



Evaluation of English Language Textbooks Prescribed by Sindh Textbook Board for Intermediate Level: Issue of Conformity to the National English Curriculum Objectives

Stephen John¹, Prof. Dr. Syed Abdul Aziz²
Dr. Aijaz Ahmed³, Nowshaba Sharf⁴, Muhammad Sohail Ishaque⁵

Received 04 December, 2013; Accepted 25 July, 2014 © The author(s) 2014. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

ABSTRACT:- The English language teaching/learning has many important components but the essential one for both teachers and students in the classroom is a textbook. The purpose of the present study was to conform that whether textbooks contents match to the specification given in the National Language Curriculum or not. For the purpose textbooks prescribed by Sindh Textbook Board for teaching of English to the students of intermediate level were selected and were compared with National Language curriculum-2006. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research. A tailor made questionnaire consisting 09 closed-ended questions was used to get the opinion of the users of the textbooks. The findings show that the teaching do not get chance to go through the curriculum and the textbooks contents do not match with the specifications given in the National Language Curriculum-2006 which one is the latest curriculum developed in Pakistan. On the bases of finding it is recommended that learners needs and interest should be given due consideration in the National Language Curriculum, the teachers should provided opportunity to read the curriculum and textbooks contents should be matched with the specifications given the curriculum.

I. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching/learning has many important components but the essential one for both teachers and students in the classroom is the textbook. This is also the most important focus of this research project. Teachers feel that it is very difficult for them to teach systematically without a textbook. Indeed, the textbook plays a crucial role in providing a base of materials for both teachers and learners. Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks do not only present the visible heart of any program but also offer substantial advantages for both students and the teacher when they are being used in the classroom.

Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p.315) opine that “the textbook is an almost universal element of teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in different countries. No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook”.

Cunningsworth (1995) identifies number of roles that textbooks can serve in the curriculum, including (a) a syllabus based on pre-determined learning objectives, (b) an effective resource for self-directed learning, (c) an effective medium for presentation of new material, (d) a source of ideas and activities, (e) a reference source for students, and (f) support for less experienced teachers who need to gain confidence.

Further to this, Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p.232) identify four ways in which textbooks can help in times of educational changes: first as a vehicle for teacher and learner training; second because they provide

¹ Assistant Professor, Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), Karachi, PAKISTAN

² Dean HIESS, Hamdard University Karachi, PAKISTAN

³ Associate Professor, Department of Education, Federal Urdu University (FUUST), Karachi, PAKISTAN

⁴ Senior Lecturer in Educational Development Course & Ph.D Research Scholar in HIESS, Karachi, Pakistan

⁵ Research Scholar in IQRA University (IU) Karachi, Pakistan

support and relief from the burden of looking for materials; third by providing as complete a picture as possible of what the change will look like; and fourth through the psychological support they give to teachers.

Cunningsworth (1984) confirms that no textbook is totally suited with a particular teaching situation. However, the role of the textbook is to be in the service of teachers and learners but not to be their master. So the relationship between a teacher and textbook shares common goals to which each side brings its special contribution. Besides, the aims of the textbook should seek to meet the needs of the learner to the highest degree.

Cunningsworth (1984) offers the following set of guidelines which can form the basis of formulating a personalized criteria checklist having local relevance:

- i. The selected materials should be related to the teaching objectives.
- ii. The material should utilize activities which are interesting, involving, and intellectually stimulating for the learners.
- iii. The students should be able to relate personally to the subject matter used in the materials.
- iv. The materials should present and practice English in a systematic and comprehensive way.

A curriculum which has been influenced by broad goals related to attainment places stress on product dimension, where 'product' implies expected objectives of the course or the behavior to be performed (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986; Finney, 2002). Those objectives which aim at accuracy and utilize discrete elements of grammar can be classified as 'knowledge based objectives'. On the other hand, the objectives focusing on the actual use of language are referred to as 'skills based objectives'.

According to Newby (2000), foreign language curriculum has three main functions. First of all, they clarify objectives, content and methods in an educational program. Secondly, they regularize and thus ensure a certain uniformity of content and expected outcomes. Thirdly, they can guide the process of teaching and learning.

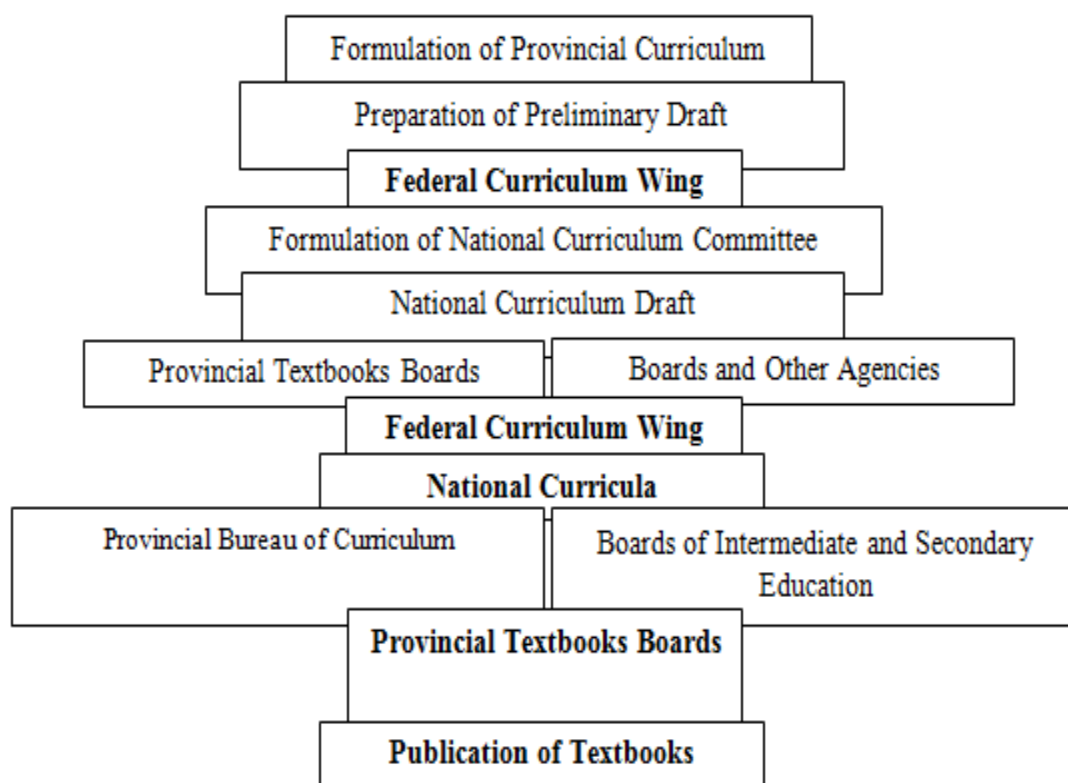
In some institutes the textbooks for the academic areas of instruction to a large extent determine the scope and sequence of the curriculum and the nature of learning experiences. It is mostly true of Pakistan where a single textbook approach is adopted and the teachers do not use the course of study planned for their guidance.

Various steps involved in Curriculum Development in Pakistan are listed below:

- i. Curriculum Wing requests the Provincial Centers to prepare draft curricula for each subject taught in various classes up to class XII.
- ii. Provincial Centers call in Committees of experts, teachers, and subject specialists on each subject.
- iii. Provincial Curriculum Committees prepare curriculum plan.
- iv. The draft plan is sent to the Curriculum Wing.
- v. Curriculum Wing circulates the drafts to the selected teachers, subject specialists in schools, colleges and other agencies concerned and invites comments.
- vi. The comments are reviewed by the Curriculum Wing.
- vii. The National Committee of Curriculum scrutinizes the drafts in the light of the comments.
- viii. The Committee submits its recommendations to the Ministry of Education.
- ix. Secretary of Education accords necessary approval.
- x. The curriculum schemes duly approved are passed on to the Provincial Textbooks Boards for preparation of textbooks (Farooq, 2005).

Curriculum development to textbooks preparation process can be viewed in the graphical presentation given as under:

Curriculum Development Process in Pakistan



National English Language Curriculum (2006)

National English Language Curriculum (2006) is the latest curriculum in Pakistan. The following Competencies, Standards and Benchmarks for Grade XI and XII are mentioned in the National Curriculum (2006)

Competency 1: Reading and Thinking Skills

Standard 1: All students will search for, discover and understand a variety of text types through tasks which require multiple reading and thinking strategies for comprehension, fluency and enjoyment.

BM 1 Evaluate patterns of text organization, function of various devices used within and beyond a paragraph in a text.

BM 2 Analyze, synthesize and evaluate events, issues and view points, applying reading comprehension and thinking strategies.

BM 3 Analyze and synthesize information from a visual cue or graphic organizer to summarize, highlighting the key areas and main trends.

BM 4 Gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information to use for a variety of purposes including a research project using various aids and study skills.

Standard 2: All students will read and analyze literary text to seek information, ideas, enjoyment; and to relate their own experiences to those of common humanity as depicted in literature.

BM 1 Analyze and evaluate short stories, poems and essays and one-act plays; relate how texts affects their lives and connect the texts to contemporary / historical ideas and issues across cultures.

Competency 2: Writing Skills

Standard 1: All students will produce with developing fluency and accuracy, academic, transactional and creative writing, which is focused, purposeful and shows an insight into writing process.

BM 1 Analyze and evaluate a variety of written discourse to use in their own compositions, techniques for effective text organization, development and author's techniques that influence the reader.

BM 2 Write expository, persuasive, analytical essays, research reports and extended narratives for multiple purposes and audiences.

BM 3 Write a variety of interpersonal and transactional texts, e.g. business letters, applications on advertisements, resume, forms for a range of purposes in real life situations using vocabulary, tone, style of expression, conventions appropriate to the communicative purpose and context.

BM 4 Plan, draft, revise, edit their own texts in areas such as, cohesion and coherence, effectiveness or arguments/opinions, sufficient supporting details, creativity, appropriate punctuation and vocabulary.

Competency 3: Oral Communication Skills

Standard 1: All students will use appropriate social and academic conventions of spoken discourse for effective oral communication with individual and groups, in both informal and formal settings.

BM 1 Use a variety of linguistic exponents to communicate appropriately for various functions and co-functions of inquiries, persuasions, arguments, comparisons, evaluations in a wide range of contexts.

BM 2 Demonstrate through formal talks, individual oral presentations and job interviews, the social and academic conventions and dynamics to communicate information / ideas.

Competency 4: Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language

Standard 1: Pronunciation: All students will understand and articulate widely acceptable pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns of English language for improved communication.

BM 1 Pronounce (acceptably) new lexical terms, and use appropriate stress and intonation pattern in sustained speech to communicate effectively.

Vocabulary: All students will enhance vocabulary for effective communication.

BM 1 Evaluate different kinds of texts to understand how lexical items change meaning and style, use lexical items to show finer shades of meaning and style in their own speech and writing.

Standard 3: Grammar and Structure: All students will understand grammatical functions and use the principles of grammar, punctuation, and syntax for developing accuracy in their spoken and written communication.

BM 1 Apply grammatical functions and concepts of tense and aspect, transitional devices and model verbs in their speech and writing.

BM 2 Recognize and use punctuation to evaluate complex texts of style and changes in meaning and to use in writing of bibliographies and reference lists.

BM 3 Analyze sentences types and structure, recognize and apply the concepts and function of coordination and subordination in extended writing tasks for increased effectiveness in communication.

Competency 5: Appropriate Ethical and Social Development

Standard 1: All students will develop ethical and social attributes and values relevant in a multicultural civilized society.

BM 1 Recognize and practice values and attributes such as tolerance, humanism, patience, equity, justice, honesty, empathy, etc., relevant for peaceful coexistence between individuals, groups and nations.

BM 2 Develop and portray through actions, a sense of importance of individual worth simultaneously valuing diversity and equality among people.

BM 3 Understand and evaluate contemporary social, economic and scientific developments/issues so as to participate in the global society as aware and thinking individuals

Themes and Topics

The following topics are recommended in the National Curriculum (2006) for Classes XI & XII:

- i. Character Building
- ii. Austerity
- iii. Tolerance, humanism, equity between groups and nations
- iv. Handling sharing responsibilities
- v. Conflict resolution
- vi. Understanding international cultural diversity
- vii. The world
- viii. Rise of nations through national pride
- ix. Appreciation and preservation of nature
- x. Gender inequality detrimental to society
- xi. Population growth and its implications

- xii. Tourism, its impact on society
- xiii. Technology and society of future
- xiv. Choosing careers / occupations
- xv. Respect for all professions. (Valuing disparity and equality among professions)
- xvi. Media skills and communication
- xvii. Role of youth in crises management
- xviii. Public behavior
- xix. Sense of individual and public responsibility
- xx. Prevention from crime

The textbook situation in Pakistan has been dismal and marred by inefficiency and inadequacy as even recognized by the research conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education itself. In Pakistan the education publishing sector as a whole and the role of textbooks and learning material can play in development of education are largely underdeveloped. The learning environment of government as well as many private schools is passive. (National Education Policy Review Team, 2006)

The textbooks prescribed for public sector are quite old and have no match with the present language curriculum of Pakistan. Moreover, there is no emphasis on application of knowledge and this encourages rote learning.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been highlighted by number of scholars that textbooks plays a vital role in teaching and learning process, moreover students depend totally on textbook and spend most of their time in reading it for preparation of the examination.

Research Questions

1. Do the teachers get opportunity to study National Curriculum?
2. Do the textbooks contents match with the instructional objectives given in the National English Language Curriculum?

III. METHODOLOGY

Mixed approach was used during the research both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the study. The research was based upon descriptive study because it describes the relationship of textbooks contents with the developed national curriculum and impact of textbooks on the teaching and learning process.

The population of the study was the teachers teaching English at intermediate level in Karachi, Sindh.

Procedure

The study was conducted on the 05 textbooks prescribed by the Sindh Textbook Board for teaching of English to intermediate students in Karachi, Sindh. The content of the textbooks was compared and analyzed with the National Curriculum-2006 of Pakistan. Moreover a tailor made questionnaire consisting 09 closed-ended was used to collect data from the teachers teaching English at intermediate level in Karachi. The research instrument was served to 291 teachers including 128 teachers of public intermediate colleges, while 163 teachers of intermediate colleges.

IV. DISCUSSION

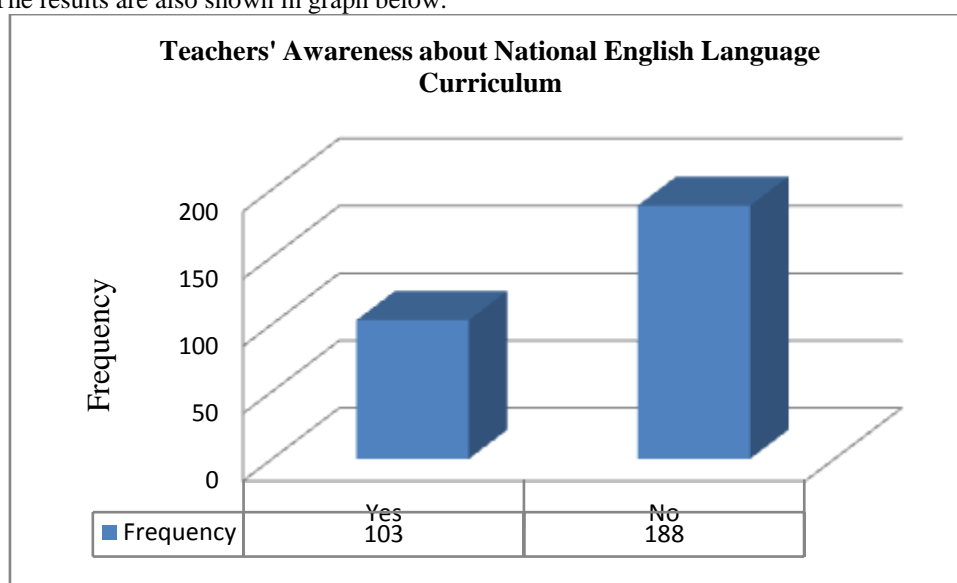
Awareness about National English Language Curriculum

To get firsthand knowledge about English language teachers' awareness about the National English Language Curriculum, the respondents were asked:

"Have you read objectives given in English language curriculum?" They were given options of Yes/No.					
Specification		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	103	35.4	35.4	35.4
	No	188	64.6	64.6	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 1

The data in the table 1 reveals that 64.6% respondents declared that they had not read National English curriculum or the objectives or standards or competencies mentioned in it. Only 35.4% could have read and could be having awareness about objectives of teaching of English at intermediate or higher secondary level in Pakistan. The results are also shown in graph below.



Graph 1

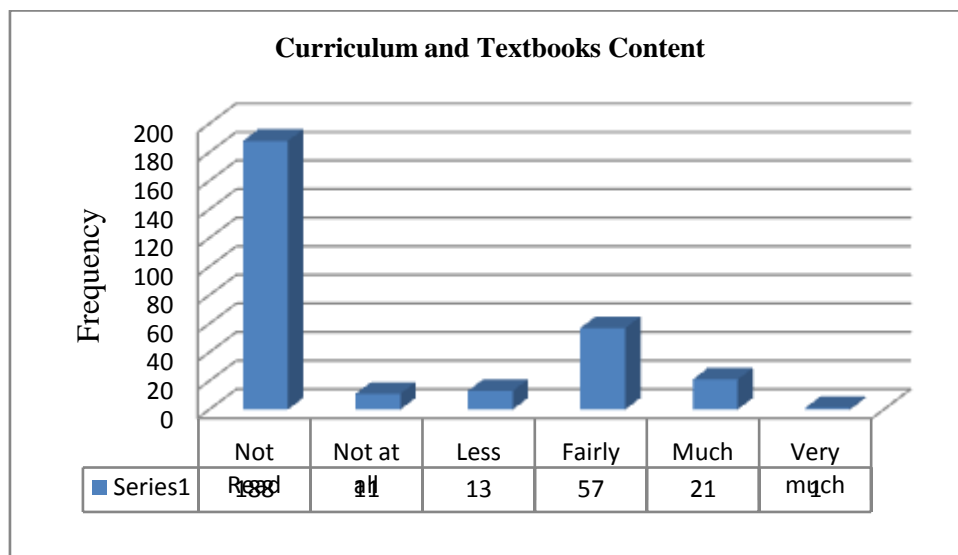
Textbooks Content and Curriculum

In response to the question related to similarity between curriculum instructional objectives and the content material of the textbooks, the asked question and the respondents' responses are as under:

Does the material of the textbook match to the specification of the curriculum instructional objectives?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	11	3.8	3.8	68.4
	Less	13	4.5	4.5	72.9
	Fairly	57	19.6	19.6	92.4
	Much	21	7.2	7.2	99.7
	Very much	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

The data reveals that among those who have read the curriculum 19.6% of participants favor the idea that the content of the textbooks fairly match with the specific curriculum objectives given in the National English Curriculum for intermediate students. While only 0.3% of participants opined that the content of the textbooks fulfill the requirement of curriculum objectives. 3.8% respondents indicated that there is no relation between content and curriculum but 4.5% also opined that there was a lesser relation. The responses are shown in the graph 2 below.



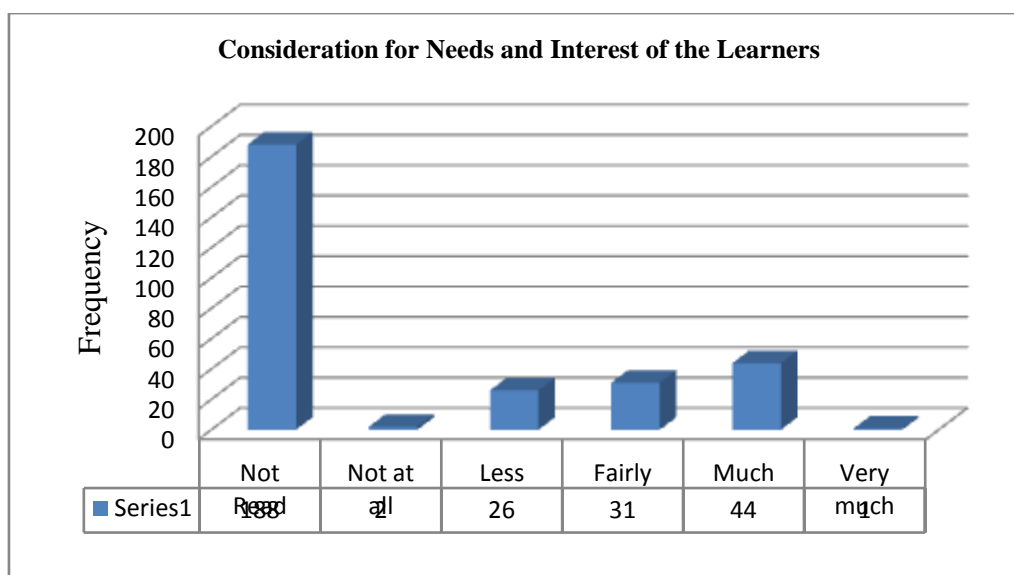
Graph 2

Consideration about Needs and Interest of Learners in Curriculum

In response to the question about consideration for the needs and interests of the second language learner the data in table 3 reveals that 15.1% (that is, the majority among those who had actually read curriculum), of the participants pointed out that needs and interests of the learners are much considered in the NELC. The detail is also shown visually in Graph 3 below.

Are those objectives related to the learners' needs and interests?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	2	.7	.7	65.3
	Less	26	8.9	8.9	74.2
	Fairly	31	10.7	10.7	84.9
	Much	44	15.1	15.1	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 3



Graph 3

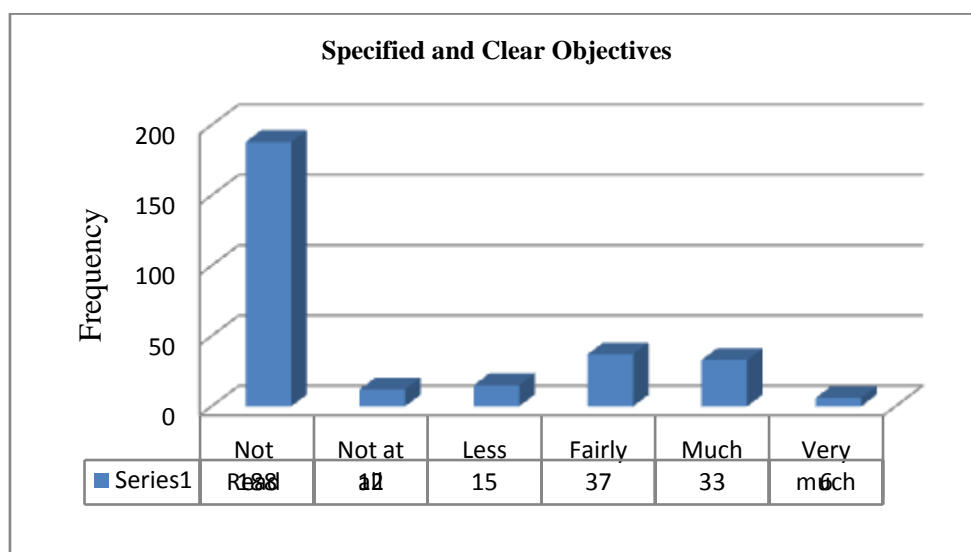
Clarity of Curriculum Objectives

To the question related to the clarity of the objectives the opinions of the participants are shown in the table below:

Are objectives clear and specific?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	12	4.1	4.1	68.7
	Less	15	5.2	5.2	73.9
	Fairly	37	12.7	12.7	86.6
	Much	33	11.3	11.3	97.9
	Very much	6	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

The data in the above table then reveals that a majority of participant have not read or seen the curriculum, but among those who have read it 12.7% favored the idea that objectives are fairly clear, while 4.1% also indicated that objectives are not clear at all. The responses of other participants are illustrated in graph 4 below.



Graph 4

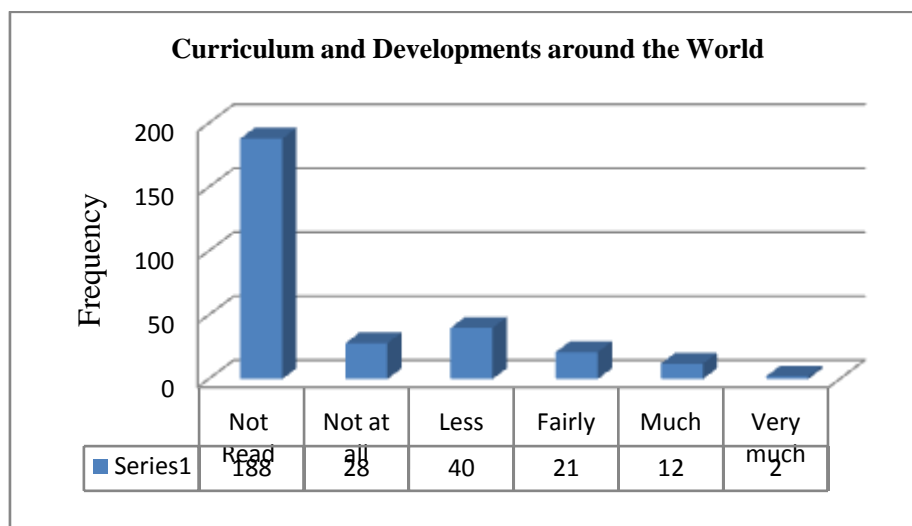
Curriculum Objectives and Developments around the World

In response to the question asked about NELC objectives and developments or trends going around the world, the respondents' opinions are given in table 5 below:

Are those objectives corresponding with the developments around the world?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	28	9.6	9.6	74.2
	Less	40	13.7	13.7	88.0
	Fairly	21	7.2	7.2	95.2
	Much	12	4.1	4.1	99.3
	Very much	2	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

Among those who had read the curriculum 13.7% pointed out that the present curriculum is having less relevance to changes going on around the world about language teaching for second language learners, while 9.6% also opined that curriculum objectives are not corresponding to the developments going around the world. The opinions of other participants are shown in graph 5 below.



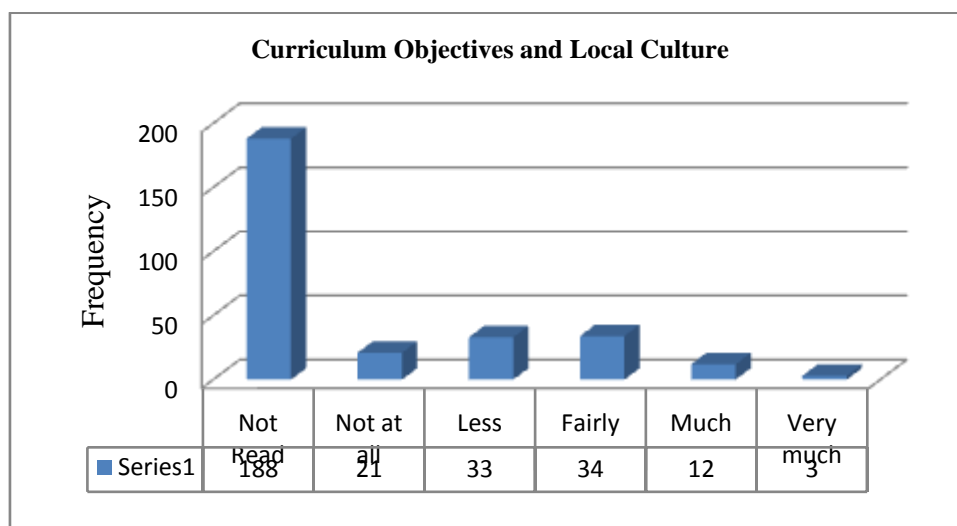
Graph 5

Curriculum Objectives and Local Culture

In response to the question related to the consideration given to local culture in the curriculum, the respondents' views are shown in table 6.

Are those objectives related to the local culture?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	21	7.2	7.2	71.8
	Less	33	11.3	11.3	83.2
	Fairly	34	11.7	11.7	94.8
	Much	12	4.1	4.1	99.0
	Very much	3	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total		291	100.0	100.0	

Table 6



Graph 6

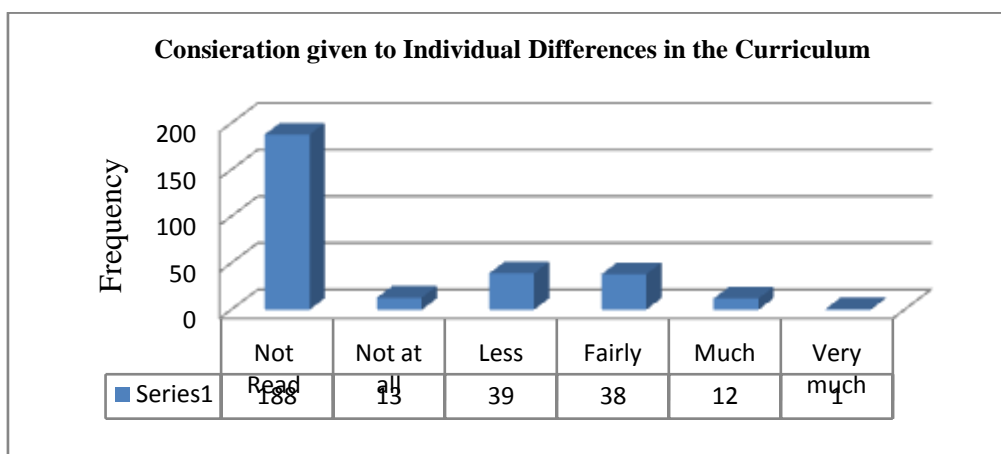
Table 6 and graph 6 reveals that 11.7% of participants were of the opinion that fair consideration is given to the local culture while 11.3% were of the opinion that less consideration is given to the local culture in NELC objectives. But as 64.6% respondents were without knowledge of curriculum, they have, therefore, not offered opinion.

Curriculum Objectives and Individual Differences among Learners

In response to the question related to the consideration given to individual differences in the curriculum the majority of participants opined that less or fair (13.4% & 13.1% respectively) consideration is given to the individual differences of students in the curriculum objectives. The collected data is shown in table 7 and illustrated in graph 7 below:

Are those objectives meeting the individual differences among students?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	13	4.5	4.5	69.1
	Less	39	13.4	13.4	82.5
	Fairly	38	13.1	13.1	95.5
	Much	12	4.1	4.1	99.7
	Very much	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 7



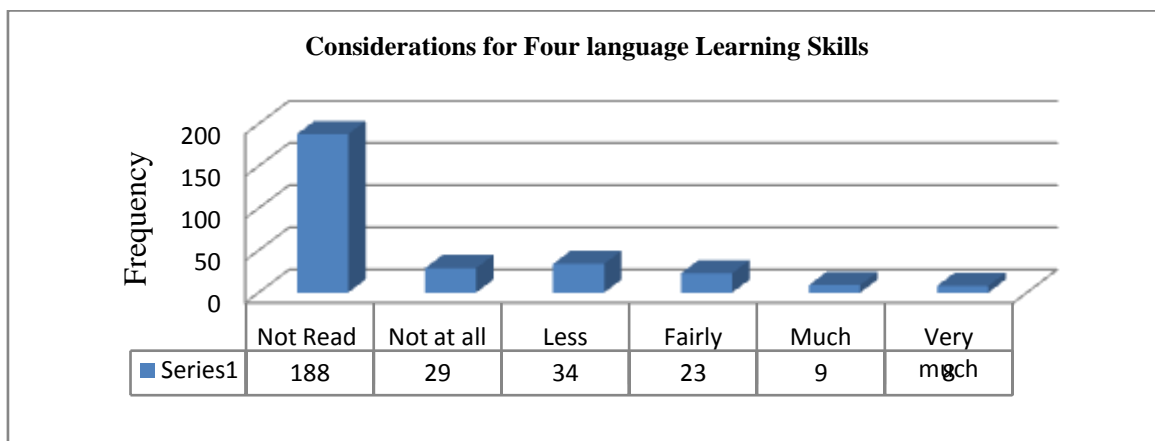
Graph 7

Curriculum Objectives and Balance in Four Basic Language Learning Skills

In response to the question related to curriculum and due consideration given to all four language learning skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, the respondents who had read the curriculum opined that either no balance at all or a lesser balance is present between these four skills (10.0% & 11.7% respectively), while the opinions of others are shown in table 8 and graph 8.\

Are those objectives making a balance between the four main skills (Listening, speaking, reading and writing)?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	29	10.0	10.0	74.6
	Less	34	11.7	11.7	86.3
	Fairly	23	7.9	7.9	94.2
	Much	9	3.1	3.1	97.3
	Very much	8	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 8



Graph 8

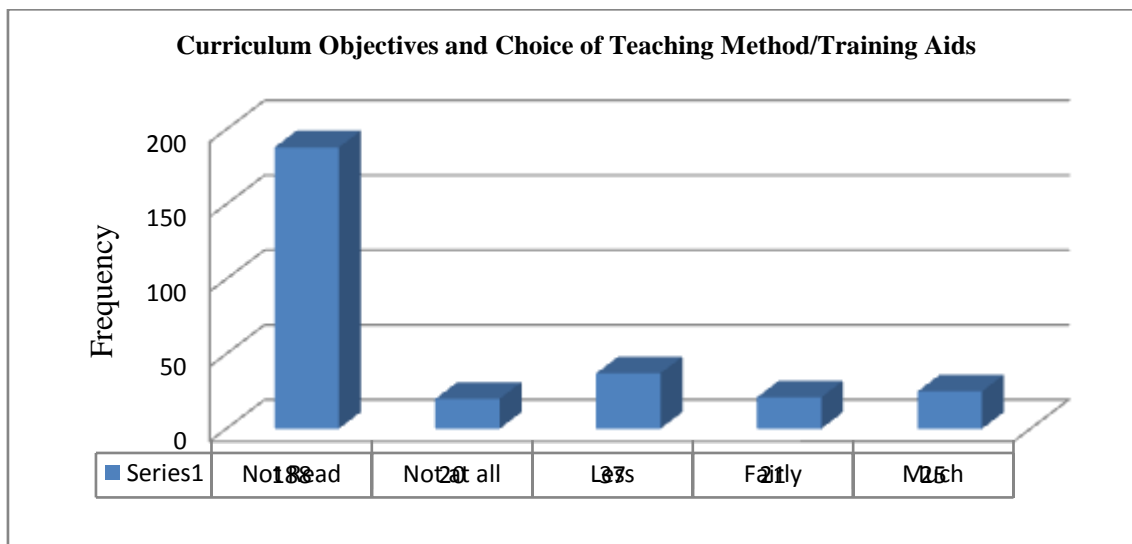
Support of Curriculum Objectives in Choice of Teaching Aids and Methods

In response to the question asked about the right choice of method and teaching aids for the achievement of a set of particular objectives in the NEL curriculum, the responses of the participants are listed in the table below:

Are those objectives helping the teachers to choose the right aids and methods?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Read	188	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Not at all	20	6.9	6.9	71.5
	Less	37	12.7	12.7	84.2
	Fairly	21	7.2	7.2	91.4
	Much	25	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	291	100.0	100.0	

Table 9

The data present in table 9 reveals that the majority (64.6%) of respondents among those who had read the curriculum expressed the view that less appropriate method or training aids were often adopted for achieving a particular objective, while 8.6% also displayed the opinion that objectives are much more appropriate while choosing the right method or training aids for achievement of a particular set of objectives. The views of other respondents are illustrated in graph 9 below.



Analysis of a Writer and a Reviewer Interviews

Two people (An administrator & a writer/reviewer) from STBBJ were interviewed and the question was posed that did the textbooks content match with curriculum. They responded that present textbooks are not designed as per directions given in the NELC-2006. The process of up-gradation or changing of textbooks is in progress; tasks are given to different institutes and hopefully expect that we will launch the new one from the next session. They also admitted that the textbooks in use are not up to the required standards of our present era of technology, the pedagogic and learning practices of modern times and contemporary developments going on around the world.

The Textbook and NCEL-2006

The textbooks are curriculum determinant and it is true the textbooks are very determinant in Pakistan. Therefore the researcher compared the textbook with the latest National Curriculum (2006), he found following strengths and weaknesses in the textbook.

V. CONCLUSION

1. From Teachers Responses

- a. 64.6% teachers did not get chance to read/see the curriculum.
- b. As more than 50% participants were not awareness about the National English Language Curriculum therefore, they were unable to respond the question but those who read only 0.3% favored that textbooks material match with the specification of the curriculum instructional objectives.
- c. Only 15.1% respondents favored that curriculum instructional objectives are as per the need of the learners.
- d. Only 2.1% respondents declared that the objectives given in the national curriculum are clear and specific.
- e. 0.7% respondents marked that Curriculum Objectives are corresponding with the development around the world.
- f. 1% respondents favored that the National curriculum Objectives are as per the local culture.
- g. 0.3% respondents favored that National Curriculum Objectives meet the need of the individual differences.
- h. Only 2.7% respondents favored that National Curriculum Objectives make a balance between the four main language learning skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.
- i. 8.6% respondents favored that objectives help the teachers in choosing the right teaching aids and methods.

2. From Analysis of Textbooks with Curriculum-2006 Competencies

The text and activities given in the textbooks are helpful for improving vocabulary and for the reading, thinking and writing skills of the learners but the standards and the benchmarks fixed in NCEL-2006 for expected SLO (Students Learning Outcomes) are missing. At the same time no activity is present to achieve the competency of oral communication skills, Moreover no reading-text has material related to ethical and social development competency.

Themes and Sub-themes

The themes and sub-themes are also mentioned in the NCEL-2006 (2.14) which should be covered in the textbook content. The themes or the sub-themes covered or missing are as under:

- i. The reading-texts related to character building/austerity, respect for Pakistani values & others, tolerance, humanism, equality between groups and nations, handling/sharing responsibilities, conflict resolution, understanding international cultural diversity, the world, rise of nations through national pride, appreciation and preservation of nature, gender inequality detrimental to society, environment & health, population growth & its implication, tourism, its impact on society, choosing career, dignity of labor, media skills and communication, participatory citizenship, prevention from crimes, youth's role in prevention of drug abuse, related diseases (HIV, AIDS, hepatitis) are not included in the textbook.
- ii. The reading-texts related to technology (*Miracle of Radio*), crises awareness & management, role of youth in crises management (*Birkenhead Drill*), festivals and cultural events (*Letters*), role models (*Pakistan Zindabad*), travel & transport (*By car across Europe*) and participatory citizenship (*Science & Society and Hostile Witness*) are somehow present but a little outdated, and not up to required levels of competencies, standards and benchmarks fixed in the NCEL-2006.

Recommendations

While keeping in view the responses of the teachers and comparative analysis of the textbooks contents with the National Language Curriculum, the recommendations are as under:

1. It should be made compulsory for the teachers to read the National Curriculum.
2. Textbooks contents should be matched with the specifications given the curriculum instructional objectives.
3. Curriculum and textbooks contents should be per the needs and interest of the learners.
4. National Curriculum should be changed as per changes happening in the world.
5. Consideration should be given local culture in the curriculum as well as in selection of textbooks contents.
6. Individual difference should be given due consideration in the curriculum as well as in selection of textbooks contents.
7. Basic language learning skills should be given due consideration in curriculum and textbooks activities.
8. Curriculum and textbooks contents should be appropriate for selection of right training aids and teaching method.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Sheldon, L. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 42(4), 237-246.
- [2]. Hutchinson, T. & Torres, E. (1994). The Textbook as Agent of Change. In *ELT Journal*, Vol. 48, no.4, 315-328.
- [3]. Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing Your Course Book*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- [4]. Cunningsworth, A. (1984). *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Materials*. London: Heinemann.
- [5]. Dubin, F. and Olshtain, E. (1986). *Course Design: Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6]. Newby, D. (2000). *Syllabus and Curriculum Design*. In Byram (ed), 590-594.