

Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of the Presentation of Language Skills in a Course Book

Selami AYDIN (*)

Abstract: The studies on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course books have mainly focused on the presentation of language and communicative skills rather than teachers' perceptions of the presentation of those skills. Thus, this study aims to investigate how teachers perceive the presentation of main language skills in a course book. The sample group in the study consisted of 48 pre-service teachers of English, and a questionnaire aimed at measuring their perceptions of the presentation of language skills in the course book, Spot on 8. The data were used to provide a descriptive analysis to address the research question. The results indicated that pre-service teachers have largely positive perceptions of the presentation of main skills, whereas there exists some problems in terms of speaking skills.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language; pre-service teachers; perceptions; language skills; course book

Aday Öğretmenlerin Bir Ders Kitabında Dil Becerilerinin Sunumu ile İlgili Algıları

Öz: Yabancı bir dil olarak İngilizce ders kitapları ile ilgili çalışmalar, dil becerilerinin sunulmasına yönelik öğretmen algularından çok, çoğunlukla dil ve iletişim becerilerinin sunumu üzerine odaklanmışlardır. Bu nedenle mevcut çalışma, aday öğretmenlerin bir ders kitabındaki temel dil becerilerini nasıl algıladıklarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın örneklem grubu, 48 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmuş, Spot on 8 on adlı kitapta dil becerilerinin sunumuna yönelik algıları ölçmek için bir anket kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sorusuna bağlı olarak, veri, betimsel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, aday öğretmenlerin, temel dil becerilerinin sunumuna yönelik olumlu algılara sahip olduklarını, ancak konuşma becerileri ile ilgili bazı sorunlar olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, aday öğretmenler, algı, dil becerileri, ders kitabı

*) Doç. Dr., Balıkesir Üniversitesi Öğretim Üyesi
(e-posta: saydin@balikesir.edu.tr)

Introduction

Communication in a foreign language depends on the learners' competence in main language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, foreign language learners are expected to be competent in listening and reading, referred to as receptive skills, and in speaking and writing, referred to as productive skills. For Harmer (1991), teachers have the responsibility of seeing that learners' language skills are transferred to the use of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In other words, if teachers concentrate on skills, this will help students approach foreign language with more confidence and greater success. On the other hand, Harmer (1991) also emphasises that teachers depend on learners' needs and a syllabus that reflects the content of the course book used in foreign language learning and teaching. In sum, foreign language teachers and course books are two considerable factors that affect the acquisition of main language skills.

Though teachers bear the primary responsibility of enabling their students to acquire language skills, the decisions about the content of the syllabus and about the presentation of language skills in course books are made by curriculum developers and book writers. However, how teachers perceive the presentation of language skills in a course book has a considerable effect on their students' acquisition of language skills. Thus, it is of real necessity to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of the presentation of language skills in course books to present realistic suggestions about the improvement of course books in terms of language skills.

Another reason that guides the present study is that there are no data on EFL teachers' perceptions of the presentation of language skills in course books used in elementary education. Within a broader perspective, it should be noted that there have been significant changes in EFL instruction in Turkey. First, after obligatory education at the elementary level was extended from five to eight years in Turkey in 1997, the obligatory learning of English encompassed fourth and fifth grade students in addition to sixth, seventh and eighth-grade learners. Second, English curricula were reorganised for the placement examination, an official and central examination for selection and placement of elementary school students in high schools. However, though recent trends in language teaching and learning were reflected in the content of the course books, EFL teachers' perceptions of those course books have remained an untouched research area. More specifically, teachers' perceptions of the presentation of language skills in course books used in elementary education have not been investigated yet. As a result, given that English as foreign language teaching and learning has gained a great importance and interest in terms of the regulations in recent years, it should be underlined that there is a strong need to research the EFL related issues. Thus, the current study aims at investigation of EFL teachers' perceptions of course books used in EFL learning.

A literature review indicates that the studies on course books used in EFL learning teaching mainly focus on three fields. First, in some studies, the content of the books

in accordance with some factors were investigated. The second area was the students' perceptions of the books. Last, research activities focused on teachers' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and views in terms of the course books used in EFL learning and teaching.

Studies focused on the presentation of the acquisition of language skills, communicative nature, thinking skills, and age, gender and social class. In relation to the presentation of the acquisition of language skills, a case study by Sert (2008) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the use of English in terms of the acquisition of both language skills and the academic content in three different approaches to language instruction. In the study, one of the approaches was English-aided instruction in which Turkish was used for lectures and English for exams and materials such as books and articles with the support of preparatory and post-preparatory English courses. It was found that the approach was not considered sufficient and efficient to teach English alongside academic content. Moreover, Gilmore (2004) reported an investigation into the discourse features of seven dialogues published in course books between 1981 and 1997 and contrasted them with comparable authentic interactions. It was found that the textbook dialogues differ considerably from their authentic equivalents across a range of discourse features. In terms of reading, Rivas (1999) analysed a sample of English as a Second Language textbooks used in Spanish secondary schools and language schools to determine how well they reflected current theories on reading, particularly the interactive approach to reading. It was found that the course books reflected current views on interactive reading, but that they differed in number and types of activities included and were deficient in various ways. Last, Arıkan (2008) investigated the nature of the topics of the reading passages in English Language Teaching (ELT) course books. In another study, Arıkan (2005) also examined age, social class, and gender, and found that social imbalances were detectable in the visual materials both quantitatively and qualitatively. In terms of communicative nature, Criado and Sanchez (2009) aimed to verify up to what point ELT textbooks used in Spanish educational settings comply with official regulations. The results showed that the communicative nature of the materials investigated was shown to be above 50%. Furthermore, Nitta and Gardner (2005) developed a framework of consciousness-raising and practice task types and applied it to nine contemporary ELT course books to identify a number of current trends. They found that there was little evidence to date on focused communication tasks. Lastly, Demir (2008) aimed at evaluating the ELT course books used in primary and secondary schools concerning thinking skills. She concluded that English course books used in primary and secondary schools needed important and urgent improvements concerning thinking skills.

The second research area was related to students' perceptions of course books. As an example, in a study by Arıkan (2007), the opinions of seventh grade students and teachers on "Let's Speak English 7" were studied through teacher and student questionnaires. The results suggested that students have rather negative feelings about "Let's Speak English 7". In addition, Oscarson (2009) aimed to explore how students perceived their

own general and specific writing abilities in relation to syllabus goals and whether these perceptions are affected by self-assessment practices. She implied that syllabus goals that encourage student responsibility and autonomy are viable and realistic, but students need to practice self-assessment.

The last area was teachers' perceptions of pronunciation and translation, curriculum development, belief about textbooks, attitudes, quality, and their views of book packages. First, in a survey study, Sariçoban (2010) examined the problems of student teachers during their practicum process and found that one of the problems they encountered was related to the course book. Student teachers perceived that course books lacked pronunciation and translation exercises. In another study, Alwan (2006) conducted a qualitative study of English language female secondary school teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in the United Arab Emirates. The results indicated that the teachers were excluded from the process of curriculum development. Next, Lee and Bathmaker (2007) explored teachers' beliefs in the use of English textbooks for teaching English. The results showed that textbooks had a great influence on teachers' beliefs. Then, Lai (1994) investigated the attitudes of Hong Kong English as a second language teachers concerning English language teaching problems. Results suggested that most respondents wanted textbooks geared to the student level. In terms of the quality of EFL books, Arıkan (2009) conducted a descriptive study on the effectiveness and quality of course books and found that prospective teachers generally found the quality of course books acceptable, although problems with course books were often associated with the teachers who make use of them. Furthermore, Kayapınar (2009) aimed to reveal teachers' views on the quality of foreign course book packages used in teaching English and found that teachers did not have positive impressions about the course book packages. The study suggested that course books should be developed and used to meet the needs of learners in the national context. Lastly, Arıkan (2007) found that teachers have rather negative feelings about the course book, "Let's Speak English 7". To conclude, the studies mainly focused on teachers' perceptions of pronunciation and translation, curriculum development, belief about textbooks, attitudes, quality, and their views of book packages, whereas their perceptions of the presentation of main language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing have not been a research subject. In other words, it was concluded that the studies in terms of teachers' perceptions reviewed are not directly related to the perceptions of the presentation of mentioned skills.

In sum, given that the present study focuses on Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of the presentation of main language skills, some drawbacks can be listed in relation to the literature review presented above. First, the studies on the course books used in EFL instruction mainly focused on the contents of course books. In other words, the studies examined the presentation of language and communicative skills, but not teachers' perceptions of the presentation of language skills. Second, some studies focused on learners' perceptions, whereas other studies focused on teachers' perceptions

of pronunciation and translation, curriculum development, belief about textbooks, attitudes, quality, and their views of book packages. To conclude, the review of literature demonstrates that there are no certain data on the teachers' perceptions of the presentation of language skills. With these concerns in mind, the paper examines one research question: how do Turkish pre-service EFL teachers perceive the presentation of main language skills in a course book?

Method

Before conducting the research, a research proposal that included an outline demonstrating the significance, purposes, research methodology and tools of the study was presented to the head of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at the Necatibey Education Faculty of Balikesir University. After an approval that was sought through the faculty was granted, the author attempted to locate the participants. Next, the study was conducted after explaining the research ethics and purposes of the research to the students.

1. Participants

The sample group for the study consisted of 48 pre-service EFL teachers studying in the ELT Department of the Faculty of Education at Balikesir University. Thirty-one (64.6%) of the participants were female and 17 (35.4) were male; the mean of their age was 21.96, falling within the range of 21-25. The reason why they are chosen as samples was that all of the participants were seniors who had school experience and teaching applications at different elementary schools in Balikesir during the 2009–2010 academic year. In other words, the participants were the preservice teachers of EFL who attended the teaching activities at various elementary schools in the city, and had the class of Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development that aims to adapt and develop materials for language teaching, adapt coursebook materials to particular learning needs and teaching contexts, design teaching materials and supplement materials parallel to the methodology. They were all of the pre-service teachers who had school experience and took had the class of Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development among 400 students in the department. Finally, the participants were informed before, after and during the study process about the aims, procedure and output of the study. The participants stated that they voluntarily participated in the study.

2. Tools

The data collection tools consisted of a background questionnaire that asked the participants about their age and gender and a questionnaire aimed at measuring their perceptions of the presentation of language skills in the course book, *Spot on 8*, written by Cemile Bacanlı Kurt and İpek Sayiner. The questionnaire, which measures their perceptions, consisted of four sub-sections of 44 items; each was assessed on a scale ranging from one to five. The questionnaire included 15 items for listening skills, 10 for speaking skills, 13 for reading skills and 6 for writing skills.

3. Procedure

The procedure of the study included three steps: the instruction of the pre-service EFL teachers, scale development, and administration and statistical analysis.

Step 1. Instruction

Pre-service teachers who participated in the study were taught the theoretical basics of teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing skills during eight weeks. Each instruction session took place for three hours per week. During the course, a two-week period was used for each language skill. The following table demonstrates the topics of the course.

Table 1. The topics of the course

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8
The role of listening in EFL learning, approaches to the teaching of listening (the Comprehension Approach, Krashen's Monitor Model, the Natural Approach, listening processes and purposes)	The role of speaking in EFL learning, approaches to the teaching of speaking, the role of pronunciation in EFL learning (intuitive-imitative, analytics-linguistic, current integrative approach), approaches to the learning of pronunciation	The role of reading in EFL learning, the models of reading process (bottom-up, top-down and interactive models), teaching reading (automatic word recognition skills, vocabulary, structure, al, formal discourse structure, content knowledge, synthesis and evaluation skills)	The role of writing in EFL learning, approaches to teaching writing (form-focused, process-focused, content-based and the reader/ audience-dominated approach)

Step 2. Scale development and administration

Before designing the questionnaire, the theoretical framework for the presentation of language skills in EFL course books was reviewed. In the sense, the related literature in terms of current trends of which details given in Table 1 was reviewed, and transferred into the draft questionnaire. In accordance with the related literature and the topics taught during the course, the researcher and participants discussed the items that should be in the questionnaire in a discussion session. To conclude, a draft questionnaire was designed in order to measure the perceptions of the presentation of main language skills. The draft questionnaire was administered to the participants who had a one-week period to examine the course book. After this study was conducted on the draft version to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the revised questionnaire was administered to

the participants in the group. Before the administration, the participants had a one-week period to examine the course book.

Step 3. Statistical analysis

The statistical procedure included three steps: First, Cronbach's Alpha Model was used to measure the reliability of the scale. After the *scale if item deleted* analysis of the draft questionnaire and revision was completed, the reliability coefficients of the final version were found to be 0.90 for the whole scale, 0.78 for the listening section, 0.87 for the speaking section, 0.80 for the reading section, and lastly, 0.79 for the writing section of the questionnaire. The values indicated a high level of reliability for both the entirety as well as each section of the questionnaire. Second, in order to obtain the validity of the scale, a factor analysis was conducted on the draft version. After the rearrangement of the items, the total variance of the final version of the scale was found to be 85.02. The value demonstrated that the scale was valid to measure the perceptions of the participants. Lastly, after the administration of the scale, the means and standard deviations of the items were computed and presented in accordance with main language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Results

The findings of the study were presented in four subsections. First, the results on the perceptions of the presentation of listening skills in the book were given. Then, the data on the perceptions of pre-service teachers of English regarding speaking skills were presented. Finally, the findings of the perceptions of the presentations of reading and writing skills were introduced.

The findings given in Table 2 indicate that pre-service teachers of English mainly believe that listening skills are presented as one of the main components in the course book. Speaking specifically, they strongly believe that comprehension abilities promote productive skills such as speaking and writing, and that listening activities in the book focus on meaning rather than form. In addition, pre-service teachers underline that listening skills are presented before speaking and writing skills and acquired from the simple to the complex; additionally, they think that listening is acquired subconsciously. Moreover, they state that listening exercises focus on conveying information and message, and that the transactional language presented in the book includes the understanding of details and is explicit, clear and coherent in terms of the comprehension of the meaning of the message. However, pre-service teachers moderately believe that listening exercises in the book focus on students' listening comprehension and production that make students familiar with English as a new language. Additionally, they have moderate perceptions of the presentation of listening skills regarding transferring listening skills to other skills, about communicational skills and interactional uses of language for communicational use rather than linguistic structures, and about the presentation of language in a harmonious communicational context.

Table 2. Perceptions of the presentation of listening skills

Statements (N=48)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Listening is presented as one of the main components.	3.94	1.12
2. Listening focuses on the learner's listening comprehension.	3.33	1.34
3. Listening production makes learners familiar with the new language.	3.08	1.51
4. Comprehension abilities precede productive skills.	3.63	1.35
5. Skills acquired through listening transfer to other skills.	3.21	1.44
6. Teaching listening emphasises meaning rather than form.	3.67	1.10
7. Listening acquisition is subconscious.	3.79	1.03
8. Listening is acquired before speaking and writing skills.	3.71	1.66
9. Language production emerges from the simple to the complex.	3.79	1.30
10. The purpose of listening is communication.	3.04	1.35
11. The focus is on harmonious communication in social contexts.	3.19	1.32
12. Interactional uses of language have communicative goals rather than linguistic structures.	2.90	1.31
13. The focus is on conveying information, and language use is message oriented.	3.60	1.09
14. Transactional uses of language include listening that requires understanding of details.	3.96	0.92
15. Transactional language is explicit, clear, and coherent in order for the listener to comprehend the meaning of the message.	3.73	1.11

The data in Table 3 demonstrate that the presentation of speaking skills in the book remains a problematic area for the pre-service teachers of English. To begin with, pre-service teachers do not believe that some methods such as the Audio-lingual Method, the Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, the Silent Way and Suggestopedia are used to improve students' speaking skills. Another problem for pre-service teachers is that pronunciation is not presented as an integral component of communication and as a key ingredient to develop learners' communicative competence. Specifically, they think that pronunciation practices are not presented within meaningful task-based activities. In addition, they state that pronunciation-focused speaking activities are not helpful for the learning of pronunciation. Lastly, they highlight that the teaching of pronunciation does not facilitate the development of intelligible speech and communication in English as a target language. However, pre-service teachers of English believe that speaking skills are presented as one of the main components of the book, and that speaking sections help learners to take in the message, to negotiate meaning and to produce comprehensible input. Finally, they underline that the books helps learners to improve both accuracy and fluency in a balanced approach.

Table 3. Perceptions of the presentation of speaking skills

Statements (N=48)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Speaking is presented as one of the main components.	3.52	1.27
2. Speaking is viewed in the larger context of communication, with the focus on the speaker's ability to take in messages, negotiate meaning, and produce comprehensible input.	3.50	1.19
3. The course book helps learners to improve the accuracy of their learning.	3.56	1.20
4. Various methods such as the Audio-lingual Method, the Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, the Silent Way and Suggestopedia are used.	2.38	1.08
5. Pronunciation is a key ingredient in the development of communicative competence.	1.88	1.25
6. A more balanced approach that values both accuracy and fluency is aimed for.	2.88	1.23
7. Pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of communication.	1.90	1.15
8. Pronunciation is practiced within meaningful task-based activities.	2.38	1.50
9. Pronunciation-focused speaking activities facilitate the learning of pronunciation.	1.88	1.12
10. The primary goals of pronunciation teaching are for the learner to develop intelligible speech and to be able to effectively communicate in the target language.	2.06	1.19

The values presented in Table 4 show that pre-service teachers of English have quite positive perceptions of the presentation of reading skills in the course book. To begin with, they strongly believe that reading is presented as a major component in the book. Moreover, they state that the reading texts presented in the book help learners to construct meaning. This way, students can understand the meaning of the texts and guess unfamiliar words. In addition, they underline that students can create meaning by relating the passages to their background knowledge, experiences and prior knowledge, and that students also make judgments about the information and the purpose and usefulness of the texts. For pre-service teachers, there exists an interaction between the reader and the texts. Pre-service teachers also emphasise that there are exercises regarding the main ideas and details in the passages, and they find the level and topics of the texts to be familiar to learners. Lastly, reading texts are also useful for the development of grammar and the vocabulary knowledge of the learners. That is, words in the texts are presented in different contexts, the texts address other aspects of the words, and there is rich and varied information about each word included. Pre-service teachers also believe that students can

recognise the structural features of the texts, and grammatical structures in the passages help learners to understand the meaning.

Table 4. Perceptions of the presentation of reading skills

Statements (N=48)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Reading is presented as one of the major components in the book.	4.15	1.13
2. The reading section helps learners to construct meaning from texts.	4.31	0.69
3. There is an interaction between the reader and the texts.	4.02	1.04
4. Readers can create meaning by relating the text to their background knowledge.	3.96	0.87
5. Readers can comprehend the meaning of the reading passage or guess the meaning of words unfamiliar to them.	3.69	1.15
6. Vocabulary is presented in different contexts and the texts address other aspects of the word.	3.58	1.41
7. Grammatical structures help students to understand the meaning of the passages.	3.58	1.14
8. Reading texts give rich and varied information about each word.	3.40	1.22
9. Texts establish ties between the words and student experiences and prior knowledge.	3.79	1.11
10. The level and topics are familiar to students.	4.29	0.90
11. The texts help students to make judgments about information, the author's purpose, and the usefulness of the text.	3.75	1.16
12. Structural features can be recognised.	3.85	1.05
13. There are exercises about the main ideas and details.	4.44	0.85

The data given in Table 5 indicate that pre-service teachers of English mainly have positive perceptions of the presentation of writing skills in the course book. In other words, they highlight that writing is presented as a main component in the book. They also believe that writing instruction is learner centred rather than teacher centred. At a moderate level, they think that the writing activities in the book focus on content and student expression instead of linguistic correctness, and that the accuracy and fluency of writing exercises are presented in a balance. Nevertheless, pre-service teachers seem unsure about the presentation of various patterns and forms of different types of written texts. In addition, they state that the culture of the target language is not emphasised.

Table 5. Perceptions of the presentation of writing skills

Statements (N=48)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Writing is presented as one of the main components.	3.44	1.43
2. Writing focuses on organisational patterns and forms of different types of written texts.	2.96	1.24
3. Writing is learner-centred.	4.00	1.13
4. Content and student expression is more important than linguistic correctness.	3.31	1.15
5. There is a balance between accuracy and fluency.	3.04	1.35
6. The culture of the target language is emphasised.	2.83	1.55

Conclusions and Discussion

In accordance with the presentations of the four language skills in the course book, four main results were obtained from the study. First, the course book presents listening skills as a main component. Speaking specifically, listening activities promote productive language skills, focus on meaning, make the learner subconsciously acquire knowledge from the simple to the complex, and focus on conveying information, message and the transactional use of the target language. However, listening exercises moderately focus on comprehension and production in English as a new language, the communicational and interactional use of the target language, and transfer to other skills. Second, the presentation of speaking skills in the book presents some problems. For instance, various language-teaching methods are not placed in the book to improve speaking skills. Dramatically enough, the book does not help learners improve learners' pronunciation skills. In other words, pronunciation practices are not used in meaningful task-based activities, not helpful to develop students' communicative competence, and do not facilitate the development of intelligible speech and communication in English. Yet, it is also clear that speaking activities help learners to take in the message, to negotiate meaning and to produce comprehensible input in a balanced way in terms of accurate and fluent use of the target language. Third, reading skills are presented as a main component in the course book. That is, reading texts and exercises in the book are beneficial to construct meaning, to guess unfamiliar vocabulary, to create meaning by relating to learners' background knowledge, experiences and prior knowledge, and to make judgments about the information, as well as the purpose and usefulness of the texts. In addition, it is obvious that learners can interact with texts and find the main ideas, details, level, and topics of the texts familiar to them. Moreover, vocabulary and grammar presented in the texts and exercises are best presented to help learners develop in terms of conveying meaning. Fourth and last, though target culture, various patterns and forms of different types of written texts, content and student expression, and the balance between accuracy

and fluency are not emphasised in the book at an ideal level, it can be concluded that writing exercises are presented as a main component in a learner-centred approach. As a result, it can be theorized that pre-service teachers of English as foreign language have positive perceptions of the presentations of language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing, while they perceive that the teaching of pronunciation remains a problematic area.

Below is a summary of the discussion of the results. First, the results of the present study suggest that pronunciation practices are not used in meaningful task-based activities, not helpful to developing students' communicative competence, and do not facilitate in developing intelligible speech and communication in English, just as Sarıçoban (2010) found that student teachers perceived that course books lacked pronunciation and translation exercises. Second, Though Kayapınar (2009) suggested that course books should be used to meet the needs of learners in the national context, the participants in the present study believe that target culture should be emphasised in the book. Furthermore, the results obtained from the study show that pre-service teachers of English mainly have positive perceptions of the presentation of language skills, in contrast to Arıkan (2007), who found that teachers have negative feelings about another course book used at the elementary level, "Let's Speak English 7". As a result, unlike the studies reviewed, the scope of the present study is limited to the perceptions of the presentations main language skills in course books, and thus, the results found in the study seem to contribute to the related literature. As a final note, the study also contributes to the related field in terms of EFL learning at elementary schools because of two reasons. First, the course books examined in the study was used to teach at elementary schools as previously mentioned. Second, the pre-service teachers whose perceptions were investigated taught at elementary schools. To end, the conclusions, implications and recommendations underlined in the study are directly related to EFL teaching and learning at elementary education.

In relation to the conclusions reached in the study, some practical recommendations can be made. First, listening exercises should focus more on comprehension and production in English. Moreover, the communicational and interactional aspects of the exercises should help learners transfer their listening skills to other skills. Second, pronunciation exercises should be placed in the book to help develop learners' pronunciation skills. In other words, pronunciation exercises should be presented in meaningful task-based activities. In this way, pronunciation activities will help students to develop their communicative competence and to use the target language in communication. Third and last, the target culture should be more emphasised in writing activities. Additionally, writing exercises should include a variety of patterns and forms of different types of writing pieces. Writing exercises should also be presented with a balance between accuracy and fluency. On the other hand, it should be highlighted that the results and recommendations noted are limited to the perceptions of the sample group, as explained below.

Apart from these and within a broader perspective, it can be recommended that teachers' opinions should be evaluated before and during the processes of curricula and

course book changes and preparations (Alwan, 2006) because the main responsibility of EFL instruction belongs to language teachers. Additionally, it should also be emphasised that teachers should be taught and supported in terms of curriculum evaluation before their opinions are evaluated, and that their needs in relation to course book evaluation should be analysed. To conclude, teachers' perceptions and opinions should have a place within the process of curriculum development and course book design.

As a note regarding the limitations of the research, the subjects were limited to 48 Turkish pre-service teachers of English studying in the ELT Department of Balıkesir University. In addition, the scope was confined to the data collected quantitatively using a background questionnaire and a questionnaire aimed at measuring their perceptions of the presentation of language skills in the course book, *Spot on 8*. Given that the sample size in the study is too small to generalize in terms of EFL teachers' perceptions of the presentations of main language skills in course books, it was recommended that further studies should use larger sample groups to obtain data about the external validity of the questionnaire. Moreover, further research should focus on the presentation of each language skill in a wider perspective and other course books used at various levels.

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Appendix 1. The questionnaire of the perceptions of the presentation of language skills

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Listening is presented as one of the main components.					
2. Listening focuses on the learner's listening comprehension.					
3. Listening production makes learners familiar with the new language.					
4. Comprehension abilities precede productive skills.					
5. Skills acquired through listening transfer to other skills.					
6. Teaching listening emphasises meaning rather than form.					
7. Listening acquisition is subconscious.					
8. Listening is acquired before speaking and writing skills.					
9. Language production emerges from the simple to the complex.					
10. The purpose of listening is communication.					
11. The focus is on harmonious communication in social contexts.					
12. Interactional uses of language have communicative goals rather than linguistic structures.					
13. The focus is on conveying information, and language use is message oriented.					
14. Transactional uses of language include listening that requires the understanding of details.					
15. Transactional language is explicit, clear, and coherent in order for the listener to comprehend the meaning of the message.					
16. Speaking is presented as one of the main components.					
17. Speaking is viewed in the larger context of communication with the focus on the speaker's ability to take in messages, negotiate meaning, and produce comprehensible input.					
18. The course book helps learners to improve the accuracy of their learning.					
19. Various methods such as the Audio-lingual Method, the Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, the Silent Way and Suggestopedia are used.					
20. Pronunciation is a key ingredient to the development of communicative competence.					
21. A more balanced approach that values both accuracy and fluency is aimed for.					
22. Pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of communication.					

23. Pronunciation is practiced within meaningful task-based activities.					
24. Pronunciation-focused speaking activities facilitate the learning of pronunciation.					
25. The primary goals of pronunciation teaching are for the learner to develop intelligible speech and to be able to effectively communicate in the target language.					
26. Reading is presented as one of the major components in the book.					
27. The reading section helps learners to construct meaning from texts.					
28. There is an interaction between the reader and the texts.					
29. Readers can create meaning by relating the text to their background knowledge.					
30. Readers can comprehend the meaning of the reading passage or guess the meaning of words unfamiliar to them.					
31. Vocabulary is presented in different contexts and the texts address other aspects of the word.					
32. Grammatical structures help students to understand the meaning.					
33. Reading texts give rich and varied information about each word.					
34. Texts establish ties between the words and student experiences and prior knowledge.					
35. The level and topics are familiar to students.					
36. The texts help students to make judgments about information, the author's purpose, and the usefulness of the text.					
37. Structural features can be recognised.					
38. There are exercises about the main ideas and details.					
39. Writing is presented as one of the main components.					
40. Writing focuses on organisational patterns and forms of different types of written texts.					
41. Writing is learner centred.					
42. Content and student expression is more important than linguistic correctness.					
43. There is a balance between accuracy and fluency.					
44. The culture of the target language is emphasised.					