



## TEACHING VALUES THROUGH LISTENING AND SPEAKING TEXTBOOKS

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to detect and present the values that are included in the listening tracks in English listening and speaking textbooks. Qualitative research design was used to analyze the data for the study. The population of the study includes Northstar (Listening and Speaking) 1, 2 and 3 textbooks which were used in preparatory classes in Düzce University for three academic years between 2009 and 2012. For sampling, 5 units from each book were selected randomly and the transcriptions of the listening tracks were analyzed through document analysis. Transcriptions were read, coded and themes were formed out of the analysis. To ensure correct coding, expert reviews were included in the analysis process. In the end, obtained themes and categories were presented by supporting them with direct citations from the transcriptions.

**Keywords:** Values, listening and speaking textbooks, listening tracks.

### INTRODUCTION

It is an undeniable fact that there have been important developments in every area, especially in science and technology. On the one hand, those developments can sometimes improve the life standards of individuals and societies, on the other hand; they can cause undesirable outcomes. Those outcomes may lead to the events that impair individual and societies' health. All those events have considerably increased the importance of education in terms of individual and society. In that sense, education plays a vital role in turning the negative effects of mentioned developments on societies into positive ones. Minimizing the effects of those developments on individuals and societies depends on education (Keskin, 2008). In all societies, one of the main functions of education is to enable the accumulation and continuity of cultural heritage of a society.

Fundamental social institutions that form social structure have their own values. Being one of the institutions of a society, school plays also an important role in determining, expanding, maintaining, in other words, transferring the values other generations (Özensel, 2003). Nations enable their continuity, maintaining their customs, conventions and traditions with the assistance of education and education system. In other words, they transfer their values via education. Within this transfer process, we can count the teacher himself/herself as the main source of impact in changing the views of students in terms of values. However; the role of the materials, especially the textbooks that we use cannot be undervalued in this transfer process.

Textbooks are the fundamental materials used in learning-teaching process (Kılıç and Seven, 2009). Textbooks are printed education and teaching materials which have rich passages endowed with appropriate cognitive and affective skills for the age and knowledge level of students; which are prepared in light of the basic principles of teaching programs and which transfer the knowledge included to student through the medium of teacher (Çeçen and Çiftçi, 2007).

As in all other subjects, using textbooks in English Language Teaching (ELT) in all levels of education has always been popular. Choosing the best textbook for teaching and learning purposes has always been a hot and controversial issue. The business of publishing English textbooks has been so important and profitable that it is possible to see lot of publishing companies around which try to promote their series of English language textbooks. These companies do their jobs professionally and they hire special experts who work in teams to meet all the requirements of their target audience. Under these circumstances, the contents of the textbooks in English language learning have always been important. The textbooks that cover appropriate grammar and include authentic, attractive and communicative materials are considered to be worth using.



In Turkey, there are teaching programs for English language both in elementary and secondary schools. These programs are controlled by Ministry of Education and they are prepared by a special team of academicians, teachers, curriculum developers and other stakeholders. However; in higher education, there is no standard teaching program released by any Ministries or Councils. At this point, institutions decide their own teaching program and choose their materials accordingly.

Universities in Turkey adapt their English teaching programs to CEFR. As CEFR “provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe and “provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and coordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible” (Council of Europe, 2001:1), curriculum developers and teachers choose and adapt their materials according to the principles mentioned in CEFR.

When choosing a textbook, it is also important to make sure that cultural concepts are presented in an acceptable level. In other words, the culture-specific issues of the target language are a good way to make the learner aware of what is going on in the countries where the target language is spoken. In CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) published by European Council in 2001, the need for mutual interaction of cultures is expressed as follows (Council of Europe, 2001:11):

“Knowledge of the shared values and beliefs held by social groups in other countries and regions, such as religious beliefs, taboos, assumed common history, etc., are essential to intercultural communication. These multiple areas of knowledge vary from individual to individual. They may be culture-specific, but nevertheless also relate to more universal parameters and constants.”

In that sense, exchanging the culture-specific concepts and values are crucial and form an important part of language learning process. If learners are not exposed to the target culture, there is no possibility to get to know the key concepts in the other culture thus making it impossible to bridge the difference in values and beliefs. So long as a total learning process is aimed, language learning and teaching activities cannot be regarded as full without a proper exposure to target culture.

Among the things that are presented as culture –specific concepts, it is possible to count everyday living, living conditions, interpersonal relationships, values, beliefs and attitudes, body language, social conventions and ritual behaviors (Council of Europe, 2001: 102-103). These are all the concepts that constitute the sociocultural knowledge of a target language. If a student becomes aware of these concepts and their implications in the target language, his or her learning becomes more meaningful thus making him/her more proficient in all parts of the language.

Values are the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behavior, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable (Halstead and Maylor, 2000: 169). They are the spotlights that lead our lives to the direction where there is no place for wrong or bad. Thus, it is crucial that we should always be aware of what is good and what is bad in order not to lead a life where we can face disappointments. As in all areas of learning, it is important to be aware of what we are exposed to and to analyze the concepts that are transferred to our lives.

When choosing a classroom material to be used by hundreds or thousands of students, it is necessary to do all the research on what is brought by them. In other words, the contents of the materials should be analyzed thoroughly and the appropriateness of the learning and teaching materials should be checked professionally. It should be noted that appropriate teaching and learning materials with correct cultural values, beliefs and attitudes will complement language learning rather than damage it.



**Purpose and Significance**

Within the process of teaching, it is important that textbooks are effective in giving the targeted qualifications of the program to students and textbooks are prepared and used more attentively. In this study, it is aimed that the results will contribute to those who prepare English language listening and speaking textbooks. In addition, this study tries to give an insight to those who are responsible to prepare materials in terms of what to include in the listening materials by giving them the chance to compare the values in their materials with the values mentioned in CEFR and to arrange them accordingly. To do this, it is aimed to identify and present the values included in the listening tracks in Northstar listening and speaking textbooks.

**METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research method was used in this study. In the following section, there are more details about the design of the study.

**Population and Sampling**

The survey field of this study is composed of the listening tracks in Northstar 1, 2 and 3 listening and speaking textbooks which were used in Düzce University School of Foreign Languages for 3 academic years between 2009 and 2012 in Düzce, Turkey. In the study, 15 randomly chosen listening tracks were examined. Keeping in mind that %50 per cent of the listening tracks that are included in these textbooks would give much more reliable and valid results, 15 out of 30 tracks were analyzed for this study.

**Data Analysis**

- Listening tracks were undergone document analysis. To do this, the operations below were done in order:
- Listening tracks and their audio scripts chosen as samples were encoded by reading and identifying the parts that express values.
  - When encoding, the expressions of values and sub-values that express the relevant section were chosen.
  - Common themes were composed by grouping the similar values expressions after encoding.
  - Corrections were done by having co-experts examine whether the values acquired are encoded correctly or not and whether the mentioned themes are suitable.

**FINDINGS**

In this section, the values found in Northstar Listening and Speaking 1,2 and 3 textbooks are presented in tables according to their appearance in units.

As can be seen from Table 1, there are certain values in the first textbook that are used more than once. These values are friendship, help, good, being together, love, understanding each other, being a / in family, peace and being happy. These values show that in the first Northstar listening and speaking book, the values which impose positive feelings to students are presented intensively. However; the appearance of values that have negative associations such as beating someone up, killing, violence and hating makes us think about the contents presented inside the listening tracks.

Table.1. Values in Listening Tracks in Northstar Listening and Speaking 1 Textbook

Unit Title	Names of Listening Tracks	Values
Faraway Friends	1- Hello. This is the Friendship Force.	Help, Making Friends, Peace, Being Together, Living with a Host Family, Becoming Good
	2- The Best Summer of My Life!	Friends, Understanding Each Other, Love, Different Religions and Cultures, Being the Same, Being Like a Family

<b>Rap Music</b>	1- A Famous Rapper: Tupac Shakur 2- Rap- Good or Bad?	Love , Bad, Believing, Using Slang, Guns, Drugs or Sex, Good, Killing, Thanking
<b>Together is Better</b>	1- I Remember 2-Elsa’s Story	Supporting, Feeling Free, Getting Together, Being Together, Help, Feeling Happy, Helping Each Other, Making New Friends, Losing Friends, Becoming Good Friends, Understanding Each Other
<b>Planting Trees for Peace</b>	1- Wangari Maathai and The Green Belt 2- Rigoberta Menchu, a Mayan Leader	Encouraging, Planting Trees, Help, Beautiful, Poor, Education, Hoping a Better Future, Staying Healthy, Continuing Going to School, Problems of Environment, Cutting Trees, Democracy, Beating Someone Up, Speaking Out, Clean Environment, Peace, Being Poor, Going to War , Taking Care of Environment, Being a Leader, Equal Rights, Work, Studying, Killing, Violence, Non-violence
<b>Only Child-Lonely Child?</b>	1- Changing Families 2- How Do Only Kids Feel?	Being Lonely, Love, Raising a Child, Taking Care of a Child, Being Happy, Having Lots of Friends, Being Popular, Being Intelligent, Being Rich, Having a Child, Hating a Good Life, Giving Someone the Best, Hating, Feeling Special

It is necessary to see the exact words, phrases and sentences where and how these values are presented in the listening tracks. Following sentences were taken from the audio scripts of the sample listening tracks:

“... but Friendship Force visitors and host families always become good friends.” (Faraway Friends, Listening-1)

“We both picked good women to talk about in class.” (Planting Trees for Peace, Listening-2)

“Rigoberta Menchu Tum helps them and she also helps all women to get equal rights.” (Planting Trees for Peace, Listening-2)

“...because Jenna and I really love kids.” (Only Child-Lonely Child?, Listening-1)

“Oh, I loved my family in Costa Rica. They were so wonderful. They were my family, too. I felt like I was their daughter.” (Faraway Friends, Listening-2)

“The police beat Wangari up so badly that she had to go to the hospital.” (Planting Trees for Peace, Listening-1)

Maria: “Is that OK with you?”

Tonia: No. I hate it. (Only Child-Lonely Child?, Listening 2)

It is obvious from Table 2 that the values that make people feel positive have been presented more often in Northstar listening and speaking 2 textbook the same as it was in the first book. Values such as meeting new people, health, help, earning money/making a living and thanking are used more than once. In that sense, it can be said that the values that foster people’s positive thinking towards other people and communities are presented effectively in this textbook

Table. 2. Values in Listening Tracks in Northstar Listening and Speaking 2 Textbook

Unit Title	Names of Listening Tracks	Values
<b>Building a Better Community</b>	1- A New Urbanist Community 2- Let's Hear from Our Listeners	Thanking, Being Healthy, Bad For The Environment, Being Safe, Being Friendly, Feeling Isolated, Being Neighbors, Sense of Community, Get to Know Someone, Being the Same, Understanding Each Other, Knowing Each Other, Sharing a Long History
<b>A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned</b>	1- A Barter Network 2- The Compact	Saying Welcome, Bartering, Cleaning, Providing a Service, Work, Earning, Equal, Valuable, Saving Money, Belonging to a Group, Promising, Health, Safety, Borrowing, Keeping a Promise
<b>Innocent</b>	1- Roger's Story	Getting Out of Prison, Doing Something Wrong, Being

<b>or Guilty?</b>	2- Why Do Innocent People Go to Prison?	Guilty, Innocent, Getting Married Committing a Crime, Work, Making a Living, Enjoying Life, Truth, Help, Asking for Help, Being With Family, Making a Mistake, False Confession, Accusing, Being Together
<b>Etiquette</b>	1- What Ever Happened to Manners? 2- Our Listeners respond- Why There is a Lack of Manners?	Manners, Becoming Ruder, Getting Along, Being Polite, Inviting, Arriving On Time, Complaining, Being Courteous, Show Respect, Family Time, Spending Time With Kids, Face to Face, Technology, Making Someone Separate, Understanding of Different Cultures
<b>An Ice Place To Stay</b>	1- An Unusual Vacation 2- Vacations Around the World	Thanking, Help, Being Popular, Beautiful, Being Worth, Getting Married, Learning About Local Culture and History/Language, Hope, Meeting Other Travelers Around the World, Being Healthy Meeting People, Being Friendly Host Family

Direct citations from the listening tracks leads us to the context where these values, especially the most frequent ones, are presented. The emergence of the most frequent values in the listening tracks can be seen as follows:

“On this trip you will sleep outdoors in a campsite and *meet other travelers from all over the world.*” (An Ice Place to Stay, Listening-2)

“I *saved money* because I didn’t need to pay anyone to fix it for me.” (A Penny Saved is A Penny Earned, Listening-1)

“Well... yeah, but sitting in a car isn’t very *healthy* and all those cars are bad for the environment.” (Building A Better Community, Listening-1)

“I’m one of more than 185 people that Innocence Project has *helped free.*”(Innocent or Guilty, Listening-1)

Findings presented in Table 3 show that the values that initiate love, human rights, problem solving and help appear intensively throughout the third Northstar listening and speaking book. The book continues the same trend of presenting positive values in almost each unit. However; this unit in this book still includes some values which are not acceptable in most cultures all around the world. These negative values range from spanking a child to hitting and intruding into someone’s life.

Table. 3. Values in Listening Tracks in Northstar Listening and Speaking 3 Textbook

Unit Title	Names of Listening Tracks	Values
<b>Identity Theft</b>	1- Lily’s Story 2-Public Service Announcements	Stealing, Complaint, Feeling Helpless, Feeling Exposed, Hope, Paranoia, Help, Safe, Committing a Crime, Protecting
<b>Culture and Commerce</b>	1- Tourist Attraction or Human Zoo 2- Town Hall meeting in Cape Cod	Human Zoo, Tradition, Poverty, Making a Living, Painful, Work, Growing Food, Being Popular, Controversy, Help, Preserving, Hurt, Entertaining, Degrading, Criticizing, Denying, Developing, Being Rich
<b>Voluntary Simplicity</b>	1- Urban Homesteaders 2- Simple Gifts	Producing, Harvesting, College Educated, Self-Sufficient Lifestyle, Connection Between People and Each Other, Tradition, Being Poor, Hope, Building Relationships Getting Close to Someone, Help, Work, Worth Doing, Believe, Willing, Being Free, Valley of Love, Delight, Ashamed
<b>Before You Say “I Do”</b>	1- A Prenuptial Agreement 2- Reactions to the Prenuptial Agreement	Marriage, Expectation, Talking About Something Openly and Honestly, Being Romantic, Understanding Each Other, Working Out a Compromise, Being the Main Breadwinner, Work, Checking Up On Each Other, Following Rules, Being Flexible, Love, Being Happy, Working Out Problems,



		Fighting, Opening Up, Being In Love
<b>To Spank or Not To Spank?</b>	1- The Spanking Debate	Spanking, Corporal Punishment, Child Discipline, Child Abuse, Admitting, Right, Wrong, Being Afraid of Parents, Respect, Thinking Someone As a Friend, Violence, Solving a Problem, Teaching a Lesson to a Child, Hitting, Being Permissive, Pain, Anger, Love, Hurt, Intruding Into People's Lives, Raising Kids, Rights of a Person, Human Rights, Treating People Equally, Being Equal
	2- Parents' Rights vs. Children's Rights	

Following citations taken directly from the listening audio scripts in the third textbook shows the context where and how some of these values are presented:

"They understand that I'm doing this because I *love* them, not because I want to hurt them." (To Spank or Not to Spank, Listening-1)

"Ten year old Lorenzo Nicholson is *helping* Brennan move plants from one part of the garden to another." (Voluntary Simplicity, Listening-1)

"So you can see two points of view on the issue of spanking: the *rights of parents* to discipline their children the way they think is best, versus the *human rights of children*, the right to be free from violence." (To Spank or Not to Spank, Listening-2)

"You just need to learn how to make your spouse happy and you have got to *work out your problems* right when they come up." (Before You Say "I Do", Listening -2)

## DISCUSSION

Textbooks are considered to be among the most important tools that are being used in language learning and teaching. In that sense it is very important to analyze what is brought by them in terms of both the activities that they offer and the contents of units. Here, values are usually considered to be among number one priorities to be focused on. If a textbook includes the values that are acceptable and valid all around the world, then it may appeal to larger audience in almost each country.

In this study, Northstar listening and speaking textbook series, which were used in Düzce University School of Foreign Languages for three academic years between 2009 and 2012, were analyzed. These textbooks were the main teaching materials in listening and speaking classes for 12 hours a week. Since students in Düzce University School of Foreign Languages were exposed to an intensive teaching period using these materials, the need to analyze what was being taught in terms of values became more and more apparent. Having all those in mind, the following results were derived out of this study:

- 1- It was found that all the three books analyzed in this study include the values that have both positive and negative associations in people's feelings. There seems to be values that are both acceptable and undesirable in all cultures round the world.
- 2- In all the three books, the values with positive associations are used much more intensively than the negative ones. Values such as friendship, help, good, being together, love, understanding each other, being a / in family, peace and being happy health, earning money/making a living and thanking human rights and problem solving are used more than once in each book they are presented. These values are appreciated worldwide and give learners and optimistic point of view towards the world and life itself.
- 3- Among the positive values presented in all three books, the most frequently (f) used values were found as friendship (f=13), help (f=10), love (f=7), being together (f=6), family (f=5) and good (f=4). This shows the determination and the precious efforts to expose learners into an environment where mostly positive feelings are valued.



- 4- Although all the three books are intensively supplied with positive values, it is still possible to see some undesirable values in almost all units in each book. The existence of values like killing, beating someone up, stealing and hating makes us be aware of what is being presented within units.

Knowing that values are among the most important concepts that have the power to shape people's lives, it is necessary to see to what extent they are used appropriately in any kind of materials that are brought inside the classrooms. As a consequence of this fact, it is possible to suggest that publishing companies should be more careful about the content they present in a textbook. There is no doubt that offering authentic materials within a teaching material fosters learning outcomes. However; it may not be acceptable to see "too real" contents such as killing, drugs or beating someone up. So long as the values included in a textbook are acceptable all around the world, there would not be any doubts about the appropriateness of the content material with the target age group. Otherwise, the discussion on what values should be included or excluded in teaching materials will continue for a long time.

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