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AN EVALUATION OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOK GRADE-VIII AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL PRESCRIBED BY PUNJAB TEXTBOOK BOARD, LAHORE

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ABSTRACT

This study capaciously investigated the analysis of English textbook at the elementary level in Pakistan. The textbook evaluation was the process of scooping out significance or worth by careful appraisal and study. The textbook was a key component in English language programs. Despite their important role, textbooks were not always professionally designed. They did not fit the curriculum and closely corresponded with the aims of the teaching program and the needs of the students. The target population for the research was all the public elementary schools of district Toba Tek Singh. Out of four tehsils of Toba Tek Singh, ten schools (five boys and five girls) were chosen from each tehsil through random sampling. Furthermore, four teachers from each school were selected randomly. Thus, the sample comprised 160 teachers. As a tool of research, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher and validated through experts' opinions. The critical inquiry was made of the proposed syllabus for the said textbook. The views of textbook users were analyzed, and evaluation was executed in an exhaustive manner. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics through SPSS 18.0 version. After data analysis, various shortcomings in the textbook were found, and suggestions and recommendations were made for further improvement. A number of respondents believe that topics related to women, patriotism, national heroes, cultural festivals, stress, intonation, and phonology are not included in the textbook. These topics may be included to make the book to make it up-to-date according to the National Curriculum 2006.

Keywords: Textbook; Evaluation; Skills; English Language.

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INTRODUCTION

The English language is confronting declining status in Pakistani students at the elementary level, and this status is due to certain shortcomings present in the textbook. After studying English for eight years, students are not in a position to use this language in its true letter and spirit. This research will explore the major flaws in the development of textbooks which are liable to the falling standard of the English language in Pakistan (Aftab et al., 2014). The English language has earned a unique and significant position and status in developing Pakistani society. Our culture has been greatly aggrandized by it, and it is a universally acknowledged and understood medium for communication nowadays. It has given us knowledge and light in all walks of life because it is the lingua franca of the world and the language of science, technology, commerce, and diplomacy. English has become inevitable to attain maturity on the way to progress (Mumtaz, 2005).

Evaluation is the process of scooping out significance or worth, usually by careful appraisal and study. The researcher will try to analyze the syllabus in order to examine the prescribed syllabus and the needs and requirements of the students. It will further guide to modification textbooks according to the specific needs (Fredriksson, 2006). We assemble and analyze data that is always useful in selecting and developing

material for textbook evaluation. Evaluation makes a thing better to understand and utilize. It shows us the pros and cons of the material set in the textbook by the developer. Therefore evaluating a textbook is significant and has a key role to play in developing material, and it is a kind of educational judgment (Marc and Rees, 2009). Textbooks are considered as an inevitable component of any ESL (English as a second language) course, and thus, the choice of the best befitting and the accordant book asks for careful investigation. A textbook helps the learner to enhance the linguistic and communicative approach of the target language. It should be in the harmonic line of the target language. Textbooks for students are available in various models such as workbooks, a teacher's book, or further multi-modal texts for the assistance of teachers and learners (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2008). The textbook gives us an analytical picture that our book is in complete accordance with its context. They truly create autonomy and offer solutions for the problems of the learners. Therefore, in this study, the kernel of systematic textbook evaluation is to perpend and inspect the suitability of textbooks and the requirements of a learning program. Needs analysis is always done prior to textbook evaluation in this context (Tok, 2010).

In Pakistan, the English language is taught and studied through nursery to the master level textbooks. The textbook is a veritable and trustworthy spring of knowledge that is compiled after a lot of research and planning. Mostly textbook boards strive hard for printing textbooks, up to the intermediate level, under their supervision. Though textbook serves as an incentive and genuine fountain of material for the examination, their functional aspects are being overlooked while teaching. It should necessarily meet the upcoming challenges of the modern age (Cunningsworth, 1995). The objective of the current study was to evaluate the English textbook for achieving the educational objectives at elementary level and to explore the shortcomings and weak spots in the English textbook.

METHODOLOGY

Basically, it is an evaluative study of the syllabus to examine its effectiveness for the learners. The researcher used a quantitative approach because it is an evaluative study, and the data was analyzed and presented in numerical form. The target population for the research was all the public elementary schools of district Toba Tek Singh. Out of four tehsils of Toba Tek Singh, ten schools (five boys and five girls) were chosen, through random sampling, from each tehsil. Furthermore, four teachers from each school were selected randomly. Thus the sample comprised 160 teachers.

Survey research was conducted for the collection of data. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The parameters of the questionnaire used in the evaluation of the textbook included impressionistic evaluation, which involved an overall presentation and analysis of the textbook related to its design, table of contents, distribution of units, lessons, and sections in the book. Moreover, in-depth evaluation was examined separately and more analytically the treatment of the different skills, reading, listening, writing, and speaking, and the assessment practices provided through the book.

The questionnaire was distributed to randomly selected teachers and was collected back carefully after filling. The researcher circulated and collected questionnaires through the individual contact method. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics through SPSS 18.0 version.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at exploring the shortcomings in the textbook of the 8th class in Punjab, Pakistan. It also clarified how the results were related to the literature review and previous research results. Therefore, answers to the research questions were extracted from the review of the literature and from the findings of the micro and the macro-evaluations. The literature review presented several related topics of interest to English Textbook evaluation. It introduced theoretical and empirical material evaluation studies. The theoretical literature review has shown that retrospective evaluation may serve many purposes. It provides teachers with information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the used syllabus (You, 2004). The literature review also expanded my knowledge of previous empirical studies their strengths

and weaknesses. This knowledge guided the construction of the overall skeleton of this study: the research questions, instrumentation, the procedures of analysis, etc.

Table 1. Statistical results of the questionnaire.

Sr. No.	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	English textbook Grade-VIII, prescribed by Punjab Textbook Board Lahore, is according to the National Curriculum 2006.	160	3.8625	1.3804
2	It is compatible with the age, needs, and interests of the students.	160	3.7313	1.38147
3	The book is efficiently supported by essentials like audio materials.	160	2.2125	1.29531
4	The contents of the textbook are student centered.	160	3.5438	1.39562
5	The textbook is activity based.	160	2.5813	1.53971
6	It covers a variety of topics from different fields.	160	3.6625	1.54955
7	Interactive and task-based activities are given at the end of each unit.	160	3.1813	1.40919
8	Development of Language is from simple to complex.	160	3.1563	1.50699
9	Topics related to women are included in the contents.	160	1.6625	1.19689
10	Topics related to Islamic personalities are included.	160	3.675	1.49443
11	Topics related to patriotism are included.	160	1.3875	0.83919
12	Topics related to national heroes are included.	160	1.6375	1.11867
13	Topics related to religious festivals are included.	160	1.6688	1.40405
14	Topics related to cultural festivals are included.	160	1.775	1.28831
15	Topics meet the needs of our national ideology.	160	1.8125	1.15572
16	Topics related to citizenship are included.	160	1.9063	1.39088
17	Topics inculcate the moral values in the minds of the students.	160	3.4688	1.73358
18	The textbook fulfills the needs of the students for reading comprehension.	160	3.9	1.38364
19	The activities promote original and creative responses.	160	4.125	1.29707
20	Exercises promote critical thinking among the students.	160	3.8375	1.40926
21	Grammatical points are highlighted in the text.	160	3.3188	1.5393
22	Application of rules of grammar is made easy through comprehension exercises.	160	3.6188	1.3169
23	Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.	160	3.3625	1.44278
24	Activities motivate students to talk.	160	3.3188	1.38896
25	The book has appropriate listening tasks.	160	3.8063	1.24636
26	Texts motivate the students for self-writing.	160	3.1375	1.31507
27	It enhances the students' creative skills.	160	3.8938	1.46058
28	Basic knowledge of phonology is given in the textbook.	160	2.1313	1.23432
29	Students learn about stress patterns in the English language.	160	2.0125	1.09881
30	Students learn about intonation in the English language.	160	2.2938	1.59242
31	It helps students to speak in a natural accent.	160	2.4625	1.29288
32	Linguistic input is given in the textbook.	160	2.825	1.36695

In Pakistan, questions have long been raised on the inadequacy of the instructional materials and the void between the proposed syllabus in the curriculum document and the existing one. Research has been carried

out, especially after the 1980s, on this and the related fields, but any quantitative study has not been carried out before. The results also illustrated that the element of progression had not been followed in developing the English textbooks for the elementary level (Sandora, 2012). The major content is comprised of new lexical items and structures. The ratio for new items is quite high, indicating one solid reason behind the uneasiness of Pakistani learners of English and a valid reason for the poor exam results. The testing and evaluation system emphasized the grammatical items rather than functional and notional elements of language; the skill of memorization was viewed to be central rather than the communicative skills or four linguistic skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

The syllabus in Pakistan from head to tail is synthetic rather than analytical. It is teacher-oriented rather than learner-oriented. The content is specified well before the start of a course. The syllabus designer draws a map from beginning to end, so the text is a finished product. According to Nunan (2003), description of a syllabus of ends or product-oriented syllabus (Rabbini, 2002), it is obvious that the syllabus for elementary education in Pakistan is product-oriented rather than process-oriented. The Students Learning Outcomes in the curriculum document give emphasis to the parts of speech, basic grammatical structures, and comprehension of linguistic skills, i.e., of reading and writing. At the same time, it is acknowledging the fact that proper facilitation has not been and cannot be provided for listening and speaking skills. This descriptive study is significant for the instructional material developers, textbook writers, teachers, and future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the study, it is concluded that the English textbook is not activity-based. Topics related to women are not included in the book. Topics related to patriotism are not included in the book. Topics related to national heroes are not present in the book. Topics related to religious festivals are not included in the book. Topics related to cultural festivals are not included in the book. Topics do not meet the needs of our national ideology. Topics related to citizenship are not present in the book. Basic knowledge of phonology is not given in the textbook. Knowledge about stress patterns is not given in the book. Knowledge about intonation patterns is not given in the book. Linguistic input is not given in the textbook. Activities should be included in the textbook for practical use of the English language. It will enhance the communicative aspect of the learners. Furthermore, it will create a real-time situation in the classroom. Students will learn by doing the activities. Women-related topics should be part of the textbook. It will make the learner clear about gender discrimination and women's social and religious rights. The students are from both male and female domains, so such topics must be there. Basic knowledge of patriotism should also be part of the contents. The passion motivates the learners to work for the country without any utilitarian approach. Students sacrifice for their country, but they must be taught first. It is necessary for character building. National heroes must be included in the textbook. Such heroes become role models for the learners, and they may follow their footsteps which can result in productive output. Religious festivals should be part of the textbook because these are part and parcel of our life. So religious affiliation with the book will result in noble behaviour on the part of students. Cultural festivals should also be included in the textbook. Culture is the basic part of our social life. To promote our culture, such topics should be part of the book. Furthermore, it will create some kind of special interest among the students. Topics about our national ideology should be included as a top priority because it is inevitable for us to have complete and sound knowledge of our national ideology as Pakistani. It makes us more responsible in our attitude towards our duties as a citizen. Basic knowledge of citizenship should also be given in the textbook. Being a good citizen is a top priority of every countryman. The social and moral character should be enhanced and promoted among the learners. Basic knowledge of phonology should also be given in the textbook. Unless or until we get competency in phonology, we cannot make the two basic skills good, i.e., speaking and listening. These are the two skills that make us aware of the function and performance of

language. Linguistic input should be included in the textbook. It will enable the student to learn basic knowledge of pronunciation and other features of linguistics. It will promote standard language activities.

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