



## AGE, GENDER AND SOCIAL CLASS IN ELT COURSEBOOKS: A CRITICAL STUDY

### İNGİLİZCE DERS KİTAPLARINDA YAŞ, TOPLUMSAL SINIF VE CİNSİYET: ELEŞTİREL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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**ABSTRACT:** Recent trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) research necessitates the study of coursebooks and instructional materials from various perspectives including but not limited to their cultural, social, and psychological qualities and effects (Kramsch 2000). Age, social class, and gender, as represented in coursebooks are studied because teachers and students are exposed to many words and images effecting their knowledge, perceptions and world views. In this critical research study, visual materials in two ELT coursebooks are studied by using the insight and perspective derived from Cunningsworth (1995) who had previously examined how age, social class, and gender were represented in ELT coursebooks. It is believed that by focusing on how characters are depicted, possible injustice and imbalance these visual materials may transmit and strengthen stereotypical thinking in students' mindsets will be articulated, verbalized, and eventually solutions will be suggested. Findings revealed that many social imbalances were detectable in these visual materials both quantitatively and qualitatively.

**Keywords:** critical, visual, tool, photographs, images, representation, coursebook, ELT, gender, age, social class.

**ÖZET:** İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) araştırmalarındaki güncel çalışmalar öğretim malzemelerinin ve tüm eğitim- öğretim pratiklerinin kültürel, toplumsal ve psikolojik özellik ve etkilerinin farklı bakış açılarından incelenmesini de gerektirmektedir (Kramsch 2000). Yaş, toplumsal sınıf ve cinsiyet gibi kavramların ders kitaplarında kavramsal ve imgesel olarak nasıl gösterildiği ve bu gösterimlerin öğrencilerin algılama ve dünya görüşlerindeki etkileri hemen bütün eğitim dallarında çalışılmıştır. Bu eleştirel araştırmada da İDE ders kitaplarında kullanılmakta olan görsel imgeler yaş, toplumsal sınıf ve cinsiyet açılarından kültürel ve toplumsal anlamlarıyla incelenmiştir. Ders kitapları incelemelerinde sıklıkla başvurulan Cunningsworth'ün (1995) yaş, toplumsal sınıf ve cinsiyeti araştırırken kullandığı bakış açısından yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmada görsel malzemelerde görülen bireylerin yaş, toplumsal sınıf ve cinsiyetlerini toplumsal adaletsizlik ve eşitsizlikleri de göstermek hedeflenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgularda da toplumsal çarpıtmalar ve dengesizlikler ders kitaplarındaki görsel materyallerde nicelik ve nitelik olarak görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** eleştirel, görsel, araç, malzeme, fotoğraf, tasvir, ders kitabı, İDE, cinsiyet, yaş, toplumsal sınıf.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language teachers make use of visual materials with a belief that students do not only learn by words. To be more specific, especially in foreign language teaching, researchers and practitioners have long ago declared that “stories and dialogues are not the only way in which ‘new’ language can be contextualised” (Wright, 1976, p.4). The use of visual materials in foreign language coursebooks, to make learning the target language easier and socio-cultural background of the culture more understandable, is becoming important in an increasing way (Genç, 2004). A closer look at the number of visual materials in English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks, from past to present, also indicates that visual materials are becoming an important part of instruction in a growing manner.

Research literature suggests that visualisation is fundamental in human learning because concrete sensory stimuli (all visual materials such as charts, diagrams photographs) which can be verbalized, will be verbalized and concrete words which can be imaged, may be imaged (Croft & Burton, 1994). Building on to this, there are many reasons why visual materials have become important tools for presenting, contextualising, and recycling instructional materials, in short, for all processes of teaching and learning especially in ELT coursebooks and materials. The relationship between visualization and coursebooks is most visible in the studies which have shown that qualitative aspects of visual materials are one of the main reasons for their popularity due to the fact that people prefer illustrations

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that are colored, contain a story, related to previous experiences and that can be associated with places, objects, persons, events or animals with which they are familiar (Canning-Wilson, 1999). Hence, coursebooks make use of visual materials that are colorful and lively to attract as well as to inform their readers and such materials continue attracting teachers and students throughout their learning and teaching experiences.

In Turkey, for example, the move towards and preference over visual materials rather than verbal ones is visible at all levels of instruction. As Keskil's (1993) study reveals, 31% of the students taking English courses at different grades of different State High Schools ask for having more pictures compared to 24 % of those demanding more reading passages in their English language coursebooks. The same study also reveals that among 15 English language teachers teaching at State High Schools 10 teachers want to have more pictures in contrast to 0 teachers who demand more reading passages in their coursebooks. These results show the importance of visual materials in coursebooks for ELT teachers and learners despite the fact that it does not inform us about the reasons of such choices. However, the rationale behind these choices can be found easily in the related literature. For example, cue summation theory explains why some visual materials work better than others in the classroom atmosphere (Croft, 1994). According to this theory learning will be more complete as the number of cues in the learning situation increases. In other words, the more visual materials are used, the more probable it becomes that students actually learn, a proposition which might have brought the ELT coursebooks to its present state with more and more colorful pictures and photographs ready to be used as instructional materials. This can also explain the choices of the Turkish learners and teachers since they might have noticed that visual materials make learning easier and with them one can learn and teach faster and in a more subtle manner.

The demand for more visual materials, both quantitatively and qualitatively, can be rooted in historical changes in the ELT world. As outlined by Pulverness, Komorowska, Zareva, Szesztay & Dascal (2002), in 1980s, an introspective mode was leading the ELT world with the slogan 'the personal is political,' and in such a realm, bringing learners' autobiographies into the classroom was an important instructional activity. Through the 1990s, however, there was a gradual shift in focus in political consciousness just as the forming of the IATEFL's Global Issues Special Interest Group which aimed to "equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values which can help them confront both local and global problems {and} to promote a less Euro-centric perspective within ELT" (pp. 70-71). In this shift in the locus, as they suggest, visual materials have meant to be a driving force for the whole classroom activity because confronting local and global problems required students' active participation and confrontation. Visual materials were the most realistic representations to activate students' cognitive as well as affective domains.

Visual materials in general and the use of visual materials in coursebooks in particular have been a part of academic discussions in many critical studies. It can be argued that coursebooks, with all their aspects, have the power of altering students' opinions and beliefs on many socio-cultural matters from gender and popular culture to religion and social class since the majority of classroom teaching is carried out by the use of them. In relation to this, critical theorists reject the claim that schooling constitutes an apolitical and value-neutral process and argue that schools often operate with the intent to reproduce the values and privileges of the dominant culture (Darder, 1991). Hence, it can be claimed that all aspects of schooling, including the coursebooks used, have effect on students' cognitive and affective development.

It is often suggested that there is imbalance in the representations of characters in ELT coursebooks as they appear in reading passages, activities, or visual materials. Research has shown that not only are girls portrayed less often than boys in children's books, but also both genders are frequently presented in stereotypical terms (Singh, 1998). For example, while girls are trapped in passive and whiny roles, boys and men are rarely described as people demonstrating emotions of sadness and fear, having hobbies/occupations that are not stereotypically male and in roles where they aren't competing or meeting high expectations. Furthermore, a review of ELT coursebooks in Poland

by Filak (2001) has shown that women are mostly portrayed as devoted mothers and wives who take care of the house, children, husband, who wash, clean, and cook.

In regard to how age, social class and gender are topically represented in ELT coursebooks many researchers have focused on different aspects of these materials from a variety of perspectives since, in Cunningsworth's (1995, p.91) words, "gender differences are not the only area of possible discrimination or unflattering portrayal. He further claims that it is also illuminating to look at materials to see how coursebooks represent various people according to the following categories: ethnic origin, occupation, age, social class, disability." In his case study of topics in six general elementary and pre-intermediate level coursebooks, Cunningsworth (1995) found the following on age, social class and gender:

1. In terms of age, most characters are youngish teenagers. Adults, where they appear, tend to be shadowy creatures who exist solely in their role as parent, youth group organizer, police officer, and teacher. There is the occasional elderly professor, pensioner castle proprietor. The world of the adult coursebook is seriously centred on the early to mid-twenties.
2. In terms of gender, even though the representation of women and men shows an equal balance, there are some unbalanced topics such as famous people in which famous men outnumber women in history. On topics on famous people eighteen out of twenty characters are males, which show an unbalanced distribution.
3. Social class is barely evident, signaling a classless society but closer analysis shows that this world is middle class (p.92-94).

In such a pedagogical realm, values resting in course books are important because students are in interaction with them both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, students are exposed to values both societal as well as ideological through many aspects of these course books including the topics, pictures, example sentences, reading passages, discussion questions, and many other skill based activities. Almost in all foreign language classrooms, including the ELT classrooms, visual materials are used as parts of warm-up, question and answer, and comprehension activities, showing the power of visual materials on students' sociocultural as well as linguistic development. Likewise, visual materials can be considered as transmitters of values along with other positions making up the coursebook. All in all, learning with visual materials has affected all aspects of educational practices especially the teaching practices related to coursebooks through processes that needs careful attention and rigorous study from linguistic as well as sociocultural and psychological perspective.

In this critical research study, visual materials in two ELT coursebooks were studied by using the insight derived from Cunningsworth's study (1995) while focusing on how age, social class, and gender are represented as cultural and social images. It is believed and hypothesized that by focusing on how characters are represented, possible injustice and imbalance these visual materials may transmit can be spotted and articulated upon which we can provide suggestions and solutions to minimize or at least eliminate some of these problems.

## **2. METHOD**

The power of visual materials is obvious because each visual material tells a meaningful story to its viewer. In other words, individuals do not only see visual materials stripped away from social and cultural values, but they actually construct a meaningful story about the material with which he or she interacts. Like all research, visual research depends upon and also redistributes social power. In the case of this critical research which problematizes visual materials, these issues are compounded by the power associated with photography. In this research endeavour, photographs and visual materials representing or depicting people are studied to find answers to the following research questions.

### **2.1. Research Questions**

The questions guided this research are as follows:

1. How are age, social class, and gender represented in the visual materials published in ELT coursebooks ?
2. What can be said about such representations as a part of social criticism in regard to the cultural and social messages given through such representations?

## 2.2. The Instrument and Procedures

In this study, a checklist formerly used by Cunningsworth (1995) was used, by focusing on the visual materials in ELT coursebooks. The three main areas it scrutinized are representation of women and portrayal of gender, age, and social class as represented in these coursebooks. Two ELT coursebooks are chosen through purposeful sampling. The first one is *The New Headway* which is chosen because of its worldwide recognition and popularity including in Turkey. As research reports on coursebook analysis and evaluation inform us, *The New Headway* 'has been very extensively used around the world and have for several years topped the EFL textbook best-seller list' (Reda, 2003, p. 261). The second reason for choosing *The New Headway* is its year of publication (2003), being one of the most recent editions of ELT coursebooks currently used in Turkey and elsewhere. The other coursebook, *Think Ahead to First Certificate*, is chosen because of the fact that it is still used in many schools in Turkey and around the world despite its relatively out of date year of publication (1993). Ten years of difference in publication date could also give us a chance to compare if the contents of visual materials have changed in time.

These two intermediate level ELT coursebooks are disseminated by separating these images to quantitatively and then qualitatively analyze the contents of them via three main variables which are age, social class, and gender. All images went through a screening process to identify the numerical status of the age of the individuals, their social status, and gender and the findings of this analytical procedure is followed by a critical study of what this total picture means to us/the readers/researchers. During the descriptive phase of the data, word based information given in activities or reading passages are also screened and used, when necessary, to make the description and analyses more subtle and richer.

## 3. RESULTS

The following tables are descriptions of visual materials containing characters:

### 3.1. The New Headway Intermediate Student's Book

**Table 1.** Images in *The New Headway Intermediate Student's Book* with descriptions

	Description of visual material referring to age, gender, and fundamental qualities of characters	Social Class
1	A Scottish man and a bald man	Middle
2	John Lennon	Celebrity
3	A girl getting ready for school and her father eating breakfast	Middle
4	Kaori Sato, an Asian woman celebrity working as Goodwill Ambassador	Middle
5	An Asian girl and a Black boy in front of the computer	Middle
6	7 male and one female tourists	Middle
7	An Olympics male sportsman	Middle
8	A woman stretching her arms towards the sky	Middle
9	Sam (adult), Kelly (child) and Peter (adult): from the same family	Middle
10	A family of four: Girl checking her watch, boy listening to her mother, mother telling her son to be hurry, father eating his breakfast and staring at the mother and son	Middle
11	Three elderly males and three elderly women holding bowling balls and laughing	Middle
12	Two women chatting	Middle
13	Two male children smiling	Middle
14	Two males and one female in their 20s laughing on the floor	Middle
15	Sidney Fisk, 45, a lawyer sitting in front of his laptop eating a sandwich	Upper

16	Sidney Fisk, 45, a lawyer, waving his hand near his (expensive) sports car	Upper
17	Jeff Norman, 45, college graduate making \$ 60,000 as a paper boy	Middle
18	A man in business suit and a woman with pink blouse and a red scarf	Middle
19	One male and one female clown doctors & the female clown doctor with a boy patient	Middle
20	Men doing basketball, cycling, snow boarding, golfing, soccer, fishing, stretching and running & women doing aerobics, running, volleyball, stretching, skiing and doing yoga	Middle
21	A husband cooking & washing clothes, wife arriving home in her office suit	Middle
22	Native Indian male almost two times taller than another native woman and a baby	None
23	Judy works for Microsmart computers on an airplane with her lap top	Middle
24	Wanda and Roy on holiday	Middle
25	Pablo Picasso and Ernest Hemingway both at work	Celebrity
26	Vinnie and Will & Sue and Maeve: Girls holding cups and looking at Will	Middle
27	Two Asian women with white dresses and head scarves and a male child in white dress with a traditional head-ware	Middle/ Lower
28	One man in a jacket and one woman in jeans talking	Middle
29	A male in his 40s is telling something to a young male and a young female	Middle
30	An elderly woman talking to a younger woman	Middle
31	Two young girls talking on the bed which is pink and white	Middle
32	A man in shirt and necktie standing next to his car, talking on his cell phone	Middle
33	A woman in business suit shopping groceries and checking her watch	Middle
34	Anthony and George, both young, talking around the table about their travel	Middle
35	Grandmother of Anthony is worried about their trip	Middle
36	Dave, a young man, is about to start a job	Middle
37	A man in his 40s at a business dinner	Middle
38	Three women in traditional white clothes one with a scarf	Middle/ Lower
39	A big family at a dinner table, all characters are listening to a male member	Middle
40	Two men in business suit exchanging business cards	Middle
41	An Asian family around the table, the father is talking, mother, son, daughter listening	Middle
42	One male and one female at a restaurant served by a waitress	Middle
43	Ben is sitting and taking his daily notes Alice is pouring coffee	Middle
44	Liz and Min, two females, talking on the phone arranging to meet over the weekend	Middle
45	Karen Saunders, a woman in her 30s, has her own travel agency	Middle
46	Two women talking in front of a train	Middle
47	A man in shirt and necktie a lap top on his lap, some file folders next to him, on the phone in a hotel room	Middle
48	Two girls listening to music and talking about CDs in a bed room	Middle
49	A family getting into their homes, mother opening the door and father carrying a suitcase	Middle
50	Soon-hee, a Korean girl and her brother; his arm around her neck	Middle
51	An astronaut holding a pizza slice in a space shuttle	Middle
52	A pizza delivery boy	Middle
53	Nancy Mann, a woman in he 20s interviewed for a job by an elderly man in suit	Middle
54	One male and one female police officers standing	Middle
55	An elderly man is giving the Nobel prize to another elderly man	Middle
56	Car workers laid off: two females and 20 males	Middle
57	Two male boxers fighting	Middle
58	Stanley Carras a male meteorologist, Linda Spelman a female trapeze artist, and Michael Doyle a male ironworker performing their jobs	Middle
59	Thomas Wilson, grandfather, and Philippa, his granddaughter talking	Middle
60	A black female secretary on the phone with a male in office shirt who wants to talk to Mr Jackson	Middle
61	Two males and a female under an umbrella walking	Middle
62	Male and female lottery winners celebrating	Middle
63	Two men in traditional clothes on the truck of World Food Programme	Lower

64	A white man holding a dog as a part of charity work	Middle
65	An African boy carrying his books over his head	Lower
66	White and black women preparing food for charity	Middle
67	Maria is bored and Paul is broke	Middle
68	Susie: Advice columnist	Middle
69	Andy and Carl talking to each other on the phone their wives looking at them happily	Middle
70	Oliver Darrow with his daughter and in another shot Carmen Darrow with her father	Middle
71	Louisa, an elderly mother and her daughter Rose	Middle
72	Two men in business suits holding a cell phone	Middle
73	Astrid Johnsson: A cellist woman	Middle
74	Dennis Woodruff: Hollywood movie star, famous for not being famous, with his hippy looks	Middle/ Lower
75	Andrea Levitt, an elderly woman with her doll collection	Middle
76	Jeff Parker, a young man, with his Star Wars collection	Middle
77	Flavia, a young woman, checking into her hotel helped by a male receptionist	Middle
78	Madonna (the singer)	Celebrity
79	Gabriela (4) and her mother (Karen) playing the piano & in another shot she is with her assisstant	Middle
80	Two elderly women with sunglasses	Middle
81	Uncle Sam poster (I want you for U.S. army)	None
82	Three young men, feet in front of the camera's objective, laughing and using informal language	Middle
83	The bride and groom at their wedding	Middle
84	The husband washing the dishes while his wife holding their baby	Middle
85	Kenny and Kathleen Brady as wife and husband on the sofa, he is staring at the camera	Middle
86	Two male police officers taking statements of two women	Middle
87	Jane Banner in bed holding her newborn baby surrounded by her husband, 5 males and 1 female	Middle
88	Frank Sinatra singing	Celebrity
89	One elderly woman talking to a young girl & another elderly woman with her granddaughter	Middle

### 3.2. Think Ahead to First Certificate

**Table 2.** Images in *Think Ahead to First Certificate* with descriptions

	Who (gender)	Social Class
1	Four young women dressed in typical British fashions	Middle
2	Vincent, Gerry and Miguel: Investigator and agents ex-policemen	Middle
3	Colin a customer and a black woman as shop assistant	Middle
4	Kirsten, an au-pair from Sweden	Middle
5	Great Marvella the magician and her assistant Arthur Cross on the stage	Middle
6	Annabel, Rick and Martin are talking around the table drinking coffee	Middle
7	Ray Harryhausen: an elderly artist and filmmaker	Middle
8	Walt Disney	Celebrity
9	A scene from the film <i>Back to the Future</i> : The old professor Dr Emmett Brown	Celebrity
10	Scenes from the film <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> showing Indiana Jones	Celebrity
11	A girl running away from her home with her suitcase to start a new life	Middle
12	East Germans trying to escape before the Berlin Wall came down	Middle
13	A young girl is on the beach with her friend, a boy who is using a metal detector to find treasure	Middle
14	Charlie Chaplin	Celebrity
15	Dr Jack Kevorkian with his suicide machine	Upper
16	An extremely fat man with a thin woman who looks through the mirror and sees herself as fat	Middle
17	Dr Frederick Wilberforce	Middle

18	M. Monroe, A. Hitchcock, Aristoteles, Shakespeare, Maria Callas, S. Dali & Steffi Graff	Celebrity
19	Vincent Van Gogh	Celebrity
20	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Celebrity
21	Elderly headmistresses and girl pupils	Middle
22	Four girl students behind whom four boy students	None
23	A homeless young man in decent clothes begging for money	Lower
24	Poppy (a female Greek student) reading a letter and then talking to an elderly woman	Middle
25	Black boxing champ Nigel Benn (stopped by cops because he was driving a white Porsche	Upper
26	Carmen is talking on the phone with her fiancé Roger in shirt and necktie	Middle
27	Lucy the nanny with two children one male and one female	Middle
28	A “typical Englishman” in black business suit wearing a black bowler hat	Middle
29	Shirley and Simon (in business suit and necktie) are talking about the “typical Englishman”	Middle
30	A young male au-pair and a child cheek to cheek	Middle
31	A Frenchman in jacket and sun hat, a Syrian in long white tunic and white scarf on his head, a long haired Columbian and a Greek man in fight, all middle aged characters	Middle
32	A white man kissing a Japanese man on the cheek just as the Japanese man seems disgusted and An Arabic man in white tunic and white head scarf	Middle
33	The singer Sting with a native Brazilian whose mouth is wide open with a red circle object inserted	Celebrity / Lower
34	Maria, a Brazilian woman, talking to another woman about saving the rainforest	Middle
35	Oxford girl Kathy Graham in prison for smuggling six priceless parrot eggs out of a small Caribbean state	Middle
36	Three males wearing different war items showing the evolution of Armour	Middle
37	Prince William and Prince Henry	Celebrity
38	Edward VIII and Mrs Wallis Simpson	Upper
39	Sofia and her son Prince Felipe	Upper
40	An actor and actress acting in Romeo and Juliet	Middle
41	Henry VIII	Upper
42	The Royal family of the United Kingdom	Upper
43	An old woman, a young woman, a punk boy, and man giving their opinions about the Royal family	All

There are 90 images in *The New Headway* (image 25 includes two photographs) and 43 images in *Think Ahead to First Certificate*. On the surface, the distribution of the visual materials in these two ELT coursebooks seem to be mediocre in terms of how age, social class, and gender are represented. That is to say, the majority of the visual materials in these coursebooks represent the middle class social strata composed of the middle aged individuals in a way that the number of both genders represented seem to be similar. However, the critical study of the discursive practices making up these images unearth the fact that there are many imbalances in such representations.

### 3.3. Age

As the findings of this critical study of the visual materials suggest, many agist tendencies are apparent in ELT coursebooks. First, these coursebooks do not treat the elderly as they treat any individual appearing in these coursebooks. That is to say, the elderly are depicted only when their age is the significant counterpart of their appearance. Thus, when the elderly are presented, their age makes up the largest part of the discourse in that particular visual image. These coursebooks present the images of the elderly when age or issues related to age are given unless the images and topics belong to a celebrity. It is noteworthy that when the elderly is a part of the discourse, they are represented as minor characters such as those having the role of the grandfather or grandmother (see 3.1. item 35). In other words, the elderly are not presented as whole persons existing with many qualities other than their ages. Often, the elderly appear as grandmothers and grandfathers or as examples in support of the belief that healthy life is possible at all ages with their role confined to

caretaking the toddlers, babies, or their grandchildren (see 3.1. item 11 and 30). In that sense, it is seen in these images that life histories of the elderly are just about the only discourse pattern that is tailored to this group to narrate their stories. It is noticeable that only one elderly person is represented as an exception to this point; a director of a company asking interview questions to a young woman (see 3.1. item 53). However, the same elderly person is visible in such an image without letting us know about himself. Then, when this exception is critically scrutinized it becomes clear that the elderly are given to a secondary role in these visual materials. In sum, the elderly are silent, if not invisible in such visual materials.

### 3.4. Gender

**Table 3.** Distribution of images according to the gender of the characters

Gender	The New Headway	Think Ahead to First Certificate
Male 212 (70.20%)	126 (70.39 %)	86 (69.91 %)
Female 90 (29.80 %)	53 (29.61 %)	37 (30.09%)

Numerically, both coursebooks show similar results in terms of the number of visual materials showing the two genders. The results clearly show that women are underrepresented in these visual materials (29.80 % females versus 70.20 % males). It is visible in these images that men are not associated with child rearing except for one man holding an au pair position (see 3.2. item 30). Furthermore, not only child rearing activities but also doing housework is not normally associated with men with an exception of those images in which women are busy with holding the child (see 3.1. item 84). It is also noteworthy that the image which shows a man doing house work is a caricature (see 3.1. item 21). In addition to these, in the shots showing the nuclear family, the father is depicted as the head of the house often sitting and watching the activity in the house in which the mother is taking care of the children and in all of these shots, the family around the table listen to the father who is doing the talking (see 3.1. items 3, 10, 39, 41).

Gender separation can also be seen in the sports with which each gender is associated. As the images suggest men are portrayed as doing basketball, cycling, snow boarding, golfing, soccer, fishing, stretching and running whereas women are doing aerobics, running, volleyball, stretching, skiing and doing yoga. Even though we cannot generalize these representations because they do not appear in many shots, we can claim that aerobics and yoga are not associated with men. Furthermore, images showing telephone conversations give us a hint about how both genders are portrayed stereotypically. When girls and women are portrayed during phone conversations, they are depicted as chatting casually by laughing in contrast to boys or men who are portrayed as doing serious business or short conversations with a particular aim such as inviting someone for dinner (see 3.1 items 11, 40, 44, 46, 47, 69). Furthermore, all secretaries, shop assistants, and table waiters are women in addition to the fact that those who look for employment and who are doing grocery shopping are women (see 3.1 items 42, 53, 60 and 3.2. item 3) while pizza delivery is given to men (see 3.1 item 52), showing a sexist job distribution. Parallel to this, all grocery shopping is carried out by women and not by men and even though girls are depicted on their bed chatting in an informal way (see 3.1 items 31 and 48), such intimate friendship is not appropriate for the males and they are often depicted as business or travel partners when they are around the table (see 3.1 item 34). At last but not least, colorful outfits and fashion are associated with women and men are either given sports wear or business suits while cellular phones are given to the men but not to women (see 3.1 items 15, 16, 18, 28, 32, ). The exceptional situation is fairly representative of this unfair gender distribution since the woman in business suit is shown as doing grocery shopping (see 3.1 item 33) and Judy who is the only business woman out of the 132 shots (see 3.1 item 23).

In terms of showing the imbalance in representing gender, the appearances of celebrities is a noteworthy casepoint (see 3.1. items 2, 4, 74, 78, 81, 88 and 3.2. 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20). The over ruling majority of celebrities are males (4 male and 1 female celebrities in *The New Headway* and 11 male and 3 female characters in *Think Ahead to First Certificate*). As these results suggest, both



numerically as well as qualitatively, the many depictions of the males make them appear superior to women as well being inherently different.

### 3.5. Social Class

**Table 4.** Distribution of images according to social classes

Social Class	The New Headway	Think Ahead to First Certificate
Lower	2 (2.2 %)	2 (4.65 %)
Middle/Lower	3 (3.3 %)	0
Middle	76 (84.44 %)	25 (58.13 %)
Upper	2 (2.2 %)	5 (11.62 %)
Celebrity	5 (5.5 %)	9 (20.93 %)
All	0	1 (2.32 %)
None	2 (2.2 %)	1 (2.32 %)

The representation of social classes shows that these coursebooks project the middle class images and values. It is significant that the lowest classes and the marginal are invisible whereas celebrities and the rich are given as success stories. Lower classes are represented through individuals from the third world except for those who are eccentric individuals living in the U.S. or the U.K. Furthermore, not a single picture shows the members of the lower classes as decent, upright, and honorable members of the society but all lower classes are depicted either as beggars asking for money or as cast outs such as punks or hippies in their ‘unique’ outfits and habits. Apart from such exceptions, the results show that poverty and lower classes are associated with the third world (see 3.1. items 27, 38, 63, 65 and 3.2. item 33). The exceptions belong to the misfits living in the West, whose poverty can be explained as individual abnormality ( see 3.1. item 74 and 3.2. item 23). Neither coursebook shows an image of members of the society from different social classes or backgrounds in a friendly and cooperative manner which shows that social classes are separated rather than living side by side and together.

The fundamental difference between *The New Headway* and *Think Ahead to First Certificate* is most impressive in their representations of social classes. No image of the “Royal family” or a “royal” person is published in *The New Headway* whereas five images contain a large number of the members belonging to the royal families of the U.K. and Spain (see 3.2. 37, 38, 39, 41, 42). In that sense, *Think Ahead to First Certificate* employs more commercial figures such as celebrities and the members of the Royal family, in a class conscious manner whereas in *The New Headway* celebrities are composed of painters, singers, and writers if not the members of the Royal family who reminds the readers of the existence of class based social strata. *Think Ahead to First Certificate*, hence, is problematic in its choice of celebrities due to strengthening socially non-democratic and ethnocentric presuppositions which defend hierarchy and superiority of one group over the other. This point can also be exemplified by the celebrity called Sting who sits next to a native Brazilian whose mouth is abnormally wide open, because of a red circle object inserted, showing the ‘liked’ with the ‘awkward’ (see 3. 2. item 33).

## 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study have first shown how the cultural, social, and political are intersected in the appearances of the visual materials in ELT coursebooks. It is Kramsch (2000) who advocates that the politics of language teaching have been shaped by the historical outcomes of military conflicts, colonial wars, ethnic conflicts, and tensions, and by the economic conditions that have grown out of such tensions all of which have to be studied in the methods courses taught at our departments through the current academic debates of feminist and postcolonial theory in cultural studies (322). Along with this call for reconsideration, future research on coursebooks and classroom materials must be taken seriously to highlight the possible effects of their components on learners and teachers. An example to this research might be the evaluation of local (regional) ELT coursebooks in comparison to the foreign ones by considering what they possess and transmit to learners and teachers culturally and socially.

The results of this study revealed that age, social class, and gender are problematic areas in the visual materials in ELT coursebooks in terms of their cultural, psychological, and social attributions. The results also support the findings of Filak (2002) on gender and of Cunningsworth (1995) on topics in ELT coursebooks, because of the fact that there is imbalance in how age, social class, and gender are distributed as properties of these visual materials. Future research should scrutinize such notions, through a thorough analysis of representations of age, social class, and gender as well as such other aspects like ethnic origin and race, occupation/profession, social relationships such as family make-up and social networks, expression of personal feelings, and interactions. At last but not least, as Bruton (1997) concludes since coursebooks are so central to EFL teaching, they should also be much more central to theoretical EFL debate by revising and updating their contents and materials through updated but less biased accounts of cultural, educational, local, international, global, as well as more marginal issues and problems.

Because schools are places in which teachers, course books, classroom materials, activities, and attitudes of all members of a given school or classroom contribute to the cognitive and emotional formation of students through knowledge based and value-laden practices, an infinite number of messages or values are passed on to students. Such values, then, may turn into stereotypical thinking of students towards others in society, inevitably building onto the malpractices such as hatred, intolerance, or belittling of others, resulting in the erosion in societal peace and solidarity. In the case of Turkey, both local (regional) and foreign coursebooks must be studied to see the effects of these materials on students' cognition and affective development as foreign language learners who have already been bombarded with media images representing age, gender, and social class among many others.

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