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A Critical Look at Textbook Evaluation: A Case Study of Evaluating an ESP Course-Book: English for International Tourism

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ABSTRACT: Teachers, students, and textbooks are considered as the three major elements in the process of education. Against the common belief that students are the key in this direction, many scholars hold the view that textbooks are the heart of education with regard to the fact that both teachers and students are to a large extent dependent on the books. Based on this view, textbooks control teacher, students as well as the dynamics of the classroom. Therefore, great care has to be taken in selecting the most appropriate textbooks capable of meeting such factors as teachers' interests and expectations, students' needs, and finally the course objective as well. This is not a goal achieved overnight; rather it requires careful scrutiny and analysis. One solution to this problem is opting for evaluation checklists which have been designed mostly by material developers based on which they can analyze available textbooks in order for the selection and development of the most perfect ones. In this respect, the current study has been developed in order to analyze an available specialized textbook for the students of Tourism on the basis of the evaluation checklist constructed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). The results of the current study have important implications both for language teachers and material developers which will be discussed here.

Key words: Textbook, Textbook Evaluation, Evaluation Checklist

INTRODUCTION

Any person involved within the realm of education has encountered the term evaluation in many cases often integrating it with course evaluation or program evaluation and more specifically with teacher evaluation, student evaluation and more recently textbook evaluation. Thus, at the very beginning it seems essential to know what the term "evaluation" means. Evaluation is a process of inquiry in which data are gathered through different instruments and from different sources. This information is interpreted to make important decisions based on the research results. These decisions might require a change and effect a drastic alteration in the outline and process of a language program instruction. All these efforts are made to the betterment of a course of study and bringing about satisfactory results. Therefore, "Program evaluation is a form of enquiry which describes the achievements of a given program, provides explanations for these, and sets out ways in which further development might be realized" (Kiely, 2009). Kiely (2009) argues that evaluation tries to ensure "quality assurance and enhancement" and creates "a dialogue within programs for ongoing improvement of learning opportunities." Evaluation can contribute not only to learning process but also to teacher change and development. Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) define Evaluation as a dynamic process which investigates the suitability and appropriateness of an existing practice. It is a useful device for both teachers and material writers as an underlying element in the development of innovations and modifications within the teaching /learning context.

As was mentioned, one major area which has drawn the attention of many language scholars and more specifically curriculum developers is the branch of "textbook evaluation". Nowadays, in educational practices throughout the world, textbooks play a vital role, since they are considered as the means of conveying the required materials and knowledge between teachers and students. To do this appropriately, books have to bear certain

characteristics in their every aspect including physical and thematic considerations. With this respect, in last decades a movement known as "textbook evaluation" began to emerge whose goal was to construct checklists based on which a book could be analyzed in detail in order to assure its usefulness and practicality with such factors as proficiency level of students, learners' needs, course objectives, gender, and many other contextual factors. All these factors have to be properly met through textbook's content. So textbooks greatly influence how content is delivered.

Taking the above points into account, the current study is conducted to take an analytical look at the book "English for International Tourism" which has been developed as a textbook for those students who major in Tourism. Textbook evaluation is not merely confined to general ELT textbooks; rather it seems to be even more crucial when it comes to the field of ESP which was introduced in the realm of language teaching and learning following 1960s. Textbooks designed for specialized program of studies should possess characteristics appropriate to course objectives, learners' needs, their proficiency level as well as many other contextual factors. To guarantee the existence of such factors, course-book developers must conduct detailed evaluations of such books before they are used. To have a practical example of this process, this study tries to present an evaluation of a specialized textbook for tourism.

Literature Review
Textbooks: Pros and Cons

English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents to many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors. As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest:

"The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries…No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook".

Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" but also offer considerable advantages - for both the student and the teacher - when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom. As Sheldon (1988) has pointed out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials. O'Neill (1982) has indicated, textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation.

Schmidt, McKnight, and Raizen (1997) identified textbooks as playing an important role in making the leap from intentions and plans to classroom activities, by making content available, organizing it, and setting out learning tasks in a form designed to be appealing to students. To make the most effective use of a textbook, however, teachers must decide which textbooks are appropriate for their needs. A teacher needs to determine the extent to which a textbook focuses on and is aligned with a coherent set of significant, age-appropriate student learning goals that the teacher, school, or district has identified as integral to the understanding of and progress in a particular academic subject. They must also assess how well a textbook's instructional design effectively supports the attainment of those specified learning goals. The only way to gain this information is through careful evaluations of textbooks and other curriculum materials. (Schmidt, McKnight, & Raizen, 1997)

Cunningsworth (1995) is the potential which textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argues that they are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) have pointed out that textbooks may play a pivotal role in innovation. They suggest that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new and/or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own.

Ur (1996) states the advantages of coursebooks as follows: (a) they provide a clear framework which the teacher and the students know where they are going and what is coming next, (b) mostly, they serve as a syllabus which includes a carefully planned and balanced selection of language content if it is followed systematically, (c) they provide readymade texts and tasks with possible appropriate level for most of the class, which save time for the teacher, (d) they are the cheapest way of providing learning material for each student, (e) they are convenient packages whose components are bound in order, (f) they are useful guides especially for inexperienced teachers who are occasionally unsure of their language knowledge, (g) They provide autonomy that the students can use them to learn new material, review and monitor progress in order to be less teacher-dependent.

Despite the advantages mentioned above, textbooks might simultaneously suffer from some problems some of the important ones are discussed here. Researchers such as Porreca (1984), Florent and Walter (1989), Clarke and Clarke (1990), Carrell and Korwitz (1994), and Renner (1997) have demonstrated that many EFL/ESL textbooks still contain rampant examples of gender bias, sexism, and stereotyping. They describe such gender-related inequities as: the relative invisibility of female characters, the unrealistic and sexist portrayals of both men and women, stereotypes involving social roles, occupations, relationships and actions as well as linguistic biases such as 'gendered' English and sexist language. Findings such as these have led researchers to believe that the continuing prevalence of sexism and gender stereotypes in many EFL/ESL textbooks may reflect the unequal power relationships that still exist between the sexes in many cultures, the prolonged marginalization of females, and the misrepresentations of writers with social attitudes that are incongruent with the present-day realities of the target language culture (Sunderland, 1992; Renner, 1997). Other theorists such as Prodromou (1988) and Alptekin (1993) have focused on the use of the target language culture as a vehicle for teaching the language in textbooks and suggest that it is not really possible to teach a language without embedding it in its cultural base. They argue that such a process inevitably forces learners to express themselves within a culture of which they have scarcely any experience and this may result in alienation, stereotyping, or even reluctance or resistance to learning. Phillipson (1992) is also wary of the complex relationship between language textbooks and the target language culture but he sees the promotion of 'Western' (British) global textbooks as government-backed enterprises with both an economic as well as an ideological agenda.

Richards and Renandya (2002) enumerate the disadvantages of textbooks as: (a) they fail to present appropriate and realistic language models, (b) They propose subordinate learner roles, (c) they fail to contextualize language activities, (d) they foster inadequate cultural understanding, (e) they fail to address discourse competence, (f) they fail to teach idioms, (g) they have lack of equity in gender representation.

A final reason for disappointment and skepticism with many ELT textbooks is the fact that they are often regarded as the "…tainted end-product of an author's or a publisher's desire for quick profit" (Sheldon, 1988). Too many textbooks are often marketed with grand artificial claims by their authors and publishers yet these same books tend to contain serious theoretical problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings. They also present disjointed material that is either to limited or too generalized in a superficial and flashy manner and the vast array of "…single edition, now defunct [text]books produced during the past ten years testifies to the market consequences of teachers' verdicts on such practices" (Sheldon, 1988).

Despite the fact that any textbook might be afflicted with some or at least one of the shortcomings motioned above, they still continue to be utilized as the most popular sources of transferring knowledge by all language teachers in their classrooms. However, the reduce the risk as much as possible, textbook developers and curriculum designers prefer to conduct an informative evolution before using a book.

What is Textbook Evaluation

According to Nunan (1988) materials constitute the essential parts of the curriculum. A brief review of the literature relating to materials evaluation reveals that, to date, the focus of attention has been more or less exclusively on predictive evaluation. There are two principal ways in which teachers can carry out this kind of evaluation. One is to rely on evaluations carried out by 'expert' reviewers. Journals like ELT Journal assist teachers in this respect by providing reviews of published course-books. In some cases (such as the Survey Reviews this journal provides from time to time), the reviewers identify specific criteria for evaluating materials. However, in reviews of individual course-books, the criteria often remain inexact and implicit. Alternatively, teachers can carry out their own predictive evaluations. There are numerous checklists and guidelines available to help them do so (e.g. Chambers, 1997; Cunningsworth, 1984; Breen & Candlin, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Littelejohn, 1996; Mathews, 1985; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Shelden, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Tucker, C. A., 1975; Ur, P. 1996). These instruments are generally organized in a manner that reflects the decision-making process which it is hypothesized teachers go through. Breen and Candlin (1987, cited in Ellis, 1997), for example, organize the questions in their checklist into two phases, the first of which enables teachers to address the overall 'usefulness' of the materials, while the second caters for 'a more searching analysis' based on the teacher's actual teaching situation. The idea behind these guides is to help teachers carry out a predictive evaluation systematically. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), textbook evaluation is basically a straightforward, analytical matching process.

Teachers can perform a retrospective evaluation impressionistically or they can attempt to collect information in a more systematic manner (i.e. conduct an empirical evaluation). It is probably true to say that most teachers do carry out impressionistic evaluations of their teaching materials. That is, during the course they assess whether particular activities 'work' (usually with reference to the enthusiasm and degree of involvement manifested

by the students), while at the end of the course they make summative judgments of the materials. Empirical evaluations are perhaps less common, if only because they are time-consuming. However, teachers report using students' journals and end-of-course questionnaires to judge the effectiveness of their teaching, including the materials they used.

Ellis (1997) introduces two types of evaluation namely micro-evaluation and macro-evaluation. A macro-evaluation calls for an overall assessment of whether an entire set of materials has worked. To plan and collect the necessary information for such an empirical evaluation is a daunting prospect. In a micro-evaluation, however, the teacher selects one particular teaching task in which he or she has a special interest, and submits this to a detailed empirical evaluation. A series of micro-evaluations can provide the basis for a subsequent macro-evaluation. However, a micro-evaluation can also stand by itself and can serve as a practical and legitimate way of conducting an empirical evaluation of teaching materials. A micro-evaluation of teaching materials is perhaps best carried out in relation to 'task'. This term is now widely used in language teaching methodology (e.g. Prabhu 1987; Nunan 1989), often with very different meanings. Following Skehan (1996), a task is here viewed as 'an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome'. Thus, the information and opinion and opinion-gap activities common in communicative language teaching are 'tasks'.

Sheldon (1988) has offered several other reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of an ELT textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, or even political investment. A thorough evaluation, therefore, would enable the managerial and teaching staff of a specific institution or organization to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market. Moreover, it would provide for a sense of familiarity with a book's content thus assisting educators in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. This would go a long way in ultimately assisting teachers with making optimum use of a book's strong points and recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks, and entire texts. One additional reason for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very useful in teacher development and professional growth. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) suggest that textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting action research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can also be a valuable component of teacher training programs for it serves the dual purpose of making student teachers aware of important features to look for in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language instruction materials.

As was previously mentioned, the most common method of executing a textbook evaluation is using a valid checklist which is constructed by famous scholars. Next section deals with what a checklist is and introduces the evaluation checklist which has been used in the current project.

Evaluation Checklist

The choice of language teaching materials can determine the quality of learning-teaching procedure. As a part of the materials used in the language classroom, the textbook can often play a crucial role in students' success or failure. Therefore, particular attention must be paid to evaluate such materials based on valid and reliable instruments. One of the common methods to evaluate English Language Teaching (ELT) materials is the checklist. An evaluation checklist is an instrument that provides the evaluator with a list of features of successful learning-teaching materials. According to these criteria, evaluators like teachers, researchers as well as students can rate the quality of the material. (Souri, Kafipur, & Souri, 2011)

Many experts advocate a very detailed examination of a course book's language content, which has led to the production of extensive evaluation checklists. These include Cunningsworth (1984) who touches upon the importance of relating materials to course objectives and the learner's needs and processes. Sheldon's (1988) checklist is very expansive and attempts to assess all aspects of content including such diverse factors as graphics and physical characteristics to authenticity and flexibility.

A review of the ELT material evaluation checklists reveals that they all have a global set of features. For instance, Skierso's (1991) checklist considers the characteristics related to 'bibliographical data', 'aims and goals', 'subject matter', 'vocabulary and structures', 'exercises and activities', and 'layout and physical makeup'. These domains are mostly in line with those in Cunningsworth's (1995) checklist which include 'aims and approaches', 'design and organization', 'language content', 'skills', 'topic', 'methodology', and 'practical considerations'. Although the headings of the sections in the two checklists appear to be different, an examination of the items will show that they are more or less the same. For example, Skierso (1991) refers to the cost-effectiveness of the textbook in the

'bibliographical data' section while Cunningsworth considers it in the 'practical considerations' section. Similarly, Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979) offer an evaluation checklist which is widely referred to for textbook evaluation and consists of five major sections including: (a) subject matter, (b) vocabulary and structures, (c) exercises, (d) illustrations, and finally (e) physical make-up. Each section is composed of several detailed strategies which can be utilized in evaluating and analyzing every textbook.

Ansary and Babaii (2002) believe that although these approaches are the most common and likely straightforward, the shaky theoretical basis of such checklists and the subjectivity of judgments have often been a source of disappointment. Perhaps, that is why the relative merits of such checklists and their criteria, over the years, would diminish and new checklists would be offered.

METHODOLOGY

Materials

The material used for the evaluation purposes in this study is the textbook titled English for International Tourism written by Dubicka and O'Keeffe (2003) for pre-intermediate students majoring in Tourism. This book is published in England by Pearson Education Ltd. In the hotel and tourism industries English language skills are both a daily requirement and essential for career advancement. In order to function professionally in English, students need not only an understanding of the language system but also an awareness of how to implement it effectively and appropriately. To this end, English for International Tourism is a skills-based course supported by a comprehensive language syllabus. This book, which is altogether 146 pages, consists of fifteen units each one including in general the following parts and sections: some activities, exercises and tasks developed based on the four major language skills, that is, speaking, listening, reading, and writing, a pronunciation section, some vocabulary exercises, and a section named Language Focus in which the grammatical point of the unit is presented.

Instrumentation

As was mentioned previously, the most popular instruments used for analyzing textbooks are evaluation checklists. A number of such checklists have been constructed in English by different scholars as we can refer to Cunningsworth's (1995), Sheldon's (1988), and Skierso's (1991). A complete list of popular checklists in English was introduced in the literature above. However, the checklist which has been utilized for the aim of analysis in the present study is the one constructed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). This checklist which is widely referred to and used in analyzing and evaluating textbooks consists of five major sections including: (a) subject matter, (b) vocabulary and structures, (c) exercises, (d) illustrations, and finally (e) physical make-up. Each section itself is composed of several detailed strategies which can be utilized as the criteria based on which the characteristics of a present textbook can be evaluated. (See Appendix A)

Data Analysis

As was mentioned earlier, the present work is a case study project focusing on evaluating a single specialized book using a checklist proposed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). In fact, it is a self-report study using qualitative descriptive analyses. In fact, the researcher tries to analyze and evaluate the current textbook based on the guidelines and framework presented in the available checklist. The researcher has obtained a full knowledge over the whole book including its content and its different exercises as a result of careful examination of the book, consulting the book with some other qualified teachers of English as well as piloting some activities and exercises of the book with some students, at the same level of language proficiency with that the book has determined, in Sharif Language Institute in Asadabad, Hamedan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first section on the checklist: Subject Matter

Concerning the first guideline presented on the checklist, the following points deserve mentioning. Since the current book is written for students interested in Tourism, they have to obtain knowledge in various language skills in order to function effectively and appropriately. For this purpose, a variety of different topics have been presented taking into regard such factors as learners' interests, their gender as well as their age and proficiency level. It has been attempted to focus on topics which are appealing both for males and females or both for children and adults. For example a unit titled Winter Holliday focuses on planning entertainment programs which will be attractive for various learners.

The subject matter is presented topically in an organized manner. A wide range of communicative practice from simple customer service encounters such as hiring a car to preparing and giving mini-presentations have been

provided. The topics are those which students most probably encounter and need to know in everyday world of tourism.

The kind of syllabus designed in this book is to a great a skill-based syllabus, since the students need to obtain professional skills related to tourism. Since this is a specialized textbook, unlike most general ELT textbooks, here the needs of the students are given a special priority as we know that needs analysis was introduced within the realm of language teaching and learning with ESP movement. Therefore, taking a look at the table of contents, it is crystal clear that topics are arranged based on the needs of the learners. To take as examples units 4 and 6 titled respectively as City Tours and Cruise Ships present exactly the subject matter areas needs for students of Tourism in which students have to acquire such skills as Give a Guided Tour, Describe a Building, Write a CV, Apply for a Job, Interview for a Job and the like. In fact, all the topics presented through the whole book turn around the skill areas required for students of tourism.

As it is mentioned in the glossary section at the introductory pages of the book, it has been attempted to include authentic texts in order to give students firsthand experience of web-pages, job advertisements, hotel bills, customer service questionnaires, menus and entertainment programs. Also extracts have been integrated from Dorling Kinderstyle's Eyewitness Travel Guides because they are visually attractive, motivating and relevant for learners. Therefore, it can be claimed that the materials are not haphazardly chosen; rather they are accurate and up-to-date.

Vocabulary and Structures

As was noted earlier, this book is written for pre-intermediate students, thus the vocabulary and grammatical structures must be appropriate to this level. As the book is designed for vocational students, the vocabularies are industry-related ranging from hotel duties and facilities to cruise ships and ecotourism. Also, the vocabulary has been recycled and extended in the consolidation units and workbook. However, selection and gradation of vocabulary items are not mainly on the basis of simplicity and frequency of occurrence. There is no clear list of vocabulary items; just every lesson contains one or two vocabulary activities mostly in matching format. These are either words matching with pictures or a list of words which have to be matched with their definitions. Therefore, as is seen direct vocabulary exercises are limited, even though in such specialized courses vocabulary plays a very crucial role.

The words are not accompanied with their phonetic transcription. Learning pronunciation has been limited to one random pronunciation exercise in very lesson in which a single sound or a technical component such as stress or intonation is practiced. The textbook is provided with an audio CD by which students can practice listening subconsciously, however, it is not sufficient and students need to learn pronunciation technically. Since there are not sufficient number of exercises meant for practicing vocabulary items, abilities like guessing the meaning of unknown words, or finding synonyms or antonyms are neglected. Such activities could be incorporated through vocabulary games, word puzzles, and vocabulary quizzes which are absent in the present book.

Every lesson in the current textbook presents a specific topic related to the vocation of tourism. Thus in each unit a special set of words related to that single topic are practiced without considering the vocabulary presented in the previous lessons. In each new lesson there is no indication to the previously learned vocabulary as we do not see any vocabulary repeated for the aim of reinforcement.

Nowadays no EFL textbook likes to be purely grammatical in terms of selection and gradation of language materials. The authors of this book also seem to realize that the focus should be on developing communicative competence of the students rather than grammatical competence. However, there is a sufficient treatment of grammar in this textbook. In every unit, the grammatical structure to be practiced has been presented in a box with the title language focus. The authors seem to realize that the basis for speaking a foreign language with confidence is an understanding of its structural system. Therefore, they have tried to integrate a comprehensive language syllabus specific to the communicative needs of their students. Grammar is always presented in context and extensively practiced. Language functions are purposes for which people use language e.g. greeting, apologizing, complaining, describing, etc. Functions should combine appropriate grammatical structures used in particular situations with purposes. In this textbook, functional language is also presented in context and then highlighted in professional practice boxes that provide useful frameworks for key customer service encounters such as telephone bookings, giving advice, and dealing with problems.

Contrary to the vocabulary which did not follow a clear line of progression, the grammatical points as well as their sequence is appropriate and systematically organized and presented in an order of difficulty. The structures gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing proficiency level of students. For example, as is seen, the first lesson deals with simple present tense, the second with the continuous tense while third lesson presents the simple past structure. Successively in next units more difficult structures like Conditionals and Relative Pronouns

are presented. Immediately, after each language focus section an activity is provided in which students are required to practice the grammatical point. The authors try to use everyday language by introducing topics and situations which the students may encounter normally in their real life. For instance, the first lesson All in a Day's Work revolve around the routine affairs that are faced with a reporter, a porter, an accountant, a bartender and the like. Realistic tasks have been created based on a variety of authentic texts to give students firsthand experience of web-pages, job advertisements, hotel bills, customer service questionnaires, menus and entertainment programs.

Taking into account the sections and tasks presented in the lessons, one can notice that they do not follow a fixed order. As we see that for example in the first lesson we come across with Speaking, Reading and Vocabulary while in the second lesson we have Speaking, Listening and Reading. There is a disorderly and illogical presentation of various activities in each lesson.

An advantage of this book is that linguistic items are introduced in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation. This has been achieved mostly with the help of various colorful pictures throughout the whole book. Bringing real pictures beside every text and linguistic item help assimilate the situation satisfactorily. The textbook has sufficient number of pictures to make the situation more life-like.

Exercises

To a large extent the activities and tasks built in each unit evolve around the four major language skills. However, the balance between listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills development in the book is not appropriate to the learners and learning situation. The textbook devote a particular space for two language skills, that is, listening and speaking. Reading is paid little attention and writing is just limited to some units. Most of the speaking activities are mainly based on pair work only, giving very little attention to other communicative activities like group work, simulation, role play, etc. Reading activities are mainly limited to question-answer types that range from simple scanning questions to questions that ask for opinions and arguments. Although the reading texts have wide coverage of topics and content, they considerably lack variety in materials and activities.

Writing exercises are limited, but they are good tasks of writing intended to improve writing ability of the students as well as to practice the grammatical structures presented in each lesson. The textbook incorporates actual activities and tasks like writing experiences or a diary, writing a letter to a friend etc. There are also challenging writing tasks, for example, writing an email describing a hotel, writing a letter of complaint, etc. The good point is that the textbook leads students from simple controlled writing activities to guided writing activities, and gradually expose free activities.

Selection and gradation of vocabulary items are not mainly on the basis of simplicity and frequency of occurrence. Also there are not sufficient number of exercises meant for practicing vocabulary items attempting to develop the ability, for example, to guess the meaning of unknown words, or to find synonyms or to find antonyms. Such activities can be incorporated through vocabulary games, word puzzles, and vocabulary quizzes.

A positive point observable within the book is the presence of a review unit which is designed after each five lessons under the titles Consolidation. Overall, there are fifteen units and three consolidations presented as consolidation 1, 2 and 3. Each Consolidation unit consists of the review exercises of the main points learned through the previous lessons. It starts with an exercise to practice the grammatical points, but this time without direct explanation of the grammatical structure. It also includes reading, speaking and writing tasks mainly focusing on those topics previously mentioned but this time again in a new context within an innovative task or activity.

All the activities, exercises or tasks are following the ultimate goal of promoting meaningful communication. Great attempt has been made to achieve this goal by providing authentic materials as well as meaningful activities similar to realistic and routine practices occurring in everyday life of people.

Illustrations

One point which can be actually referred to as one of the strengths of the current book is its use of a variety of beautiful, colorful, and real pictures which serve two main functions. First, these illustrations make the book and its content very appealing and motivating for the students. Second, it refers to the linguistic advantage of the pictures as they provide a meaningful context for each activity and help students to understand the materials and make sense of the tasks better. Making use of visualization techniques is a strategy which has been emphasized in various teaching methodologies and is considered as a vital technique by material developers in designing instructional materials. In this book, illustrations and pictures both cartoonist and real ones taken from either internet pages or real photos are encouraging and make the situations more real-like. The topic page of every unit is both provided with a detailed picture as well as the unit topic which together have an important role in activating the background knowledge of the students. Hence, students, using their schemata, can guess what the coming text

is about. Also, every reading, speaking, and listening task is provided with a related picture just close to the text which all are effective in creating meaning. Even the grammatical exercises which test the structural knowledge of the students are also equipped with a related picture which activates the meaning part of the activity.

Physical Make-up

The last section on the evaluation checklist used for the purpose of data analysis in this project is assigned to the Physical Make-up. Almost, all the existing evaluation checklists include this section sometimes titled differently, for example Lay-out or Physical Appearance, which reveals the fact that it is a crucial factor to be considered in designing every textbook. In fact, students make their first impression of every book based on its physical appearance regardless of its content. There many publication companies in every country, but they are not all given the same value or credit by material developers and textbook writers. This judgment, to a great extent, is based on the value of their work in such aspects as the printing quality, the material used in paper sheets and the cover page, and in general the durability of their work which all affect our judgments of a printed book. For instance, good printing not only makes a book attractive but also motivates the learners to read, whereas crowded printing or small fonts demotivate the students or at times it has been observed that bad appearance of a book has caused readers not even take a look at a single page of it. With regard to this criterion, the used textbook here gets an acceptable or perhaps the best score in comparison to the other criteria mentioned so far. The results of evaluation are as follows:

The paper used for the textbook is of good quality; each sheet is quite thick and ensures durability of the texts. Binding is not so strong, but the physical appearance is interesting and attractive. The good printing, size and type of the fonts used in this book undoubtedly guarantee the smooth readability of the texts. The layout is clear and well-organized. The topic of each unit is written in bold type. Reading passages are of normal font size that is just right for the first graders. All the letters unanimously are in black color. There are no traces of weak points in the font size for topic and exercises, the top, bottom, left and right margins, the space between words, sentences, lines and paragraphs, the quality and color of ink used, etc. The researcher went thoroughly through the textbook but found no cases of errors. It ensures thorough editing and proofreading of the textbook. The titles and subtitles are in different font and color which attract the attention of the students. On the whole, in terms of practical considerations the book is satisfactory and well-organized.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The process of language education involves many elements often learners considered as the center. However, this common belief is rejected when textbooks as sources of providing input are seen to control the instruction to a large extent.

Textbooks play a very crucial role in the process, since both teachers and students rely heavily on them. In fact, textbooks occupy a mediating position between teachers and students and thus have to bear certain characteristics to make them an appropriate connector. Taking these points into account, one of the important measures facing EFL educators is the selection of the textbook. This is a vital decision which will affect teachers, students, and the overall classroom dynamic.

An appropriate textbook needs to have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method and technique which suit the students and their needs. Choosing an appropriate textbook is not an easy job and may take a lot of time and energy. To compensate for such complexity and make the process simpler, evaluation checklists have been referred to as a good strategy for choosing appropriate textbooks. Evaluation procedure or checklist can lead to a more systematic and thorough examination of potential textbooks and to enhanced outcomes for learners, instructors, and administrators. These checklists have been considered as the basis not only for selecting general EFL books but also for selecting specialized books designed for those students who are majoring in ESP courses.

To have a practical example, this study was conducted to evaluate the specialized book of English for International Tourism based on the checklist developed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). The obtained results showed that the current book can be used as an acceptable textbook to teach to students who are interested in studying tourism. The characteristics of the book were mainly analyzed in two general dimensions concerning the physical appearance and its content in such aspects as grammar, vocabulary, exercises, and illustrations. Overall, the lay-out and the physical appearance of the current book proved to be perfect in that the practical elements in this regard including the cover, the font, the size, the color, and the design of the whole book were shown to match the guidelines presented in the evaluation checklist. Regarding the content, it should be mentioned that since the used syllabus was mainly skill-based, attempt had been made to make the students communicatively competent in using the required skills in tourism industry. The activities and exercises were mostly speaking and listening based

with some writing and reading tasks developed simultaneously in the form of meaningful tasks. Visualization was a major technique utilized in this book using various colorful pictures taken from internet or real world photos which were all intended to make the book and its content attractive and motivating. Grammar focus sections revolved around the important grammatical structures which were necessary to produce in relation to the skills presented in each unit. Among the advantages of the current book, the Review Units, the audio CD, the listening scripts as well as the grammar glossary presented at the end of the book were noticeable.

Finally, the findings of the present study bear significant implications for material developers and both general and specialized EFL teachers. First of all, it is hoped that this textbook analysis provides the necessary insight for all language teachers to conduct such a procedure in their own practice of textbook selection. Teachers will obtain the information that there are various evaluation checklists which can guide them in analyzing various instructional books. Both teachers and material developers should notice that a variety of factors should be taken into account in designing and selecting a book. The important proverb: Don't Judge a Book by its Cover, reflects this important point that beside the cover of a book there are many practical criteria which careful scrutiny while selecting a course-book for students. Moreover, the needs of the students as well as the course objectives need to be considered in the very beginning stages of evaluating a textbook.

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Exploring EFL Learners Reading Comprehension Problems in Reading ESP Texts Amir Rezaei, Mohammad Ali Rahimi. Â For the purpose of the study, five passages from their coursebook were selected and they were asked to underline the syntactically problematic parts in the passages. The subjects of the study were composed of 185 homogenous engineering students who were learning english as a foregin langauge. Â More often ESP students success in their specific subject of study is bound to their ability to read sufficiently in English. Â English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. TESOL Quarterly, 25(2), Jordan, R. R. (1997). Evaluating and synthesizing information found in a variety of sources requires advanced cognitive skills, "representing a literacy that is far beyond what is needed in a more constrained environment, such as with textbooks where all the information is contained within one source" [12, p. 6]. This simple example shows that while technology makes simple tasks easier, it places a greater burden on. Â Thus, one of the objectives of an ESP / EAP course should be to teach English in the way that will enable students to effectively use resources available online. In the context of ESP / EAP, one of the teaching aims should be to develop those language skills, or sub-skills, which will help students improve their ICT use, make it more effective. A critical look at textbook evaluation: A case study of evaluating an ESP course-book: English for international tourism. Jan 2013. 372-380. S N Sarem. H Hamidi. R Mahmoudie. Sarem, S.N., Hamidi, H., & Mahmoudie, R. (2013). Â What do textbook evaluation schemes tell us? A study of textbook evaluation schemes of three decades. Jan 2002. 52-68. A Riazi. Riazi, A. (2002). What do textbook evaluation schemes tell us? A study of textbook evaluation schemes of three decades.