

---

# Post-use Evaluation of English Book 2 for its Effectiveness in Iranian High Schools

Reza Javanmehr

*Department of English, Science and research branch, Islamic Azad University, West Azerbaijan, Iran*

## ABSTRACT

This study tried to evaluate the effectiveness of the “English Book 2” which is taught in Iranian second grade of high schools based on vocabulary and structure criteria. The study was conducted at Chamran, Emam Ali and Dehkoda high schools in Urmia with 100 second grade high school students in the end of educational year. The checklist proposed by Doaud and Celce- Murcia (1979) was used to conduct the study. After collecting the data, Descriptive Statistics Analysis procedure was applied to analyze the data. The results indicated that the criteria studied in this study had no effectiveness in improving English knowledge of learners. It can be said that the students were not satisfied with their educational source, i.e. English book 2. Therefore, the aimed book needs considerable attention and revision.

**Key words: Textbook evaluation, English Book 2, high schools, post-use evaluation**

## I. Introduction

English as an international language is going to be dominant in all aspects of communication among people around the world urging people to learn it as a foreign language to be able to contact with people from different countries with different languages. One of the important tools used in the process of teaching and learning of English is textbook. Textbooks play a vital role in the realm of language teaching and learning and are regarded as the most important factor in the second/ foreign language classroom after the teacher (Riazi, 2003).

Textbooks are reliable resource with the process teaching and learning in most educational settings. However, it is related to the pedagogical environment in which they are used. Nowadays textbooks or coursebooks are basic elements in teaching English language (ELT) especially in schools. Benevento (1984) argues that whenever language instructors see each other, after greetings, first they ask each other, "What textbook do you teach?" As Dubin and Olshtain (1986, p. 167) state "the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many teachers and learners is the textbook".

The importance of the role of textbooks is clear and definite in teaching and learning process from the teachers' and students' perspectives. All educational materials and

---

especially Textbooks should meet certain standards and criteria. Materials should raise the learners' interest and attention in order to have an effect on their learning English language as a foreign language (Tomlinson, 2001). Tomlinson also states that the students can learn more if the materials and textbooks they use include lots of white space and different activities in them. He believes that the confidence of learners can be developed through these activities by engaging them in using the targeted language.

Considering the above statements, it can be uttered that there is not any textbook that can be without fault, thus, evaluation is very essential to clarify the efficacy of the textbooks and find the best one. There are some situations where we need to evaluate materials specially textbooks. Teachers might be given the choice to develop their own materials, in one situation, or they are just users of the books provided by others. McDonough and Shaw (2003) believe in the usefulness and necessity of the role of evaluation in both cases.

For evaluating textbooks many checklists have been made by researchers (e.g., Daoud & Celce-Murcia,1979; Eriksoussy,1993; Skierso, 1991; Sheldon,1988; Tomlinson, 2001; Tucker,1975; Ur,1996; Williams,1983). In the present study, the checklist developed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979) was utilized to collect information from learners about the English book taught in their second grade of high school.

In Iran, textbooks provide the basis for language input learners receive, the content of lessons, and the language practice in the classroom. Iranian students study English for nearly seven years, i.e. 3 years in secondary school, 3 years in high school and 1 year in Pre-university; however, the education they receive neither enables the students to gain full competence in using English language nor helps them to interact with the others. Therefore, the aim of this research is to evaluate the appropriateness and suitability of English Book 2 used in Iranian high schools from learners' perspectives at Urmia high schools. What motivated the present study to be undertaken is the need to be informed of the students' attitudes to the English books they study in high schools.

Therefore this study tries to answer the following question:

Are the vocabulary and structure of English Book 2 effective in any way in the case of Iranian high school students?

## **II. Methodology**

### *A. Design of the study*

This study is a descriptive survey which relies on the students' attitudes and beliefs towards the textbook "English Book 2". The advantage of the survey study is that essential amount of information can be gathered in a relatively short time (James, 1988). The data was collected from three high schools in Urmia.

### *B. Participants*

As the study was conducted at High Schools in Urmia, 100 second grade high school students participated in it. The participants were males since there were some restrictions

---

for the researcher to conduct the study in girls' high schools. The oral question of the researcher showed that all of the students had already studied English at English institutes, at least for 2 terms; therefore, they were familiar with nature of the books which would be to develop English as a foreign language.

### *C. Instrumentation*

Based on the necessity of the checklist in these kinds of study, the researcher used the items of vocabulary and structures criterion of the checklist developed by Daoud and Celce- Murcia (1979) (See Appendix A) to gather the information quantitatively and qualitatively. The vocabulary-structure criterion contained nine items. The students were asked to select one of the options of totally lacking, weak, adequate, good, and excellent according to their attitudes toward each criterion.

The instrument which was used in this study, to apply the checklist on it, was English Book 2 compiled by Birjandi, Norouzi and Mahmodi (revised in 1997-1998).

### *D. Procedure*

In the first step, the researcher went to the three Chamran, Emam Ali and Dehkhoda high schools in Urmia in the end of educational year of 1391-1392. After entering the second grade classes, he distributed the checklists of Daoud and Murcia among the students to collect their points of views about their high school English book. Since the checklist was in English, the researcher translated each item and explained them to the students about what each item wants them. All the students were familiar with language learning through taking classes in language institutes and hence the researcher's work was easy. However, they were free to ask any question during the answering. The time for answering the items was one hour in each class. After gathering the information and views of the students, the researcher tried to transfer them to quantitative and qualitative information. At the end, all collected data was analyzed descriptively.

## **III. Results**

In this section the frequency and percentage of each item of the vocabulary-structure criterion is presented and then explained descriptively.

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO THE ITEMS OF THE  
VOCABULARY-STRUCTURE

	X1		X2		X3		X4		X5		X6		X7		X8		X9	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Totally lacking= 0	0	0 %	36	36%	5	5%	0	0 %	13	13%	62	62%	76	76 %	50	50 %	82	82%
Weak = 1	28	28 %	45	45%	28	28%	3	3 %	58	58%	38	38%	24	24 %	39	39 %	18	18%
Adequate = 2	46	46 %	19	19%	48	48%	68	68 %	29	29%	0	0%	0	0 %	11	11 %	0	0%
Good = 3	26	26 %	0	0%	19	19%	22	22 %	0	0%	0	0%	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0%
Excellent = 4	0	0 %	0	0%	0	0%	7	7 %	0	0%	0	0%	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0%
Mean	1.98		0.83		1.81		2.33		1.16		0.38		0.24		0.61		0.18	
Standard deviation	0.73		0.72		0.80		0.65		0.63		0.48		0.42		0.68		0.38	

As Table I shows, the students rated item one of vocabulary-structure criterion, i.e. Does the vocabulary load (i.e., the number of new words introduced every lesson) seem to be reasonable for the students of that level?, as 28 % weak, 46 % adequate, and 26 % good with mean score of 1.98 and standard deviation of 0.73 which shows that this item is considered somehow suitable.

In relation to item two of this criterion, i.e. Are the vocabulary items controlled to ensure systematic gradation from simple to complex items?, learners rated 36% totally lacking, 45% weak , and 19% adequate with mean score of 0.83 and standard deviation of 0.72.

Item three, i.e. Is the new vocabulary repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement?, was rated by students in this way: 5 % totally lacking, 28 % weak, 48 % adequate, and 19 % good. Therefore, this result showed that this item of the vocabulary-structure criterion is not effective for the students.

Considering the ratings of item four, i.e. Does the sentence length seem reasonable for the students of that level?, revealed that the aimed criterion in this section was regarded effective in the way that 3% of the students viewed this item as weak, 68% adequate, 22% good, and 7% excellent. These results showed that this item was somehow adequate and moderately effective based on students' view points.

---

Based on Table I, item five, i.e. Is the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence appropriate ?, was rated by students 13% totally lacking, 58 % weak, and 29 % adequate with mean score of 1.16 and standard deviation of 0.63 demonstrated that item five is not satisfactory.

Learners answered the effectiveness of item six, i.e. Do the structures gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing reading ability of the students?, in this way: 62% totally lacking, 38 % weak. The mean and standard deviation of this item were 0.38 and 0.48 respectively. The results of this item showed that the book's inability in presenting the structures in a right way made it ineffective in the views of the learners.

Based on Table I, item seven, i.e. Does the writer use current every day language and sentence structures that follow normal word order?, was rated 76 % totally lacking and 24% weak, with mean score of 0.24 and standard deviation of 0.42. This showed that item seven was not suitable and appropriate based on students' ideas.

Regarding item eight of the aimed criterion in this section, i.e. Do the sentences and paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?, 50 % of the students checked this item as totally lacking effectiveness, 39% of them checked weak, and only 11% of the learners considered the effectiveness of this item in their book as adequate. This showed that like many previous items, this item did not have the effectiveness and suitability from students' attitudes.

Students scored item nine, i.e. Are linguistic items introduced in meaningful situation to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation?, in a way that it got 82 % totally lacking and 18 % weak. This result indicated that the students were not satisfied by the way the linguistics items were presented and therefore, found it unsuitable and ineffective.

The results of vocabulary and structure items revealed that the textbook English book 2 is not an effective choice according to students' attitudes.

#### **IV. Discussion and Conclusion**

The aim of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the textbook "English Book 2" for Iranian second grade high school students using a checklist developed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). Regarding the results of vocabulary-structure criterion, it may be stated that item four of this criterion was the only item which was moderately effective because the mean of this item was more than the mean of other items, i.e. 2.33. The reason for this result might be due to students' satisfaction with the length of the sentences in passages and exercises. However, considering the results of all items in general shows that this criterion lacks effectiveness for the students. Since, for instance, the grammatical points are not presented in a meaningful situation and the dominant way of presenting the grammar is drills and substitution (see Appendix B for an example). The other problem is that the vocabularies and new words which are listed in the end of each lesson (e.g. Appendix C) can not motivate the learners to learn them in a meaningful way and they, instead, try to memorize them in their short term memory just for their examinations. What seems to be the main problem with this criterion might be

---

related to the sequence of the grammatical structure. There seem to be no logic behind the ordering of the grammatical points because, for example, Present Perfect Tense has been introduced and presented in lesson one but the easier grammatical point, i.e. the Article 'The' is presented in lesson five. The presenting of the structures should go forward from simple to complex. This sentence can be supported by the statement of Ansary and Babaii (2002) who claim that simple sentence patterns and grammatical structures should be taught first and then followed by the complex ones. Based on the above sentences, it can be inferred that English book 2 is not effective in vocabulary-structure criterion. Generally speaking, the findings of this research showed that the candidates were not satisfied with their educational source, i.e. English book 2.

The findings of this study help Iranian textbook designers of the ministry of education and training to know the learners' attitudes towards the book they study at high schools and try to revise the book to gain the better feedback by considering the learners' needs and interests in the subsequent publications. Teachers also need to be aware that there are many important shortcomings which can demoralize the students from effective learning; therefore, they should do their best to cover these shortcomings by their own supplementary sources and activities.

There are some suggestions for further studies offered by the researcher. This research has been done in high schools of Urmia, West Azerbaijan, Iran. It is suggested that in order to generalize the findings to the larger environment, the other researchers conduct other studies not only in different high schools but also in different high schools of other states of Iran. English Book 2 was the aim of this study; therefore, it is offered that other books of high school, e.g. English book 3, go under investigation, as well. The researcher hopes these studies result in creating better materials for learners.

## References

- Ansary, H., & Babaii, E. (2002). Universal characteristics of EFL / ESL textbook: A Step towards Systematic Textbook Evaluation. *The internet TESL Journal*, 8 (2). Retrieved June 10, 2012 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Ansary> - textbooks.
- Benevento, J. (1984). *Choosing and using textbooks*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American council on the teaching of foreign languages. Chicago. IL.
- Birjandi, P., Norouzi, M. & Mahmodi, Gh. (Ed. 1997-98). *English Book 2*. Tehran: Iran Textbook Publisher.
- Daoud, A., & Celce - Murcia, M. (1979). Selecting and evaluating a textbook. In M. Celce- Murcia & L. McIntosh (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 302- 307). Cambridge MA: Newbury House Publishers.

- 
- Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1986). *Course design. Developing programmers and materials for language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eriksoussy, Z. M. (1993). *Evaluating the English Language Textbook Studied at the First Year Intermediate Schools in Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished MA thesis, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- James, B. (1988). *Understanding research in second language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Riazi, A. M. (2003). What textbook evaluation schemes tell us? A study of the textbook evaluation schemes of three decades. In W. A . Renanda. (Ed.), *Methodology and materials design in language teaching* (pp. 52-68). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Center.
- Skierso, A.(1991). Textbook selection and evaluation. In M. Celce – Murcia (Ed.),*Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 432–453). Boston, MA: Heinlein & Heinlein publishers.
- Sheldon, L. E. (1987). *ESL textbooks and materials: problems in evaluation and development*. Oxford University Press: Modern English Publications.
- Tomlinson, B. (2001). Materials development . In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.). *The Cambridge guide to teaching to speakers of other languages* (pp. 66 - 71). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tucker, C. A. (1975). *Evaluating beginning textbooks*. *English teaching Forum*, 13(3), 355 -361.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for textbook evaluation. *ELT Journal*, 37 (3), 251 – 255.

**Appendices**

APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST FOR THE ITEMS OF VOCABULARY/STRUCTURE

<b>Vocabulary and Structure</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Totally lacking</b>
1. Does the vocabulary load (i.e., the number of new words introduced every lesson) seem to be reasonable for the students of that level 3. Is the new vocabulary repeated in subsequent Lessons for reinforcement?	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
2. Is the new vocabulary repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement?					
3. Are the vocabulary items controlled to ensure Systematic gradation from simple to complex?					
4. Does the sentence length seem reasonable for the students of that level?					
5. Is the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence appropriate?					
6. Do the structures gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing reading ability of the students?					
7. Does the writer use current every day language, and sentence structures that follow normal word order?					
8. Do the sentences and paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?					
9. Are linguistic items introduced in meaningful situation to facilitate understanding assimilation consolidation?					

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF GRAMMAR SECTION

Substitute the words in the pattern sentences.

I like to learn English perfectly.

- |              |                 |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. want      | 2. wish         | 3. was planning |
| 4. am trying | 5. have decided | 6. will try     |

She wants to go home.

- |                        |                      |                     |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. stay here           | 2. see her friends   | 3. leave here today |
| 4. answer the question | 5. go there by train | 6. wash the dishes  |

What do you want to eat?

- |                   |                  |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. What / to do   | 2. Where / to go | 3. When / to sleep |
| 4. Why / to leave | 5. What / to buy | 6. How / to come   |

---

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF VOCABULARY SECTION

## I. Vocabulary

against*	gold	prefer
although	grammar	president
blow	hand (clock)	promise
boss*	handle	real*
bowl*	head	reason*
chemistry	How about...?	sad*
coal*	ill*	stay with
complete (v)	iron (n)	telegram
countryman	law*	terrible*
cruel*	machine*	touch
cry*	metal	watery*
earn*	mine* (n)	wind
feel	miner*	
feel sorry for (sb)	offer (v)	
France	perfectly	