

The Analysis of Interjections in Two English Coursebooks

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Abstract

There has been a growing interest in the teaching of interjections in English, as interjections play an important role serving a bridge between verbal and non-verbal communication. However, interjections remain as an under-researched area in English language teaching (ELT). This study explores and compares the use and frequency of interjections in two English coursebooks. Yes You Can (written by non-native speakers of English and funded by the Turkish Ministry of Education) and Touchstone 2 (written by native speakers of English and published by Cambridge University Press) were chosen to collect data. A total of 97 dialogues were analysed. Although the findings indicated similarities between the two coursebooks regarding the functions and meanings of the interjections within the coursebooks, an obvious gap was observed between them regarding the diversity and amount of interjections integrated. The study offers suggestions to material developers, ELT teachers, language learners and authorities.

Keywords: interjections, ELT coursebooks, material evaluation, teaching spoken language

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Introduction

This study investigates and compares two English coursebooks used in Türkiye, in order to understand the use and frequency of interjections in them. Interjections, defined as “words that constitute utterances by themselves and express a speaker’s reaction towards an element in the socio linguistic context” (Ameka, 2006, p.4), were traditionally overlooked in English as they were considered as so-called “small words” (Petrova, 2020), or even ‘the outlaws of English’ (Nordquist, 2012 as cited in Petrova, 2020). Therefore, whether interjections should be seen as a separate category in English has been very much controversial (Petrova, 2020), and they were attempted to be categorised under adverbs (Ashdowne, 2008), or even treated as paralinguistic phenomena (Wharton, 2003). Recently, however, there has been a growing interest to better understand the role of interjections in English. That may be linked to the fact that interjections are frequently used in everyday speech (Ponsonnet, 2023), and therefore play an essential role in communication and social interactions in English (Stivers, 2019).

In English language teaching (ELT), written language was seen as the main concern previously. However, this has shifted to spoken language, which is grounded on a more communicative approach (Brown & Yule, 1983). This has affected how ELT materials and curriculums should be designed, ideally integrating spoken language within them (Reber, 2011). Through the teaching of spoken language, learners can gain the opportunity to practise how to carry out daily conversations, both with native and non-native speakers of English (Elkilic & Genc, 2010).

Spoken language involves face-to-face interaction of two or more interlocutors in a shared space and time (Clark, 1998). When these interlocutors share common cultural and personal backgrounds, the resulting rich context allows speakers to reduce verbalisation to a minimum (Miller et al., 1998), through interjections (Goffman, 1981). However, interjections are culture specific, therefore there are often no similarities between interjections across languages (Wierzbicka, 1992), as a result of which, interjections can become obstacles to cross-cultural communication since interlocutors may not be familiar with them (Mao, 2017). This may lead to misunderstandings and/or communication breakdowns among interlocutors, which directly decreases the quality of communication (Hismanoglu, 2010). Therefore, learners should gain the ability to successfully use interjections

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in English, as *the lingua franca*, to develop communicative competence (i.e., socio linguistic rules of a specific context), and authenticity in English (i.e., the proper use of spoken language in a specific context) (Celce-Murcia, 2008).

One effective way of achieving this is through English coursebooks (Sahragard et al., 2014), where interjections are integrated throughout to raise language learners' awareness to the natural flow of conversation (Reber, 2011), as well as to the contribution of interjections to communication (Cruz, 2009). This highlights the importance of the evaluation of teaching materials, which is carried out to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a course material, for a specific purpose (Slaouti et al., 2013). The proper choice of the coursebook for a programme, such as English coursebooks for teaching English, may have far reaching consequences, including spending on the module, learning experience, levels of proficiency, and ultimately, future employability of learners (Mishan & Timmins, 2015). However, as Hismanoglu (2010) mentions, there is a lack of developed materials teachers can utilise "to teach the communicative functions expressed by English interjections" (p.30). And, the teaching of interjections in English is still neglected (Ameka, 1992) and unfortunately under-researched (Petrova, 2020).

Previously, scholars mostly researched interjections in English, in relation to their linguistic features, such as pragmatic functions (e.g., Norrick, 2009). However, the existing literature lacks in providing a consistent categorisation of interjections (Stivers, 2019), and certainly more research is needed investigating the role of interjections in all stages of language teaching (Petrova, 2020). The few studies which analysed the coursebooks in terms of interjections (e.g., Reber, 2011; Sahragard et al., 2014) compared English coursebooks written by native speakers only – they will further be explained later under the section of relevant studies. This study differs from them by comparing an English coursebook written by Turkish authors, with one written by British authors, and focuses both on the forms and functions of interjections used in both coursebooks. The existing studies, although they looked at the forms of interjections, tended not to investigate the functions of interjections in detail. Also, in countries like Türkiye, where English is taught and learned as a foreign language, the teaching of interjections is often ignored by ELT teachers (Hismanoglu, 2010). And, therefore, learners' knowledgebase on interjections is generally very limited, as shown in Elkilic and Genc (2010), which can be improved by carefully designed and developed English coursebooks and teaching materials. This study attempts to fill these gaps in the literature by comparing two English coursebooks used to teach English in Türkiye, and evaluating them regarding the differences and similarities between them. Doing this will ultimately help to gain insights into the issues related to material development in Türkiye, and how to best help learners to increase their awareness of interjections, and enable them to implement interjections while communicating in English (Reber, 2011). The research questions are:

1. Which interjections are used and/or taught in *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2*?
2. What is the frequency of the interjections used and/or taught in *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2*?
3. How are *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* different and similar in terms of the meanings and the functions of interjections used and/or taught?

Literature Review

This section briefly introduces two approaches to interjections, further focuses on the characteristics of interjections, presents a framework that informs this study, and also looks at the relevant studies in the literature.

From the sociolinguistic approach, interjections are not regarded as a part of the language (Goffman, 1981), as they deviate from observed morphological and syntactic patterns (Mushin et al., 2023). They are often considered as 'response cries', or a "ritualised act, in something like the ethological sense of that term" (Goffman, 1981, p.100). However, this is not to say interjections lack meaning and function, or does not have a role in social interactions (Mushin et al., 2023). Wilkins (1992), adopting the semantic approach, argue that "interjections are semantically rich and have a definite conceptual structure which can be explicated" (p.120). Therefore, they help speakers to reflect their state of mind, attitudes, and reactions towards situations (Ameka, 1992). Interjections convey messages without saying much (Wharton, 2003), which makes them the bridge between the verbal and non-verbal communication (Ameka, 2006). Somebody who says *Ugh!* or *Wow!*, for example, might show an immediate feeling of disgust or surprise, without actually saying *I am disgusted*, or *That's amazing* (Goddard, 2014).

Characteristics of Interjections

Interjections cover a wide range of expressions, ranging from response cries such as *ouch* or *oops*, to *yeah* or *uh huh* (Stivers, 2019). Syntactically, interjections are independent and can stand alone as complete utterances, by, in most cases, signalling unexpected burst of emotions (Norrick, 2007). They can be used not only together with other patterns of the language, but also alone by helping to indicate speakers' emotional and mental state (Cruz, 2009). While in written texts they are separated from the rest of the sentence via a comma, a period or an exclamation mark (Wharton, 2009), a pause is given to separate them from other utterances in spoken language (Ameka, 1992). Although they are not productive since they do not take any derivation or inflection (Wilkins, 1992), interjections help the message to be conveyed during the conversation by acting as coded signals (Wharton, 2003). As such, they often have an illocutionary meaning as well, representing the implicit message intended by the speaker (Norrick, 2009). Some interjections have standardised meanings (Wilkins, 1992). However, many interjections convey attitudinal expressions depending on the linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts they are produced in (Denizot, 2013), or the intonation contour of the speaker (Norrick, 2009). As such, the meaning of interjections is co-constructed through the link between a sound pattern and a particular context (Reber, 2011).

As interjections appear in several formats, such as single words, sounds, phrases or utterances (Norrick, 2009), several attempts have been made to categorise them. For example, interjections have been classified with onomatopoeias; however, Meinard (2015) indicates that onomatopoeias are the transcription of any sound while interjections reflect the speakers' state of mind. And, interjections have largely been associated with expressing emotions (Reber, 2011), and specifically been linked to exclamative causes (Norrick, 2009). Yet, Ameka (1992), opposes to this by explaining that exclamations cover every utterance, and this categorisation, therefore, can lead to confusion. Others tended to categorise interjections with pragmatic markers (Norrick, 2007), and particles, including fillers, discourse markers and routines (Meinard, 2015). However, Ameka (1992), insists that interjections need to be considered as a distinct class that exists in all languages.

Ameka's (1992) Typology of Interjections

Ameka (1992) talks about two main ways of classifying interjections: according to their forms and functions. In terms of their forms of, there are two kinds; namely, primary and secondary interjections (Ameka, 1992, 2006). Primary interjections are not used otherwise. They are defined as non-words since they do not fit in the rules of the language they belong to (Goffman, 1981), which is why they "tend to be phonologically and morphologically anomalous" (Ameka, 1992, p.105). *Oh, mhm, huh, wow, ohh, oops, ouch, mm, eh, ah, psst* are some examples of primary interjections (Wharton, 2009). On the other hand, secondary interjections are "forms that belong to other word classes based on their semantics and are interjections only because they can occur by themselves non-elliptically as one-word utterances" (Ameka, 1992, p.105). Secondary interjections tend to be lexical items carrying a concrete semantic meaning (Ameka, 1992), and they are morphologically and semantically motivated (Denizot, 2013). Unlike primary interjections, which act as turn initiators, secondary interjections display a range of functions (Norrick, 2009). Additionally, secondary interjections have an independent semantic value, and they can be used to express a mental attitude, or state. Most of the secondary interjections consist of one morpheme (which is called monomorphemic) such as *yeah!, God!, Gosh!, boy!*; however, there are also some examples of multi-morphemic interjections such as *Goddamit!* (Ameka, 2006).

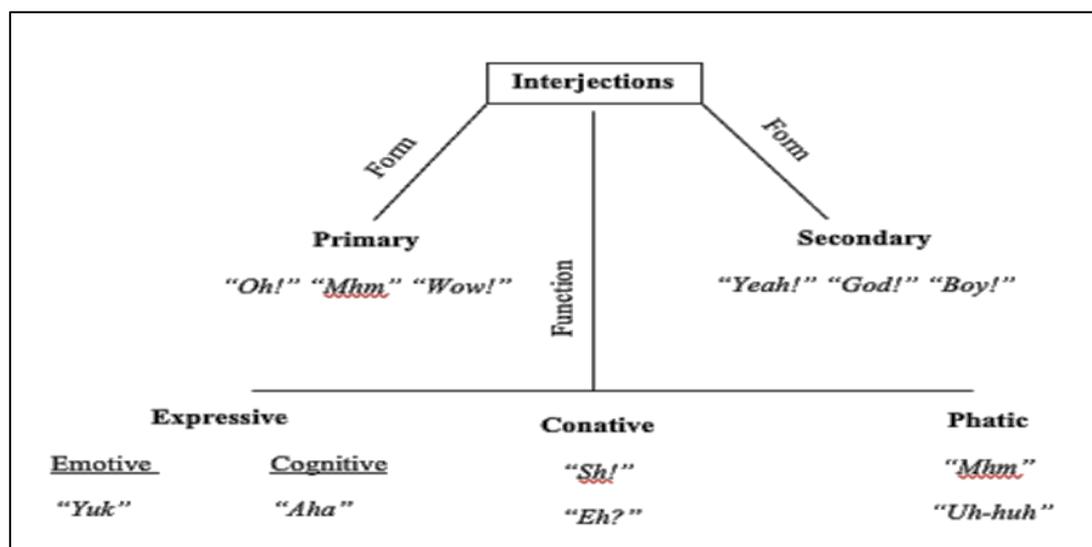
Regarding their function, Ameka (1992) classifies interjections as three; namely, expressive, conative, and phatic interjections (Ameka, 1992). Expressive interjections are the vocal gestures that reflect the mental state of the speaker and are subdivided into two (Ameka, 1992). Emotive interjections, as the first group of expressive interjections, reflect speakers' emotions and sensations that they have at the time of speech (Ameka, 1992), and they have the component of *I feel something* in their meaning (Wierzbicka, 1992). *Yuk* for disgust, *wow* for surprise, and *ow* for pain are some examples that can be given for this type of interjections (Wilkins, 1992). Cognitive interjections, as the second group of expressive interjections, reflect speakers' thoughts and state of knowledge at the time of speech (Ameka, 1992). This type has the component of *I think something*, or *I know something* in their meaning (Wierzbicka, 1992). For example, *aha* might be used to mean *I understand* (Wierzbicka, 1992), and *ehe* might mean *I now remember* (Ameka, 1992). Conative interjections can be claimed to be listener-oriented since they are the expressions which are directed to listeners to get their attention, response, or reaction (Ameka, 1992), and they often mean *I want something* (Wierzbicka, 1992). For example, *sh!* might be used for *I want silence here*, and *eh?* for *I want to learn something* (Ameka, 1992). As the third group, phatic interjections show the mental attitude of speakers towards an on-going conversation (Ameka, 1992). They can be

used to establish a conversation, and since they serve as feedback, they can be used to maintain the conversation as well (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). *Mhm*, *uh-huh*, and *yeah* can be given as examples for phatic interjections (Ameka, 1992).

In this study, I utilised Ameka`s (1992) typology, as it is succinct and sufficiently explanatory (Nakatani, 2005). Doing this helped to answer the research questions, as it investigates both forms, and functions of the interjections. Based on Ameka (1992), Figure 1 was depicted, to guide the analysis of the interjections.

Figure 1

Interjections in Relation to Their Forms and Functions (based on Ameka, 1992)



Relevant Studies

As indicated previously, interjections is a poorly researched area (Petrova, 2020). Some studies researched interjections in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, without a specific focus on the teaching of interjections. Thompson (2022), for example, investigated interjections in one EFL corpus in Asia, in comparison to a non-EFL corpus, and found fewer interjections with less variety in the EFL corpus, which, according to the researcher, might have been linked to EFL users` lack of knowledge on certain interjections. Other studies mostly looked at language learners` capabilities of using interjections. For example, Hismanoglu (2010) investigated EFL learners` competence in using the appropriate interjections in Cyprus, and found that although learners could use the interjections appropriately at times when those interjections had a similar meaning and function to the ones in the learners` native language (L1), they failed in using other interjections which differed from the ones in their L1. The researcher, therefore, underlines the importance of exposing language learners to authentic real-life materials and situations. Similarly, another study was conducted in Türkiye with 42 intermediate-, and 40 advanced-level EFL learners, and found that learners, regardless of their level, were familiar only with the very commonly used interjections (Elkilic & Genc, 2010). The researchers conclude that English coursebooks need to be prepared by professionals, and learners should be explicitly taught about the differences between Turkish and English interjections (Elkilic & Genc, 2010). In Japan, Talandis and Stout (2015), despite not focusing particularly on interjections, conducted action research and designed a curriculum by means of personalised topics, direct teaching of pragmatics, and frequent assessment of oral skills to improve EFL learners` speaking skills. They found that explicit teaching of conversation strategies helped learners to interpret the meanings of interjections and solve interactional difficulties (Talandis & Scout, 2015). What these studies seem to have in common is the implication that explicit teaching of interjections, through real-life materials, can help language learners to better learn and use interjections while communicating. This brings about the importance of English coursebooks in the teaching of interjections; however, there is very little research focusing on the integration of interjections in English coursebooks. In one study, Reber (2011) carried out a survey of English coursebooks used in German elementary and secondary schools, and found that interjections were included in constructed conversation examples in the coursebooks. However, there was a lack of instruction regarding the meaning and use of interjections, and, a lack of information regarding visual actions in the coursebooks, which, according to Reber

(2011), might limit learners from inferring the correct meaning of interjections. In another study, Sahragard et al. (2014) investigated three coursebooks in terms of the frequency of interjections used in them, and one coursebook was found integrating more interjections with a greater variety. The researchers highlight the necessity of developing more authentic (from real-life situations) materials.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study as the purpose was to analyse two English coursebooks; namely, *Touchstone 2* (McCarthy et al., 2012) and *Yes You Can* (A.2.2 and A.2.3, as a set of two used in sequence) (Baydar Ertopcu et al., 2015; Persembe et al., 2015), to gain an understanding of the forms and functions of interjections used in them (Gray, 2014). Purposive sampling, specifically, criterion sampling was employed, as the focus of the study was on interjections within the chosen coursebooks (Gray, 2014). Therefore, all pages in both coursebooks were reviewed, a total of 402 pages constituted the unit of analysis, with all written dialogues and listening transcripts in both coursebooks, which were the sections including interjections (Patton, 2015). Table 1 shows the number of units, pages and dialogues in both coursebooks.

Table 1

Number of Units, Pages and Dialogues in the Coursebooks

		Yes You Can	Touchstone 2	TOTAL
Units		16	12	28
Pages		244	158	402
Dialogues	Written	25	35	60
	Spoken	17	20	37

The coursebooks represented around the same level of proficiency, namely, intermediate level. *Yes You Can* was developed by Turkish writers and funded by the Turkish Ministry of Education, while *Touchstone 2* was written by British writers and published by Cambridge Press Publications. *Touchstone 2* was chosen purposefully for this comparison since it was designed according to the spoken corpora as stated in the coursebook. According to Mishan (2005), spoken corpora is an incomparable resource for coursebook writers as it offers 'pure' language loaded with contextual features. Comparing *Touchstone 2* with *Yes You Can* (in which corpora was not taken into consideration) provided insights regarding the process of material development.

Content analysis was carried out on the gathered data, which helped to make evaluative comparisons between two coursebooks, according to the established goal, i.e., identifying the forms and functions of interjections (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Throughout the analysis, these steps were followed; selecting the text to be examined, specifying the unit of analysis, determining the category scheme, selecting final categories and analysing and interpreting findings (Gray, 2014). The data was coded both deductively and inductively (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). The deductive part was informed by the literature, about the forms of interjections (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). To answer the first research question, Ameka's (1992) classification of interjections was employed, to detect the interjections used and/or taught in *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2*. In order to answer the second research question, the number and the frequency of interjections was calculated manually and determined for both coursebooks. As the aim was to understand the meaning and the functions of interjections, discourse analysis, in addition to content analysis, was carried out for the third research question, which was when the data was analysed more inductively by reading and rereading the unit of analysis for multiple times. The focus of the discourse analysis is "on the use of particular words, phrases, idioms, smiles, metaphors, kinds of rhetoric, and so on" (Thomas, 2013, p.242), which in this case was interjections used and/or taught in the coursebooks. This part of the analysis included interpreting interjections by taking into consideration the dialogue so that which function and meaning each interjection was signalling to could be found out (Gray, 2014). Figure 2 shows an example of how the functions of interjections were determined.

Figure 2

Examples from *Yes You Can*, in Terms of the Coding Process

Examples from *Yes You Can* (A.2.3)

Page 34.
 Ayumi : Hello, where are you? I'm waiting for you in front of the box-office and the film is about to start.
 Sandra : I'm so sorry, Ayumi. I know I'm late but the traffic is terrible and I'm stuck in it. I'm afraid I'll miss the first part of the film.
 Ayumi : **Oh**, I see. I'm buying a single ticket then. Oh – understanding
 Sandra : OK, let's meet at the café next to the cinema after the film.
 Ayumi : Fine, see you there then.

Umm - hesitating Page 50.
 Shop assistant : Good morning, can I help you?
 Gaby : Hi. I'm looking for a smart evening dress.
 Shop assistant : Certainly, ma'am. We have the most fashionable dresses of this year. How about these?
 Gaby : They are really nice. **Umm**, but they look a little big for me. Do you have the red or black one in a smaller size?
 Shop assistant : I think so. Let me look. **Oh**, we have both. Would you like to try them on?
 Gaby : What do you think about them? Which one is better? Oh – noticing
 Shop assistant : I think the black one is perfect but the red one is more charming.
 Gaby : Ok, I'll try the red one on.

Page 68. Wow – admiring
 Doris and Spencer are at the Music Store now.
 Spencer : **Wow**, Doris. Listen to this; it's beautiful, isn't it?
 Doris : Yes, is it Red Hot Chili Peppers?
 Spencer : **Yeah**, and I think it's the best album of theirs by far. Yeah – confirming

Page 19.
 Maria : Can we park here?
 Lisa : No, we can't. Oh – noticing
 Maria : **Oh**, the sign!
 Lisa : **Yeah**. Let's park opposite the supermarket. Yeah – confirming

This interpretation stage was followed by grouping and categorising the functions and the meanings of each interjection. In addition, Oxford English Dictionary Online (2012) was consulted to check whether or not other alternative meanings and usages of each observed interjection existed. As the last step, *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* were compared to each other to find the similarities and differences. I was involved in the data analysis process; however, to ensure the quality of the coding stage, I sought intercoder reliability on a small set of data. This ensured that the data was categorised in the same way, and the created codes were consistent (Drisko & Machi, 2016). Additionally, I constantly assessed the codes over time and made amendments if necessary, to make sure of the internal consistency of the coding process, which contributed to the intracoder reliability of the coding process (Neuendorf, 2017). Doing these and providing examples from the data, to support the inferences and conclusions drawn, contributed to the validity of the coding process as well (Neuendorf, 2017).

Findings

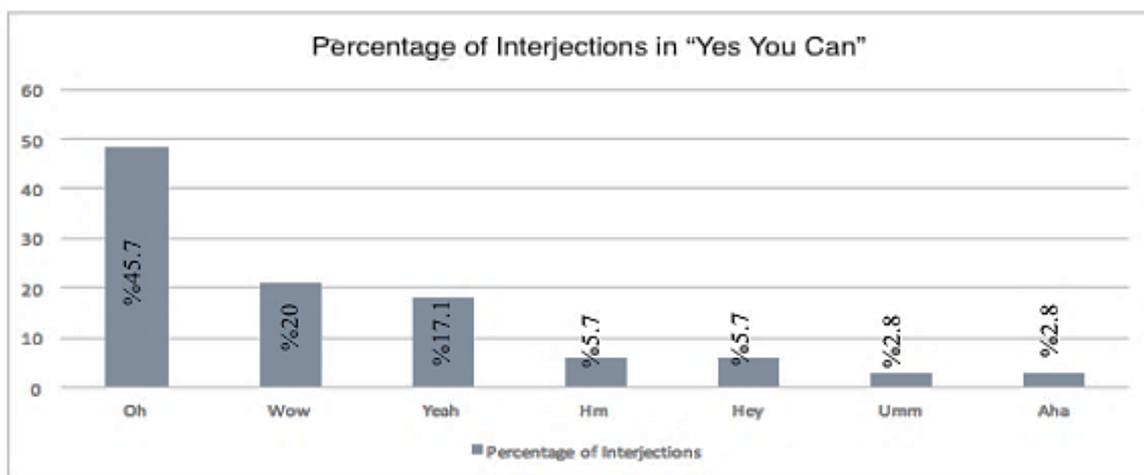
The findings of this study will be presented in accordance with the research questions. While the first and the second research questions will be answered together as they are linked to each other, the third research question will be explained separately.

Comparison of *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* Regarding the Interjections Used within Them, and Their Frequency

Each dialogue in both coursebooks was studied carefully in order to detect the interjections. Based on the analysis of 42 dialogues, *Yes You Can* was found to have 35 interjections with 7 different types. *Oh* and *wow* were the most frequent interjections in the coursebook while *umm* and *aha* were found to be the least frequent ones. Figure 3 indicates the percentages of the interjections in *Yes You Can*.

Figure 3

Percentage of Interjections in *Yes You Can*

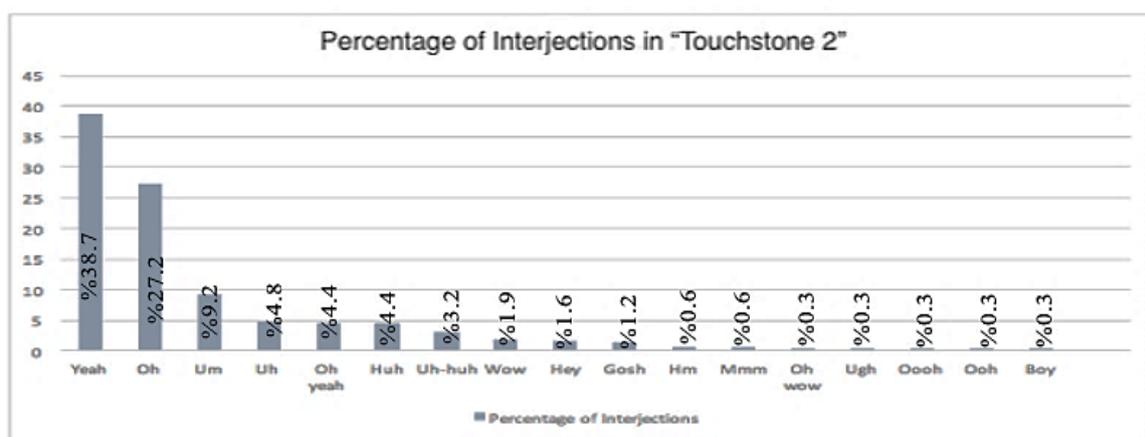


As Figure 2 shows, all interjections were structured either as one word or as non-word. While six types of interjections, which corresponds to 85.71% of all interjections found in *Yes You Can*, were primary with the range of *oh*, *wow*, *hm*, *hey*, *umm*, and *aha*; *yeah* was the only example for secondary interjection, which corresponds to 14.28%. Moreover, after the analysis of the coursebook, it was determined that no explicit instruction regarding the meaning or the usage of interjections was provided.

After analysing 55 dialogues, *Touchstone 2* was found to include 312 interjections with 17 different types. While *yeah* and *oh* were found to be the most frequently repeating interjections, *oh wow*, *ugh*, *ooh* and *boy* were found the be the least frequently repeating interjections. Figure 4 demonstrates the percentages of the interjections in *Touchstone 2*.

Figure 4

Percentage of Interjections in *Touchstone 2*



As can be inferred from Figure 3, 15 out of 17 types of interjections, which corresponds to 88.23% of all interjections found in *Touchstone 2*, were structured as either one word or non-word such as *yeah*, *oh*, *um*, *uh*, *huh*, *uh-huh*, *wow*, *hey*, *Gosh*, *hm*, *mmm*, *ugh*, *ooh*, *ooh* and *boy*. *Oh yeah* and *oh wow*, which corresponds to 11.76%, were found to be interjections that were structured as two-words. Moreover, based on the analysis, it can be indicated that 13 types of interjections (*oh*, *um*, *uh*, *huh*, *uh-huh*, *wow*, *hey*, *hm*, *mmm*, *oh wow*, *ugh*, *ooh*, *ooh*), which corresponds to 76.4%, were primary while four of them (*yeah*, *oh yeah*, *Gosh*, *boy*), which corresponds to 23.5%, were secondary. Unlike *Yes You Can*, instructions regarding the function and meaning of the interjections were found in *Touchstone 2*. For example, in Unit 3 in *Touchstone 2*, a glossary section is provided, and *oh*, *wow*, *oh wow*, *Gosh* are introduced as expressions to show surprise in informal conversations (p.27). Also, on the same

page, the frequency of these interjections in the spoken corpora is provided, to show learners which ones are more frequently used.

By comparing Figure 3 and Figure 4, differences and similarities between the coursebooks regarding the diversity of the interjections could be understood. *Yeah, oh, wow* and *hey* were the interjections that were used in both coursebooks. However, while *aha* was used only in *Yes You Can*, *uh, oh yeah, huh, uh-huh, Gosh, mmm, oh wow, ugh* and *boy* were used only in *Touchstone 2*. Moreover, some variants of the interjections were found in the coursebooks. While *hm, umm*, and *oh* were used in *Yes You Can*, *hmm, um, oooh* and *ooh* were used in *Touchstone 2*.

Comparison of Yes You Can and Touchstone 2 Regarding the Meanings and Functions of Interjections Used within Them

In addition to the diversity of the interjections used in the coursebooks, similarities and differences regarding their functions and meanings were detected between the coursebooks (see Appendix A and Appendix B for a detailed list of interjections with regards to their functions, meanings, frequency, and percentages). *Oh* was one of the largely used interjections in both *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* as shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Table 2 shows the functions and meanings of *oh* in both coursebooks.

Table 2

Functions and Meanings of “Oh” in Both Coursebooks

Functions	Meanings
<i>Yes You Can</i>	
To show a change in cognitive process	“I see/notice/remember”
To show turn-taking	No precise meaning
To show affection	“It is bad!”
To show disappointment	“I am disappointed”
To show pleasure	“Great!”
To show disagreement	“No!”
To show annoyance	“I am angry”
<i>Touchstone 2</i>	
To show turn-taking	No precise meaning
To show a change in cognitive process	“I see/notice/remember”
To show surprise	“Interesting”
To show disappointment	“I am disappointed”
To show affection	“I like it”
To show affection	“It is bad”
To show annoyance	“I am angry”

As shown, *oh* was used for several functions and meanings in both coursebooks. Being used as a cognitive interjection by speakers, *oh* indicated a change in cognitive process with a percentage of 43.75 in *Yes You Can* and with a percentage of 32.94 in *Touchstone 2*. In this case, speakers used *oh* to show an understanding, noticing and remembering moment throughout the conversation. An example from *Touchstone 2* is:

Example 1

Alicia: It's Mom's birthday on the first. Remember? She is going to be 50!

Dave: Oh, that's right. What are you going to get her?

Oh was used as a phatic interjection as well where the listeners reacted to a remark or to a question to imply that they are taking the turn. The percentage for this function was 18.75 in *Yes You Can*, and 43.52 in *Touchstone 2*. In addition, it was used as an emotive interjection to show a range of emotions. In both coursebooks, it was used to show affection; however, while in *Yes You Can* the meaning implied by the speaker was *it is bad*, in *Touchstone 2* the speaker showed affection to convey two meanings; *it is bad* and *I like it*. Moreover, in both coursebooks *oh* was used to reflect both disappointment and anger. An example from *Yes You Can* is:

Example 2

Doris: How are you going to pay for it?

Spencer: Good point! I don't have my credit card with me. Can I use yours?

Doris: Oh, Spencer! You are hopeless!

In addition to the abovementioned similarities between *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2*, regarding the functions and meanings derived from the use of *oh*, the coursebooks had differences as well. For example, *oh* was used to show surprise in *Touchstone 2* for nine times (10.58%), and it was used to signal pleasure and disagreement with the meanings of *great* and *no* in *Yes You Can*.

Another similarity between the coursebooks was the way *wow* was used (see Appendices A and B). *Wow* was used as an emotive interjection in order to show admiration and surprise. While it was used for five times (71.42%) with the meaning of *amazing* in *Yes You Can*, it was used for two times (33.33%) with the same meaning in *Touchstone 2*. Additionally, in both coursebooks, speakers used *wow* to show their surprise. However, the percentage was different as it was used for four times (66.66%) in *Touchstone 2* when the frequency was two (28.57%) in *Yes You Can*. An example from *Touchstone 2* is as follows;

Example 3

Man: I have the same dream every night.

Woman: Every night? Wow! What do you dream about?

Another widely used interjection in both coursebooks was *yeah*. Table 3 indicates the functions and meanings of *yeah* in both coursebooks.

Table 3

Functions and Meanings of "Yeah" in Both Coursebooks

Functions	Meanings
<i>Yes You Can</i>	
To show confirmation	"Yes"
To show agreement	"You are right"
<i>Touchstone 2</i>	
To show confirmation	"Yes"
To show agreement	"You are right"
To give feedback	"I am listening"
To show turn-taking	No precise meaning
To ask for confirmation	"Is it so?"
To show hesitation	"I am not sure"
To show self-confirmation	"I am sure"

In order to maintain the conversation, *yeah* was used in both coursebooks as a phatic interjection. While it was used for five times (83.33%) in *Yes You Can* with the meaning of yes for showing confirmation, the frequency was 59 (48.76%) in *Touchstone 2*. An example for this meaning from *Yes You Can* is as follows;

Example 4

Todd: Hey, Stewart, have you heard about the Van Gogh Alive exhibition?

Stewart: Yeah, I've already heard the name but I don't have any idea about the details. Where is it?

In addition to this, *yeah* was used by speakers to show that they agreed with their interlocutors, in which case it meant *you are right*. With this meaning, it was used for once (16.16%) in *Yes You Can*, while the frequency was 38 (31.40%) in *Touchstone 2*.

Example 5, Touchstone 2

Chris: You know, we should take a few days off sometime.

Adam: Yeah, we should. Definitely.

Apart from these functions, *yeah* was used in *Touchstone 2* for several other functions as well such as back channelling the speaker, asking for confirmation, self-correction, showing hesitation and turn-taking. In *Yes You Can*, however, the function of *yeah* was limited to showing confirmation and agreement.

In both coursebooks, *hey* was used as a conative interjection to draw the listener's attention (see Appendices A and B). While it was used for two times (100%) in *Yes You Can*, in *Touchstone 2* it was used for four times (80%) for this function.

Example 6, Yes You Can

Todd: Hey, Stewart, have you heard about the Van Gogh Alive exhibition?

Stewart: Yeah...

Hey was also used as an emotive interjection in *Touchstone 2* by the speaker to show her anger; however, in *Yes You Can*, this function was not given place. With the purpose of showing speakers' hesitation, *hmm* and *hm* - as a variant of *hmm* - were used for two times (100%) in *Touchstone 2* and two times (100%) in *Yes You Can* respectively (see Appendices A and B). An example from *Touchstone 2* is:

Example 7

Ray: And there's good food. You can get all kinds of tacos and things. Do you want to go?

Tina: Hmm. Well, maybe.

As the last common interjection between the coursebooks, *um* and *umm* were used in the coursebooks to show speakers' hesitation (see Appendices A and B). In this case, the meaning attributed to *um* and *umm* was *I am not sure*. In *Touchstone 2*, *um* was used for seven times (24.13%) with this meaning while *umm* was used with the same meaning for one time (100%) in *Yes You Can*.

Example 8, Touchstone 2

Mark: I got a new apartment. It is really nice, but like I said, I can't find my TV, I mean, it's in one of those boxes, so, uh...so, could I borrow yours? Just for a couple of days?

Jenny: Um, I guess. Like when?

In addition to this function of *um*, it was also used to maintain the conversation as a phatic interjection by indicating speakers' thinking process and their intention to get to another topic in *Touchstone 2*. Even though the coursebooks seemed to have similarities in terms of the functions and meanings of the interjections mentioned thus far, they differed from each other with regards to the choice of interjections they used to indicate a change in cognitive process. In addition to *oh*, which was used in both coursebooks for this purpose and explained above, *aha* seemed to be used for this purpose in *Yes You Can*, while in *Touchstone 2* it was *oh yeah* and *ooh*.

Discussion

The findings showed that *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* were similar in terms of integrating Ameka's (1992) primary and secondary interjections; and they both used primary interjections more commonly than secondary interjections. However, an obvious gap was observed between the coursebooks. *Touchstone 2* was found to include a wider range of interjections with more frequent use compared to *Yes You Can* in which both the variety and frequency of the interjections was quite limited. In addition, while *Touchstone 2* seemed to introduce multiple meanings and functions for most of the interjections used in the coursebook, *Yes You Can* seemed to fail in achieving this. And, *Touchstone 2* introduced a variety of interjections for the same meaning/function, such as *yeah, oh yeah, huh* for confirming; *yeah, oh yeah* for agreeing; *yeah, uh-huh* for giving feedback; *yeah, oh, uh-*

huh for turn-taking; *yeah, um, uh, hmm* for hesitating; *oh, oh yeah, ooh* for showing a cognitive change; *oh, huh, wow, Gosh, boy* for showing surprise; *oh, hey* for showing annoyance; *um, uh* for showing a thinking process; *um, uh* for transitioning to the (main) point; and *wow* and *oh wow* for admiring (see Appendices A and B). *Yes You Can*, on the other hand, provided very few examples of the interjections which were used for the same meaning/function; and these were *umm* and *hm* for hesitating, and *oh* and *aha* for showing a cognitive process. Learners need to know that there are several types of interjections, serving different purposes such as expressing emotions or processing a thought (Cruz, 2010). Therefore, their being introduced to as many different interjections as possible appears to be very important, even if not every interjection is used as often in everyday conversations (Aijmer, 2004). That is because, learning how to use interjections while communicating can give learners a sense of authenticity and expressiveness, helping them to develop their communicative competence (Petrova, 2020). The finding regarding *Touchstone 2* seems to align with Sahragard et al. (2014), in which the researchers compared three different coursebooks (*Interchange 3, Top Notch 3 A-B, Touchstone 4*), all written by native speakers, and found that *Touchstone 4* integrated a greater diversity and higher frequency of interjections compared to the other two. This difference, although not specified by the researchers, might result from whether the coursebooks were designed by taking the spoken corpora into consideration. Accordingly, the researchers suggest that material developers should design authentic coursebooks by integrating interjections more effectively (Sahragard et al., 2014).

Given the number and variety of the interjections used in the coursebooks, *Yes You Can* obviously lacks in providing learners with a wide range of interjections since the amount of the interjections found in *Touchstone 2* is almost nine times more than the number of the interjections *Yes You Can*. A possible reason for this gap may be linked to the fact that *Touchstone 2* was designed by using the spoken corpora as explicitly stated in the coursebook. As such, it may not be surprising that *Touchstone 2* included more genuine communications between people from real life, rather than prepared communications in artificial conditions (Mishan, 2005). In the development of *Yes You Can*, however, corpora were not taken into consideration. This looks in alignment with Paksoy and Harmaoglu (2017). The researchers investigated the authenticity of the language in four English coursebooks used in Turkish high schools, and did not specifically look at interjections. However, after comparing the coursebooks with the British National Corpus, Paksoy and Harmaoglu (2017) observed that the coursebooks had little similarity to the authentic language, which could limit the opportunities for language learners to be exposed to real-life language.

Yes You Can and *Touchstone 2* differed in terms of the number of the dialogues as well, which implies that *Touchstone 2* gives more emphasis to the spoken language than *Yes You Can* does. The analysis of the structure of the dialogues showed that the dialogues in *Touchstone 2* reflect the real-life conversation better than the dialogues integrated in *Yes You Can*. And, many of the dialogues in *Yes You Can* are structured as interviews. Accordingly, because of the nature of the dialogues (formal vs informal), the more informal real-life dialogues (emphasising the spoken language) were found to include more interjections than the formal interview type dialogues (emphasising the written language). According to Cutting (2008), interviews tend to include unequal balance among the interlocutors since the interviewer always asks and the interviewee always explain. However, the main purpose of the dialogues should be to promote interaction by providing several characteristics of the spoken language rather than merely talking (Cutting, 2008).

Learners were provided with instructions in *Touchstone 2* in terms of the use of *oh, wow, oh wow, Gosh, oh my Gosh* to show surprise, for example. However, no explicit instruction was provided in *Yes You Can* regarding the meaning or the function of interjections. This finding seems to align with Reber (2011), which showed, after analysing three coursebooks used to teach English in Germany, that the coursebooks did not offer accurate and detailed information for the meanings of the interjections that were taught. Explicit teaching of interjections is considered essential as interjections help learners to express their attitudes, emotions and values, all of which influence the flow of the conversation (Reber, 2011), and determine whether learners become a competent speaker of the target language (Cruz, 2010). In the absence of instructions regarding the use and meaning of interjections, as Reber (2011) indicates, learners interpret and incorporate them in their learning process, which may lead to misconstrual.

Conclusion

This study investigated and compared *Yes You Can* and *Touchstone 2* regarding the meanings and frequency of interjections, with the purpose of answering three research questions. While the coursebooks were found to be similar in terms of integrating more of primary interjections, rather than secondary interjections, and regarding

the functions and meanings attributed to these interjections within both coursebooks, there were differences as well. *Touchstone 2* integrated a wider range of interjections, with higher frequency, and introduced several interjections for the same meaning/function. Also, while *Yes You Can* did not provide any explicit instruction regarding the function or meaning of interjections, *Touchstone 2* did.

This study adopted a qualitative interpretivist approach and therefore the findings cannot be generalised, and only apply to the analysed coursebooks. Still, it provides insights into how to teach interjections and also how to develop better coursebooks for teaching interjections in English. The findings suggest that integrating everyday dialogues into the coursebooks, as in *Touchstone 2*, meant to include more interjections since they reflected more of informal and spoken language. Additionally, benefitting from the spoken corpora, at the stage of developing an English coursebook, can help to understand the variety of interjections used in daily conversations and the meanings/functions of them. Moreover, explicit teaching of interjections can help to draw language learners' attention to the importance of using interjections while communicating in English.

Several stakeholders can benefit from the findings of this study. Firstly, coursebook writers need to take the spoken corpora into consideration at the stage of developing English coursebooks, to provide more authentic and real-life communication situations, and also to focus more on frequently used language. Doing this especially important in contexts where English is not spoken as the first language, as in Türkiye, as coursebook writers' intuitive knowledge regarding the use of English can be misleading, or even wrong (Paksoy & Harmaoglu, 2017). Coursebook writers ought to provide information regarding the functions and meanings of interjections in a glossary section, where the meaning/function of an interjection is difficult to be inferred from the dialogue itself (Reber, 2011). ELT teachers need to make better decisions on the coursebooks they use for their students. Also, when the coursebooks do not offer authentic enough language, they should utilise additional resources to explicitly teach interjections. Learners need to realise the role of interjections to become more competent in English, and try to use interjections in their conversations. Lastly, authorities ought to provide trainings to ELT teachers, to raise their awareness on interjections. This is especially important for non-native ELT teachers, as they may lack the mastery of the usage of interjections (Cruz, 2010). And, authorities should prioritise the teaching of spoken language, and accordingly choose the coursebook writers.

Code of Ethics

All information in this paper has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical concerns. The study did not require an ethical approval as it does not involve human or animal participants.

Statement of Interest

I declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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İki İngilizce Ders Kitabında Yer Verilen Ünlem İfadelerinin Analizi

Öz

İngilizcede ünlem ifadelerinin öğretilmesi konusuna artan bir ilgi vardır, çünkü ünlem ifadeleri sözlü ve sözsüz iletişim arasında bir köprü görevi görerek önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Fakat, İngilizce dili öğretiminde (ELT) ünlem ifadeleri yeterince araştırılmamış bir alan olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu çalışma, iki İngilizce ders kitabındaki (orta seviyeye tekabül eden) ünlem ifadelerinin kullanımını ve sıklığını araştırıp ve karşılaştırmıştır. Veri toplamak için *Yes You Can* (anadili İngilizce olmayan kişiler tarafından yazılmış ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından finanse edilmiştir) ve *Touchstone 2* (anadili İngilizce olan kişiler tarafından yazılmış ve Cambridge University Press tarafından yayınlanmıştır) seçilmiştir. Toplamda 97 diyalog analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, ders kitaplarında öğretilen/kullanılan ünlem ifadelerinin işlevleri ve anlamları açısından iki ders kitabı arasında bazı benzerlikler olduğunu gösterse de, entegre edilen ünlem ifadelerinin çeşitliliği ve miktarı açısından bu ders kitapları arasında bariz bir fark gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışma materyal geliştirenlere, ELT öğretmenlerine, dil öğrenenlere ve yetkililere öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: ünlem ifadeleri, ELT ders kitapları, materyal değerlendirme, konuşma dili öğretimi

Appendix A

Semantic and Pragmatic Features of Interjections in *Yes You Can*

Functions of Interjections	Interjections	Meaning	f	%	
To show admiration	Wow	“Amazing”	5	71.42	
To show surprise		“Interesting”	2	28.57	
To show confirmation	Yeah	“Yes”	5	83.33	
To show agreement		“You are right”	1	16.66	
To show hesitation	Umm	“I am not sure”	1	100	
To show hesitation	Hm	“I am not sure”	2	100	
To draw attention	Hey	“I want to learn smth”	2	100	
To show a change in cognitive process	Oh	“I see/notice/remember”	7	43.75	
To show turn-taking		No precise meaning	3	18.75	
To show affection		“It is bad!”	2	12.50	
To show disappointment		“I am disappointed”	1	6.25	
To show pleasure		“Great!”	1	6.25	
To show disagreement		“No!”	1	6.25	
To show annoyance		“I am angry”	1	6.25	
To show change in cognitive process		Aha	“I see”	1	100

Appendix B

Semantic and Pragmatic Features of Interjections in *Touchstone 2*

Functions of Interjections	Interjections	Meaning	f	%
To show confirmation	Yeah	“Yes”	59	48.76
To show agreement		“You are right”	38	31.40
To give feedback		“I am listening”	13	10.74
To show turn-taking		No precise meaning	5	4.13
To ask for confirmation		“Is it so?”	3	2.47
To show hesitation		“I am not sure”	2	1.65
To show self-confirmation		“I am sure”	1	0.82
To show turn-taking	Oh	No precise meaning	37	43.52
To show a change in cognitive process		“I see/notice/remember”	28	32.94
To show surprise		“Interesting”	9	10.58
To show disappointment		“I am disappointed”	6	7.05
To show affection		“I like it”	2	2.35
To show affection		“It is bad”	2	2.35
To show annoyance		“I am angry”	1	1.17
To show a thinking process	Um	“I am thinking”	18	62.06
To show hesitation		“I am not sure”	7	24.13
To show a transition to the point		“I want to say smth”	4	13.79
To show a thinking process	Uh	“I am thinking”	9	60
To show hesitation		“I am not sure”	3	20
To show a transition to the main topic		“I want to say smth”	3	20
To show a change in cognitive process	Oh yeah	“I see/notice/remember”	8	57.14
To show confirmation		“Yes”	4	28.57
To show agreement		“I agree with you”	1	7.14
To ask for confirmation		“Really?”	1	7.14
To show surprise	Huh	“Interesting”	12	85.71
To ask for confirmation		“Right?”	2	14.28
To give feedback	Uh-huh	“I am listening”	5	50
To show turn-taking		No precise meaning	5	50
To show surprise	Wow	“Interesting”	4	66.66
To show admiration		“Amazing”	2	33.33
To draw attention	Hey	“I want to learn smth”	4	80
To show annoyance		“I am angry”	1	20
To show surprise	Gosh	“Interesting”	3	75
To show disturbance		“It is disturbing”	1	25

Functions of Interjections	Interjections	Meaning	f	%
To show pleasure	Mmm	"It is delicious"	2	100
To show hesitation	Hmm	"I am not sure"	2	100
To show admiration	Oh wow	"Amazing"	1	100
To show disgust	Ugh	"It is disgusting"	1	100
To show a change in cognitive process	Ooh	"I notice"	1	100
To show anger	Ooh	"I am angry"	1	100
To show surprise	Boy	"Interesting"	1	100