

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT: EVALUATING SPINE TEXTBOOKS FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this study is to explore Sudanese English language teachers' views of the suitability and appropriateness of Spine Book One for the pupils of the Basic Level Schools in North Sudan. The Spine Series is a six-textbook series currently taught at the Basic and Secondary Level Schools in North Sudan. The research method adopted is the descriptive research method. The data are qualitative, and are collected with a checklist designed specifically for this purpose. The methodology also included content analysis. The findings indicate that: The content of this textbook is not suitable for Sudanese young learners of English. Most of the material in the textbook is not interesting. A lot of the content is obsolete and old. The four major language skills are not given equal emphasis. Neither the grammatical structures nor the vocabulary items are sequenced*

KEYWORDS: Spine Series, North Sudan, curriculum design and development.

INTRODUCTION

Most definitions of the term syllabus in language teaching refer to the linguistic content and the principles that underlie that content (Wilkins 1976, p 5). Research findings in the field of curriculum design and development (e.g. Taba 1962; Wheeler 1967) have shifted attention to the specification of needs and communicative objectives as additional components in second/foreign language syllabus design (Shaw 1982, p 219). The discussion has recently centred around the question of whether methodology forms part of the syllabus or not (Stern 1983, p 7). Most current syllabuses seem to exclude methodology from the syllabus specification, and include at the utmost only guidelines for the implementation of the syllabus (White 1975, p 69).

The syllabus is a fundamental factor in the attainment of communicative competence in foreign/second language teaching (Wait 1990). There are various proposals for syllabus design now available. They range from product to process syllabuses. Their theoretical bases and the practical constraints which influence them are discussed. The product syllabus is a formal statement of the end product, and has been criticized mainly because it cannot account for communicative competence in the syllabus design itself and because it may encourage a step-by-step teaching procedure. The process syllabus attempts to address learning procedures and is concerned with learning experiences and the negotiation of meaning. This approach is also not without its critics. But practical factors such as administrative requirements, teacher capacity and learner differences constrain the syllabus design. It is concluded that a process syllabus which specifies the classroom activities in much more detail than has been the case so far, and which contains product elements to accommodate some of the constraints, is likely to realize the aim of communicative competence

Statement of the Problem

English language teachers in North Sudan often complain about the Spine Series, the textbook now taught in public schools. The pupils themselves feel that the textbook does not cater for their actual needs. They are incapable of expressing themselves neither in speaking nor in writing. So this study attempts to analyze Spine one in order to pinpoint its strengths and weakness.

Aim

This study is intended to find out to what extent Spine one is appropriate for Basic Level Schools' pupils. The study focuses on content , sequencing , format, presentation and assessment.

Questions of the study

The study attempts to answer the following main question:

To what extent is Spine one suitable for teaching English language to Sudanese beginners ?

1. Is the content accurate and up-to-date ?
2. Is the content size suitable to the time available ?
3. Does the content meet local and national standards?
4. Does the textbook use authentic material at an appropriate level?
5. Is the material suitable for different learning styles ?
6. Is there practice in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)?
7. Is the material suitable for use in a self-study mode?
8. Does the textbook have a key to exercises?
9. Is there enough recycling of material ?
- 10.. Are there enough activities for communicative interaction and the development of communicative competence ?
11. Is there any obvious basis for selection and grading of vocabulary?
- 12.. Is there any obvious basis for the selection of grammar ?
- 13.Is there any sequencing of the material ?

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that Spine one is suitable for teaching English language to Sudanese beginners.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be helpful for those who are responsible for developing curricula and syllabi of English language in Sudan and abroad. They will also be of use to language teachers and ELT managers in general.

Limits

The study is limited to the evaluation of the content of Spine one, in the school year 2013/2014, in Sudan.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The descriptive research method is used. The data are collected through the use of content analysis and a checklist. A list of 27 questions has been developed and the answers to these questions are sought from the analysis of the content of the textbook.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term syllabus is defined as *“a contract between faculty members and their students, designed to answer students' questions about a course, as well as inform them about what will happen should they fail to meet course expectations.”* (Slattery, 2005, p.159). It is also defined as a *“vehicle for expressing accountability and commitment”* (Habaneck, 2005, p. 63. A syllabus (pl. syllabuses or syllabi) (OED September 2005). is an outline and summary of topics to be covered in an education or training course. A syllabus may be set out by an exam board or prepared by the teacher who supervises or controls course quality. It may be provided in paper form or online.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2005), the word *syllabus* derives from modern Latin *syllabus* which means "list". Because the word *syllabus* is formed in Latin, the Latinate plural form *syllabi* is also used in addition to the normal syllabuses. The OED admits both *syllabuses* and *syllabi* as the plural form. The syllabus ensures a fair and impartial understanding between the teacher and learners. It explains the policies relating to the course, sets clear expectations of material to be learned, behavior in the classroom, and effort on learners' behalf to be put into the course. The syllabus also provides a roadmap of course organization and direction relaying the teacher's teaching philosophy to the learners, and providing a marketing angle of the course such that learners may choose early in the course whether the subject material is attractive.

General items of a syllabus can be amplified in a specific curriculum to maximize efficient learning by clarifying student understanding of specified material such as grading policy, grading rubric, late work policy, locations and times, other contact information for teacher such as phone or email, materials required and/or recommended such as textbooks, assigned reading books, equipment, lab vouchers, etc. There are several ways of classifying syllabuses. One way of doing that is just to list them as follows:

Grammatical syllabus.

1. Functional syllabus.
2. Lexical syllabus.
3. Situational syllabus.
4. Skill-based syllabus.
5. Task-based syllabus.

Structural syllabus : A syllabus in which grammatical structures form the central organizing feature. A structural syllabus proceeds from simple grammatical structure to more complex grammatical structure. An example might be something like: Present progressive -> Comparatives

-> Simple past -> Past progressive. The main faults of structural syllabuses is that they tend to ignore meaning and a lot of really useful language is neglected at the beginning because it is viewed as structurally too complex (*If I were you, I would*). Structural syllabuses can be contrasted to functional syllabuses, which are organized according to the functions that language has (greeting, asking advice, disagreeing). <http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/functionalsyllabus.htm>

Functional syllabus: Language programs with functions being the primary organizing feature. The course content is based on functions not grammatical structures. A typical unit might be *Giving Advice*. The content of the unit would include:

I think you should . . .

Why don't you . . . If I were you, I would . . .

You'd better . . .

This could be a very basic unit taught to beginners even though the grammatical complexity of these expressions is quite high (including a second conditional with subjunctive mood!). Other examples of functions include *asking for directions, telling stories about the past, talking about rules, and requesting information* (<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/functionalsyllabus.htm>).

The Lexical Syllabus: This foreign language teaching approach was developed by Michael Lewis in the 1990s. According to the Lexical Syllabus, the basis of language is to be found in its vocabulary as well as the relations between its separate items. Back in 1988, John Sinclair defined the approach in his book, *The Lexical Syllabus for Language Learning*. During the same year, Dave Willis published a course book that follows the method : *The Collins Cobuild English Course*. In 2002, Lewis published the study 'Language Consists of Grammaticalised Lexis, not Lexicalised Grammar,' which provides support for the method, despite lacking particular scientific basis. Its main idea is that languages consists of lexical units. Examples are :

<u>binomials</u>	–	cat	and	dog
<u>trinomials</u>	–	ready,	steady,	go
<u>idioms</u>	–	flog	a	dead
<u>similes</u>	–	as	blue	as
<u>connectives</u>	–	in	other	the
<u>conversational gambits</u>	–	in	other	the

– did you hear the news?

The focus of study is not grammar but vocabulary, yet the role of grammar in the language is also seen as crucial. However, grammar is important only in relation to words and not by itself. Studying grammatical rules and looking for examples to fit them is seen as unnatural. Instead, rules about the use of grammar are inducted from the already gained knowledge of vocabulary through observations and examples. <http://www.a2zteachers.com/blog/the-lexical-syllabus-approach> .

Situational Syllabus: The central argument for the situational syllabus is that language is always used in a social context and cannot be fully understood without reference to the contextual settings. According to Wilkins, the situational syllabus is constructed on the analyses of situations and

behaviours. The situational analysis can enable the syllabus designers to predict in what situations the learners are likely to use the language and teach accordingly. The behavioural analysis aims to consider the likely behaviours or activities that the learners may conduct in different situations. In the situational syllabus the content is specified and ordered in non-linguistic terms (i.e. excluding grammatical items, vocabulary topics, or functions). The content of language teaching is a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. The content often takes the form of dialogues and conversations. The learners are expected to practice the dialogues and memorize useful expressions and patterns. The grammar and the vocabulary derived from the situations are not themselves the driving force behind selection. However, the grammar and the vocabulary are also taken into account when the language forms in situations are selected, since these two components receive primary attention in almost all types of syllabus design and development. Thus the main components of the situational syllabus can be analyzed in the following order:

- I. a list of language situations, and
- II. description of the grammatical and lexical items of each of these situations.

Examples of such probable situations include:

- At the hotel,
- At the travel agent,
- At the post office,
- At the restaurant,
- At the garage,
- At the airport,
- At the shopping mall,
- At school, and so on.

(<http://tanvirdhaka.blogspot.com/2010/02/situational-syllabus.html>)

Skill-Based Syllabus: In skill-based syllabus, the content of the language teaching involves a collection of particular skills that may play a role in using language. Relevance on student-felt needs or wants is the advantage of the skill based syllabus because learners who know what they need to do with the language generally show great acceptance of instruction that is clearly directed toward their goals. on the other hand, there are many people argue that skill based syllabus will limit people general language proficiency and some bad impact related to social value that Skill based instruction that is too limited in scope can program students for particular kinds of or isolated them from achievements and ambition that the competencies do not prepare them. The primary purpose of skill-based instruction is to teach the specific language skill that may be useful or necessary in using language. Skill-based syllabus merge linguistic competencies (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse) together into generalized types of behavior such as listening to spoken language for the main idea, writing well-formed paragraphs, delivering effective lectures and so forth. There are four mode understanding the language : Listening, speaking, reading, and (writing.http://www.researchgate.net/publication/235656404_A_SKILLSBASED_SYLLABUS_FOR_THE_TEACHING_OF_POETRY)

Task-based syllabus:

A task-based syllabus is based on task-based learning, an approach where learners carry out tasks such as solving a problem or planning an activity. The language learnt comes out of the linguistic demands of the activity. A task-based syllabus is structured around a series of these tasks. Example A teacher uses a series of projects on British culture as a syllabus for teenage learners on a summer course in the UK, and applies the task-based approach to the work the learners do. In the classroom various elements of the task-based approach are applicable to activities in other methodologies. For example, learners can see a model of the activity they are to do first, prepare a report of how they completed a task, or a project, and the teacher can record this report and analyze it for further work. (<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/knowledge-database/task-based-syllabus>)

Another way of classifying syllabuses is suggested by Long, M.H. and G. Crookes (1992, 27-56) *“Syllabus types can be divided into two superordinate classes, synthetic and analytic... [The synthetic syllabuses]segment the target language into discrete linguistic items for presentation one at a time. Different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up.... At any one time the learner is being exposed to a deliberately limited sample of language. Synthetic refers to the learner's role: the learner's task is to re-synthesize the language that has been broken down into a large number of small pieces with the aim of making his / her task learning task easier. They[The] synthetic syllabus relies on learners' assumed ability to learn a language in parts (e.g., structures, lexis, functions, and notions) which are independent of one another, and also to integrate, or synthesize, the pieces then the time comes to use them for communicative purposes. Lexical, structural, notional, and functional syllabuses are synthetic. So are most so-called topical and situation syllabuses, for examination of teaching materials shows that topics and situation have traditionally been used as vehicles for structural syllabuses.”*

The second major type is the analytic syllabuses .

These types

“offer the learner target language samples which, while they may have been modified in other ways, have not been controlled for structure or lexis in the traditional manner. Users maintain that prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous. Analytic approaches ... are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes. Analytic, that is, again refers not to what the syllabus designer does, but to the operations required of the learner. Willkins (1976) writes: "Since we are inviting the learner, directly or indirectly, to recognize the linguistic components of the language behavior s/he is acquiring, we're in effect basing our approach on the learner's analytic capabilities. Analytic syllabuses present the target language whole chunks at a time, without linguistic interference or control. They rely on learner's assumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and to induce rules....Procedural, process, and task syllabuses are all examples of the analytic syllabus types.”

Textbooks in EFL Classroom

Textbook has been defined by Wocky : as: “ *A collection of the knowledge, concepts and principles of a selected topic or course. It is usually written by one or more teachers, college, professor, or education experts who are authorities in specific fields.*”
(www.teachervision.fen.com/curriculum-planning/new-teacher)

English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents to many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors.

As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest:

"The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook". Other theorists such as Sheldon (1988) agree with this observation and suggest that textbooks not only represent the visible heart of any ELT program, but also offer considerable advantages - for both the student and the teacher - when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom. Haycroft (1998), for example, suggests that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them. Second, as Sheldon (1988) has pointed out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials.

O'Neill (1982) indicates that textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation. Fourth, textbooks yield a respectable return on investment, are relatively inexpensive and involve low lesson preparation time, whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective. In this way, textbooks can reduce potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988).

Cunningsworth (1995) points to the potential which textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argues that they are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, A reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Although some theorists have alluded to the inherent danger of the inexperienced teacher who may use a textbook as a pedagogic crutch, such an over-reliance may actually have the opposite effect of saving students from a teacher's deficiencies (O'Neill, 1982; Williams, 1983; Kitao & Kitao, 1997). Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) mentioned that textbooks may play a pivotal role in innovation.

They suggest that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new and/or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and

create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own. While many of the aforementioned theorists are quick to point out the extensive benefits of using ESL/EFL textbooks, there are many other researchers and practitioners who do not necessarily accept this view and retain some well-founded reservations on the subject. Allwright (1982), for instance, wrote a scathing commentary on the use of textbooks in the ELT classroom. He suggested that textbooks are too inflexible and generally reflect the pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors. Subsequently, the educational methodology that a textbook promotes will influence the classroom setting by indirectly imposing external language objectives and learning constituents on students as well as potentially incongruent instructional paradigms on the teachers who use them. In this fashion, therefore, textbooks essentially determine and control the methods, processes and procedures of language teaching and learning.

Moreover, the pedagogic principles that are often displayed in many textbooks may also be conflicting, contradictory or even out-dated depending on the capitalizing interests and exploitations of the sponsoring agent.

Other theorists such as Prodromou (1988) and Alptekin (1993) focused on the use of the target language culture as a vehicle for teaching the language in textbooks and suggest that it is not really possible to teach a language without embedding it in its cultural base. They argue that such a process inevitably forces learners to express themselves within a culture of which they have scarcely any experience and this may result in alienation, stereotyping, or even reluctance or resistance to learning.

Phillipson (1992) was also wary of the complex relationship between language textbooks and the target language culture but he sees the promotion of 'Western' (British) global textbooks as government-backed enterprises with both an economic as well as an ideological agenda. (Gray2000), on the other hand, has defended the socio-cultural components of many textbooks. He suggests that English language textbooks are actually ambassadorial cultural artifacts and those students should not only critically engage their textbooks but also view them as more than mere linguistic objects. In this way, he argues, learners will improve their language skills by using their textbooks as useful instruments for provoking discussion, cultural debate, and a two-way flow of information. Clearly there is no consensus on this issue at this particular time and this would seem to warrant some degree of caution when using these types of books in certain teaching and learning contexts.

(Brazil, Coulthard, and Johns, 1980; Levis, 1999), argued that Some proponents of authentic classroom language models with many textbooks are not necessarily the fact that they are culturally or socially biased but that they are actually too contrived and artificial in their presentation of the target language. They argue that it is crucial to introduce learners to the fundamental characteristics of authentic real life examples of both spoken and written discourse. They have demonstrated that many scripted textbook language models and dialogues are unnatural and inappropriate for communicative or cooperative language teaching because they do not adequately prepare students for the types of pronunciation Language structures, grammar, idioms,

vocabulary and conversational rules, routines and strategies that they will have to use in the real-world (Cathcart, 1989; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Yule et al., 1992).

They further contend that the scripted unauthentic language found in many textbooks does not lend itself to communicative practice but instead can lead to an oversimplification of language and unrealistic views of real-life situations. It can also provide additional inaccurate advice about the target language society that can be particularly dangerous for students entering the target language community or those who are expecting to engage in significant amounts of real-life interactions with native speakers.

(Sheldon, 1988). Explained that a final reason for disappointment and skepticism with many ELT textbooks is the fact that they are often regarded as the "...tainted end-product of an author's or a publisher's desire for quick profit thus, too many textbooks are often marketed with grand artificial claims by their authors and publishers yet these same books tend to contain serious theoretical problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings. They also present disjointed material that is either too limited or too generalized in a superficial and flashy manner and the vast array of "...single edition, now defunct [text]books produced during the past ten years testifies to the market consequences of teachers' verdicts on such practices" (Sheldon, 1988.)

Textbook Evaluation

Whether one believes that textbooks are too inflexible and biased to be used directly as instructional material or that they actually help teaching and learning, there can be no denying the fact that textbooks still maintain enormous popularity and are most definitely here to stay. It is important to remember, however, that since the 1970's there has been a movement to make learners the center of language instruction and it is probably best to view textbooks as resources in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs.

Moreover, they should not necessarily determine the aims themselves (components of teaching and learning) or become the aims but they should always be at the service of the teachers and learners (Brown, 1995). Consequently, we must make every effort to establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks that we use in our language classrooms. We should also ensure "that careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program." (Cunningsworth), 1995). Sheldon (1988) has offered several other reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of an ELT textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, or even political investment. A thorough evaluation, therefore, would enable the managerial and teaching staff of a specific institution or organization to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market. Moreover, it would provide for a sense of familiarity with a book's content, thus, assisting educators in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. This would go a long way in ultimately assisting teachers with making optimum use of a book's strong points and recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks, and entire texts.

One additional reason for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very useful in teacher development and professional growth. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) suggest that textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting action research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can also be a valuable component of teacher training programs for it serves the dual purpose of making student teachers aware of important features to look for in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language instruction materials.

The Spine series

In 1990 a new Educational Ladder with a system of 8+3 was introduced. This means that the duration of basic level is eight years and the secondary level is three years. In September 1990, the General Education Conference came up with recommendations to make radical changes in all curricula so as to be in conformity with the radical changes in the new Educational Ladder. And this was recommended by the National Comprehensive Strategy for Education in 1992. Therefore, the English language syllabus was changed and hence the SPINE series came into being. It meant to help create a learner who is interactive with his environment and proud of his heritage, culture and social values. Spine one consists of five units, each unit is divided into lessons, a lesson may be covered in one or more period. The number of period in the fifth class is three per week, and in the sixth class are six periods per week. At the end of each unit there is a revision section.

The content of Spine one:

Greetings ,Alphabet, Acquiring basic numbers, Objects, People, Location, Parts of the body, Ordering, Colors, shapes, Home, Time, School, likes and Dislikes ,Food and Drinks, Jobs, The farm, The zoo, Descriptions, Directions, The Sun and Moon. Building and the Sudan.

Previous studies

The following is a survey of the previous studies that are related to this research,

“Evaluation of Spine Textbooks for Teaching English in Sudanese secondary schools”, it was a thesis submitted to the University of Khartoum for the degree of PHD by **Inaam Tagelsir Ali, 2009**. The main findings are:

1. The emphasis of the books is on reading and writing.
2. Listening and speaking are the least practiced skills in the books.
3. The Spine textbooks do not help students to communicate in English because the communicative ability needs many tasks and activities in order to be developed. There are not enough of them on the books.
4. Teachers do not benefit from the teacher's book, it is not available in schools and most teachers do without it.
5. The syllabus is national. It reflects the Sudanese culture with very little emphasis on the western culture.
6. Syllabus alone cannot be a reason for a low standard in English; other factors are the time allotted to English, and the teacher's competence and level of training.
7. The spine books are not accompanied with any educational technology.

The second study entitles (Evaluation **the Communicative Aspect of Spine**). It was a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.A. in ELT 2011, at Nile Valley University by **Anwar Elsadat Osman**. The main finding is:

Spine 2 is based on communicative theory, but it needs competent well- trained and well- informed teacher about the communicative language teaching

“An analytical and Evaluation study of Spine Three”

Is a title of the research done by **Najat Mubarak Osman** – Nile Valley University in 2005, the study concerned with the evaluation of English language teaching programs, it focused on the third book in the spine series, which is taught in the basic level schools. One of the most important findings of the study is that; Spine three is loaded with lexical item and most of them are not recycled.

“Assessing the suitability of spine to Sudanese first year secondary school”

Is a title of a research done by **Salwa Altaj Mohamed**, Nile Valley University in 2011. The study is an attempt to find out the real factors that affect the students' ability in understanding topics which they have been taught at secondary school. The findings of the study are:

1. The majority of the topics in the book (spine four) are scientific and the students do not tend to read these topics.
2. The researcher found that some of the information is some lessons are untrue.
3. The book does not present passages that are specially prepared to develop reading for enjoyment.

“Evaluation of spine five selected materials” is the title of the research done by **Zainab Jami Mohamed**, Nile Valley University 2011, it is an attempt of evaluate spine five and show how it considers the growing needs of Sudanese society. The most important findings are: spine five supposed to have taught students to do things in English, to direct people, ask for direction. It takes the students along the road towards self-sufficiency in English and enables them to acquire basic study skills including reading and writing summaries and compositions of various types.

METHOD

The major objective of this study is to evaluate Spine One which is used for teaching English in basic level schools. The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. The researcher used (27) questions which were subjected to evaluation by expert in the field of educational measurement and evaluation and the field of applied linguistics. Several changes have been made on the initial version. The textbook analysis was made first by the researcher then amended by five teachers of Spine One.

Tool

The questions used for evaluating Spine One:

1. How does the overall appearance of Spine one look ?
2. Is the appearance attractive ?
3. Does the appearance appeal to pupils?
4. Does the Spine's description of itself appear to match the contents?
5. Who will use Spine one ?
6. In what situation will Spine one be used?

7. Are the materials, language focus and activities adaptable to personal learning and teaching styles or in general appropriate for pupils ?
8. Are the materials used in the textbook authentic ?
9. Are the materials in the Spine up-to-date ?
10. Is there practice in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)?
11. If so, is the practice balanced? If not, which skills are omitted or less practiced?.
- 12.. Does Spine one use authentic reading material at an appropriate level?
13. What kind of comprehension questions are asked?
14. Does the course book use authentic listening material at an appropriate level?
15. Is fluency balanced with accuracy?
16. How is accuracy and fluency balanced in speaking and writing?
17. How long are the units?
18. Does the Spine content identify and discuss areas of pupils' needs ?
19. Is Spine one sensitive to what the pupils need in order to learn well?
20. Does Spine one encourage deductive or inductive approach to learning – or a balance of both?
21. . Is the material suitable for use in a self-study mode?
22. . Do the exercises and questions have an answers key to them ?
23. Are there variety and pace in the content used?
24. Is the personal involvement of the pupils encouraged?
25. Is the material suitable for different learning styles ?
26. Is the content sufficiently 'transparent' to motivate both the pupils?
27. Are the pupils encouraged to use language creatively?

Procedure

The textbook, Spine one, was first analyzed. Then the analysis was shown to five teachers who are familiar with the textbook itself. Some additions were made upon their feedback. Then the 27 questions were used, the answers to these questions were sought from the analysis.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis have indicated the following :

FINDINGS

1. According to the study, there isn't sufficient variation of content .
2. Most of the content is not interesting, not up- to date and does not suit the student's age.
3. The emphasis of the books is on reading and writing. Less emphasis is given to listening and speaking.
4. Listening and speaking are the least practiced skills in the book.
5. The grading and sequencing in Spine one is inappropriate.
6. Most of the vocabulary of this textbook is neither graded, nor recycled in subsequent lessons and is not suitable for the pupils of this stage.

7. The textbook does not help learners communicate in English because the communicative ability needs many tasks and activities in order to be developed. There are not enough of them in the books.
8. The basic level requires teachers to plan activities for the class. There are no suggestions for reference books or resources.
9. The syllabus is national; it supposed to reflect all Sudanese cultures but this is not found in the textbook.
10. Pupils have little exposure to the English language due to the lack of sufficient exercises , activities and reading materials.
11. The book does not provide a useful table of contents, glossary or index.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be clear objectives for introducing English in Sudanese schools.
2. If the objectives include the four skills, there should be appropriate balance of them in the textbook.
3. The vocabulary should be a vocabulary of common use in English; it should be graded from simple to more complex and should be recycled.
4. The material should be interesting, up to-date and suitable to the pupils' age.
5. The content should be appropriate to the cognitive standard and affective domain of the pupils.
6. English literature should be introduced because it reflects the culture of the foreign language and hence offers pupils a good exposure to the language.
7. Time allotted to English should be doubled so as to allow for the teacher to compensate for any deficiency.
8. Spine one should include sufficient exercises and activities which give the pupils opportunity to practice the language.
9. Spine one should be enriched with educational technology like videos, cassettes ...etc. which will make teaching and learning enjoyable.
10. Spine one should include tables of contents, glossary, index and references.
11. Spine one should contain appropriate colored pictures and drawings to make it attractive to the pupils, and to help in understanding of the materials.
12. The teachers' book should be more informative to the teachers and should be available at schools.
13. The English language textbook should be improved and kept up to- date.

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