



Research Paper

Evaluating English Textbook for Beginners in Sudan

Dr: Abdulbagi Babiker Ali & Dr: Fatima Ibrahim Eltayeb

Jazan University .kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This paper is about evaluating English textbook of third level at the basic school by using check list based on external and internal evaluation for the book. The study uses an interview as tool for data collection from the EFL teachers at basic school at Managil Locality which consists of (20) teachers. The paper briefly discusses the external evaluation and then concludes with the results of a detailed evaluation of all book chapters. The evaluation indicated that the book needs qualified teacher and special aids to teach. Using computer is useful in teaching the book. The paper recommended that: teacher need training to teach this book. The ministry of education should equip the school by teaching aids in special visual aids like video, computer, projector to motivate students learn the new language.

Key word: Evaluation – Third level- - Basic Schools - Smile Book

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I. Introduction

Second language learning is defined by Lado (1964) as acquiring the ability to use its structures within a general vocabulary under essentially the condition of normal communication among native speakers at normal conversational speed

In recent years, English language teaching in developing countries has taken a new approach. A need has arisen to specify the aims of English learning more precisely than in terms of the learning of formal grammar as English has been required to play important role in our society. Throughout the world, students at different levels of education find it as a struggle to learn English. In most of the countries English has taken a unique position that all the students or scholars are pushed to the situation where they cannot have better career or higher education without the knowledge of English. The students remain in a compulsory situation to learn English in order to stand up to one's own expectations. In India, English was given an important place before independence. In most of the institutions English had been the medium of instruction. The students were happy to learn the language because native speakers of English taught it. The study of English was considered to be a superior quality not only status wise but also for career that the child is expected to interact through English with his family members, neighbors in various types of interaction.

Second language learning takes place in different manners. Generally, second language learner always has the tendency to view the second language through the grammatical rules of his/her first language. Then, it is needless to say that the influence of the mother tongue will be on the second language at every level starting from phonology to syntax. This is the reason why the researchers often distinguish between language learning and acquisition. While learning the second language, the phenomenon of interference from the mother tongue is the one, which is inevitable for most of the learners. It is the main reason to develop the second language, methodology in such a way that the above-mentioned interference should be avoided to great extent.

The Need for Evaluation

On a daily basis, we as teachers evaluate the materials that we teach, but this type of evaluation is not sufficient. If our purpose is to maximize learning, then we must conduct systematic evaluations (Brown 1995, Ellis 1997, Richards 2001). In my situation, I have a range of textbooks from which to choose, but the selection process can be time-consuming and expensive (McDonough & Shaw 2001; Karimi 2006). Evaluation is a 'matching process; matching needs to available solutions' (Hutchinson and Waters 1987 cited in Sheldon 1988: 237). This statement is true in my situation, as I am striving to satisfy the needs of my learners. I am attempting to find the book that contains solutions to all or most of my learners' deficiencies. As this course is related to the careers of individuals, the materials must be selected carefully (Hutchinson et al. 1987, 1994). As Sheldon states, '[t]he selection of a particular core volume signals an executive educational decision in which there is

considerable professional, financial and even political investment the definition and application of systematic criteria for assessing course books are 'vital' (1988: 237).

The McDonough and Shaw (2003) evaluation model saves us a significant amount of time and effort. These authors suggest two stages: external and internal evaluation. In the first stage, a teacher can scan a book, obtain a general idea regarding the materials and then decide whether the materials conform to his expectations. If the text satisfies his requirements, then he can progress to the next stage, which consists of an in-depth analysis of the materials. The researcher chosen this model because it is the most appropriate, time-saving, economical and applicable method of evaluation for my situation. In simple terms, this model a 'universal model' that can be useful in nearly any context. According to Sheldon (1987), Dudley and Evans cited an instance in which some Egyptian teachers used questionnaires, interviews and seminars as means of evaluation. These methods can be effective if they are well managed, but the authors also cited some drawbacks of these techniques, such as embarrassing situations for teachers in interviews and some types of speech disorders in seminars.

II. The External Evaluation

After performing a brief yet accurate scan of the blurbs, contents, and introduction, the paper can confidently state that the claims of the book are true. The claims in the blurbs by the authors are exemplified throughout the book. To account for the additional materials, we must adopt certain assumptions. The book is part of a package that includes a teacher's book, audio cassettes, progress tests and a workbook. In book context, the researcher focusing on the core material rather than the supplementary materials. The book cover a range of vocabulary and terminology. The use of visuals is appropriate to the context in the book. The books employ comics, which students are likely to find entertaining.

III. The Internal Evaluation

After examined the basic surface structure of the book, the researcher proceeded to conducting a deeper analysis in terms of several criteria. we have read the eight chapters from the book and examined several exercises from different chapters.

3.1 The Language

The presentation

This criterion corresponds to the following questions. What skills are covered? How are the language and exercises presented? How much space are they given? This part has a special focus on listening in addition to some speaking (pronunciation) exercises. This inclusion can be justified by the carefully constructed syllabus on which this book is based, as claimed in the blurb. Because the listening materials are available, the paper cannot evaluate them. Some units have writing exercises, and a few units have reading exercises. The main topic is presented first in the form of listening/speaking activities followed by some exercises pertaining to grammatical components combined with vocabulary, and each part concludes with one or more skill activities. The characteristic of the book with which the studymost pleased is the integration of the language in the exercises. Communicative exercises are primarily in the form of role play with some comprehension exercises. These exercises can be used as communicative exercises by, for instance, converting them into a discussion activity.

3.2 Reading Type

It is important to consider the type of reading. This consideration could greatly affect the adaptation of the materials for learners. In terms of adapting material, a teacher could like a book despite the unsuitability of the reading type for the needs, levels or styles of his or her students (Sheldon 1988). straightforward language but becomes increasingly difficult as learners progress towards more advanced units.

3.3 Authenticity

Authentic material is the one of the primary demands of my learners. They seek authentic materials for two reasons:

First, the students have not been exposed to such materials during their study of English in schools.

Second, such a feature will certainly assist them in achieving success in the course and in their careers. As previously stated, listening materials and aids for Book are not available. By examining the listening transcript at the end of the book, we can determine that the materials are not authentic. The remainder of the exercises appear to be written for the sake of the book. The book could contain some authentic exercises, as I have not fully examined every exercise. The paper would also suggest considering whether the tasks in the book correspond to those that learners are likely to encounter outside of the classroom and whether these texts assist them in communicating.

Fortunately, The book achieve these aims.

3.4 Appropriateness

The study will use this term to refer to whether materials are appropriate for learners in terms of difficulty, style and expectations. As we used a negotiated syllabus and as a result of time restrictions, the learners are likely to use a self-study strategy. To expect the materials in this book to provide students with new situations and enable them to think or ask questions about new information. Thus, the paper must carefully examine some units in the book. The teacher provides students with opportunities for self-study, as the book is comprehensive and coherent. Students can practice the exercises, which are clear and require no guidance.

As previously mentioned, the package contains an answer key for the exercises, a full transcript of the listening materials and progress tests to ensure that students can maintain their progress. However, I doubt that the abilities of lower intermediate non-native speakers are sufficient to cope with this book on their own; such students may require the assistance of a teacher. The book provide new contexts, culture and information to the third level students. This request leads us to an additional concern regarding the suitability of materials: the teacher/learner mismatch. The final determination is governed by the experience of a teacher, the objective of a book and the needs of learners.

3.5 Culture

would rather consider this criterion part of the internal evaluation, as it is important to students. Thus, the study must ensure appropriateness for our students. Because of some restrictions that are imposed by the Ministry of Education, certain the book whose contents primarily contradict the Islamic and Sudanese culture are banned or forbidden from being taught. Visuals of wine, for example, are not accepted, nor are articles or topics that teach other religions. If allowed by the Ministry, such materials can be used anywhere, except in schools. This factor exerts a significant amount of pressure on teachers. Sheldon notes that 'publishers sometimes neglect matters of cultural appropriateness; they fail to recognise the likely restrictions operative in most teaching situations' (1988: 239).

The books contain some visuals of wine. students who know the real purpose of writing such books and know that these visuals are only illustrations. These images are not intended to teach or offend students. Moreover, this book is included under the private section rather than the public section that the Ministry controls. Furthermore, by basing our course on a negotiated syllabus, we can exclude material that is deemed offensive.

Evaluating EFL Textbooks and Materials

ELT course book publishing is a multi-million pound industry, yet the whole business of product assessment is haphazard and under-researched. Course books are often seen by potential consumers—teachers, learners and educational purchasers—as market ephemera requiring invidious compromises between commercial and pedagogical demands. Some practical and theoretical reasons for such grassroots discontent are discussed, as are previous textbook studies and qualitative 'checklists'. The state of the informational assistance available to intending purchasers is also examined. Finally, as set of 'common core' qualitative criteria is advanced, whose purpose would be to make evaluation and selection more systematic and informed.

Methodology

The study adopt descriptive analytical method and an interview as a tool of data collection.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consist of (20) EFL teachers at basic school from Managil Locality.

The Tool of the Study

I this paper the researcher use an interview to collect data, the interview was consist of (6) question. The teacher answer question then the researcher discuss this answers in a part of this paper.

IV. Data Analysis and Discussion

The smile book in the third level in basic school.

There are (8) chapter in the **smile** of the third level; in basic school.

Teachers interview

Questions (1) What about the smile book for third level at basic school?

70% of the teachers agree that the book is good and suitable for third students level but it needs some enhancement on teaching ways and method.

Questions (2) what is about the book language and divides?

The majority of teachers agree that language is simple and suitable for teachers and students but teachers need some aids to teach the book clearly and easily.

Questions (3) Can the materials be generalized? Will they be useful for all learners?

(100%) of the teacher say yes .

Question (4) Do you think that teacher needs special training to teach smile book?

(90%) of the teachers strongly agree that teacher needstraining to teach the book beside training about using technology aids alike (C.D, Flash , projector etc....) .

Question (5) Is the material flexible in the book ?

(89%) of the respondents agree that the material is more flexible.

Question (6) What about the teaching aids ?

All the teachers agree that this book needs special aids like monitors computer video audio to motivate students learn ability.

V. Conclusion

Contacting EL teachers at the basic level, collecting their views about the book, the study arrives at the following findings:

- 1.The content is well-organized.
- 2.The book can match students' needs at this stage.
- 3.The book is enjoyable as its easy for teachers .
- 4.The material depends on modern teaching, allowing for discussions.
- 5.most EL teachers are not trained to teach it effectively.

Recommendations:

In the light of the above-mentioned result, the study recommends the following:

- 1.There should be a training program for EL teachers on all units of the book.
- 2.There should be continuous discussions, seminars and workshops on dealing with this book.
- 3.EL teachers should be trained on using technology (CD, data show, projector, etc...)

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