ANALYZING THE ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES BOOK IN TERMS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to examine the social study book in terms of graphic design principles. This research is a qualitative study. Qualitative research is a type of research in which perception, events or circumstances are revealed in a realistic and totalitarian way. In this study, Document Analyses Technique is used as a data collection tool. In this respect, graphic principles criterions are determined firstly and then the images that are used (506 images) in the elementary school social study book are examined. The results show that social study books are found to be of a very low level, in terms of graphic design principles. It turned out that all parts of the social study book show a lack of implementation of graphic design principles. While the most used graphic design principles are: integrity, emphasis and balance, the least adopted ones are: alignment, line spacing, blanks and kerning. In the context of the research, these suggestions are brought forward: a social study lesson book should be made more interesting and should be according to graphic design principles. Priority should be given especially to the chapters where there is a lack of use of graphic design principles. Graphic design principles that are used the least such as line and measurement should be implemented more.

Keywords: Social studies, graphic design, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

Graphic design is a process including the use of 2D or 3D images in a perceptible and understandable level, in order to deliver a message, to develop an image or to visualize an idea (Wikipedia, 2017). Graphic design is a type of language to communicate (Twemlow, 2008). The purpose of graphic design is to maximize effective communication and aesthetic quality. Thus, some principles need to lead the way. Graphic design principles are the overall principles that a designer needs to pay attention to and adhere to while creating a new design.

These principles differ in use from design to design and from designer to designer. Nevertheless, they are collected under certain basic categories. The basic materials of graphic design products are: line, tone, color, tissue, form, measurement and aspect (Becer, 2011). These principles again, contribute to the design to be more technical by having sub-principles amongst them. We can call these sub-principles ''assistant factors connected to the main factors''. When a designer is working on a design, these principles discipline him and lead the way. This is also valid for book page designs.

Page design is organizing the text, display and other graphic design factors as to how it should look on a page after the press for a last time. Page designs are usually done by placing the elements on a grid shaped pattern. Because there are active and passive sections in a page, according to human-eye perception (Ambrose and Harris, 2010). There is a benefit in questioning these factors when a book is examined in terms of meaning:

- Is a design approach discussed for the reader and for the subject in the book?
- Can the visual factors explain what is told in the text without leaving room for misunderstanding? Are the informative or decorative elements in the foreground of the visual use?
- Do the text and the visual factors contribute to delivering the message? Does the reader have problems while reading or watching the photographs and illustrations? Does the style of the factors support the content of the book?

In page design, the process being followed is from general to specific and from whole to detail. Like in other similar designs, there are no certain rules in page designing. The result of a printed page, both in the identification stage and copied stage go through these stages (Uçar, 2004). In addition, the relation between the syntactic aspect of the design and the visual factors is explained:

- Is there visual integrity and continuity in page order, typeface, line blanking, margin and the size of the visual factors?
- Is there a distinct style in the photographs and illustrations - complementing each other in terms of similar or different purposes-? (Becer,2011)

According to many designers, a book is defined by its purpose, more than by its form. Therefore, one of the tasks of the designers is to shape the material of the author, fictionalize it, curatorship and add his own critical views to increase reading experience (Themlow, 2008). Graphic design is important: it has to ensure ability to memorize the course books and to increase students' concentration, as well as being significant in other areas. For an effective design in a course book, it is necessary to use well-selected design elements and to use design principles. In this study, the goal is to examine social study books in terms of graphic design principles.

METHOD

This is a qualitative study. A qualitative study is a study in which perception, events or situations are revealed in a realistic and totalitarian way. In this study, document analysis technique is used as a data-gathering tool. The reason why "document analysis" technique is used in this study is that document analysis techniques can be used in sources such as journals, diaries and recordings, as well as visuals such as drawings and photographs. In this context, firstly, graphic design criterions are determined and the visuals in the book are examined. The data is collected because examining the images with document analysis technique are presented in a systematic way in order for it to become more understandable. Later, suggestions are brought forward related to the data collected in the study.

In this context, firstly graphic design principle criterions are constituted and the images (506 image) which are used in the elementary social study book were examined. The images are graded between one and five according to all of the graphic design principles. Percentage and frequency on the basis of points is provided by the SPSS Package Program.

FINDINGS

General Situation of the Design Principles

As for the general condition of social study book in terms of design principles, it shows that it gets 2.08 points out of five. It proves that social studies book remained low level in terms of graphic design principles.

Status of the Units in Terms of Graphic Design Principles

Table.1 Graphic Design Principle Points of the

Units Point averages of the units	
1. Unit: 2.83	5. Unit: 2.30
2. Unit: 1.90	6. Unit: 1.74
3. Unit: 2.09	7. Unit: 1.91
4. Unit: 1.93	8. Unit: 2.07

Examining the table, firstly it shows that the lowest graphic design point is 1.74 and the highest is 2.30. Hence, it is clear that social study books receive a low grade, taking into consideration that the units received a 2 out of 5.

Social Studies Book in the Extension of Graphic Design Principles

Table.2 Grades in the context of graphic design principles

Graphic Design Principles	
Line: 1.49	Aspect: 2.15
Tone: 2.08	Balance: 2.16
Color: 2.07	Ratio and Proportion: 2.23
Texture: 2.13	Integrity: 2.68
Form: 2.12	Emphasis: 2.61
Measure: 1.62	Contrast: 1.94
Emptiness/Packness: 1.85	Light/Shade: 1.95

When the second table is examined, one can see that social study books receive low and high grades according to different principles. In this context, it is seen that the highest grades of social study books were derived from the principles: integrity, emphasis and balance. Attention is drawn to alignment, line spacing, blanks and kerning, which are the least applied principles.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the research, it is shown that the social study book is in a low level in terms of graphic design principles. In a study conducted by Keser (2004), computer lesson course books in Turkey were examined in terms of applied graphic design principles, and none of the books was able to meet with all of these principles. The result of Keser's study shows similarity with this result of the study. It has been pointed out that all of the chapters remained in a low level in terms of implementation of the graphic design principles. While the most implemented graphic design, principles are: integrity, emphasis and balance, the least implemented ones are: alignment, line spacing, blanks and kerning.

Suggestions below were brought forward as a result of the researches:

- Social study books should be made interesting for students by making use of graphic design principles.
- Priority should be given especially to the chapters where graphic design principles are implemented less.
- The least used graphic design principles, such as line and measure should be implemented more.

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