities are individual or pair work, rather than group discussions. However, the speaking and writing components that involve providing directions and choosing the means of transportation are semi-structural and imply some level of problem-solving. The eighth unit of the third-grade English textbook is a rather linear way of introducing transportation and directions but does not fully integrate critical thinking and problem-solving into its curriculum. 33.33% of the activities included in the unit incorporate elements of CT and PS, but the unit might be enhanced by incorporating more realistic navigation tasks, group discussions about travel plans, and team problem-solving activities to increase cognitive challenge.

Figure 4.15 Act Out Exercise in Unit 8

4.2.1.9 The Analysis of Unit 9 in Terms of CT and PS

The ninth unit of the third-grade English textbook, called "Weather," is about describing weather conditions. The unit is mostly focused on listening, speaking, and vocabulary exercises and the main goals are to identify different kinds of weather, state the conditions, and be able to answer questions about the weather. Most of the exercises are based on the recognition and memory aspects and some of the tasks are designed to require analysis of the weather patterns and response based on students' experience which incorporates aspects of critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS). The activities in this unit include listening to dialogues, identifying weather conditions, answering weather-related questions, describing what is shown in the descriptions and the images, unscrambling weather-related words, finishing dialogues, role-playing the interactions, and drawing weather scenes. Most of the tasks are repetitive and straightforward, however, several of them imply that students will have to make a decision regarding the weather scenarios and express their views, thus increasing the level of cognitive engagement.

Table 4.23 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 9

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	3	75.00%
Writing Focused	1	1	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	5	5	100.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 9	13	6	46.15%

In Unit 9, 13 activities were analyzed, of which 6 (46.15%) were found to elicit critical thinking and problem-solving. Most of the tasks involved drawing and explaining the weather, making decisions in connection with certain weather situations, and explaining how certain weather affects them, making students relate what they learn in class to their everyday lives and compare different situations. The assessment of Unit 9 is made on the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" and the result shows that even though the unit has some reasoning-based tasks, most of the exercises are structured and controlled. There is a low level of collaboration in problem-solving since many of the activities are individual work rather than group work. However, some speaking and writing tasks require describing and explaining something as well as writing and speaking about the weather which involve some level of independent thinking. The ninth unit of the third-grade English textbook is a rather linear approach to talking and writing about the weather, with only a moderate focus on critical thinking and problem-solving. Although 46.15% of the activities are combined CT and PS, the unit could be enhanced by more group work, and more real-life applied problems related to weather and emergency planning and decision-making in groups to enhance cognitive complexity.

Figure 4.16 Listen to the Dialogue and Repeat Exercise in Unit 9

4.2.1.10 The Analysis of Unit 10 in Terms of CT and PS

The tenth unit of the third-grade English textbook called "Nature," is dedicated to the development of the abilities to express likes and dislikes, make simple requests and questions, and discuss such topics as nature and animals. The unit is mostly based on listening and speaking exercises, and vocabulary-building activities, with the focus being put on the recognition of animals, their description, and preferences. Most of the exercises are based on rote learning and recognition-paradigm tasks, however, some tasks require students to contrast animals, choose for themselves, and explain their decisions, thus involving elements of critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS). The activities in this unit include listening to the dialogues, naming the animals, answering the questions, matching the descriptions with the animals, finishing the dialogues, role-playing the interactions, and giving opinions about preferences regarding animals. Most of the tasks are of cognitive type and require students to recall or recognize something but a few tasks require students to decide, compare different animals, and give their opinion with reasoning, thus increasing the level of cognitive engagement.

Table 4.24 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 10

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	4	3	75.00%
Writing Focused	1	1	100.00%
Total Productive Skills	5	5	100.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 10	13	6	46.15%

In Unit 10, 13 activities were evaluated, where 6 of them (46.15%) were considered to activate critical thinking and problem-solving. Most of the tasks were related to sorting animals according to their traits, making choices between preferences, and explaining the status of like and dislike. The assessment of Unit 10 using the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" reveals that although decision-making and preference components are present in the unit, most of the exercises are rather direct and predictable. There is a low degree of concern with collaborative problem solving as many of the tasks are individual productions rather than group discussions. However, the speaking and writing parts that entail describing animals and giving personal views incorporate some aspects of independent thinking.

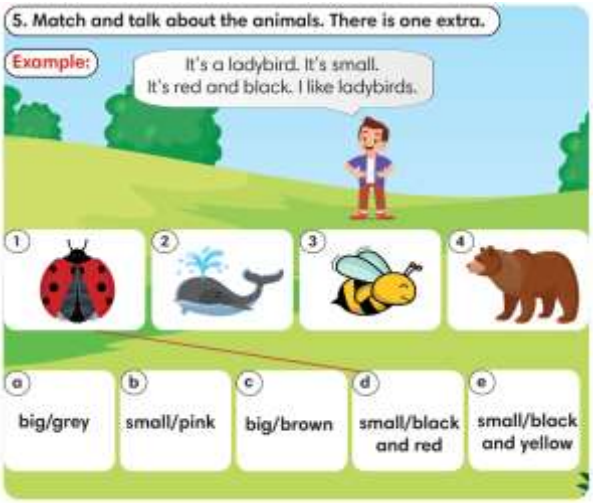

Figure 4.17 Match and Talk About the Animals Exercise in Unit 10

4.3 The Evaluation of Activities in the Course Book of the 4th Grade Learn with Bouncy English Textbook

The fourth-grade English course book is more structured and more complex in its approach to language learning than the previous grades and has a higher integration of critical thinking (CT), problem solving (PS), communication, collaboration, and creativity. Out of the three grade levels, it is the most attempt to incorporate the 21st century skills, but these skills are not homogeneously distributed and developed across the language areas.

The analysis of the 197 activities in the fourth-grade course book shows that 70 activities (35.53%) include CT and PS elements. With 54.55% of writing-focused activities intended to have students respond, analyze, and evaluate them, writing activities contain the highest proportion of CT and PS components. Speaking activities also contain 47.62% of the tasks that demand reasoning and decision making which provides students with a structured way of engaging in dialogue, sharing opinions, and explaining their choices. In contrast, listening (20%), vocabulary (20%), and grammar-focused exercises (16%) are still based on recognition, memorization, and controlled drills, which provide not only for the development of higher-order thinking skills but also for other ways of learning. A unit-by-unit breakdown shows that the CT and PS skills are not evenly distributed. Unit 1 ("Daily Routines") and Unit 8 ("Healthy Living") are somewhat more likely to contain critical thinking and problem-solving tasks than other units; 45% of total tasks incorporate these skills in each. Such units involve such features as structured discussions, inference-based reading exercises, and interactive decision-making tasks that involve real language use. However, other units, like Unit 6 ("Nature and Weather") and Unit 10 ("Food and Drinks"), are rather low in cognitive engagement and are designed for simple replay, repetition, and mechanical work rather than for active problem-solving or collaborative decision-making. Even though it is more integrated with the 21st century skills than the previous one, there are several limitations of the fourth-grade course book. Today, speaking and writing components provide rather semi-structured context for individual reasoning and expression; while reading and listening exercises are still centered on the understanding and retrieval of information, which prevents students from having to analyze, infer, and synthesize information. Collaboration remains a major gap, as most tasks are individual rather than cooperative, and there are no specific arrangements for teamwork, peer discussion, or group decision-making. Furthermore, there are no open-ended, inquiry-driven tasks in the course book to allow students to come up with several solutions and explain their viewpoints while developing flexible problem-solving strategies. Although the fourth-grade

course book shows a clear progression in the integration of the 21st century skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, the overall approach is only partly developed and rather disproportionately applied to skill areas. As for future revisions, the existing exercises could be less repetitive and more open-ended, and investigative tasks could be used more often which will compel students to summarize, interpret, and combine information instead of simply recalling it. To increase collaborative learning, such as peer group discussions, cooperative problem-solving tasks, and group projects where students work together to achieve a common goal could also be included. Thus, reading and listening tasks should graduate from basic comprehension exercises to more complex analytical tasks that require the students to ponder different points of view, assess arguments, and participate in real-life decision-making processes. So, in the areas shown, the fourth-grade course book could provide a more equal focus on language development, critical thinking, and other meta-cognitive abilities so that the students are prepared to solve real-life problems and communicate effectively.

4.3.1 The Analysis of CT and PS Skills in Activities in the 4th Grade Learn with Bouncy English Textbook

The fourth-grade English course book was developed to further students' language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Unlike the previous levels, this textbook contains more complex language structures and attempts to involve students in meaningful communication through games and exercises. Another shift is incorporating CT and PS skills into the curriculum at this level of language learning. The course book is the main source of language input, but it should also help the students find ways to analyze and evaluate what they have learned and to apply it in practical tasks. These activities are not just memorized and repeated activities but also involve making inferences, solving problems, and expressing their reasoning. This section aims to explore how well CT and PS skills are integrated into the course book across the various skill areas. Table 4.12 provides a summary of the total number of activities in the book including the number and percentage of activities that require higher order thinking.

Table 4.25 Activities That Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in the 4th Grade Course Book

Language Skills	Number of Activities	Number of Activities Promoting CT and PS	Ratio
Reading Focused	12	5	41.67%
Listening Focused	60	12	20.00%
Speaking Focused	42	20	47.62%
Writing Focused	33	18	54.55%
Grammar Focused	25	4	16.00%
Vocabulary Focused	15	3	20.00%
Open Based	10	8	80.00%
Total	**197**	**70**	**35.53%**

197 activities were identified from the fourth-grade course book and among these, 70 (35.53%) of them were integrated with CT and PS elements. As it was with the third-grade textbook, speaking and writing activities were found to have more critical thinking and problem-solving tasks than the other activities which included grammar and vocabulary exercises that were mostly controlled practice and memorization. There are very few activities that are based on reading, and even these have some tasks that require the student to make inferences or a conclusion from the textual information. There are more listening activities but very few of them make the student do the evaluation, prediction, or interpretation of information in addition to recognition. Productive skills like speaking and writing have more CT and PS tasks than the others as students are expected to justify their opinions, decide, and participate in semi-structured reasoning. Nevertheless, the textbook is still rather traditional and the focus is given to the initial language acquisition and drills rather than to the cognitive development. Adaptations for the future could include more open-ended group discussions, team problem-solving exercises, and decision-making tasks so that students could use their critical thinking skills in real-life language communication. The remaining sections will present a breakdown of the CT and PS integration by unit and highlight the particular activities that support these skills, including how they are distributed across the skill areas.

4.3.1.1 The Analysis of Unit 1 in Terms of CT and PS

The first unit of the fourth-grade English course book is introduced to support students in their development of vocabulary and basic language skills through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This section assesses the integration of critical thinking (CT) and problem solving (PS) into the activities of this unit, where 45.00% of the activities contain CT and PS components, as shown in Table 4.26 below.

Table 4.26 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 1

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	8	4	50%
Writing Focused	6	3	50%
Total Productive Skills	**14**	**7**	50%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 1	**20**	**9**	45%

As it is clear from Table 4.26, some of the speaking and writing activities in Unit 1 are designed to help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Some of these activities have students examine, critique, and formulate responses to situations, which promotes metacognitive challenge. However, several activities, including 'Listen and repeat', 'Match and say', and 'Trace and say', are designed primarily for memorization and repetition rather than to require analytical thinking or independent problem-solving. Although Unit 1 has some attempts to incorporate CT and PS, the focus is still primarily on initial language development rather than on critical thinking. The evaluation of activities was also done using the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (Uluhan, 2019) to help determine the presence of the 21st century skills in the course book. The checklist shows that while Unit 1 is consistent with some important principles, it is lacking in some respects. The unit is systematic in introducing vocabulary; however, the variety of tasks' difficulty is limited, and students have no choice of ways to solve a task. Tasks that involve information analysis, interpretation, or assessment are scarce and the majority of the exercises are recognition and repetition types, which require research or inquiry.

Some of the exercises allow students to come up with their responses, thereby involving them in the decision-making process to some extent. Meanwhile, the unit includes interaction-based activities such as dramatic enactment of the dialogues or creation and use of a finger puppet to foster interactive communication in small groups of students. However, the lack of well-structured collaborative problem-solving tasks limits the development of teamwork and group decision-making. In addition, the distribution of CT and PS activities across different skill areas was analyzed to determine whether these skills were incorporated into various parts of language learning.

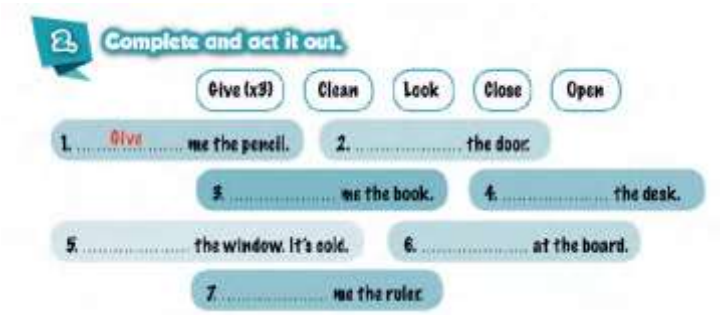

Figure 4.18 Complete and Act Out Exercise in Unit 1

4.3.1.2 The Analysis of Unit 2 in Terms of CT and PS

The second unit of the fourth-grade English course book is also aimed at the development of students' vocabulary and language skills within the framework of learning and using language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This section assesses the integration of critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) in the activities of this unit, which are 44.44% of the activities having CT and PS elements based on Table 4.27.

Table 4.27 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 2

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	7	3	42.86%
Writing Focused	5	2	40%
Total Productive Skills	12	5	41.67%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 2	18	8	44.44%

As it is shown in Table 4.27, some speaking and writing activities in Unit 2 involve CT and PS components. These tasks require students to analyze and synthesize information, state their viewpoints justify them, and use them in communication. However, there are some activities in Unit 2, like 'Listen and repeat', 'Match the words', and 'Fill in the blanks' that are geared towards the reinforcement of discrete element knowledge rather than the development of analytical skills or problem solving. Some of the exercises are rather private and allow for a good deal of input and decision-making; however, most of them are rather closed-ended. The unit was evaluated using the "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" and it was seen that although Unit 2 incorporates some CT and PS aspects, it focuses more on the acquisition of a structured language program than on the development of higher-order cognitive processes. It includes teaching new vocabulary and sentence patterns, but there are no tasks that would require students to solve problems and make decisions on their own. A few activities in Unit 2 are interactive, including pair discussions and role-playing exercises in which students are expected to express their opinions and solve problems. However, there are no collaborative problem-solving tasks that would require students to work together to come up with solutions in a given format.

Figure 4.19 Draw, Color, and Talk Exercise in Unit 2

4.3.1.3 The Analysis of Unit 3 in Terms of CT and PS

The third unit of the fourth-grade English course book is designed to help students develop their vocabulary and basic language skills through speaking, writing, listening, and reading activities. In this section, critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are reviewed in the activities of this unit, as outlined in Table 4.8, which shows a numerical distribution.

Table 4.28 CT and PS Analysis for Unit 3

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	9	4	44.44%
Writing Focused	6	3	50%
Total Productive Skills	15	7	46.67%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 3	22	10	45.45%

As Table 4.28 shows, 44.44% of the speaking-focused activities and 50.00% of the writing-focused activities are aimed at the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This leads to 46.67% of all productive skills activities incorporating CT and PS components. In all, 45.45% of the activities in Unit 3 are aimed at the development of these

skills. Some activities help students think critically, such as analyzing, evaluating, and coming up with their responses, which involve a meta-cognitive level of engagement. However, there are some activities in the curriculum, including “Match and say,” “Listen and repeat,” and “Fill in the blanks” which are meant for reinforcement and not for developing higher-order critical thinking or problem-solving. While Unit 3 incorporates some aspects of critical thinking and problem-solving, it is not the primary focus of the unit, instead focusing primarily on language practice. The “Course Book Evaluation Checklist” was used to determine how well Unit 3 incorporates the 21st century skills. The checklist shows that although Unit 3 is based on the necessary curriculum criteria, the activity complexity diversity is low. The unit is rather linear in its structure and does not comprise a large number of tasks that could be completed in a variety of ways. Some of the exercises enable students to share their views and opinions which help in the development of decision-making skills. Furthermore, there are some practical components of Unit 3, for instance, acting out dialogues and group activities which help in the improvement of communication and social interaction. However, there is no provision for collaborative and structured problem solving which hinders the development of teamwork and negotiation skills.

Figure 4.20 Listen and Act Out Exercise in Unit 3

4.3.1.4 The Analysis of Unit 4 in Terms of CT and PS

The fourth unit of the fourth-grade English course book is designed to expand the student’s vocabulary and basic language skills through speaking, writing, listening, and reading activities. In this section, critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are analyzed in the activities of this unit as presented in Table 4.29. The results of the evaluation are presented in Table 4.29 below which shows the numerical distribution.

Table 4.29 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 4

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting CT and PS in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	10	5	50%
Writing Focused	7	4	57.14%
Total Productive Skills	17	9	52.94%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 4	24	11	45.83%

As Table 4.29 shows, 50.00% of the speaking-focused activities and 57.14% of the writing-focused activities support CT and PS. This leads to 52.94% of the productive skills activities incorporating CT and PS. Overall, 45.83% of the activities in Unit 4 contribute to higher-order thinking. Some tasks require students to think critically, that is, to analyze, evaluate, and respond to the questions they have been given, thus involving them cognitively. However, there are some activities, for instance, "Listen and repeat," "Match and say," and "Fill in the blanks" which are based on memorization rather than on independent problem-solving or critical thinking. Although Unit 4 has some attempts to incorporate CT and PS, it is primarily aimed at language learning rather than critical thinking. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to determine how well Unit 4 incorporates the 21st century skills. The results show that the unit is consistent with the core curriculum but has low variation in activity complexity. Most exercises are presented in a way that offers one clear solution or requires students to follow a set of steps to reach the solution, with limited opportunity to explore other solutions or engage in open-ended problem-solving. There are very few tasks that require students to interpret, assess, or evaluate information as most tasks are designed for recall or repetition style learning. Some exercises require students to give their own opinions, which helps in decision-making skills. Furthermore, there are interactive elements in the unit including role play, where students engage in dialogues and collaborative tasks with their peers, which enhance communication. However, there are still limited and rather structured collaborative problem-solving situations provided, which hinders the students' opportunity to work on their teamwork and negotiation skills.

Figure 4.21 Ask and Answer Exercise in Unit 4

4.3.1.5 The Analysis of Unit 5 in Terms of CT and PS

The fifth unit of the fourth-grade English course book is aimed at the development of vocabulary and general language skills such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This section examines how well critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit as depicted in Table 4.30. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.30 below.

Table 4.30 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 5

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	8	4	50%
Writing Focused	6	3	50%
Total Productive Skills	14	7	50%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 5	21	9	42.86%

Based on this analysis, 50.00% of the speaking-focused activities and 50.00% of the writing-focused activities involve CT and PS. This means that 50.00% of the productive skills activities

are aimed at higher-order thinking. In general, 42.86% of the activities of Unit 5 are aimed at the development of CT and PS. Some tasks require students to think critically, analyze and evaluate the information, and come up with their responses, thus involving them in more complex cognitive processes. Nevertheless, there are some tasks, such as 'Listen and repeat', 'Match and say', and 'Fill in the blanks' which are designed for repeating information rather than for independent problem-solving or critical thinking. Although Unit 5 has some aspects that support the development of CT and PS, the main focus is given to language rehearsal rather than to specific tasks that aim at developing cognitive skills. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to determine how well Unit 5 incorporates the 21st century skills. From the analysis, it could be seen that the unit is rather traditional and does not have a lot of variety in activity complexity. Most exercises are presented in a rather strict manner and do not provide many chances for the student to try different approaches or come up with solutions to a problem. There are very few tasks that require students to interpret, assess, or evaluate information as most of the tasks are designed to assess recall or controlled practice. Some of the exercises provide a chance for students to give their own opinions which helps in the development of decision-making skills. Furthermore, there are interactive elements in the unit including dramatizing dialogues and group work which help in the development of communication and teamwork skills. However, there are very few structured collaborative problem-solving tasks presented, which limit students' opportunity to learn to negotiate and work in teams.

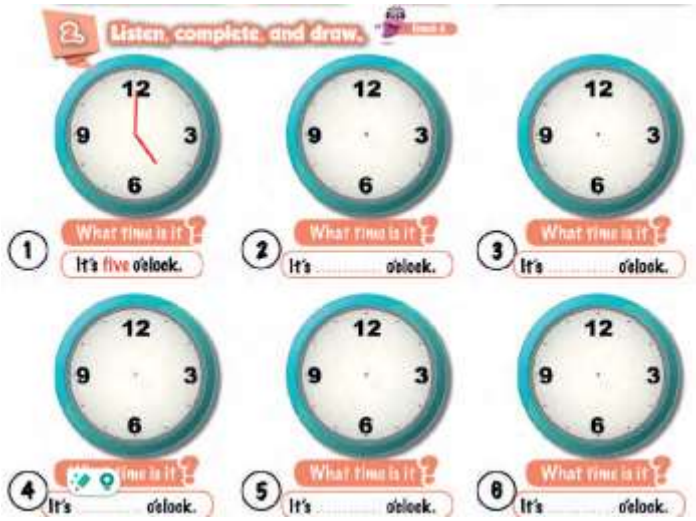

Figure 4.22 Listen, Complete, and Draw Exercise in Unit 5

4.3.1.6 The Analysis of Unit 6 in Terms of CT and PS

The sixth unit of the fourth-grade English course book is aimed at expanding students' vocabulary and basic language knowledge and skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. In this section, how critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit are examined as depicted in Table 4.31, which shows the frequencies.

Table 4.31 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 6

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting CT and PS in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	7	3	42.86%
Writing Focused	5	2	40%
Total Productive Skills	12	5	41.67%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 6	18	7	38.89%

From the results of the analysis, it could be seen that CT and PS are integrated in 42.86% of the speaking-focused activities and 40.00% of the writing-focused activities. This leads to 41.67% of the total productive skills activities targeting higher-order thinking. In all, 38.89% of the activities in Unit 6 are aimed at the development of CT and PS. Some exercises require students to think critically and to make evaluations and decisions, which is a higher-order cognitive task. However, some tasks are designed to assess students' memory rather than their critical thinking or problem-solving abilities. Even though Unit 6 has some attempts to include CT and PS, it is first and foremost a review of language items rather than a systematic approach to cognitive challenges. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to determine the integration of the 21st century skills in Unit 6. The results indicate that the unit is rather straightforward and not very diverse in its activities, and thus does not meet the standards of complexity. Many of the exercises are presented in a way of a routine, which reduces the chances of unexpected or freely given solutions.

Figure 4.23 Choose, Mime, and Guess Exercise in Unit 6

4.3.1.7 The Analysis of Unit 7 in Terms of CT and PS

The seventh unit of the fourth-grade English course book is aimed at expanding the students' vocabulary and basic language knowledge and skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This section examines how well critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit as depicted in Table 4.32 which shows numerical distribution.

Table 4.32 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 7

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	9	4	44.44%
Writing Focused	6	3	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	15	7	46.67%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 7	22	10	45.45%

As Table 4.32 shows, CT and PS are incorporated in 44.44% of the speaking-focused activities and 50.00% of the writing-focused activities. This means that 46.67% of the total productive skills activities are aimed at higher-order thinking. In another way, 45.45% of the activities of Unit 7 are oriented towards the development of CT and PS. Some activities help students to analyze, evaluate, and come up with their responses, thus leading to a higher level of cognitive

involvement. However, some tasks are designed to require little or no independent reasoning or problem-solving but instead depend on memorization. Even though Unit 7 has some attempts to incorporate CT and PS, the focus is still on reinforcing language structures rather than on a more structured approach to cognitive engagement. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to evaluate the integration of the 21st century skills in Unit 7. The analysis of the work reveals that the unit is rather conventional and does not offer a rich variety of activity complexity. Many of the exercises are presented in a rather strict way, which reduces the chances of spontaneous problem-solving and free-response questions. Some exercises enable students to share their views and opinions and make decisions. Also, the unit includes such cooperative activities as the dramatic representation of the dialogues and the interpersonal communication tasks, which help the students to communicate. However, there is a lack of closure in the form of structured collaborative problem-solving tasks, which could have helped students develop their teamwork and negotiation skills.

Figure 4.24 Choose, Ask and Answer Exercise in Unit 7

4.3.1.8 The Analysis of Unit 8 in Terms of CT and PS

The eighth unit of the fourth-grade English course book is aimed at expanding the student's vocabulary and basic language knowledge and skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This section examines how well critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit as depicted in Table 4.33.

Table 4.33 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 8

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting CT and PS in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	10	5	50.00%
Writing Focused	7	4	57.14%
Total Productive Skills	17	9	52.94%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 8	25	11	44.00%

As can be seen from Table 4.33, CT and PS are integrated in 50.00% of the speaking-focused activities and 57.14% of the writing-focused activities. This means that 52.94% of the total productive skills activities are geared towards higher-order thinking. Overall, 44.00% of the activities in Unit 8 are aimed at the development of CT and PS. Some activities help students to think critically, to analyze and evaluate the data, and to come up with their ideas which could be viewed as a more complex cognitive task. However, some tasks are based mainly on memorizing information rather than using their intelligence or problem-solving abilities. Although Unit 8 has some attempts to incorporate CT and PS, the focus is still on reinforcing language structures rather than on structured cognitive engagement. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to evaluate the integration of the 21st century skills in Unit 8. The analysis shows that the unit is rather conventional and does not offer a rich variety of activity complexity. Many of the exercises are presented in a routine way, which reduces the potential for innovative problem-solving and free response. Some of the exercises involve students' own opinions and decision-making abilities. Also, the unit includes group activities such as dramatizing the dialogues and pair work which are good for enhancing communication. However, the number of structured collaborative problem-solving tasks is rather limited, which prevents students from developing such skills as teamwork and negotiation.

4.3.1.9 The Analysis of Unit 9 in Terms of CT and PS

The ninth unit of the fourth-grade English course book aims to expand the student's vocabulary and basic language knowledge and skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This section examines how well critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit, as depicted in Table 4.34. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.34 below.

Table 4.34 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 9

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	8	4	50.00%
Writing Focused	6	3	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	14	7	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 9	20	9	45.00%

From the results of the analysis, it could be seen that 50.00% of the speaking-focused activities and 50.00% of the writing-focused activities involve CT and PS. This means that 50.00% of the productive skills activities are higher-order thinking tasks. In all, 45 percent of the activities in Unit 9 are aimed at the development of CT and PS. Some activities help students to think critically, to analyze and evaluate the information, and to come up with their responses, thus involving them in a more complex cognitive process. However, several tasks are rather straightforward and involve little or no independent reasoning or problem-solving. Even though Unit 9 has some attempts to incorporate CT and PS, the focus is still on reviewing language structures rather than on the structured cognitive challenge. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to evaluate the integration of the 21st century skills in Unit 9. The analysis shows that the unit is rather conventional and does not offer a rich variety of activity complexity levels. Many of the exercises are presented in a fairly rigid way, which reduces the potential for innovative problem-solving and free response. Some exercises enable students to share their

own views and narratives and exhibit decision-making capacities. Also, the unit includes group activities such as dramatizing the dialogues and pair work exercises which are effective in enhancing communication. However, the number of structured collaborative problem-solving tasks is rather limited, which hinders the development of students' teamwork and negotiation skills.

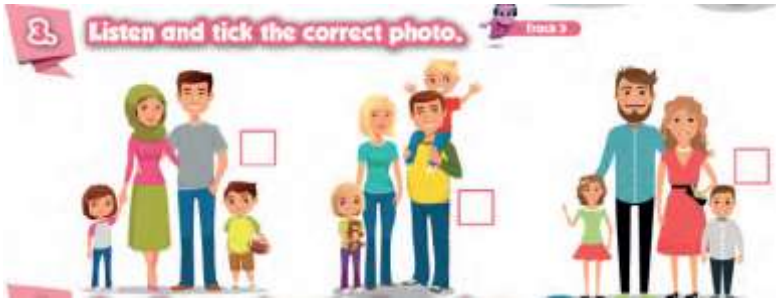

Figure 4.25 Listen and Tick the Correct Photo Exercise in Unit 9

4.3.1.10 The Analysis of Unit 10 in Terms of CT and PS

The tenth unit of the fourth-grade English course book also aims to expand the students' vocabulary and basic language knowledge and skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This section is examined to check how well critical thinking (CT) and problem-solving (PS) skills are incorporated into the activities of this unit, as depicted in Table 4.35. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.35 below.

Table 4.35 CT and PS Skill Analysis for Unit 10

Language Skills	Number of Productive Skills Activities	Number of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Productive Skills	Ratio
Speaking Focused	8	4	50.00%
Writing Focused	6	3	50.00%
Total Productive Skills	14	7	50.00%
Total Number of Activities in Unit 10	20	9	45.00%

As shown in Table 4.35, the level of CT and PS integration is 50.00% for speaking-focused activities and 50.00% for writing-focused activities. This means that 50.00% of the productive skills activities are higher-order thinking tasks. In all, 45.00% of the activities in Unit 10 are directed toward the development of CT and PS. Some activities help students to think critically, analyze and evaluate the information, and come up with their responses, thus fostering a higher level of cognitive engagement. However, several tasks are designed to measure students' ability to recall information rather than to use their independent reasoning or problem-solving skills. Although Unit 10 has some attempts to integrate CT and PS, the focus is still on reviewing language structures rather than on structured cognitive engagement. The "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" was used to evaluate the integration of the 21st century skills in Unit 10. The analysis shows that the unit is rather traditional and does not offer a rich variety of activity complexity levels. Many of the exercises are presented in a rather straightforward way, which reduces the potential for exploratory problem-solving and free response. Some of the exercises involve expressing personal opinions and decision-making skills. Also, the unit includes cooperative activities such as dramatizing the dialogues and peer interaction, which help in learning the language. However, the structured collaborative problem-solving tasks are not well developed, which hampers the development of teamwork and negotiation skills among students.

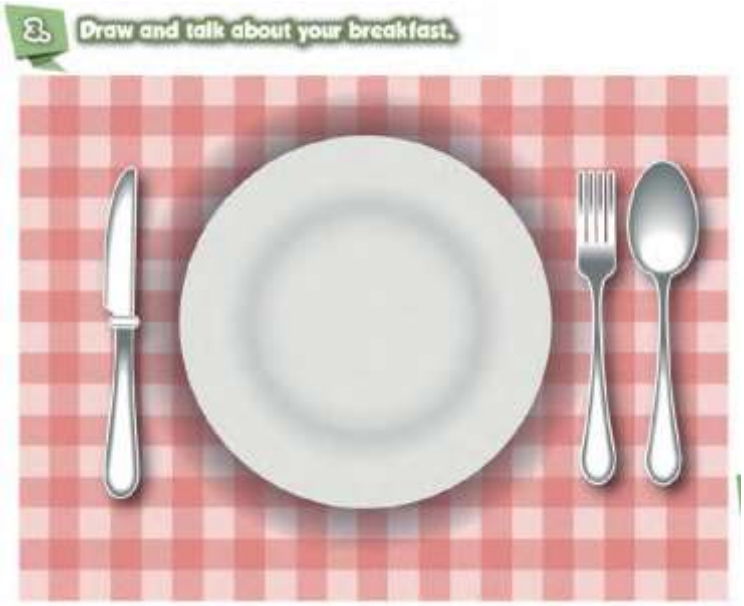

Figure 4.26 Draw and Talk About Your Breakfast Exercise in Unit 10

The activity shown in Figure 4.26 illustrates the "Draw and Talk About Your Breakfast" exercise in Unit 10, which is designed to develop students' speaking skills through personal

expression. This activity encourages learners to engage in descriptive language use and supports critical thinking by prompting them to organize and verbalize their thoughts coherently. Although the exercise fosters oral communication, it primarily emphasizes language recall and routine description rather than complex problem-solving. Nonetheless, such tasks contribute to the gradual integration of critical thinking and problem-solving skills by promoting active student participation and collaborative learning opportunities.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1 Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented and discussed. The general purpose of this research was to establish how much the English textbooks used in public schools' second, third, and fourth-grade English classes include the 21st century skills in their content. The study identified how these skills are incorporated in various drills, examples, and other resources that are related to CT, PS, communication, collaboration, and creativity. To address the research questions, the textbooks were analyzed systematically and the frequency, distribution, and depth of the integration of the 21st century skills were assessed. The analysis was carried out using Uluhan's "Course Book Evaluation Checklist" (2019) which offers a systematic approach to evaluating the integration of learning and innovation skills in language learning materials. The units of the second, third, and fourth-grade textbooks were reviewed to identify the number of activities that enrich the 21st century skills and how they are incorporated into different types of learning tasks. The findings are presented in tables and figures to represent the frequency and quality of these skills in the textbooks. Moreover, the results are discussed in positive and negative aspects, and the study offers a critical appraisal of the textbooks in helping students to meet the challenges of the current educational and working environment.

5.1.1 How much do the English textbooks used in the second, third, and fourth grade English classes in Turkish primary schools include content that promotes the 21st century skills?

The findings show that the application of the 21st century skills in second, third, and fourth-grade English textbooks is random and depends on the grade level and the skill area. In general, the integration of these skills is fragmentary; some of the textbooks contain some approaches towards the development of communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, while other textbooks are based on the traditional approach, where students learn language rules and practice them in mechanical drills and memory games. The second-grade English textbook focuses on the introduction to the language, such as vocabulary enhancement,

comprehension of instructions and patterns, and construction of basic sentences. The 21st century skills are not well embraced in the textbook as most of the activities are repetitive and contextual based with low levels of thinking or problem-solving. There are some active elements, for example, songs, chants, and role plays that could help children communicate but there are no specific group activities and open-ended problems to solve. The third-grade English textbook has a moderate increase in the integration of the 21st century skills especially in the communication area. Early forms of critical thinking and creativity are introduced through such activities as predicting, classifying, and expressing personal views in small group discussions. Nevertheless, problem-solving and collaboration are not well developed and most of the exercises are still closed loop, that is, they require minimal or no creativity and tend to focus on mere rehearsal. The listening and speaking components include more real-life contexts, which offer some context for learning and decision-making. The fourth grade English textbook has the most evident attempt to integrate the 21st century skills, especially in the productive skills of speaking and writing. Critical thinking and problem-solving are integrated in almost 35.53% of all the activities that involve the students in the analysis and evaluation of the information and formation of the response. Less emphasis is given to collaboration because most of the interactive activities are designed for the student working alone rather than for working with peers in problem-solving. Creativity is partially encouraged, especially in writing where students are asked to write stories, give their opinions, and describe something. Nevertheless, reading and listening tasks are still based on recognition and repetition, which means that interpretation and synthesis are not required in all the tasks.

The 21st century skills are incorporated in all three textbooks but their integration is partial and limited in lower grades. The fourth-grade textbook makes the most advancement in integrating critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity whereas the second-grade textbook relies much on memorization and repetition. In all the levels, the biggest gaps are observed in the structure of collaboration and problem solving as many of the exercises are rather simplistic and do not provide the student with several possible solutions or a chance to participate in a group discussion. Some possible enhancements for the future could be to include more productive tasks that require higher order thinking such as group discussions, pair work, and collaborative problem-solving tasks that could help to develop students' teamwork and negotiation skills and make sure that there are real-life situations incorporated in the learning of English to help with the development of authentic communication and decision making.

5.1.2 How are the 21st century skills presented with various exercises, illustrations, and other materials in the selected textbooks?

The 21st century skills are incorporated in second, third, and fourth-grade English textbooks in different quantities and qualities. These skills are not introduced and incorporated in exercises, illustrations, and other learning materials in a uniform manner across the grade levels. However, some of the activities are discovered to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, cooperation, and communication while other tasks are more repetitive, cognitive, and language controlled. In the second-grade textbook, the 21st century skills are introduced through visuals such as pictures, graphics, and flash cards. Exercises are based on vocabulary development and grammar rules and practices, with little or no provision for product or process outcomes that are not linked to writing. Most of the exercises are based on recognition where the students are required to recognize words and images and not analysis, evaluation, or creation. Speaking exercises were based on repeated patterns of dialogues which students could replicate but failed to come up with their responses. Some of the role-play activities were quite interactive but they were not developed in a way that could demand problem-solving or negotiation skills. The listening sections are quite basic and include simple quizzes that require the student to recognize objects, colors, letters, numbers, or shapes and give a simple response like yes or no. The limited number of exercises is indicative of the fact that while the 21st century skills are included in some form, they are not fully integrated into the learning process.

The third-grade textbook provides a more systematic way of integrating the 21st century skills with more emphasis on communication and creativity. In this textbook, students are expected to share their ideas, make comparisons and contrasts, and make some inferences. Speaking tasks are no longer strictly based on repetition; students are expected to engage in moderate discussions. Some reading comprehension activities contain problem-solving elements where students give their answers or solve simple problems using their critical thinking skills. However, collaborative exercises are not well represented, and most activities are still designed for the student to work independently and hand in their work without involving their peers. Illustrations are used to support comprehension, but they are not used as a tool to encourage independent thinking. Writing skills are somewhat advanced and include such tasks as describing objects, listing some items, and finishing a dialogue. However, to this extent, such

activities encourage the students' creativity but they do not fully support metacognitive processes like evaluation or synthesis of information.

The fourth-grade textbook has the most comprehensive integration of the 21st century skills especially productive skills. Many of the speaking tasks involve discussing, talking about own life experiences, and giving own opinions which helps to develop both communication and critical thinking skills. There are some role-play and scenario-based exercises that are somewhat similar to real-life situations and hence could be used to invite students to make decisions and think critically. Some writing tasks contain directions that ask students to come up with a certain output within a certain context, which provides more freedom for creativity and problem-solving. Nevertheless, these tasks are not open-ended and are often presented within a framework that limits the possibilities for exploration. Comprehension and listening exercises have more inference-type questions that involve analyzing the information provided. Illustrations are used in a more applied sense to help the students solve various tasks, for example, as a visual assistant in discussion or storytelling. Although these improvements are welcome, structured cooperation is still lacking, as there are virtually no exercises that are specifically aimed at teamwork, negotiation, or cooperative problem-solving. It could be seen that all three textbooks contain aspects of the 21st century skills but they are not always direct or they are limited by controlled teaching. The progression from second grade to fourth grade focuses more on the aspects of communication, creativity, and rudimentary critical thinking skills but problem-solving and cooperation are not highly developed. Exercises, illustrations, and other materials are used effectively to help students learn the language, but they do not always engage students in sophisticated thinking, independent work, or cooperative learning. Future enhancements could include the development of tasks that support more free-flow learning, the increase in the number of cooperative activities, and the ensuring that illustrations and other materials enhance the development of analytical and decision-making skills rather than just helping in comprehension.

5.1.3 What are the positive and negative aspects of English textbooks in Turkish primary schools in terms of maintaining the 21st century skills?

The second, third, and fourth grade English textbooks also have their strength and weaknesses in implementing the 21st century skills. Despite the textbooks offering relevant and progressive language learning activities that incorporate some aspects of critical thinking,

problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity, the intensity and continuity of these skills are not equally high across different grades and subjects. Some of the advantages of the textbooks include that they introduce the learner to the 21st century skills and build on them as the learner advances through the grade levels, with more emphasis on communication and creativity. In the fourth-grade textbook, in particular, there is a more systematic attempt to include tasks that call for higher-order thinking and problem-solving, especially in the speaking and writing sub-components. Such exercises that include giving opinions, group discussions, and answering questions that relate to the given context enhance the critical thinking and decision-making skills of the learner. Also, some aspects like role play and storytelling help the student engage in real-life communication situations, thereby enhancing the applicability of the learning process.

Another advantage is that the textbooks contain pictures, videos, and instructions that help guide the learner through the activities. These materials help in improving comprehension and interest, thus making language learning easier for children. Sometimes, the listening and reading parts contain items that ask learners to make inferences, thus involving them in the process of analysis. Moreover, the writing sections in the latter grades have a more individual approach and demand original answers rather than templated responses. However, there are some shortcomings in the implementation of the 21st century skills. The biggest drawback could be the absence of well-organized cooperative problem-solving tasks. Some activities need student-teacher or student-student contact but most of them are meant for individual work and do not include such elements as teamwork, negotiation, or cooperative learning. The lack of specific peer learning tasks means that children have few chances to learn how to work in a group, which are important aspects of the 21st century school.

Another limitation is that while critical thinking and problem-solving are incorporated, they are not done so consistently across all skill areas. The listening and reading parts still mainly focus on recognition and comprehension rather than on higher-order processes. Many tasks are based on recognition, filling in the gaps, or learning of certain language items, which help to develop language skills but do not necessarily involve critical thinking, analysis, or evaluation. This imbalance indicates that even though the textbooks seek to enhance analytical thinking, they fail to provide realistic problem statements that would compel the student to analyze different points of view or possible solutions to the problem. Furthermore, the only time creativity is encouraged is in writing tasks, but most activities are still within the framework of highly guided tasks. Even though students might be asked to explain, contrast, or share their

experiences, they are not often given tasks to argue, suggest, or even create their learning objectives. Most of the exercises are rather strict, which means that students don't have many choices regarding the way to solve a particular task, which can limit the possibilities for innovation and autonomous learning.

In general, the textbooks are partly successful in integrating the 21st century skills, especially in terms of communication and critical thinking but rather poor in cooperation, creativity, and problem solving. Future updates could use more group work, more choice-based work, and more critical thinking in all the skills areas instead of just some.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of the Results

The purpose of this study was to establish the extent of integration of 21st century skills in second, third, and fourth-grade English textbooks, specifically in critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity. The results show that the 21st century skills are included in all three textbooks, but the depth and coverage are different across the grades and skills. Some aspects of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication are included while others, such as collaborative problem-solving and open-ended creativity, are not fully developed. The progress from second grade to fourth grade involves step by step increase in the integration of these skills; however, there are gaps and inconsistencies in how they are incorporated into the learning resources.

The second-grade textbook is designed to help children learn language and the approach is rather passive with a large emphasis on memorization with not much else to offer in terms of higher-order thinking or group work. Exercises are mostly recognition-based, with pattern dialogues and matching activities that offer low-level chances for students to reason, analyze, or come up with their answers. The activities are usually quite procedural in that they are presented in a very clear and specific way and students are expected to follow the instructions without too much scope for individualization or creativity. Furthermore, while some listening and speaking exercises involve verbal interaction, they are mostly reformulated and repetitive drills with predetermined answers that do not develop critical thinking or decision-making skills.

The third-grade textbook has a moderately higher level of integration of 21st century skills especially in the area of communication and creativity. Some basic problem-solving is introduced especially in reading and speaking sections, but collaborative learning is not fully exploited. Speaking and writing tasks gradually become more complex and more independent than in the previous grade, however, many tasks are still pattern-driven and do not encourage free thinking. Sometimes students are expected to give an opinion or explain their thinking but most of the time the tasks continue to focus on recall and controlled use of language, thus limiting the students' exposure to higher-order cognitive processes such as evaluation,

reasoning, and synthesis. The listening and reading parts still focus more on recognition than on analysis, thus limiting the opportunities for students to use their interpretative or critical skills when processing information instead of just remembering it.

The fourth-grade textbook has the most noticeable attempt to incorporate 21st century skills in the speaking and writing activities. CT and PS skills are incorporated in 35.53% of all the activities in the textbook and the tasks given to the students aim for them to think critically and respond appropriately. Such speaking activities help students develop their critical thinking skills and communication skills as they engage in group discussions, give their opinions, and justify their answers. Writing tasks also become more diverse and less guided, enabling students to come up with their ideas more freely. However, while the two texts have several similarities, the absence of collaboration in problem-solving is still evident. Although students might engage in role plays or guided group discussions, there are very few group tasks that involve the students working together to come up with a solution or decision. Furthermore, many of the listening and reading tasks continue to be simple comprehension checks that do not challenge students to think critically or perform higher-order meaning-making.

The integration of 21st century skills within exercises, illustrations, and materials is also different. The second-grade textbook is illustrated and has many visual representations and structured activities with very few discussion activities. Illustrations are used mainly as aids to comprehension rather than as prompts to encourage creative or critical thinking. The third-grade textbook has more discussion-based exercises and creative prompts, but collaboration and higher-order thinking are not fully developed. The fourth-grade textbook has role play, contextualized speaking exercises, and creative writing tasks that help to promote autonomy and critical thinking. Nevertheless, most activities are still individual and there are virtually no peer learning strategies that would actively encourage teamwork and collective problem-solving.

Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks shows the current state of the textbooks in terms of 21st century skills development. The most significant strength is the step-by-step enhancement of critical thinking and creativity in the productive skills area from second grade to fourth grade. With the grade levels, students are gradually expected to give their opinions, explain their thinking, and apply knowledge in more meaningful ways. Furthermore, writing tasks also become more challenging and diverse and thus students have more freedom to work on the tasks on their own. Similarly, the fourth-grade speaking inventory includes decision-making elements where the student has to make a choice and explain why they chose

a particular option. Despite these positive changes, the major weaknesses of the textbooks include the absence of structured cooperation, shallow problem-solving, and overemphasizing controlled activities rather than exploratory learning. In all three textbooks, peer interaction is minimal and there are very few activities that require students to work together towards common goals. Moreover, problem-solving elements are not fully integrated into all the skill areas although they are incorporated into some of the activities. Listening and reading tasks still concentrate mainly on comprehension rather than analysis, thus preventing students from using interpretation, inference, or argumentation. In the writing tasks, creativity is to some extent encouraged; however, many tasks are designed in a way that the students know what is expected of them and how to achieve it.

In general, it could be concluded that the 21st century skills are incorporated to some extent, but their integration is not equitable. The textbooks enhance communication, creativity, and basic critical thinking to some extent; however, collaborative problem-solving and innovative strategies are not well embraced. Possible recommendations for the future include implementing more group work, enhancing problem-solving sections to mimic real-life situations, and ensuring that the 21st century skills are incorporated in all language learning areas. The integration of project-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, and student-directed inquiry would guarantee that these skills are not only included but also adequately developed throughout the learning process. The implications of the findings of the study suggest that the 21st century skills are incorporated to some extent, but the integration is not equal. The two texts enhance communication, creativity, and basic critical thinking to some extent; however, collaborative problem-solving and innovative strategies are not well captured. It is therefore recommended that future work should embrace more peer learning, enhance problem-solving sections to make them more like real-life situations, and ensure that the 21st century skills are incorporated more systematically across all language areas. This means that the inclusion of project-based learning, interdisciplinary connections, and student work that involves independent inquiry would guarantee that these skills are not only introduced but also properly fortified throughout the learning process.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

The results of this study show both the strengths and the weaknesses of the integration of the 21st century skills in second, third, and fourth grade English textbooks. Nevertheless, these skills, which include critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration, as well as creativity, have not been fully integrated into all the skill areas and all the grade levels.

Based on these findings, several recommendations could be made for future research to further explore and improve the integration of 21st century skills in English language teaching materials. One more significant area that needs further investigation is the description of how these skills evolve sequentially across several grades. This study was conducted on three consecutive grades, but a more comprehensive analysis of other education levels could have given a better understanding of how the 21st century skills are introduced, reinforced, and developed. Such an approach would help to determine whether some skills are given enough progress as children progress through their English education. Future work could also examine the success of the 21st skill integration using classroom-based research. This study looked at textbooks in isolation, but other research could explore how teachers use these materials in real classroom settings. Natural studies, interviews with teachers, and assessments of students' performance could give important information on the actual development of these skills while using textbooks and whether any extra assistance is needed to fill the gaps.

Another suggestion for future work is to compare different textbook series to determine if there are similar patterns across the different publishers and curriculum frameworks. This study was carried out on a specific set of textbooks, but a comparison of several course book series might show whether the good and the bad observed in the present materials are peculiar to them or if they are characteristic of English language textbooks used in other countries. Such a study could also examine how international course books differ from national ones in terms of integrating the 21st century skills. Furthermore, other studies could emphasize students' interest in and achievement of the 21st century skills. This study focused on textbook content, but future research could explore how students react to tasks that require them to think critically, solve problems, work in a group, and be creative. Any student-centered research employing surveys, focus groups, or experimental research will be able to give evidence for some types of exercises that are more likely to help in the development of these skills than others.

Finally, because of the continuing importance of technology and online resources in education, it is worthwhile to examine how digital English language materials are like or differ from traditional textbooks in helping to develop 21st century skills. The use of technology-induced exercises, productive and creative tasks, and multimedia elements in the learning process may provide better opportunities to collaborate, solve problems, and be creative than traditional textbooks. To this end, this article offers recommendations for combining digital and print materials to create a more holistic English language curriculum that can help achieve the learning goals of the 21st century.

To this end, future investigations might include classroom observations, comparison of textbooks, student-centered experiments, and integration of digital learning, to gain a better understanding of how the 21st century skills could be integrated into English language teaching and learning more effectively.

6.3 Further Implications and Pedagogical Suggestions

The research conclusions present reasonable statistics on the rate of integration of the 21st century skills in public primary education English textbooks and the aspects that need improvement. Besides the suggestions for future research, the results also have implications for curriculum writers, teachers, and policymakers responsible for designing English language education. This is a significant implication of this study which shows that more systematic integration of the 21st century skills is needed at all levels of primary education. The analysis also revealed that the textbooks include critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity to some extent; however, they are not equally distributed across the grades and there is no evident progression across the grades. This means that curriculum developers should guarantee that such skills are incorporated into the curriculum more systematically and comprehensively across all the learning areas rather than just incorporating them into some lessons. Another implication is the importance of teacher training for the effective implementation of the 21st century skills in the classrooms. Textbooks are a good starting point for the development of skills, but the effectiveness of their application depends on how the teachers interpret, modify, and use them in the lessons. It is important for professional development programs to educate teachers on how to include and develop critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity in existing textbook-based activities. Furthermore, if teachers were to be provided with additional resources and strategies, this could

help to bridge the gap between the content found in the textbooks and how it is used in the classroom.

The study also suggests the need to develop more engaging and student-oriented materials based on explorative learning rather than on memorizing. Looking at the predominance of structured, recall-type exercises in the textbooks one might conclude that there is much scope for enhancing the integration of more open-ended, inquiry-based tasks. Hence, it is recommended that course book designers should incorporate project-based tasks, real-life problem-solving scenarios, and group work where students can develop critical thinking and work in groups. Moreover, the results of the study show that textbooks might not be enough for the full development of the 21st century skills in students. Owing to the current trends in learning and the advances in technology, it is possible to use blended learning approaches that combine the use of print and digital resources to improve skill development. This means that education policymakers and curriculum designers should perhaps consider how to incorporate technology into English language teaching to offer students a livelier and diverse way of learning.

In general, the study shows that there is a gradual need for English language materials that could help in the learning of language but also in the development of other skills that are essential in the current society. This means that it is important for the 21st century skills to be integrated into language education, meaning that curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers must collaborate. Future course books could move towards a more holistic and skill-based approach to language learning, the gaps identified in this study will make students better prepared for the future, by also developing their skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity. This means that it is important for the 21st century skills to be integrated into language education, meaning that curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers must collaborate.

Future course books could move towards a more holistic and skill-based approach to language learning, the gaps identified in this study will make students better prepared for the future, by also developing their skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity. The implications for curriculum development are significant. Curriculum developers should prioritize integrating these essential skills into language education. They should align textbook content with the comprehensive list of 21st century skills to ensure a well-rounded curriculum. Additionally, professional development programs for educators should

focus on helping teachers incorporate these skills into their teaching strategies, which is crucial for ensuring the effective implementation of this approach.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Course Book Evaluation Checklist

LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS: CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING	YES	NO
Flexibility and Adaptability		
1. Does the book provide students with new concepts and new perspectives?		
2. Does the book encourage students to identify their own assumptions about the world and later change them?		
Information Literacy		
3. Does the book include activities that are designed in a way that students answer questions and complete language learning tasks?		
4. Does the book include tasks for students to engage in to develop language skills?		
5. Does the book stimulate students to make inferences through inference comprehension questions?		
Making judgments and decisions		
6. Does the book stimulate decision-making, proposing solutions?		
7. Does the book include activities engaging students in logical thinking where they support their reasoning and resolve differences with their peers?		
8. Does the book include interesting questions for students to discuss?		
9. Does the book encourage students to have relationship analyses (through analogies) or comparisons (i.e. Venn diagrams)?		
10. Does the book promote synthesising: (synthesis of information from two texts to teach a 'multiplicity' approach rather than a 'duality' approach to learning?		
11. Does the book make sure that students can realize that ideas seem to be in opposition on the surface may actually intersect and reinforce each other?		
12. Does the book include activities which stimulate students to identify assumptions, recognize attitudes and values and re-evaluate them?		
13. Does the book encourage students have a feeling of reasoning and argumentation?		
14. Does the book have question types that promote critical thinking (Why…? What…? etc.)		
15. Does the book give the students the idea of judgment; choosing factual, unbiased information for research projects?		
LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS: COLLABORATION		
Productivity and Accountability		
16. Does the book explicitly teach collaboration skills including strategies for interacting productively with others,		

resolving conflicts and managing task work?		
17. Does the book try to strengthen students' collaboration skills and provides them with strategies for being a good teammate?		
18. Does the book establish learning objectives around collaboration?		
19. Does the book design activities that require learners to use the elements of collaboration?		
Flexibility and Adaptability		
20. Does the book make sure group activities require students to work together and to negotiate?		
Social and Cross-Cultural Skills		
21. Does the book use group activities as opportunities to reinforce and practice collaboration skills?		
22. Does the book include activities that rotate groups so that student gain experience working with different types of individuals and teams?		
23. Does the book allow students to choose which of the defined roles in a task they would like to play but encourage them to practice playing different roles over time?		
Leadership and Responsibility		
24. Does the book promote interpersonal communication through various activities?		
LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS: COMMUNICATION		
ICT-Media Literacy		
25. Does the book encourage the students to utilize multiple media and technologies, and let them know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact?		
Communicating clearly		
26. Does the book have activities that lead students to use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)?		
27. Does the book encourage the students to listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions?		
28. Does the book give the students the opportunity of using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts so that they can articulate thoughts and ideas effectively?		
29. Does the book create diverse environments so that the students can communicate effectively in different situations using both verbal and non-verbal communication?		
30. Does the book ask open-ended and creative questions so that the students can start a conversation and keep it going?		
LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS: CREATIVITY		
ICT-Media Literacy		
31. Does the book encourage learners to think creatively by		

enticing them to present their learning performances through creative ways such as using videos, PowerPoint presentations, posters, brochures, blogs and social media?		
Initiative and Self Direction		
32. Does the book provide opportunities for students to take risks, take their own initiative to do things?		
Thinking creatively		
33. Does the book encourage students to use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming, problem-finding, conceptual combination)?		
34. Does the book create environments that encourage creative expression and a real and useful contribution to their work?		
35. Does the book help students create new and worthwhile ideas using both existing and new knowledge?		
36. Does the book help students elaborate, refine, analyse and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts?		
Working creatively with others		
37. Does the book encourage students to develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively in a variety of conditions?		
38. Does the book let students be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work?		
39. Does the book include original activities to make students feel inventive in work and help them understand the real-world limits to adopting new ideas?		
40. Does the book help students view failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes?		

Appendix 2: Ethics Committee Approval

T.C.
BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Akademik Değerlendirme Koordinatörlüğü

1993

Sayı : E-62310886-302.14.01-415793
Konu : Ziya Görkem Celasun'un Etik Kurul Onayı

06.01.2025

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi : 13.12.2024 tarih ve 408851 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Ziya Görkem Celasun'un, Doç. Dr. Senem Üstün Kaya danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı, "Türkiye'deki Devlet İlkokullarında Kullanılan İngilizce Ders Kitaplarının 21. Yüzyıl Becerileriyle Uyumunun Analizi" adlı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve bilgilerinize ekte sunulmuştur.

Prof. Dr. Sadegül AKBABA ALTUN
Kurul Başkanı

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 06.01.2025-415793

Sayı : 17162298.600- 299
Konu : Tez Çalışması

23 Aralık 2024

İlgili Makama

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Ziya Görkem Celasun'un, Doç. Dr. Senem Üstün Kaya danışmanlığında yürütmeyi planladığı, "Türkiye'deki Devlet İlkokullarında Kullanılan İngilizce Ders Kitaplarının 21. Yüzyıl Becerileriyle Uyumunun Analizi" adlı tez önerisi değerlendirilmiş ve yapılmasında bir sakınca olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımızla sunarız.

Başkent Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler ve Sanat Alan Araştırma Kurulu

Ad, Soyad	Değerlendirme	İmza
Prof. Dr. Gözen Güner Aktaş	Olumlu/Olumsuz	
Prof. Dr. Sadegül Akbaba Altun	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Fatih Çetin	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu	Olumlu/Olumsuz	
Prof. Dr. Filiz Kalelioğlu	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Hidayet Hale Künüçen	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	
Prof. Dr. Özcan Yağcı	Olumlu/~~Olumsuz~~	

Appendix 3: Checklist Permission

Checklist kullanim izni hk. Gelen Kutusu ×

Görkem Celasun

Merhaba,Ben Baskent Universitesi Ingiliz Dili Egitimi bolumunde okuyab tez surecinde birisiyim. Senem Uslun Kaya tarafindan mailinizi aldim ve ch

GAMZE ULUHAN

Alıcı: ben

Merhabalar,atıfta bulunarak tabii ki kullanabilirsiniz,çalışmalarınızda kolaylıklar dilerim.

Appendix 4: Course Book Permission

MEB.TT.2025.015941	11.01.2025	TÜRKİYE'DEKİ DEVLET İLKOKULLARDA KULLANILAN İNGİLİZCE DERS KİTAPLARININ 21. YÜZYIL BECERİLERİYLE UYUMUNUN ANALİZİ	Yüksek Lisans Tezi	Onaylandı