

RESEARCH ARTICLE


Navigating materials adaptation: English teachers' experiences in Turkish secondary schools

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Abstract

Teachers often adapt materials to create more effective learning experiences due to the unique characteristics of each classroom, considering varying student backgrounds and needs. Studies highlight the role of coursebooks, which are essential yet sometimes insufficient for addressing communicative and intercultural aspects of English language education. Hence, this qualitative study explores the adaptation of English language teaching materials by ten secondary school English teachers as part of the PRELIM3 Project. Specifically, it examines their perceptions of national coursebooks and their strategies for adapting project materials to enhance language teaching in the "PRELIM3" project, aimed at developing supportive language teaching materials aligned with the national curriculum for less developed regions in Türkiye. Data were collected through triangulation, including weekly teacher narrations of material adaptation experiences, semi-structured post-project training interviews, and analysis of weekly adapted coursebook activities. Additionally, teachers' conference presentations provided insights into classroom material adaptation, reflecting on students' language performance and reactions, besides teachers' use of materials. Content analysis and coding techniques were used to analyze narrations and interviews, while activities were evaluated based on English language skills targeted, alignment with lesson objectives, and responsiveness to student interests and needs. The study highlights the critical role of material adaptation in meeting students' language learning needs, revealing teachers' perceptions and strategies in addressing the limitations of national coursebooks. Findings underscore the need for contextually responsive materials and offer insights to improve English language education in diverse classroom settings.

Keywords

Coursebook, materials adaptation, curriculum, English language teachers

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Introduction

Adapting materials in search of the best coursebook (Korkmaz & Korkmaz, 2020, p.260) has become an inevitable process in language teaching due to the recent growth in diverse student populations. English language classes are filled with monolingual students and students of various ethnicities, native languages, cultures, and countries. Every class is unique and distinctive regarding the student population, learning and teaching atmosphere, language proficiency levels, students' interests and needs, teachers' backgrounds, and the local context. In line with the second language acquisition principles (Tomlinson, 2013), students need to be supported through activities that are exciting and relevant to their lives, address multiple learning intelligences and preferences, and provide opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Coursebooks should facilitate language learning for them through their instructional, elicitation, and exploratory nature. Accordingly, the best coursebook can be achieved through material adaptation addressing contextual factors such as student population, the role of English in the school, the testing and assessment system, and the syllabus (McDonough et al., 2013).

Considered a core component of English language teaching and learning, coursebooks are the primary or unique resources for many secondary school teachers worldwide (Bouckaert, 2019; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). For teachers, they are the source of authority and security, organisers of the lesson content, and a practical and effective professional development strategy. For students, they are the source of language input and an opportunity to practise the target language with intercultural values in the classroom. However, as McDonough et al. (2013) stated, no coursebook is likely to be perfect or the best owing to students' differing needs, objectives, backgrounds, and preferred styles in local contexts. Hence, teachers often have to adapt materials to suit the needs of their local context (Hanifa & Yusra, 2023).

In Türkiye, English language coursebooks for grades 2-12 are prepared by national publishers, sent for revision to the Board of Education, and reviewed by a panel of experts appointed by the Board. These coursebooks are approved by the Board depending on the views of the panel (Board of Education, 2024). The Common

European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) was employed to design and develop the curriculum, syllabus, and materials. So, as mentioned in the EFL Programme (MoNE, 2018), coursebook authors are encouraged to employ methodological choices in line with the CEFR, key competencies and values, and themes in the coursebooks. Accordingly, all state schools must use national coursebooks approved by the Board of Education. English language teachers are expected to make the most effective use of these coursebooks, addressing their students' needs and interests. However, as reported in studies by Vale et al. (2013), Dülger (2016), and Solhi et al. (2020), many English language teachers in Türkiye find these coursebooks significantly limiting regarding communicative aspects, intercultural integration, and addressing diversity in schools. Despite these studies, how English language teachers adapt materials into lived instruction is still under-explored (Li & Li, 2021).

As a remedy to the coursebook implementation limitations and scarcity of research, we report on the views and experiences of English language teachers in materials adaptation and use during the project called "PRELIM3: Developing Teacher Support Sources for the Secondary School English Language Teaching Programme in Less Developed Regions in Türkiye" funded by the British Council, NILE, and IATEFL, managed by the University of Sheffield, and partnered by Gazi University. The project aimed to develop English language teaching and learning materials parallel to the Secondary School English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Curriculum, as needed by the teachers working in rural areas in Türkiye. Understanding teachers' views and experiences on the national coursebook adaptation is essential because it reveals teachers' perceptions of classroom problems and ways of implementing the English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology in classroom activities (Li & Li, 2021; Tomlinson & Masahura, 2018). Borg (2006) also argues that exploring their perspectives and observing them adapt the coursebook is crucial to understanding teachers' views and beliefs. This study examines the opinions and classroom experiences of 10 project participant English language secondary school teachers who implemented project materials in English lessons through material adaptation strategies.

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the reasons for English language secondary school teachers to make adaptations in national coursebooks?
- How do these teachers adapt the project materials in their English lessons?

Materials adaptation in ELT

As the dynamics of language and education evolve and diversify, teachers continually seek innovative approaches to engage learners effectively. Materials adaptation in ELT emerges as a pivotal strategy, enabling language teachers to tailor resources to meet the diverse needs, preferences, and learning styles of their students in local contexts because, as Tomlinson states, “no matter how good the materials are, they will not by themselves manage to cater to the different needs, wants, learning styles, attitudes, cultural norms and experiences of individual learners” (as cited in McDonough et al.,2013, p.64).

Materials adaptation refers to modifying existing teaching resources, such as textbooks, worksheets, multimedia, and online materials, to suit the specific objectives, contexts, and learner profiles. This flexibility allows educators to align instructional content with their students' linguistic, cultural, and cognitive requirements, fostering a more inclusive and interactive learning environment. Teachers can accommodate various learning modalities by customising materials to incorporate visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile elements (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). This ensures that all students have equitable opportunities to comprehend and internalise the content effectively. Educators can incorporate authentic materials such as newspaper articles, songs, films, and advertisements, enriching the learning experience and promoting cross-cultural understanding through adaptation. By scaffolding content, providing vocabulary support, and simplifying language structures, when necessary, educators can ensure that instructional materials are accessible and understandable to all learners, regardless of their proficiency levels. This differentiation fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel challenged yet capable of mastering new language skills. Furthermore, material adaptation empowers teachers to address their classrooms' diverse linguistic proficiency levels and encourages creativity and innovation in

teaching practices (Mede & Yalçın, 2019). Rather than rigidly adhering to pre-designed materials, educators can modify, supplement, or create resources based on emerging pedagogical trends, technological advancements, and student feedback. This flexibility lets teachers stay abreast of evolving educational needs and adapt their instructional approaches, accordingly, enhancing their overall effectiveness of language instruction (McDonough et al., 2013).

However, effective material adaptation requires careful consideration of various internal and external factors, as McDonough et al. (2013) suggested. While external factors refer to what we have at hand, such as learner characteristics, physical environment, resources, and class size, internal factors are about what materials offer, such as choice of topics, skills covered, proficiency level, and grading of exercises. Similarly, Tomlinson and Masuhara state that factors such as local, regional, and national teaching environment, learners' demographic information, teachers' personalities, teaching styles and beliefs, and course objectives should be considered for effective material adaptation (as cited in Freda & Timmis, 2015). These factors are expected to match each other as closely as possible. Madsen and Bowen (1978, ix) refer to this matching as “congruence”, which they see as essential for effective adaptation. Teachers must deeply understand their students' backgrounds, interests, and learning preferences to make informed decisions about adapting materials. Overall, effective adaptation will contribute both to the learning and teaching process.

As for the reasons to adapt, there are some possible areas of non-congruence, such as not enough focus on the grammar, too much unknown vocabulary in reading texts, inauthentic listening passages, not enough guidance on pronunciation, and inappropriacy for the age and proficiency level of the students. Additional factors include a lack of intercultural items in visuals and texts, too little variety or opportunity in communicative activities, and a need for more technical facilities. (Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022; Masuhara, 2022). Systematic support for materials adaptation was also highlighted as a need for teachers. Cunningsworth adds to the list the classroom dynamics, personalities involved, syllabus constraints, availability of resources, and learner expectations as reasons for adaptation (as cited in Freda & Timmis, 2015).

Material adaptation occurs in several stages, as various scholars propose (McGrath, 2013 Islam & Mares, 2003; McDonough et al., 2013). McDonough et al. (2013) regard the particular teaching context as central and emphasize personalising, individualising, and localising factors. Personalising refers to making the content relevant to learners' needs and interests. Individualising addresses learners' learning styles. Localising also considers the cultural and geographical differences and variations in the use of materials. The adaptation strategy by McDonough et al. (2013) includes five techniques: adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying, and reordering (Table 1, p.77). In "adding", teachers supplement more input (visual or written) into the content, considering the practical effect and timing. Deleting can be done by reducing the length of the material by subtracting from it. Modifying is related to the internal change in the approach or focus of the exercise. It can be done in both ways: rewriting (turning the material into a more communicative and relevant consent) and restructuring (changing the material according to learners and the learning condition). Simplifying is done on instructions, explanations, and visuals to clarify the input according to learners' levels. Reordering refers to putting the parts of a coursebook in a different order. McGrath (2013) states that teachers can adapt language instructions, exercises, explanations, examples, productions of learners, and forms of classroom interaction for giving instructions and clarifying meanings, topics, cultural content, and linguistic and cognitive demands of the learners.

Previous studies on material adaptation in ELT

EFL teachers worldwide have adapted and used materials differently for various purposes and levels in the English language teaching field so far. Prawiti, Jufrizal, and Hamzah (2020) examined the material adaptation techniques used by Indonesian English language teachers in senior and vocational high school coursebooks by the Centre for Curriculum and Textbook Development under the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. They observed and interviewed five ELT teachers and found these teachers mainly used adaptation techniques, such as expansion and re-writing, but ignored techniques, such as subtraction and reordering, owing to unfamiliarity. It highlighted the necessity of being familiar with coursebook adaptation techniques and

using them properly in the classroom. Priyanka and Selamat (2021) discussed the need to adapt learning materials in Indonesian schools to promote acquiring language skills, values, and 21st-century skills. It is emphasised that materials can be sequenced from comprehension tasks first and productive, interactive tasks next in adaptation. Hanifa (2018) explored an Indonesian EFL high school teacher's ways of adapting materials, perceived benefits, and challenges. It was observed that the teacher adapted materials by adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying, and reordering in the classroom. Although the adaptation facilitated the language learning process, some issues were raised, such as the absence of a section for sharing feelings, adjusting the difficulty level, dealing with teacher anxiety, and using the native language extensively. In-service teacher training and education for materials adaptation was reported as a crucial need to be addressed.

Halim and Halim (2016) investigated how and why teaching materials must be adapted by gathering novice and experienced EFL teachers' perspectives through interviews and questionnaires. Teachers were reported to believe no perfect coursebook existed and preferred to adopt materials rather than adapt them due to either a lack of resources or time. Liu (2016) shared the adaptation of authentic materials in the foreign language (L2) listening coursebook through graded tasks in the Chinese context. Li and Li (2021) also focused on the Chinese EFL context and explored how EFL teachers in China selectively used materials in language classrooms. Their findings showed that teachers adapted materials by adding, modifying, and simplifying due to the complex, situated, and interactive classroom context. Devi (2017) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding material adaptation in Nepal. In the study, it was reported that teachers mostly adapted tasks at the activity and unit levels. The primary adaptation technique was modification through reordering, omission, and reduction. The teachers perceived the EFL coursebooks in Nepal as not addressing Nepalese learners' cultural needs and interests, lacking visuals and examples to support meaning, and lacking audio materials, especially for listening texts. They reported the need for in-service training for materials adaptation, as well as time and support from their colleagues, to practise material adaptation more effectively in their classes.

In addition to the studies in different parts of the world, various studies in Türkiye have explored material adaptation from multiple aspects. Şimşek (2022) used a group of 14 multicultural preparatory learners' feedback to improve teachers' adaptation strategies. The teacher added two scaffolded grammar tasks through visual aids, collaborative group work, an explicit focus on grammar, and learner translations. Learners showed greater interest in activities and raised awareness of using the modal of deduction in context. Korkmaz and Korkmaz (2020) examined 120 ELT student-teachers' views and experiences in materials evaluation, adaptation, and creation through surveys and semi-structured interviews in Türkiye. The participants held positive beliefs about material adaptation and stated that when materials were adapted for a specific context, learners became more involved, motivated, and interested in the activities. They used personalisation and localisation strategies in materials adaptation to create a child-centred learning atmosphere in the teaching practicum. Also, the main reason for their adaptation was to enable primary EFL students to engage in communicative and fun activities while using English. Karatepe and Civelek (2021) aimed to investigate EFL teachers' views on the adapted pragmatic activity to teach requests. Teachers found pragmatic-awareness-raising activities helpful in teaching pragmatics. Mede and Yalçın (2019) examined the self-reported beliefs of 14 Turkish EFL instructors, seven novices and seven experienced, at a tertiary-level preparatory programme about textbook adaptation. They also explored which strategies were used frequently in their lessons through reflective essays, lesson plans, and semi-structured interviews. They found that EFL instructors shared positive beliefs about using adaptation strategies. Some techniques they used included raising learners' curiosity in the lead-in activity, teaching vocabulary and grammar, and increasing interaction through games. Deletion was also preferred for free-practice vocabulary structure activities. Modifications were made to newly learnt grammar topics and the content of speaking activities. Among the instructors' primary reasons for adapting materials were meeting the course objectives, the need to cater to learning styles, and increasing learner interactions

These studies discuss the importance and necessity of understanding teachers' views and experiences in material adaptation in English classes. Teachers' adaptation

practices are affected by their views of ELT methodology, the classroom context, learners' needs, ages, goals of learning English, interests, and language teaching policy, reflecting the nature of the partnership between the coursebook and the teacher. In other words, their adapting and using materials in English language teaching affects what they teach, how they teach, and how their students learn. Although there are a variety of studies investigating teachers' and student-teachers' perspectives on material adaptation, there is a scarcity of research on understanding EFL secondary school teachers' material adaptation views and in-class practices in Türkiye. To address this gap, this study focuses on 10 EFL secondary school teachers working in diverse regions of Türkiye. It explores their views of national coursebooks and in-class practices in adapting teaching materials from the PRELIM3 Project in their local English classes.

Methodology

Participants and research context

At the time of the study, the participants were 10 EFL secondary school teachers teaching English to 5th, 6th, and/or 7th graders in seven cities with different sociocultural backgrounds in Türkiye, namely, Şanlıurfa/Halfeti, Gaziantep/Şehitkamil, İzmir/Selçuk, Hatay/İskenderun, Van/Edremit, Trabzon/Ortahisar, Ağrı/Doğubeyazıt, Ankara/Sincan and İstanbul/Bağcılar. At first, there was a call for project participants on social media for teachers who taught these grades in Türkiye. Twenty-eight teachers applied, and their conditions were evaluated regarding project aims, timelines, and requirements. As a result, ten of them were chosen based on the purposive sampling method (Creswell, 2012) (Table 1). Their age ranged from 25 to 45. Three of them were novices, while seven of them were experienced teachers. They all used EFL coursebooks developed by national publishers and approved by the Board of Education in Türkiye.

Different trainers with expertise in materials adaptation trained these teachers weekly for two months to adapt and appropriately use web-based materials in their classrooms. Teachers shared their local teaching context through weekly online meetings (Table 2). They reported their coursebook use, adaptation experiences, and

students' language needs, while trainers introduced material adaptation stages, project materials, and sample adapted coursebook activities. Regarding the weekly training tasks, teachers were asked to adapt the web-based project EFL materials weekly in their classrooms, share these adaptation experiences, and prepare for their presentations at the project conference on February 23, 2024. Each meeting lasted 1,5 hours on Zoom. The project team determined the content of these meetings (aims, outcomes, and training materials).

Table 1.

Project Participants

Teachers	City	Experience of teaching	Age	Levels they teach
Teacher 1 (T1)	Şanlıurfa/Halfeti	One year	25	5th grades
Teacher 2 (T2)	Trabzon/Ortahisar	Two years	27	5th grades
Teacher 3 (T3)	Ankara/Sincan	Fifteen years	40	5th grades
Teacher 4 (T4)	Ağrı/Doğubeyazıt	Five years	31	6th grades
Teacher 5 (T5)	İstanbul/Bağcılar	Five years	31	6th grades
Teacher 6 (T6)	Van/Edremit	Five years	31	6th grades
Teacher 7 (T7)	İzmir/Selçuk	Fifteen years	42	5th grades
Teacher 8 (T8)	Hatay/İskenderun	Fifteen years	41	7th grades
Teacher 9 (T9)	Gaziantep/Şehitkamil	Eight years	32	7th grades
Teacher 10 (T10)	Trabzon/Ortahisar	Seventeen years	42	7th grades

Table 2.*Project Training weeks and content*

Training weeks	Training content
Week 1 (December 13, 2023)	Project introduction: material adaptation
Week 2 (December 20, 2023)	Coursebook adaptation in ELT
Week 3 (December 27, 2023)	Adapting 5th grade EFL coursebooks: sample activities
Week 4 (January 3, 2024)	Adapting 6th grade EFL coursebooks: sample activities
Week 5 (January 10, 2024)	Adapting 7th grade EFL coursebooks: sample activities
Week 6 (January 17, 2024)	Teacher reflections on project materials and adaptation experiences in local contexts
Week 7 (January 24, 2024)	Localising the EFL coursebook
Week 8 (January 31, 2024)	Teacher preparations for the project conference presentations: building bridges between trainers and teachers

Data collection and analysis

In this qualitative study, data were triangulated and collected through weekly teacher narrations of material adaptation experiences, semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the project training about their overall project and adaptation reflections, and their weekly adapted coursebook activities. Also, their stories of classroom material adaptation experiences, consisting of information on students' language use performance, their reactions toward the material, and teachers' material use performances, were reflected in their project conference presentations. These reflections were also noted in addition to the data tools. With three narrations and one interview per ten teachers, we collected and analysed thirty narrations and ten interviews throughout the project.

Data from narrations and semi-structured interviews were analysed using content analysis and coding (Creswell, 2012). Activities were analysed in terms of target

language skills and components, their alignment with the lesson plan objectives and duration, and students' language interests and needs. Ethical permission was obtained before the study. Teachers were informed about the study, agreed to participate voluntarily, and gave consent.

Results and Discussion

Through two research questions, this study aimed to understand the reasons for and experiences of ten PRELIM 3 Project participant teachers in materials adaptation. It was revealed that teachers had positive views on the teaching sources developed as a product of the project. They were observed adapting project materials into their lessons for various reasons, resulting from the non-congruence with external and internal factors (Madsen & Bowen, 1978).

Reasons to adopt national coursebooks

The first research question in this study was to explore secondary school EFL teachers' reasons for adapting materials in their English classes. As a result of the analysis of the narrations and semi-structured interviews, all Turkish EFL teachers in this study were unsatisfied with grades 5, 6, and 7 coursebooks for several reasons. The first common reason was the lack of in-class opportunities for the students' communicative use of grammar. As for the reasons for material adaptation, it was revealed that teachers found communicative use of grammar opportunities in the coursebooks limited, especially in productive skills activities. Communicative aspects of grammar activities have always been lacking in MoNE coursebooks, as revealed by Dülger (2016) and Solhi et al. (2020). As appears in the beliefs and views of teachers in studies by Şimşek (2022) and Korkmaz and Korkmaz (2020), teachers in this study believed in teaching grammar communicatively to young learners. They believed students would need to communicate accurately and fluently in real life, which would become possible by engaging them with functional and interactive use of grammar. For them, these students needed to use English outside the class for accurate speaking and writing purposes. They emphasised that pre-activities in the coursebooks should give them a real aim for communicative

purposes. That is why all teachers in this study highlighted that “they were searching for meaningful, communicative, and relevant activities that would enable students to use vocabulary and function of the grammar item in context” in the project presentation conference. This was reported to be the main reason for material adaptation in the class. The adaptation provided their students with more engaging and motivating learning opportunities, as Korkmaz and Korkmaz (2020) mentioned. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers' beliefs about materials use and their teaching practices cluster due to the top-down approach. In other words, limiting teachers with the MoNE coursebooks and expecting them to use them in English lessons may contradict their teaching beliefs. Regarding topic choice, activity quality, and real communicative purposes, national coursebooks were found to be problematic since they demotivate students to use English in the classroom. For example, T6 stated: “In Unit 3 of the 6th-grade book, we have to study both comparatives and present continuous tense with many mechanical exercises. They do not understand how and where they will use these structures in real lives.” This problem was also observed in an EFL teaching context at the tertiary level by Mede and Yalçın (2019). EFL instructors primarily adapted materials to increase learner interactions and communicative use of the target language in speaking activities. The communicative aspect of the activities is prioritised at all levels of language education.

Second, they mentioned the students' interests and needs should be considered to make the English lessons lively, fun, engaging, and relevant. It was reported that students were in the technology era and interested in digital materials that would provide them with enriched language input and opportunities. From the narrations and reflections, it was understood that teachers had positive views on integrating technology in teaching English. They especially needed space in the coursebooks to use digital language learning and teaching materials (Kiddle, 2013). However, teachers pointed to the lack of digital and interactive language learning materials to meet these needs, as argued in Tomlinson's study (2013). For example, T4 and T5 reported: “Also, in the 5th-grade and 6th-grade course books, there aren't any video links we can watch via smartboard.” Similar to EFL teachers' beliefs in Li and Li's (2021) study, these teachers believed students could become active language users by integrating interactive games

and digital activities into the lessons. PRELIM 3 materials included interactive games where students can practice newly learnt grammar items in speaking and writing activities (see appendix x). T2 stated that “It was also beneficial to adapt the materials for unit or lesson revisions at the end of the lesson”. Since the MoNE coursebook lacks fun activities, she believes it does not motivate students to participate actively in the class. As Tomlinson (2013) argues, according to the language acquisition principles, students should be supported through interesting, exciting, and relevant activities. Considering contextual factors enables teachers to address the diverse student populations regarding learning styles, language proficiency levels, and cultural background. As an answer to the need, “... we need funded experiments in which universities and publishers combine their expertise and resources to produce and trial innovative language learning materials... such cooperation...to be extremely rare in education.” addressed by Tomlinson (2013, p.226), PRELIM 3 Project materials enabled teachers to address these varieties and the gap in the field.

Third, given the national coursebook contents, T7 reported that “More than three or four hours a week is needed to cover all the activities and objectives of the units.” As expressed by Chinese and Nepalese teachers in Devi’s (2017) and Liu’s (2016) studies, teachers in this study needed more class hours to practise listening or speaking activities. For instance, the 7th-graders’ English teacher (T7) emphasised the excessive number of grammar topics in the book and the lack of class hours to complete them:

Another reason is the number of units and the load of topics. The book contains ten units; students must pass the activities without absorbing the tasks or activities because of the time limitations or the number of students in crowded classes. They can’t even have a chance to speak in English classes as expected. Teachers have to complete activities in a time given to them. Real communication opportunities are underestimated, and things are done superficially.

Accordingly, they made adaptations mainly both at activity and unit levels. One teacher also criticised the unattractive cover design of the 7th-grade coursebook and layout from the students’ point of view.

The adaptation of PRELIM 3 Project materials into English lessons

The second research question focused on how these teachers adapted the PRELIM digital materials to their English classes. Teachers' answers revealed several details about the adaptation timing, techniques, and adapted course components. To start with the timing of the adaptation, teachers mostly preferred to adapt the digital content in the middle of the lesson to improve listening and speaking skills in communicative grammar teaching. They believed that a foreign language should be taught in an integrated way. So, they needed activities in which grammar was integrated into language skills, as found out by Şimşek (2022). First, they taught the subject from the coursebook. Then, in the second half of the lesson, they continued with the digital materials to practise the newly learnt items in context. For example, one of the 6th-grade teachers (T5) practised the comparative and superlative topic through “drag” and “fill in the blank” types of exercises in the listening part. She reported, “Such integrated activities increased student motivation and participation in class activities”. Another 7th-grade teacher (T7) integrated the digital content into the lesson's three phases (pre-, while, and post-stages). He used these materials throughout the lesson as a whole class activity. Indonesian EFL teachers in Priyanka and Selamat's (2019) study also preferred this sequence of materials adaptation.

Among the adaptation techniques (McDonough et al., 2013), similar to Indonesian EFL high-school teachers in Hanifa (2018) study, “adding” was the primary technique used by the teachers. Since project materials were more attractive in terms of colour, sound, and context, they added these materials primarily to increase interaction among students in the classroom, motivate them, practice writing and vocabulary entertainingly, teach the content appropriately, and let them have fun while using English. Since they found the coursebooks uninteresting and full of mechanical exercises, they preferred “removing” as the second most popular technique. They removed repetitive and mechanical coursebook exercises to reduce the length of the material and added new ones aligned with the curriculum objectives from the digital content. “Simplifying” was also used for several purposes. Simplifying first helped teachers arrange the content appropriate to students' proficiency levels. T8, for example,

stated that: “In unit 3, “Biographies” of the 7th-grade content, students find new words difficult to understand in the texts in the unit. Also, they do not have a reason to use these words in real life, so they find it boring.” She simplified the instructions for reading text questions so that they could be answered quickly. T3 reported, “I added songs for the activities I removed to avoid making long explanations. The class sang these songs through body language with the teacher's guidance by using the visuals in the project materials”. Second, simplifying enabled the effective use of visuals and songs to clarify the input at any lesson plan stage. Sometimes, she sang these songs at the beginning of the lesson to energise them and revise the unit's vocabulary at the end. Only one teacher (T1) mentioned using the “reordering” technique to increase students' readiness levels before the while activities.

As reported in other studies, all teachers found that speaking activities were limited in the coursebooks (Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022; Masuhara, 2022). Thus, to compensate for the deficiency of the books, they preferred to add speaking activities in pairs and groups from the PRELIM digital content towards the end of the lesson. They reported that students needed help speaking accurately and fluently with each other. For instance, T7 stated, “I added a speaking activity before reading the text to help students facilitate comprehension and relate the topic to their lives.” Similarly, T8 replaced the coursebook activities with a game from the digital content to revise Unit 4, “Wild Animals”. He used gamification throughout the lesson in groups on the smart board. He reported that such a game increased their imagination and made the content meaningful. T5 also removed the activity which involved talking about Sally's weekend in the 6th-graders' coursebook and added two writing activities (one controlled and one guided) to help students use the time meaningfully through teacher-led questions and visuals. These features helped students enjoy writing in the classroom by practising “the time” topic. In unit 3 of the 6th grade, students first watched the quiz on the smartboard and then answered the questions to find the opposites of adjectives in the superlative form. Although they found it challenging, all students participated in the game. T2 mentioned, “I adapted the Unit 4 reading text activity in the 5th-grade coursebook by adding the video and the quiz game as a pre-activity to increase students' interest in the reading. Students answered the quiz items on the board, which created classroom interaction among them as they knew the

answers.” T9 preferred to add a “correct the mistakes” exercise at the end of the lesson as a self-assessment tool for students. Students had the chance to correct the mistakes using their Simple past-tense knowledge in a reading text. Since they had the opportunity to get quick feedback on their answers, this exercise enabled them to practise grammar knowledge, reading skills, and critical thinking skills. The teacher appreciated the instant feedback on the exercises.

Teachers adapted materials in all stages of the lesson for various reasons, considering external factors such as the number of students in the classroom, students’ interests in digital games, their expectations, and the existing coursebooks, and internal factors such as the difficulty level of vocabulary teaching practices, the sequence of language skills, and the weight of mechanical grammar exercises in the coursebooks. The adaptation techniques they preferred also match the ones suggested by McDonough et al. (2013) and McGrath (2013). Additionally, in adapting the project materials, teachers reflected on the local and national teaching environment, revealing their beliefs on language teaching and materials adaptation and the non-congruence resulting from the clash between these beliefs and the adhered coursebook. Among these beliefs, it became apparent that technology is a necessity, not an option, for teachers and students in materials adaptation. As also appeared in teachers’ beliefs in Hanifa and Yusra (2023), they confirmed the existing MoNE coursebooks’ limitations regarding integrating digital language learning and teaching materials.

Since they received weekly training on how to adapt the coursebook and the materials for each grade, they experienced no difficulty in the materials adaptation process. In the weekly online training, ten teachers from nine different cities in Türkiye gave feedback to each other and shared their local experiences in materials adaptation. This enabled them to collaborate with teachers from different contexts, learn from each other’s lived stories, develop their language teaching methodology, revise their teaching techniques, and contribute to their professional growth.

Conclusion

This study explored ten Turkish EFL secondary school teachers' reasons and experiences in adapting PRELIM3 Project teaching materials into their classes in Türkiye. Through triangulated data, we answered two research questions. They preferred to make the adaptation in all stages of the lesson mainly to increase the communication and interaction opportunities among students in the class, to provide authentic audio input through digital interactive listening and speaking activities, and to avoid making long explanations before the activities or during the teaching stage. Hence, adding became the most preferred technique. Findings also showed that teachers had positive views towards the new materials, confirmed their beliefs on the communicative use of grammar in productive skills, highlighted students' needs to practice the language through digital materials, and appreciated the weekly training offered by project trainers for their professional growth.

There are certain limitations to the study. First, we did not take into account the students' first-hand feelings and experiences in using these materials for their language growth. Instead, we learnt about them through teachers' reflections and narrations. Second, we conducted the study with ten project teachers, adhering to the project content. Third, the participating teachers' classrooms were not first-hand observed while adapting the materials.

Accordingly, the study has some implications for future research and practice. In future studies, more teachers' experiences and reasons for materials adaptation can be investigated through first-hand classroom observations as well as narrations, semi-structured interviews, and reflection sessions. A mixed-research design can be employed to understand the congruence between teachers' beliefs and their actual adaptation experiences through quantitative data tools such as surveys or questionnaires and qualitative tools such as interviews and observations (Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022). In addition to secondary school teachers' experiences, future studies may include teachers from primary and high-school levels, instructors, and teacher educators from tertiary levels (Hanifa & Yusra, 2023). The teachers' materials adaptation techniques that emerged in this study may be context-bound and used for the purposes of the project.

Their adaptation preferences and experiences may differ in their actual teaching practices. Hence, these teachers may be observed after the project to understand how, when and to what extent they adapt other sources such as authentic texts, videos, and open-access digital tools, and how this affects their students' language learning experiences.

In collaboration with student-teachers in practicum, teachers in the role of mentors may share their materials adaptation experiences and assign them to teach a lesson via evaluating and adapting the MoNE coursebooks (Korkmaz & Korkmaz, 2020) so that student-teachers can gain more self-esteem in materials adaptation. McDonough et al. (2013) state that no coursebook is likely to be perfect. Therefore, teachers' search for the best coursebook will continue through effective materials adaptation practices to provide congruence between the external and internal factors in the local context. In-service materials development and adaptation training will likely become a continuing need for novice and experienced EFL teachers.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

This research study was conducted with the Research Ethics Committee approval of Gazi University, dated 18.04.2023 and numbered 2023-558.

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