

## Eliciting Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Views on Coursebooks Through Metaphorical Language

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### ABSTRACT

Unearthing pre-service attitudes towards coursebooks might have important implications for pre- and in-service teacher education since, of all the materials used in English language teaching (ELT), coursebooks are widely used in school settings. In this regard, this study aims to surface pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' beliefs on coursebooks through metaphorical language. Data gathered from 129 Turkish pre-service teachers of English are presented and discussed in the present study. Qualitative content analysis was employed in this study to analyze the metaphors provided by the pre-service EFL teachers. The participants produced 70 different metaphors for coursebooks and data analysis revealed seven conceptual categories: *Guidance, Resource, Support, Access to New Opportunities, Worthlessness, Restrictions and Boredom*. The participants produced mostly positive metaphors for coursebooks and saw coursebooks as a support and guide for language education.

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### Statement of Publication Ethics

The study has been conducted by following the publication ethics and the ethics committee approval has been obtained from Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Sivas Cumhuriyet University dated 08.04.2022 and numbered E-60263016-050.06.04-159543.

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The author reports no conflict of interest.

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## Introduction

According to the database of the project entitled “How States Promote Global English: Shifting Priorities in Education Policy” (Global English Education Policy, n.d.), there are 142 countries in the world where English is taught as a mandatory subject in the public education and in 41 countries it is offered as an elective course in many schools. As the projection stated in the English Effect (2013), a report issued by British Council, by 2020 there would be up to almost 2 billion English learners in schools worldwide. Considering the wide range of teaching contexts all around the world, it is possible to state that coursebooks are widely used especially in school settings since they have several advantages that make them useful for both teachers and learners (Allwright, 1981; Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002; O’Neill, 1982; Ur, 1996). First of all, they provide a structured and systematic approach to curriculum and a clear and coherent progression of language skills and knowledge that follows a logical sequence and builds on previous learning. Furthermore, coursebooks offer a variety of materials and activities that cater to different learning styles, preferences, and needs. They include texts, audio, videos, images, games, puzzles, quizzes, and projects that engage learners and stimulate their interest and motivation (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). They expose learners to authentic and relevant language input and facilitate self-study and revision by providing clear learning objectives and outcomes.

Among the advantages for EFL teachers, one might well state that coursebooks support teachers in their planning and delivery of lessons by providing them with ready-made materials and guidance, which might be considered as “a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence” (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.7). They save teachers time and effort in designing and preparing their own materials and allow them to focus on other aspects of teaching, such as classroom management, differentiation, and personalization. Furthermore, coursebooks facilitate communication and collaboration among teachers and learners by creating a common reference point and a shared understanding of the course content and goals. They enable teachers to monitor and evaluate learners’ progress and performance by using the same criteria and standards. They also foster a sense of community and belonging among learners by promoting interaction and cooperation.

Despite these advantages, the literature has also raised some of the potential disadvantages that coursebook-based teaching might have (McGrath, 2002; Ur, 1996). For example, coursebooks may not suit the needs, interests, and levels of the learners in a particular class as they are designed for a general audience. Furthermore, coursebooks may impose a fixed sequence and structure of lessons that teachers and learners have to follow, which may reduce the opportunities for teachers to adapt the materials to their own teaching style and context, and for learners to explore their own interests and learning strategies. Thus, they may limit the creativity and autonomy of teachers and learners. Besides, coursebooks are not always accurate, objective or up-to-date in their presentation of language and content. They may contain mistakes in grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation or present misleading or incomplete information about the culture, history or society of the target language.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of coursebook-based teaching, it is possible to suggest that what matters is not to choose to use a coursebook but how teachers and learners use it in language teaching and learning. As Garton and Graves (2014) state, in their chapter entitled ‘Materials in ELT: Current Issues’, the field is under-researched and much of the research in the literature focus on materials design, types of materials, materials evaluation, adaptation and

development (McDonough et al., 2013; McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2012). Considering the relationship between attitudes, beliefs and practices, exploring English language teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks is of great significance since their attitudes affect the way they use the coursebooks in language teaching. The assumption underlying this study is that if these views are articulated and examined in the pre-service teacher education programs, they will be more aware of their own conceptions and more critical towards using coursebooks in their future careers. Furthermore, such an investigation might yield significant information for teacher educators about the pre-service teachers' needs, which might well lead to changes in the teacher training programs. Metaphor elicitation was employed in this study to unearth pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about coursebooks since metaphors might provide links between the participants' attitudes and practices. Thus, this paper aims to unearth pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs on coursebooks through metaphorical language. The following research questions guide this study:

1. What metaphors did pre-service EFL teachers use for coursebooks?
2. In which categories can these metaphors be grouped according to their common characteristics?

### **Literature Review**

Metaphors may provide windows into people's thinking and cognition as they might be considered as mental structures that shape human perception, thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which might well justify its popularity as a research tool in educational contexts. Discussing the use of metaphor in education, Thornbury (1991) states that "[t]eachers, like other professionals, resort to and depend on the use of metaphor when it comes to verbalizing their experience: metaphors help them to see what is invisible, to describe what otherwise would be indescribable" (p. 193). Reviewing the literature on teaching and teacher education, Saban (2006) identified 10 distinct functions of educational metaphors: metaphors as "a blueprint of professional thinking, an archetype of professional identity, a pedagogical device, a medium of reflection, a tool for evaluation, a research tool, a curriculum theory, a mental model, an instrument of discovery and a springboard for change" (p. 301).

Metaphors have been employed in many studies in the literature to explore various educational concepts including teacher and student (i.e., Aslan, 2019; Gencer, 2020; Oxford et al., 1998; Sarıkaya, 2018; Seferoğlu et al., 2009) education, teaching and learning (i.e., Duru, 2017; Leavy et al., 2007), teacher identity (i.e., Gao & Cui, 2021; Nguyen, 2016; Kimsesiz, 2023; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Yeşilbursa, 2012), educational reforms (i.e. Ungar, 2016), curriculum (i.e., Akınoğlu, 2017; Aykaç & Çelik, 2014; Çırak-Kurt, 2017; Gültekin, 2013; Özdemir, 2012; Semerci & Özçelik, 2018; Yıldız & Korkmazgil, 2021), school (i.e., Arslan, 2020; Koca et al., 2021; Neyişçi & Özdiyar, 2019; Saban, 2008), classroom (i.e., Levine, 2005), literacy (i.e., Shaw & Mahlios, 2011) and digital literacy (i.e., Tham et al., 2021).

The concept of coursebooks is also one of the subjects studied through metaphors (Allen, 2015; Kesen, 2010; McGrath, 2006a, 2006b). McGrath (2006b) analyzed 221 metaphors gathered from Brazilian teachers of English for ELT textbooks and found that teachers' views on coursebooks vary greatly suggesting that "the teachers fall into three groups: there are those who are prepared to follow a textbook; those who use it selectively; and those who will do what they can to avoid it" (p. 313). In another paper, McGrath (2006a) shared the results of the data collected through over a two-year period both from 75 secondary school teachers of English and several

hundred secondary school students in Hong Kong. These participants were also asked to write a metaphor or a simile for English language coursebooks. The English language teachers' images were categorized under four themes, which are *Guidance*, *Support*, *Resource* and *Constraint*, while the learners' images for coursebooks were grouped under *Authority*, *Resource*, *Support*, *Guidance*, *Constraint*, *Boredom*, *Worthlessness* and *Source of anxiety and fear*. Interpreting the difference between the images of teachers and learners, McGrath (2006a) justified the use of metaphors in the study on the grounds that such an investigation has important implications because it reveals learners as well as teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks and "the expression of different views among learners may prompt discussion of the source of these views and their possible effect on learning; implications for learner training or for desired modifications in teacher practices may then emerge" (McGrath, 2006b, p. 179). Furthermore, as McGrath (2006b) suggests, if teachers examine their students' and their own metaphors for coursebooks and reflect on the possible gaps between these views, they can eventually take action to improve the education process and use it as an opportunity for their professional development.

Kesen (2010) examined the metaphors of 150 Turkish students about coursebooks. The participants, mostly majoring in science, psychology and engineering, were learning English in the Preparatory School at a private university in Cyprus. The participants produced 57 different metaphors for coursebooks and the analysis of the metaphors revealed that the most frequently cited metaphors such as 'planet', 'foreign country', 'secret garden' and 'space' fall under the theme of *Mystery*. Kesen (2010) interprets this result by stating that these metaphors for language coursebooks "in Turkey where foreign language education is compulsory and is still a demanding task ... represent the feeling of uncertainty or enigma experienced by the learners. The reason for such analogies might be attributable to inappropriate selection of language textbooks by language teachers" (p.116). The second category with the highest number of metaphors was found to be *Guidance and Enlightenment* in which the metaphor of 'guide' was used by twelve participants. Kesen (2010) found that participants mostly produced positive metaphors for coursebooks while one-third of the metaphors implied negative perceptions.

Allen (2015) studied the opinions of Swedish teachers of English on coursebooks and their reliance on ELT coursebook packages against freely available digital alternatives and data were collected from pre- and in-service EFL teachers in Sweden. He employed metaphors as part of his data collection procedures. In this regard, the participants were given a list of coursebook metaphors adapted from McGrath (2002) and asked to circle the one that they think best described their attitude to coursebooks in the digital era. Analysis revealed that inexperienced teachers and pre-service EFL teachers have a more positive attitude towards the use of coursebooks. "Their more experienced in-service colleagues are, however, increasingly abandoning the coursebook in favour of freestanding digital resources. Practising teachers in the survey increasingly saw coursebooks in contingency terms and as a 'fall-back' position" (Allen, 2015, p. 249).

The difference between the experienced teachers and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the use of coursebooks has also been supported by some other studies (Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Tsui, 2003; Yılmaz & Aydın, 2015). As teachers gain more experience, they might feel less dependent on coursebooks they use in the classroom and they can adapt and adjust their use of coursebooks to better suit the needs of their learners, while novice teachers depend more on coursebooks due to lack of knowledge about the learners and the curriculum. Much of the literature on coursebooks deal with coursebook evaluation from the practicing teachers' perspectives

(Kayapınar, 2009; Kütük & Su-Bergil, 2021; Şahin, 2022; Şener & Mulcar, 2018); however, there is a gap in research into the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards ELT materials. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the related literature by investigating pre-service EFL teachers' views on coursebook through metaphors.

### **Methodology**

This research study follows a phenomenological design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Underlying phenomenological research is an attempt to seek the reality in the narratives of an individual on a particular phenomenon based on his/her emotions and experiences and to produce in-depth explanations for this phenomenon (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015, p.1). Thus, the current study aims to reveal pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of coursebooks through their metaphorical language and explanations.

### **Participants and the Context**

Admission to the Initial English language teaching programs in Turkey is granted by a centralized university entrance exam. Pre-service teachers take various subject matter courses such as literature, linguistics and methodology as well as general education courses during their four-year teacher education programs. Starting their third year in the program, they take the ELT methodology courses that aim to equip these pre-service teachers with theoretical and practical knowledge to address different age groups and teaching contexts. Pre-service teachers take teaching practice in the final year of the program during which they have opportunities to observe real classrooms and put their theoretical knowledge into practice during their demo lessons.

The study group of the research consists of pre-service EFL teachers at the Department of Foreign Language Teaching at a state university in the Central Anatolia region in the spring semesters of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years. Convenience sampling was employed and of 129 pre-service teachers participating in this study, 105 (81.4 %) are female and 24 (18.6 %) are male. Their ages vary between 19 and 23. As part of their teacher education program, all of the participants took the course 'Coursebook Evaluation in ELT' in the fall term of their third year. This course aims to equip pre-service EFL teachers with knowledge and skills necessary for evaluating language coursebooks and adapting materials, and prepare them towards material development, which might contribute to their professional development considering the fact that teachers working at public schools are obliged to follow the coursebooks that Ministry of National Education send to all K-12 students in Turkey for free. Furthermore, in the courses of Practice Teaching I and II, they both observed their mentor teachers' use of coursebooks and used these coursebooks in their demo lessons in the assigned schools.

### **Data Collection**

An open-ended questionnaire form was administered to determine the perceptions of preservice teachers about coursebooks. The questionnaire form consists of two parts. Participants were first asked to provide demographic information such as gender and age, and then in the second

part they were given the sentence “A course book is like ..... because .....” and asked to complete this sentence with a metaphor or simile that represent their attitudes to course books and provide an explanation for the metaphor/simile they have written.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was employed in this study to analyze the metaphors provided by the pre-service EFL teachers. The content analysis process was carried out in the following four stages: coding the data, creating themes, ensuring inter-coder reliability, and identifying and interpreting the findings. In accordance with these stages, the metaphors produced by the participants were firstly listed in alphabetical order and then the information about each participant, his/her metaphor and the explanation presented by the participant were coded. Reviewing the participants' explanations about the metaphors, seven themes were created in which the metaphors provided by the preservice teachers can be classified. This stage was finalized by placing metaphors and explanations under the categories. In order to ensure credibility and reliability, the aforementioned stages of content analysis were conducted by two coders. The second coder matched the metaphors with the categories created by the first coder. In the analysis of the metaphorical perceptions of preservice EFL teachers, the coders reached a consensus of 94.8%. The level of consensus among coders is expected to be at least 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Therefore, it is possible to assert that the internal consistency is high in this study. Finally, the results were interpreted according to the defined themes.

### Research Ethics

Prior to the study, the ethics committee approval was obtained from Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Sivas Cumhuriyet University dated 08.04.2022 and numbered E-60263016-050.06.04-159543. The participants were informed about the research purpose, data collection procedure, and the research design. They were told that participation in this research study was voluntary and they could withdraw anytime during the procedure. Moreover, the participants were informed about the steps taken to keep anonymity. No personal information which might expose their identity would be asked from the participants, and their responses were displayed not only during the data analysis but also in the report only through numbers with the initials of pre-service teachers such as PT-1, PT-2, etc.

## Results

### Preservice EFL teachers' coursebook metaphors

129 EFL Preservice teachers produced 70 different metaphors for coursebooks and these metaphors are displayed in Table 1. The most frequently created metaphors were 'compass', 'guide', 'map', 'lantern', 'sea', 'light', 'teacher', 'treasure', 'leader', 'moon', 'ocean' and 'sun'.

**Table 1.** Preservice Teachers' Coursebook Metaphors

Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
1. Compass	11	25. Breath	1	48. Marriage	1

2. Guide	9	26. Candle	1	49. Medicine	1
3. Map	6	27. Canvas	1	50. Mirror	1
4. Lantern	5	28. Car	1	51. Money	1
5. Sea	5	29. A closed box	1	52. An old man	1
6. Light	4	30. Conductor	1	53. Painting	1
7. Teacher	4	31. Dictionary	1	54. Parent	1
8. Treasure	4	32. Door	1	55. Parrot	1
9. Leader	3	33. Drawing room	1	56. Rubbish bin	1
10. Moon	3	34. Eyeglasses	1	57. Rubik's Cube	1
11. Ocean	3	35. Food	1	58. Safe box	1
12. Sun	3	36. Foreign text	1	59. Showcase in the living room	1
13. A broken watch	2	37. Fountain	1	60. Snacks	1
14. Coffee	2	38. Gum sticking to the bottom of a shoe	1	61. Stairs	1
15. Friend	2	39. Human body	1	62. Streetlight	1
16. Manual	2	40. Inadequate parent	1	63. Swamp	1
17. Navigation	2	41. Lampshade	1	64. Toxic relationship	1
18. A new world	2	42. Library	1	65. Torch	1
19. Pomegranate	2	43. Lighthouse	1	66. Traffic lights	1
20. Rainbow	2	44. Life	1	67. Trip	1
21. Road signs	2	45. A living organism	1	68. Universe	1
22. Sky	2	46. Load	1	69. Waterfall	1
23. Tree	2	47. Water spring	1	70. Work life	1
24. Balloon	1				

### Thematic Classification of Pre-service EFL Teachers' Metaphors for ELT Coursebooks

The metaphorical images produced by the pre-service EFL teachers regarding the coursebooks were grouped under seven themes: *Guidance*, *Resource*, *Support*, *Access to New Opportunities*, *Worthlessness*, *Restrictions* and *Boredom*. These themes are displayed in Table 2. Pre-service EFL teachers were found to produce mostly positive metaphorical images for coursebooks (n=109) that included the images assigned to the first four categories shown in Table 2, while the negative images created by the participants fell under the categories of *Worthlessness*, *Restrictions* and *Boredom* (n=20).

As Table 2 presents, among these seven categories created by pre-service teachers' metaphorical images for coursebooks, the categories with the highest number of metaphors were *Guidance* (n=57), *Resource* (n=31), *Support* (n=13) and *Worthlessness* (11) respectively. The categories with the lowest number of metaphors were *Access to New Opportunities* (n=8), *Restrictions* (n=7) and *Boredom* (n=2).

**Table 2.** A Thematic Classification of Coursebook Metaphors Produced by Preservice EFL Teachers

Themes	f	Metaphors
1. <i>Resource</i>	31	breath, coffee (2), dictionary, fountain, food, good friend (2), a human body, library, a living organism, main water spring, ocean (3), pomegranate (2), safe box, sea (5), sky (2), treasure (4), universe, waterfall,
2. <i>Support</i>	13	canvass, car, eyeglasses, marriage, medicine, mirror, stairs, teacher (4), tree (2),

3.	<i>Guidance</i>	57	candle, conductor, compass (11), guide (9), lantern (5), leader (3), light (4), lighthouse, manual (2), map (6), moon (3), navigation (2), a parent, road signs (2), sun (3), streetlights, torch, traffic lights
4.	<i>Access to New Opportunities</i>	8	door, a foreign text, a new world (2), painting, rainbow (2), trip
5.	<i>Worthlessness</i>	11	balloon, a broken watch (2), drawing room, lampshade, load, money, parrot, rubbish bin, showcase in the living room, snacks
6.	<i>Restrictions</i>	7	a closed box, gum sticking to the bottom of the shoe, an inadequate parent, swamp, work life, Rubik's cube, toxic relationship
7.	<i>Boredom</i>	2	life, an old man

The category of *Guidance* included 57 metaphors (44.2 %). The most frequently stated metaphors in this category were 'compass', 'guide', 'map', 'lantern', 'light', 'moon' and 'sun'. In this category, pre-service EFL teachers considered coursebooks as a guide in English language teaching as the following three quotations showed:

A coursebook is a lantern because it sheds light on teachers and students on how, where and which way to go correctly while progressing on the path we want to go (PT-7).

A coursebook is like the light that exists in the dark because it guides the teacher and sheds light (PT-34).

A coursebook is like a map because it guides us in every subject we want to learn (PT-122).

When most of the explanations provided by the participants for the theme *Guidance* were considered neutral as a guide, some nuances were found in terms of their perceptions of a coursebook as a guide. For example, two participants emphasized the control of a teacher over the materials they use in the classroom by stating:

A coursebook is like a compass because the book shows the direction to the teachers, the teacher decides where and how to go (PT-31).

A coursebook is like the Moon because just as the moon reflects the light it receives from the Sun to the Earth, the coursebook also gives information to students in the light of the teacher (PT-78).

Moreover, having analyzed the metaphors with the explanations given by the pre-service teachers, it is possible to suggest that metaphors such as 'parent', 'leader', 'conductor', 'manual', 'road signs' and 'traffic lights' revealed their perceptions that they were more dependent on a coursebook as guide:

A coursebook is like a manual because just as we cannot figure out a new electronic device without looking at the user manual, we cannot understand or solve our lessons without a book that shows us direction. (PT-22)

A coursebook is like an orchestra conductor because it manages which subject will be given in what way and in what order during the lesson. (PT-26)

A coursebook is like a leader because it guides, teaches and illuminates our path. (PT-54)

The category of *Resource* includes 18 metaphors obtained from 31 pre-service teachers. In this category, the participants considered the coursebook as the basis, essence,

raw material and main source of the lessons. When the metaphors in this category are examined, it is possible to say that there are different views on the use of coursebook as a source. For example, the metaphors of 'sea', 'ocean', 'main water source', 'spring' and 'waterfall', which evoke water, an indispensable source of life, were expressed by 11 participants. One participant that produced the metaphor of sea stated that "a coursebook is like the sea because it contains all kinds of information and each piece of information in the book is like an organism in the sea" (PT-108), while another emphasized the abundance of information that coursebooks contain for language learners by stating that "a coursebook is like an ocean because it is full of many pages waiting to be discovered and completed" (PT-51). The metaphors of 'sky', 'breath' and 'food' used by four participants also support the view that coursebooks are indispensable resources in education. The selection of these natural life resources as metaphors suggest the view that the coursebook also constitutes a natural resource in the teaching and learning process.

The metaphors of 'dictionary', 'library', 'universe' and 'pomegranate' used by 5 participants also express the view that show the diversity and richness of the information that the coursebooks contain for teachers and students. For example, one participants used the metaphor of pomegranate for coursebooks because "when you open it, you find thousands of large and small beneficial vitamins/information" (PT-110), while another used the Universe to describe the coursebooks as having the structure that encompasses everything that a student needs: "A coursebook is like the Universe because it contains everything within it" (PT-55).

The metaphors of 'treasury', 'safe', and 'good friend' expressed by seven participants in this category also emphasize that coursebooks actually contain valuable resources, but their value will be appreciated by the person who uses them. Unlike metaphors for indispensable resources such as water or breath, these valuable resources can vary depending on the skills and decisions of the person using them:

A coursebook is like a safe full of money because those who know how to open it can benefit from what is inside. (PT-48)

A coursebook is like a treasure because you are happy when you first own it, but if you don't care about it later, you waste its pages in vain. If you value it, you can make yourself more valuable with it (PT-49)

The category of *Support* consists of 9 metaphors obtained from 13 pre-service teachers, and pre-service teachers consider coursebooks as an element that contributes to the development of students. In particular, metaphors of 'canvas', 'car', 'glasses', 'mirror', and 'stairs' are considered tools that help students reach their goals and information. The metaphor of 'the teacher', the most frequently expressed metaphor in this category, is important because it might indicate that coursebooks are seen as equal to the teacher. In other words, the information and support given by the teacher to the students are seen as equivalent to the support given by the coursebooks, as expressed by the two participants below:

A coursebook is like a teacher because it both tells and teaches students (PT-116).

A coursebook is like a teacher because it can teach you what a teacher can teach (PT-59)

In this category, two pre-service teachers drew attention to the support of the course

book for different skills and subjects by using the tree metaphor. For example, one participant stated that “A textbook is like a tree because each leaf contains new and different information. Students also become green like trees with information, that is, they are informed” (PT-75).

However, ‘medicine’ and ‘marriage’ metaphors show a different view of support than other metaphors in this category. Pre-service EFL teachers using these metaphors, although accepting the support and order given by the coursebooks, stated that it actually restricts one's freedom, such as marriage: “The textbook is like marriage because without it you are more free, but with it an order is formed and life improves” (PT-21), or that it is a form of support that is used when necessary, such as medicine: “A textbook is like medicine because we don't want to use it, but eventually we are forced to use it. We do not want to use it because it is boring, but we have to use it to gain new knowledge” (PT-47).

In the category of *Access to New Opportunities*, there are 6 metaphors produced by 8 pre-service teachers. These are ‘a door’, ‘a foreign text’, ‘a new world’ (2), ‘a painting’, ‘rainbow’ (2), and ‘a trip’. When these metaphors are examined, one might well suggest that the participants described the coursebook as a tool that might create new opportunities to open up to the world, learn about different cultures and have different experiences:

A coursebook is like the world because in an English book we usually learn about different cultures from different corners of the world and we can meet different civilizations. (PT-66)

When the student opens the book, it opens the door to a new world full of excitement and knowledge. (PT-20)

A coursebook is like a rainbow because it opens the doors of colorful worlds to children. (PT-76).

The last three categories in Table 2, *Worthlessness*, *Restrictions* and *Boredom*, include negative metaphorical representations with regard to coursebooks. The *Worthlessness* category includes 11 metaphors gathered from 10 participants. Metaphors in this category, such as ‘a broken watch’, ‘drawing room’, ‘lampshade’, and ‘showcase in the living room’, draw attention to the dysfunction of the coursebook. For example, one participant described the coursebook as an unused showcase in the living room of a house (PT-96), while another likened it to a drawing room not used by the household but prepared only for guests (PT-97). The idea that students have coursebooks, but they almost never use them in language teaching has also been resonated by the metaphor of the ‘lampshade’ used by another pre-service teacher: “A coursebook is like a lampshade because everyone has it, but it is never used” (PT-89). Another point emphasized in this category through the metaphors of ‘balloon’, ‘load’, ‘parrot’, ‘rubbish bin’ is the fact that textbooks contain unnecessary, outdated, and superficial information and become worthless due to this structure:

A coursebook is like a parrot that repeats the same thing over and over because it offers us the same information every year with the same activities without any change. (PT-94)

A coursebook is like an information load because we don't always need to learn every piece of information in the book, or it has mostly what we already know in

normal life. (PT-126)

The category of *Restrictions* includes metaphors produced by 7 pre-service EFL teachers. When the metaphors in this category are examined, it is possible to say that the participants saw the coursebooks as a necessity that they cannot get rid of and that coursebook based teaching actually harms the education process. Participants chose strong metaphors such as 'gum sticking to the bottom of the shoe', 'an inadequate parent', 'swamp' and 'toxic relationship' to explain this situation. For example, a pre-service teacher who described textbooks as swamps stated that getting rid of the coursebook is as difficult as getting out of the swamp, and the more you use the coursebook, the more you sink into the swamp: "The coursebook is like a swamp because as much as it is useful, it drags you to the bottom with unnecessary details and makes you drown in too much information" (PT-125).

The category of *Boredom* includes two metaphors: these are 'life' and 'an old man'. As the name of the category suggests, these metaphors were chosen to express that coursebooks are full of boring reading materials, tasks and activities.

### **Discussion**

The results of this present study revealed that 129 pre-service EFL teachers produced 70 different metaphors to describe ELT coursebooks. These metaphors were grouped under seven conceptual categories, namely, *Resource*, *Support*, *Guidance*, *Access to New Opportunities*, *Worthlessness*, *Restrictions* and *Boredom*. The categories in this current study also seem to be consistent with those identified in McGrath's (2006a, 2006b) two research studies published in the same year. McGrath's (2006a) study with two groups of participants in Hong Kong revealed that English language teachers' images were grouped under four themes, *Guidance*, *Support*, *Resource* and *Constraint*, while the learners' images for coursebooks were categorized under *Authority*, *Resource*, *Support*, *Guidance*, *Constraint*, *Boredom*, *Worthlessness* and *Source of anxiety and fear*. Similarly, metaphorical images of Brazilian EFL teachers for coursebooks in McGrath's second study (McGrath, 2006b) were also grouped under five themes, that is, *Guidance*, *Access*, *Support*, *Resource* and *Constraint*.

The participants in this current study produced mostly positive metaphors for coursebooks (n=109), while the negative images gathered from 20 pre-service teachers constitute 16% of the whole data. This finding complies with the related literature. For example, having analyzed the metaphors of coursebooks from 150 college students in the Preparatory School at a private university in Cyprus, Kesen (2010) stated that they mostly produced positive metaphors for coursebooks which correspond to almost two-thirds of the data in the study. There are studies in the literature showing that pre-service teachers have more positive opinions about coursebooks than experienced teachers. (Allen, 2015; Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Israelsson, 2007; Tsui, 2003). For instance, Allen's (2015) collected data both from pre-service and in-service EFL teachers in Sweden about their use of and reliance on ELT coursebooks against freely available digital alternatives. He found that inexperienced teachers and pre-service EFL teachers have a more positive attitude towards the use of coursebooks, while more experienced EFL teachers in the study preferred

to move away from using coursebooks and instead using digital resources. According to Allen (2015), “practicing teachers increasingly saw coursebooks in contingency terms and as a ‘fall-back’ position” (p. 249). Experienced teachers may feel less reliant on coursebooks and can tailor their use to meet their students’ needs. In contrast, new teachers may rely more on coursebooks due to their unfamiliarity with the curriculum and their students. This might well justify the high percentage of positive metaphors that were produced by the pre-service EFL teachers in the study.

There are also studies conducted in Turkey which show that pre-service EFL teachers have mainly positive views about coursebooks (Arıkan, 2009; Aydın, 2012; Şimşek, 2017). Arıkan (2009) analyzed reports of 12 pre-service EFL teachers’ opinions taking the Practicum course to explore their opinions about the use of English language coursebooks in secondary school EFL classrooms in Turkey. The results showed that coursebooks were used as the most important resource in the language classroom. Pre-service EFL teachers in the study generally found the coursebooks quality adequate and believed that problems with coursebooks arise from the way teachers use them in the classroom. In a similar study, Aydın (2012) investigated the 48 pre-service EFL teachers’ perceptions with regard to the presentation of main language skills in a coursebook called Spot on 8. He found that pre-service EFL teachers had mostly positive opinions of the presentation of main skills, but they thought that some improvement might be made for the treatment of speaking skills in the book. Şimşek (2017), on the other hand, examined pre-service teachers’ culturally-responsive preferences and rationales for adapting ELT materials. 58 pre-service EFL teachers in an urban Turkish university responded to a survey that aimed to elicit their attitudes towards gendered and alienating texts from local and global English coursebooks and provided word associations to reveal their prototypical views of culture. Şimşek (2017) found that over half of the participants preferred to use the materials unchanged.

When the seven conceptual categories created by the pre-service EFL teachers’ metaphorical images for coursebooks in this current study were examined, it was found that the category with the highest number of metaphors was *Guidance* (n=57). Almost half of the participants’ metaphors (44%) belong to this category, and metaphors in the categories of *Guidance*, *Support* and *Access to New Opportunities* constitute 60% of the whole data. This ratio is significant in terms of revealing pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards the role of coursebooks in English language education. If we consider pre-service teachers’ views about textbooks on a continuum between control and choice, as McGrath (2002) suggests, the results of this study indicate that pre-service teachers mostly see coursebooks as a support and guide for education. This might signal a place somewhere between the two edges of this continuum, which may indicate a balanced relationship to materials in their future educational experiences. Similarly, McGrath (2006b) pointed out that “the thematic progression from guidance to resource posited ... can be seen as a continuum ranging from control *by* textbook to control *of* textbook, with the latter expressing itself as *criticality* and a *willingness to be autonomous*” (p. 313). Although the majority of the metaphors produced by the participants were positive, 20 pre-service EFL teachers expressed negative metaphorical images for ELT coursebooks. These metaphors were grouped under the categories of *Worthlessness*, *Restrictions* and *Boredom*.

It is important to note that this research study is limited to 129 pre-service EFL

teachers' opinions studying in the ELT program of a university located in a province of the Central Anatolia Region in the spring semesters of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years, and the data collection tool (metaphors) used to determine these opinions. Data gathered from the participants in this study reflect their views about the ELT coursebooks. In this respect, the current study contributes to both pre-service EFL teacher education and in-service training in terms of determining the perceptions of pre-service teachers about English coursebooks. Surfacing pre-service teachers' opinions might allow these teacher candidates to reflect on their own conceptions of coursebooks and become more aware of their coursebook use in their future practices. Since heavy coursebook dependence might lead to a loss in their professional knowledge and result in deskilling of teachers (Littlejohn, 1998), exploring pre-service teachers' views of coursebooks might also inform teacher educators about their students' needs and take action to revise the courses in the initial teacher education program. Teacher educators might also employ the metaphor elicitation method to lead a change in the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks. As Thornbury (1991) suggests, "images – and the metaphors that help identify them –... offer teacher educators a valuable tool: they are a powerful – perhaps the most powerful – force for change, and should be of critical interest to those whose business is educational change" (p. 197). In accordance with the two-staged approach proposed by Thornbury (1991), the results of this study might be first used as an awareness-raising activity and teacher educators might help pre-service teachers replace these metaphors with more appropriate counterparts, which might result in a change and development in their attitudes. In-service teacher training programs might also benefit from such an application. The trainings might be designed and conducted to elicit teachers' opinions of coursebooks and foster teacher autonomy with regard to using materials in language classrooms. Teachers might also be encouraged to take part in decision-making processes including coursebook selection, evaluation as well as development of other language materials so that they can have a more balanced relationship with the coursebooks they use and adapt them to better suit their teaching contexts.

### **Conclusion**

Coursebooks have a very important role in foreign language education. In this regard, it is also very important to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards coursebooks. Metaphors, on the other hand, are an important method in revealing attitudes and beliefs and, of course, as Thornbury (1991) suggests, an invaluable tool in creating a change. In this regard, this study aimed to unearth the pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of ELT coursebooks through metaphors and contributed to the related literature that investigates and challenges the beliefs of prospective teachers towards coursebooks so that they can become more autonomous EFL teachers in their future careers and can choose and adapt the materials in accordance with their learning environments.

Further research might investigate EFL teachers' views on English coursebooks similarly and compare those with pre-service teachers' opinions. More research studies can also be conducted to explore pre-service teachers' views on other concepts related to English language education (teacher, student, curriculum, school, literacy, etc.) through metaphors. Moreover, further research studies can be carried out by using different data collection

methods such as interviews and in-class observations, and more in-depth data can be provided to determine the pre- and in-service teachers' opinions about coursebooks.

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