

## **Core Units of Spoken Grammar in Global ELT Textbooks**

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### **Abstract**

Materials evaluation studies have constantly demonstrated that there is no one fixed procedure for conducting textbook evaluation studies. Instead, the criteria must be selected according to the needs and objectives of the context in which evaluation takes place. The speaking skill as part of the communicative competence has been emphasized as an important objective in language teaching. The present study explored the core units of spoken grammar inherent in four widely-used ELT textbooks following McCarthy and Carter's (2002) classification. A coding scheme was developed to make it possible for the researchers to use the classification in codifying the data. The data were then analyzed to detect the units of spoken grammar inherent in the target textbooks. Results from codification of dialogues and transcripts of audio recordings showed that the units of spoken grammar are not evenly distributed in these ELT textbooks. In addition, a significant difference was found between the textbooks in their inclusion of different categories of the spoken grammar.

**Keywords:** textbook evaluation, spoken grammar, ELT textbooks, coding scheme

## INTRODUCTION

Materials, according to Tomlinson (2001), include anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette, CD-ROM, DVD or on the Internet. They can be instructional in that they inform learners about the target language, they can be experiential in that they provide exposure to language in use, they can be elucidative in that they stimulate language use, or they can be exploratory in that they seek discoveries about language use.

Among the various language teaching materials, textbooks have always been of considerable importance. In an interesting study, Bada and Okan (2000) asked learners and teachers whether they liked learning from (a) television/video/films, (b) radio, (c) tapes/cassettes, (d) written materials, (e) the blackboard, or (f) pictures/posters. Television and video, being powerful media, received a high percentage of preference (83.9% from students and 82.6% from teachers). However, learning from written materials also received relatively similar percentage of preference (77.4 % from students and 65.2% from teachers). Therefore, it seems that textbooks play a major role in students' learning as well as in the nature and type of learning activities used in the classroom. Thus, many English language teachers rely heavily on textbooks for teaching and giving assignments.

According to Educational Product Information Exchange (EPIE) (1976, cited in Rawadieh 1998), nearly two thirds of classroom time is spent on using written materials, particularly textbooks. Apple (1986) estimated that elementary and secondary school students spend at least 75 percent of their time in classrooms using textbooks. Accordingly, the cognitive skill

sets that students practice in English courses are largely dependent on learning activities that materials writers choose to embed in textbooks.

Despite the foregoing arguments, textbooks remain a controversial issue for many teachers and researchers. Allwright (1981) suggests that there are two positions regarding the use of textbooks. First, there is the deficiency view which holds that we need teaching materials to save learners from our deficiencies as teachers and to ensure that the syllabus is covered using appropriate exercises. According to this view, good teachers do not need published materials since they can always create their own materials. The second view, namely the difference view sees materials as carriers of decisions made by people who are different in expertise from teachers. Those who agree with this view argue for the use of published materials on the grounds that they are more effective in terms of cost, time, and energy spent.

Therefore, as Crawford (2002) rightly argues it is easy for the proponents of anti-materials view to criticize published materials and “the grounds for criticism are wide-ranging” (p. 81). Crawford (2002) refers to several studies focusing on the shortcomings of written materials. For example, some materials, do not present appropriate and realistic language models (Porter & Roberts, 1981). Others assign subordinate learner roles (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985) and present decontextualized language activities (Waltz, 1989). Still others may also fail to promote adequate cultural understanding (Kramsch, 1987).

On the other hand, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) refer to data from a study carried out in the Philippines on the introduction of an ESP textbook to challenge some of the assumptions that underlie the anti-textbook view.

They argue that a textbook has a vital and positive role to play in the everyday teaching and learning of English and that the importance of a textbook becomes even greater in times of change. They conclude that the least a textbook does is to bring order into the otherwise chaotic situation in which teachers may need to make all the decisions by themselves. Moreover, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) favor textbooks for their provision of orientation, accountability, and negotiation.

However, despite the two polarized views on the use of written materials, as Crawford (2002) points out, “[textbooks] do not need to be a debilitating crutch used only by those unable to do without... The issue, then, is not whether teachers should or should not use such materials... but what form these materials should take if they are to contribute positively to teaching and learning” (p. 84). In other words, effective classroom materials including textbooks are likely to reflect the principles which are in line with our present understanding of learning in general and language learning in particular.

As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) argue, textbooks can be valuable agents of change if certain criteria are met. For example, they should include guidelines for both teachers and learners on how to best approach the learning situation as well as providing support and help with classroom management. Therefore, “Rather than denigrating and trying to do away with textbooks, we should recognize their importance in making the lives of teachers and learners easier, more secure and fruitful, and seek a fuller understanding of their use in order to exploit their full potential as agents of smooth and effective change” (p. 327).

Crawford (2002, pp. 84-87) proposes eight assumptions that need to be

considered carefully in selecting materials to ensure that they contribute positively to the learning environment. These include the following:

1. Language is functional and must be contextualized.
2. Language development requires learner engagement in purposeful use of language.
3. The language used should be realistic and authentic.
4. Classroom materials will usually seek to include an audio visual component.
5. In our modern, technologically complex world, second language learners need to develop the ability to deal with written as well as spoken genres.
6. Effective teaching materials foster learner autonomy.
7. Materials need to be flexible enough to cater to individual and contextual differences.
8. Learning needs to engage learners both affectively and cognitively.

The concern of the researchers in the present study is more or less to do with the third and fifth assumptions. In other words, the study attempts to determine the extent to which the features of the spoken grammar (authentic language of spoken genre) are covered in widely-used ELT textbooks.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Materials Evaluation

As McDonough and Shaw (2003) contend, the ability to evaluate textbooks effectively is a very important professional activity for all EFL teachers. This is partly because there are very few teachers who do not use published course materials at some stage in their teaching career. McDonough and Shaw (2003) refer to two scenarios in this respect. The first one is to do with contexts where teachers are under a lot of professional and financial pressure to select a suitable textbook from among the large number of those

available on the market. In this case, the evaluation of current materials is of great importance because an inappropriate choice may waste funds and time and it will demotivate both students and teachers alike. The second scenario concerns teachers working with materials given to them by a ministry or similar body. Even though such teachers do not need to evaluate the adopted materials, they may well be interested in evaluation as a useful process in its own right, which will help them keep up with latest developments in the field. Nevertheless, Rea-Dickins (1994) argues that the materials evaluation literature has been focusing almost exclusively on the analysis of the product, namely what she calls the level of workplan. This means that teachers carry out the evaluation on the textbook itself in order to determine which materials best suit their purposes. In their proposed model of materials evaluation, McDonough and Shaw (2003) distinguish between internal and external evaluation but both aspects refer to evaluation at the level of workplan and the extent to which a reviewer thinks that a book will do what it claims to do. This sort of evaluation practice can be achieved via numerous checklists and guidelines built around numerous aspects of teaching and student-teacher interactions.

Tomlinson (2001) points to two potential shortcomings of this approach: the subjective nature of the evaluation instruments and their speculative nature, which would hence make them useful for pre-use evaluation. Similarly, as Byrd (2001) notes, making a comprehensive yet reasonable checklist for evaluation of textbooks is an enormous challenge that requires different lists for different types of courses in different settings. For these reasons, Tomlinson (2001) observes that “recently there have been attempts to help teachers to conduct action research on the materials they

use... and to develop instruments for use in conducting *pre-use, whilst-use* and *post-use evaluation*” (p. 69).

Ellis (1997) also suggests a retrospective evaluation designed to examine materials that have actually been used. Teachers can do this by investigating specific teaching tasks. He concludes that task evaluation constitutes a kind of action research that can contribute to reflective practice in teaching.

Donovan (1998) proposes “piloting” as one form of materials evaluation which is done before a set of materials is published formally and widely. The process of piloting has three features. First of all, the writers who have developed the materials are distanced from the piloting process and the teachers who participate in piloting do not know the materials writers in order to eliminate any chance of bias. Second, the teachers are free to use these materials or not. Third, the teachers participating in the piloting process have the option to use the newly developed materials as supplements and not necessarily the main material of the course.

Masuhara (1998) emphasizes teachers' needs as an important starting point in materials development and evaluation. He suggests that teacher characteristics such as their personality, psychological characteristics, teaching styles, and preference are especially important with relation to materials. These characteristics should therefore be taken into account in evaluating teaching materials.

Therefore, there seems to be no one fixed procedure for conducting textbook evaluation studies. What is important, however, is how to overcome these problems. Cunningsworth (1995) proposes to limit the number of criteria used and the number of questions asked to a manageable

proportion. Otherwise, he believes, we may face a great amount of detail which we may not be able to cope with.

In recent years a number of studies have been conducted to analyze the contents of ELT materials from various perspectives. Tavakoli (1995), for instance, analyzed the language functions in the dialogues used in the English textbooks of Iranian high schools based on Searle's (1976) model of speech acts. She aimed to see whether or not the different kinds of speech acts are correctly used. She also determined how frequently each function was used, and which ones were introduced to the students in the four English textbooks. She found that out of five different kinds of language functions, only three of them (representative, directive, and expressive) were used in the texts, while the other two (commissive and declarative) had gone unnoticed.

In another study, Darali (2007) analyzed *Spectrum* series for the type of metapragmatic information that helps language learners develop their pragmatic knowledge. She found that *Spectrum* series provides valuable metalinguistic information, but it lacks explanations on the use of different forms in a particular situation. She also mentioned that *Spectrum* series lacked explicit descriptions regarding appropriateness, paralinguistic information, and contextual information.

Finally, Gordani (2010) explored different types of learning objectives chosen for textbooks used at Iranian guidance schools following Bloom's taxonomy. His study showed that all of the tasks and exercises in these textbooks were concentrated in the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, and application), which are referred to as the lower levels of cognitive skills. In addition, he found a significant difference



between the textbooks in their inclusion of different levels of cognitive skills.

## **Spoken Grammar**

In learning a second or foreign language, the goal of most learners is to use the target language for effective communication. It is difficult to suppose that we could learn to use the language effectively without being familiar with the rules governing the spoken language.

With the advent of corpus linguistics and the use of concordance programs in analyzing large quantities of spoken language, there has been a growing interest in exploring the nature of spoken language, especially with regard to grammar. Corpus studies have pointed out to some major distinctions between spoken and written grammar. Carter and McCarthy (1995) believe that the differences between spoken and written grammar are essential for pedagogical grammars, since descriptions solely based on written mode are likely to ignore many common features of everyday informal grammar and usage.

Brazil (1995) believes that to understand spoken grammar, we have to adopt a totally different model from those traditionally applied to written language. Brazil favors a process-oriented linear grammar that shows how speakers put together their utterances a bit at a time as they go along since grammar in speech has to be constructed and interpreted in a linear way. This view makes it clear that the academic mainstream has largely ignored the nature of spoken language.

In addition, McCarthy and Carter (2002) argue that much greater attention should be paid to spoken grammar in materials for language

teaching and learning. In other words, language pedagogy that claims to support the teaching of speaking skills does itself a disservice if it ignores what we know about spoken language.

One seemingly problematic issue in the description of spoken grammar is to decide on the nature of basic units and classes in the spoken grammar. Authentic conversations are full of phrases, incomplete clauses, and interrupted structures, and other features of authentic daily conversation. It seems that, contrary to written grammar, the notion of well-formed sentences with main and subordinate clauses cannot be applied to the description of spoken grammar. According to Hockett (1986), these characteristics of the spoken grammar which cannot be considered sentences deserve more attention.

This research is an attempt to survey a selection of widely-used ELT textbooks to explore their coverage of the core units of spoken grammar. Five categories form the basis of the survey. The textbooks will be content analyzed to find out the extent to which core units of spoken grammar, revealed in the literature on corpus studies by Carter and McCarthy (1995) and McCarthy and Carter (2002) are used in the analyzed textbooks.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study follows several objectives. First of all, it looks for instances of grammatical features that appear in text materials, namely textbook dialogues or transcripts for audio recordings. Findings will make it clear which one of the five categories of spoken grammar is more dominant and hence emphasized in each textbook. The study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Are all five units of spoken grammar equally represented in global ELT course materials?
2. Does the use of the features of spoken grammar differ among the five textbooks?

## METHOD

### Theoretical Framework

This study is built upon McCarthy and Carter's (2002) contention to establish core units of spoken grammar. The problem, they suggest, is that we usually observe units with main and subordinate clauses which cannot be categorized as well- formed sentences. This raises "questions about the nature of basic units and classes in a spoken grammar, and the solution would seem to be to raise the status of the word, phrase, and clause to that of (potentially) independent units; to recognize the potential for joint production of units, and to downplay the status of the sentence as the main target unit for communication" (p. 54).

McCarthy and Carter (2002), further clarify their point by providing the following two examples (p. 52). The examples show some of the kinds of units frequently encountered in a spoken corpus. Problematic areas for a traditional grammar are highlighted (originally by McCarthy and Carter (2002, pp. 52-56).

[Speakers are sitting at the dinner table talking about a car accident that happened to the father of one of the speakers]:

Speaker 1: I'll just take that off. *Take that off.*

Speaker 2: *All looks great.*

Speaker 3: [laughs]

Speaker 2: Mm.

Speaker 3: Mm.  
 Speaker 2: I think your dad was amazed wasn't he at the damage.  
 Speaker 4: Mm.  
 Speaker 2: It's not so much the parts. It's the labour charges for  
 Speaker 4: *Oh that. For a car.*  
 Speaker 2: Have you got hold of it?  
 Speaker 1: Yeah.  
 Speaker 2: *It was a bit erm.*  
 Speaker 1: Mm.  
 Speaker 3: Mm.  
 Speaker 2: *A bit.*  
 Speaker 3: That's right.  
 Speaker 2: I mean they said they'd have to take his car in for two days. And he says All it is is s= straightening a panel. *And they're like*, Oh no. It's all new panel. You can't do this.  
 Speaker 3: *Any erm problem.*  
 Speaker 2: *As soon as they hear insurance claim.* Oh. Let's get it right.  
 Speaker 3: Yeah. Yeah. *Anything to do with+*  
 Speaker 1: *Yow.*  
 Speaker 3: *+coach work is er+*  
 Speaker 1: Right.  
 Speaker 3: *+fatal isn't it.*  
 Speaker 1: *Now.*

Here, as McCarthy and Carter (2002, pp. 53-54) conclude, we may observe the following phenomena:

1. Indeterminate structures (is the second *Take that off* an ellipted form of *I'll just take that off*? Is it an imperative? Is *All looks great* well-formed? What is the status of *And they're like*?)
2. Phrasal utterances, communicatively complete in themselves, but not sentences (*Oh that. For a car. Any problem.*)
3. Aborted or incomplete structures (*It was a bit erm ... A bit.*)
4. 'Subordinate' clauses not obviously connected to any particular main clause (*As soon as they hear insurance claim.*)
5. Interrupted structures with other speaker contributions intervening (*Anything to do with ... coach work is er ... fatal isn't it.*)
6. Words whose grammatical class is unclear (*Yow. Now.*)

There is also the problem of joint-production grammatical units which refer to units that are not complete unless another participant adds his/her contribution, as in the next example:

[Customer and waiter in restaurant:]

Customer: Yeah. *Let's just have er*

Waiter: *Some rice?*

Customer: Yeah.

Based on this framework, a coding scheme was developed to codify dialogues and transcripts for audio recordings. A copy of the coding scheme can be found in Appendix A.

The data in this study are four widely-used ELT textbooks at the intermediate level. These textbooks are published to be used in general ESL courses and they are the ones which are most popular in Iran's rapidly developing private language teaching sector (as contrasted to the public education). The books are listed in Table 1 together with the information about the authors and publishers.

### **Data Analysis Framework**

This study uses a coding scheme to codify, classify, and analyze the examples of grammatical features that appear in text material, namely textbook dialogues and transcripts for audio recordings. The purpose of developing the coding scheme is to make it possible for the researchers to use McCarthy and Carter's (2002) framework in analyzing the materials found in the textbooks. The analysis is done to detect grammatical features inherent in the target materials.

The coding categories are labeled: 1) word 2) phrase 3) clause 4) joint construction, and 5) indeterminate structures. Each coding category includes

a definition for each level. In addition, specific features and examples are provided to represent each of the categories.

The following are three examples to show how the dialogues and transcripts in the four textbooks are classified to the three levels of word, phrase, and clause. The first one is an example from *American Headway*, the second example is from *Top Notch*, and the third one is from *American English File*.

### ***Sample for the category “word”***

The following example is taken from *American Headway 2*, unit 9 (p.69).

Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

A. Well, scientists will grow organs - new livers, kidneys, hearts, and lungs.

B: Whoa.



Word

### ***Sample for the category “phrase”***

This example is taken from *Top Notch 2A*, unit 4 (p.39). The students are asked to read along silently as they listen to a conversation in a car rental agency in Germany.

Sound Bites:

AGENT: Certainly sir. Just a moment... Oh, yes. We were expecting you. An air-conditioned Clio. Is that with automatic transmission, or manual?

RENTER: Either way.



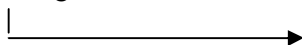
Phrase

***Sample for the category “clause”***

The following example from *American English File 2*, unit 1 (p.5) is a listening task which is an interview including fairly personal questions about the life of a star.

Q: What has been your most embarrassing moment?

A: Forgetting the lyrics to my new single on a TV show.



<b>Clause</b>
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After codifying the materials, the frequency of each one of the features of the spoken language in each textbook was identified. In addition, the data were analyzed so that it would be clear which one of the features is more dominant and hence emphasized in each textbook.

To ensure the reliability of the classification of items into one of the categories, the researchers conducted two kinds of reliability analysis, namely intra- and inter-coder reliability with regard to the coding scheme. To ensure intra-rater reliability, 10 percent of the data from the textbooks were selected randomly. The data, then, were coded twice by the second researcher in a two-week time span and the degree of consistency in the two coding attempts was found to be 1.00. In addition, a colleague was trained to code the 10 percent data and the agreement between his coding and that of the second researcher was used as the inter-coder reliability, which was found to be 0.89.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 presents some of the general features of the four textbooks analyzed

in this study. It shows the number of pages and lessons together with the publication date and the authors in each textbook. As can be seen, a total of 42 units (519 pages) were analyzed to locate the core units of spoken grammar within the textbooks.

**Table 1:** General features of the ELT textbooks

Textbooks	Author (s)	Publication Date	No. of Pages	No. of Units
1. Interchange 3	Jack C. Richards	2005	144	16
2. American Headway 2	John Soars & Liz Soars	2001	154	14
3. Top Notch 2A	John Saslow & Allen Ascher	2006	61	5
4. American English File 2	Clive Oxenden & Christina Latham-Koenig	2002	160	7
Total			519	42

### *Features of the Spoken Grammar in Textbooks*

The results from the codification of the whole textbooks' dialogues and listening transcripts in the four ELT textbooks are presented in Table 2. This amounts to a total of 42 units. For the items that have more than one part, the researchers evaluated each part separately.

As indicated in Table 2, the first category (word) was the most common item, with a percentage of 40.1% of the items. The next most common items were at categories 3 and 2 (clause and phrase), with 35.4% and 24.4% each. The least frequencies were found at the last two categories of spoken grammar: category 4 (joint) and category 5 (indeterminate) with no contribution in the items analyzed.



**Table 2:** Summary totals and percentage of grammatical features

Spoken Grammar			Cumulative
Feature	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage
Word	84	40.1	40.1
Phrase	51	24.4	64.5
Clause	74	35.4	100
Joint	0	0	100
Indeterminate	0	0	100
<b>Total</b>	209	100	100

The results of a Chi-square test yielded a test statistic of 184.12 with 2 degrees of freedom. The last two categories of spoken grammar were not included in the Chi-square analysis since the frequency of items for each one of these categories was zero. The results manifested that there is a statistically significant difference between core units of spoken grammar in the analyzed ELT textbooks. This is apparent in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Chi-square test results to compare units of spoken grammar

Chi-Square(a)	184.12
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.001

### ***Core Units of Spoken Grammar among the Textbooks***

Table 4 compares the four ELT textbooks with regard to the core units of spoken grammar.

**Table 4:** Units of spoken grammar among the target ELT textbooks

Textbooks	Word	Phrase	Clause	Joint	Indeterminate
1. Interchange 3	15 (46.8%)	7 (21.8%)	10 (31.25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2. American Headway	33 (55.93%)	9 (15.25%)	17 (28.81%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3. Top Notch 2A	14 (28.57%)	24 (48.97%)	11 (22.44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4. American English File 2	22 (31.88%)	11 (15.94%)	36 (52.17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

As Table 4 indicates *Interchange 3* and *American Headway 2* have the highest proportion of items at the first category, word (46.8% and 55.93% respectively). *Top Notch 2A* has the highest proportions at category 2, phrase (48.97%) while *American English File 2* has the highest proportion at the category of clause (52.17%). As the table shows, however, no item was found in the last two categories of spoken grammar within the textbooks.

The Chi square test results gave a statistical value of 15.07 with 4 degrees of freedom (since no item was associated with the last two categories (joint and indeterminate structures), these were left out of the analysis) which show that there is a statistically significant difference between the four target ELT textbooks in terms of different units of spoken grammar inherent within each. These results are shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5:** Chi-Square Test Results to Compare Units of Spoken Grammar among the Textbooks

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.07 (a)	4	.005
Likelihood Ratio	20.18	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.23	1	.626
N of Valid Cases	381		

## DISCUSSION

Four widely-used ELT textbooks (a total of 42 units) were analyzed in this study to see how units of spoken grammar were used in them. The most frequent items found were word, followed by clause and phrase; however, there were no joint or indeterminate structures. In addition, follow-up analysis revealed that these units of spoken grammar were not evenly distributed in the textbooks. Comparisons were also made between the textbooks with respect to the core units of spoken grammar inherent within each, which revealed a statistically significant difference. It is, however, crucial for students to get equally familiar with every one of the elements of the spoken grammar.

The results are definitely consistent with the findings of many other studies such as those of Cullen and Kuo (2007) and Karaata and Soruch (2012), who also focused on the availability of spoken grammar forms in textbooks published in the UK and Turkey, respectively. Upon finding a lack of spoken grammar features in the textbooks, they emphasized that corpus-based findings about spoken grammar are not adequately taken into consideration in the ESL/EFL textbooks.

It must be noted that the ability to recognize and comprehend joint and indeterminate constructions in conversations is an essential element of a person's communicative competence. The students learning a foreign language must learn to comprehend and apply these elements in their daily conversations as part of their communicative competence. The absence of these elements may be considered a deficiency for the analyzed textbooks and as a result, language learners may be prompted to speak "like a TV

announcer, always complete sentences with perfect grammar and they sound bookish” (Goh, 2009, p. 308).

As we can see, despite the findings of the studies on spoken grammar of English, the application of the knowledge derived out of these studies is not always applied to practice. In a comprehensive study, Timmis (2005) claimed that the corpus findings about spoken grammar “have been relatively slow to filter through to ELT practice” (p.117). Closer examination of the available global textbooks is needed to pinpoint the reasons for the inefficacy of most learners in speaking or in conversation with both native and nonnative speakers. Commensurate with the findings of the present study, it could be that language learners are constantly exposed to language with a communicative purpose which strictly follows the rules of written grammar. Most of the learners try to memorize and later recall the target prescriptive grammar rules during interaction or before beginning to speak, which shows the need for the units of spoken grammar to be included and emphasized not only within the textbooks but also as materials to be dealt with during the different phases of teaching.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Language teachers have long known about the existing differences between spoken and written English. However, awareness of this dichotomy has often been associated with spoken forms being considered as poor counterparts of the written forms. The teaching of spoken language forms has often been limited to a few slang phrases, idioms, and points of register, largely as a supplement to presumably more important teaching points. The present study was an attempt to call attention to the importance of inclusion

of spoken grammar features in ELT materials.

One major finding of the present study is the fact that the units of spoken grammar are not evenly distributed in global ELT textbooks. Joint structures were ignored in all of the textbooks and some of the textbooks had a preference to favor certain structures to the exclusion of others. This, of course, can be attributed to the authors' assumption about the learners' proficiency level. It is assumed that students are offered these textbooks with an intermediate or lower-intermediate level of English language proficiency. The learners' low proficiency levels call for more controlled language. Nevertheless, Ellis (2002) believes that textbooks need to include authentic language at any level of language proficiency.

An even more contentious issue here is the agreement to integrate non-standard units in a spoken grammar. If this is the case, then according to McCarthy and Carter (2002), a spoken grammar is likely to be more liberal in what it accepts as "adequately formed", which itself may be preferable to the term "well-formed", with its connotations of native-speaker intuition as compared with external evidence.

External evidence points us toward a socially-embedded grammar, one with criteria for acceptability based on adequate communicability in real contexts, among real participants. It is evidence that cannot simply be dismissed as "ungrammatical. (p. 55)

However, there are strong arguments for including the features of the spoken grammar in ELT textbooks. Cullen and Kuo (2007) provide the following arguments in this respect.

The first argument relates to frequency of use. The evidence from corpus studies of spoken English shows that all the features discussed in the

first part of this article occur frequently in conversational discourse. Heads and tails, for example, occur in Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999).

Secondly, neglecting to teach these features may lead to learners' either avoiding them or transferring equivalent features from their first language. As the study by De Cock, Granger, Leech, and McEnery (1998) suggests, advanced learners of English experienced the need to use vague language, either due to lack of contact with the target language or lack of explicit teaching, and they were left alone to formulate their own expressions, drawing on their own resources (e.g., transfer from L1 or from a written model of L2).

Finally, while mismatches between English language learners and native English speakers' usage may not be a cause for great concern in the global arena in which English is used and in which the great majority of its users are not native speakers, learners still need models of some kind as a point of reference. And some evidence, from research conducted by Timmis (2002) into the kind of English that students actually want to learn, suggests that native speaker norms of English exert a very strong appeal to learners from a diverse range of countries and contexts of language use, and that these norms include "the kind of informal, spoken grammar highlighted in the work of Carter and McCarthy (1997)" (p. 246).

Therefore, if one is attempting to teach "conversation," it is fair enough to say that written forms are not suitable options to be used as models of the spoken language. To do so would be simply unacceptable, because spoken forms often employ unique and special means of realizing various interpersonal functions of real-time discourse or permit one to more

accurately identify and use a specific genre of speech.

However, in line with the suggestion made by Karaata and Soruch (2012), one issue needs careful consideration. As McCarthy and Carter (2002) and Leech (2000) point out, the grammars of speaking and writing are not always different; rather, much grammar overlaps between the two. Therefore, materials writers should display similarities as well as differences and should not misguide the learners to the false impression that speaking is learnt only through spoken grammar and writing only from written grammar. It is also a good idea for materials writers to show the frequency of the grammar forms common to both spoken and written grammar in the textbooks.

The results of this study make a variety of interesting suggestions and offer potential for further research. First of all, the study raises an important question. If not all of the core units of spoken grammar are emphasized in current global ELT textbooks, is it rational to try to include all of them in textbooks? If not, which ones should be included? Is it reasonable to expect all features of the spoken language to be present in global English courses? There is no easy answer to these questions and these are the questions which need more careful consideration and exploration.

Further research is also needed to compare and contrast the textbooks analyzed in this study with their advanced volumes and also other similar materials to investigate whether or not higher proficiency levels would result in the use of more sophisticated features of the spoken language.

## Bio-data

**Sasan Baleghizadeh** is an associate professor of TEFL at Shahid Beheshti University, where he teaches courses in applied linguistics, syllabus design, and materials development. His research interest lies in investigating the role of interaction in English language teaching. He has published numerous research and practical papers in national and international journals.

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## Appendix A

### Coding scheme based on McCarthy and Carter (2002)

Unit	Feature	Definition	Example
A. Word	Unclear words	Words whose grammatical class is unclear	YOW Now
B. Phrase	Phrasal utterances	Communicatively complete in themselves but not sentences.	Any problem
C. Incomplete Clause	Aborted structures	Structures not uttered completely by the speaker	It was a bit erm ... a bit
C. Clause	Unconnected subordinate clauses	Subordinate clauses not obviously connected to any particular main clause	As soon as they hear insurance claim
D. Joint	Interrupted structures	Structures with other speaker contributions intervening	Anything to do with [YOW] coach work is er [RIGHT] fatal isn't it?
D. Joint	Joint production	Structures which are completed by the contribution of another speaker.	Customer: Let's just have er Waiter: Some rice? Customer: Yeah.
E. Indeterminate	Indeterminate structures	Structures with no definite status and sometimes even not well formed.	Take that off.