

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Such a framework has a dual utility. On the one hand, if the evaluations of several raters should be compared and contrasted in order to reach a correlated consensus, several opinions of a single textbook can be easily displayed on the same graph. On the other hand, an evaluator can display his judgements about several textbooks on a single graph using a separate line for each textbook. In this way, he may compare the profiles of various textbooks, see them in contrast to the ideal solid line, and judge how far a particular textbook can satisfy his requirements. If this is done, not only are the differences among various textbooks portrayed, but also any instances of marked variation can be noted and revised.

Furthermore, this two-tier system can be approached in two distinct ways. An evaluator may first examine a particular textbook to identify its characteristics and then he may judge it against his preferred criteria. Or an evaluator can first define his preferred options, and then he may investigate how far a particular textbook matches his preferred criteria.

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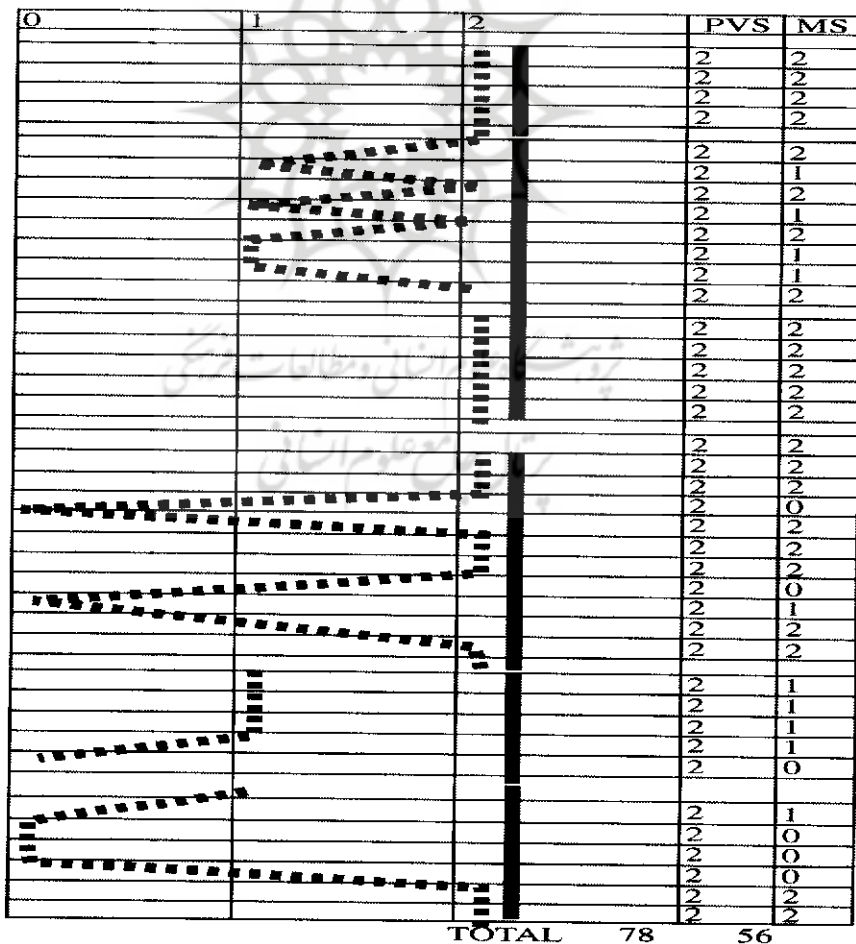
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Appropriate title	Natural way	2	0
Administrative concerns			
Macro - state policies	Non-native English not serving as an official language	2	1
Appropriate for local situation	Iran, Islamic government	2	0
Culture	Iranian	2	0
Religion	Islamic friendly	2	0
Gender	Unbiased	2	2
Appropriate Price	Rs. 10000	2	2

PVS: Perfect Value Score (2)

Ms Merit Score (range: 0 = lacking, 1= present but inadequate, 2= adequate)

Graphic Representation of the Evaluation



Evaluation Result: 71.7% satisfaction

Key to the exercises	Necessary	2	2
Supplementary materials	Audio cassettes, orientation bulletins	2	2
To the student			
Piecemeal, unit by unit instruction	Necessary to suit 1.5 hour sessions	2	2
Graphics (relevant, free from unnecessary details, colorful, etc.)	Necessary to make input comprehensible	2	2
Periodic revisions	Two revisions per semester	2	2
Workbook	Necessary to be filled with ample reading and listening activities	2	0
Exercise and activities	TPR, TF, MC, Yes/no questions, ultimately leading to natural speech emergence	2	2
In the classroom	Oral	2	2
Homework	Written reflection on covered materials	2	2
Sample exercises	Necessary for unfamiliar types	2	0
Clear instructions	Helpful	2	1
Varied and copious	Helpful	2	2
Accompanying audio-visual aids	Audio cassettes	2	2
Physical make - up			
Appropriate Size & Weight	Paperback book size 14 × 20	2	1
Attractive layout	Colorful, with generous margin	2	1
Durability	Good binding	2	1
High quality of editing and publishing	Standard computer typesetting	2	1

Evaluation Form

Title: Combination level 3

Authors: Ghosni, et al. Date of publication: 1992 No. of pages: 147

Physical size: 22 × 29 cm

Price: Rs. 9100

Components: Teacher's guide with an answer key, audio cassettes

Length: 4 units, each 4 lessons plus 2 consolidation units

Hours: $4 \times 4 = 16$, $16 \times 1.5 = 24$, $24 + (2 \times 1.5) = 27$

Target Learners: Adult, Es, Level 3

Target Teachers: BA holders in TEFL

UNIVERSAL CHARACTERISTICS	DEFINING CRITERIA	PVS	MS
Approach			
Dissemination of a theory about	Terrell & Krashen's (1997) Natural Approach to SLA	2	2
The nature of language	A means for communicating meaning	2	2
The nature of learning	Comprehension precedes production	2	2
How the theory can be put to applied use	Comprehensible Input, anxiety-free, acquisition - rich environment	2	2
Content Presentation			
Stating purpose(s) and objective(s)	Basic skills in communication	2	2
For the total course	Survival English	2	1
For individual units	cf. Teacher's guide	2	2
Selection and its rationale	Comprehensible familiar topics	2	1
Coverage	Core grammar & vocabulary	2	2
Grading	i + 1 to ...	2	1
Organization	Es Program, textbooks 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8, each 4 units, each unit four lessons	2	1
Satisfaction of the syllabus	90% satisfaction	2	2
To the teacher			
Providing a guide book	Necessary	2	2
Giving advice on the methodology	Detailed teaching techniques	2	2
Giving theoretical orientations	Detailed technical presentation of the natural approach	2	2

A Two-tier Approach to Textbook Evaluation: A Sample Analysis

The process of materials evaluation can be seen as a way of developing our understanding of the ways in which it works and, in doing so, of contributing to both acquisition theory and pedagogic practices. It can also be seen as one way of carrying out action research (Tomlinson, 1996, p.238).

Perhaps, no neat formula or system may ever provide a definite yardstick to judge a textbook by. However, at the very least, probably the application of a set of universal characteristics of ELT textbooks may well help make textbook evaluation a coherent, systematic and thoughtful activity. Following Tucker (1975, pp. 359-361) a system for textbook evaluation should, I believe, include:

- (1) a predetermined data - driven theory-neutral collection of universal characteristics of ELT textbooks discrete and precise enough to help define one's preferred situation-specific criteria,
- (2) a system within which one may ensure objective, quantified assessment,
- (3) a rating method that can provide the possibility for a comparative analysis,
- (4) a simple procedure for recording and reporting the evaluator's opinion,
- (5) a mechanism by which the universal scheme may be adapted and/or weighted to suit the particular requirements of any teaching situation,
- (6) a rating trajectory (curve) that makes possible a quick and easy display of the judgements on each and every criterion, and
- (7) a graphic representation to provide a visual comparison between the evaluator's preferred choices as an archetype (ideal

model) and their actual realizations in a particular textbook under scrutiny.

What follows is a demonstration of how such a system works. Evaluation essentially involves the following steps. First, an evaluation form with four columns is designed. The universal theory-neutral characteristics of ELT textbooks appear in the first column on the evaluation form. In the second column, however, evaluator decides to insert his preferred situation-friendly criteria. Preferences could be based on the results of students' needs analysis. Secondly, two separate scores may serve as the basis for rating:

- (1) a perfect value score (PVS) of 2 which appears in the third column indicating an ideal weight assigned to each defined criterion,
- (2) a merit score (MS) consisting of numbers 0 to 2 which appears in the fourth column on the evaluation form. By means of this, a comparative weight is assigned to the relative realization in the textbook under scrutiny of each actual criterion: a perfect match between the ideal defined criterion and its actual realization in a particular textbook receiving 2, a total lack a score of 0, and any inadequate match a score of 1.

Finally, the numbers in the MS and PVS columns after each criterion are represented on a graph by drawing (1) a dotted line corresponding to the numerical value of the Merit Scores, and (2) a straight solid line to represent the Perfect Value Scores. According to this scheme, the product of VS times MS gives an index based on which the evaluator may judge the extent to which a particular textbook suits his or her teaching situation.

INTRODUCTION

It is ironical that those teachers who rely most heavily on the textbooks are the ones least qualified to interpret its intentions or evaluate its content and method (Williams, 1983, p.251).

In general, ELT textbooks have brought with them a range of reactions. However, they are frequently seen as necessary. Responses often fluctuate between two extremes. One position is that they are valid, useful, and labor - saving tools (Cf. Skierso, 1991; Ur,1996). The other position holds that they are "masses of rubbish skillfully marketed" (Brumfit, 1980, p.30). During the last three decades, these reactions have essentially been based on ad hoc textbook evaluation checklists (See, e.g., Chastain, 1971; Candlin & Breen, 1979; Daoud & Celce - Murcia, 1979; Littlejohn, 1996). And the shaky theoretical basis of such checklists and the subjectivity of judgements have often been a source of disappointment.(Cf. Sheldon, 1988)

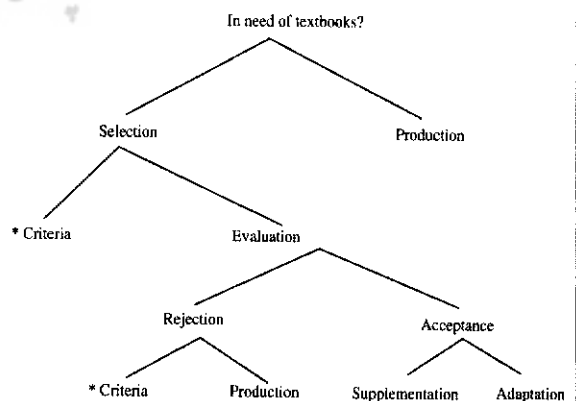
As teachers, many of us perhaps have had the responsibility of evaluating textbooks. Often, however, we have not been tenaciously confident what to base our judgements on, how to qualify our decisions, and how to report the results of our assessment. It seems to us that to date textbook selection has been made in haste and with a lack of systematically applied criteria.

In light of the above argument(s), our purpose here is to offer a two - tier situation friendly framework based on a theory-neutral data - driven set of universal characteristics of ELT textbooks (cf. Ansary & Babaii, 2001) by which one may draw up his own preferred criteria for different situations to evaluate ELT textbooks. These criteria may then serve two purposes: one may use them (a) to write textbooks, or (b) to judge available textbooks with reference to such criteria. With certain

degrees of latitude, it is believed here, whatever said about ELT textbooks in general can well be applied to any ELT teaching materials.

At the outset, we would like to point out the fact that the term 'two-tier' in the title of this article has been used in the following senses. It basically refers to a binary-option approach to evaluating textbooks. That is to say, when in need of textbooks, one may either select an available textbook or generate his own textbook. To select a textbook, one should define his own preferred criteria in order to evaluate a textbook and make choices. To make choices, one either accepts a particular textbook with some reservations or rejects it as inappropriate. To reject a textbook, one needs criteria based on which one may either select another textbook or generate his own textbook. In case, after evaluation one accepts a particular textbook, he may either supplement it to improve it or modify it to make it suitable for the new situation. Fig. 1 below shows the senses in which we have used the term 'two-tier' in this article.

FIGURE 1
Schematic Representation of What the Term 'Two-Tier' in the Title Refers to



* Note. Defining criteria serves two purposes: (1) evaluation and (2) production

A Two-tier Approach to ELT Textbook Evaluation

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چکیده

اصطلاح «دو مرحله‌ای» در این مقاله به دو مفهوم مجزا اشاره می‌کند: (۱) از یک طرف تأکید می‌کند که دو راه در امر تهیه و تدوین کتاب‌های درسی وجود دارد. یکی انتخاب کتاب درسی خاص پس از ارزشیابی آن و دیگر تولید کتاب درسی مورد نیاز است. (۲) از سویی دیگر، اصطلاح «دو مرحله‌ای» معطوف به این معناست که روند ارزشیابی کتاب‌های درسی اصولاً از دو مرحله تشکیل شده است. یکی تعیین ملاک‌ها و دیگری تحلیل ارزش هر کتاب درسی با عنایت به آن ملاک‌ها است. هدف ما در این پژوهش ارائه رهیافتی دو مرحله‌ای برای ارزشیابی کتابهای درسی آموزش زبان انگلیسی است تا معلمان زبان بتوانند ابتدا متناسب با شرایط ویژه خود ملاک‌هایی نظری را تعریف کرده و سپس با توجه به آن ملاک‌ها، هر کتاب درسی را ارزشیابی نمایند. در این راستا با به کارگیری مشخصات همگانی کتاب‌های آموزش زبان انگلیسی (ر. ک. انصاری و بابایی، ۲۰۰۱) و با انگیزه آموزش آنها - که هر معلمی می‌تواند با استفاده از این روش، کتاب مورد نظر خود را انتخاب کند و یا برای رفع نیازهای خاصی اقدام به نگارش کتاب‌های جدید نماید.

کلیدواژه‌ها: ارزشیابی کتاب درسی، انتخاب کتاب درسی، تولید مواد آموزشی

Abstract

The term 'two-tier' in the title has been used in two distinct senses. It emphasizes, on the one hand, that there are two possible, equally - invaluable options open in order to turn a particular course design into actual teaching materials: (a) materials evaluation and / or selection, and (b) materials production. On the other hand, it underscores the need for splitting up the evaluation process into two major phases: (a) defining criteria, and (b) analysis.

Our purpose here is to offer a two - tier scheme by which situation - friendly criteria may be developed for evaluating ELT textbooks. Instructions are given as a way of suggesting how teachers can draw up their own criteria for different situations. A sample procedure is also presented to demonstrate how such a framework can be applied or weighted to suit a particular ELT program. The suggested framework for textbook evaluation takes into consideration a set of universal characteristics of ELT textbooks (cf. Ansary & Babaii, 2001) as a blueprint to define our preferred criteria. Then, against such a backdrop of theorizing, one may either choose an available textbook to analyze the extent to which it realizes the preferred criteria or, one may decide to write his own teaching materials and / or textbooks.

Key Words: ELT materials production, ELT text book evaluation,