

EVALUATION OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOK IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB TEXTBOOK FOR 9TH CLASS

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ABSTRACT: *The present study aimed at evaluating English text book for matriculation programme (9th class) prescribed by Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore, Pakistan. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the suitability of the textbook to contribute to the improvement of the English language programmes in Pakistani schools. A review of evaluation checklists and other methods led to the decision that adapted checklist would best fit for this study. The results of this study showed that the relevant textbook did not fulfill the general objectives of target language. The problematic areas were related to integration of skills, nature of activities and some general features of the textbook. The results also implied that more attention needs to be given to the English language textbooks that are being utilized in language programmes.*

KEYWORD: Checklists, objectives of target language, language programmes.

INTRODUCTION

It is inevitable to decide whether the current English textbooks are effective enough in fulfilling the requirements of English language teaching and the students of English. This study was designed to evaluate one prescribed textbook. It was based on the hypothesis that the Pakistani official English language programmes prescribe textbooks which do not facilitate the students to achieve the objectives of the target language. The research project focused on one compulsory English course book prescribed in matriculation programme (9th class) of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Faisalabad. This paper argues that the selected textbook may be confirming to the requirements of the publishers, authors and administrators, but it is definitely not meeting the needs of learners.

Textbooks play a conspicuous role in the teaching /learning process as they are the primary agents of conveying knowledge to learners. One of the basic functions of textbooks is to make the existed knowledge available and apparent to the learners in an organized way. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) argue that any textbook has a very important and positive part to play in teaching and learning of English. They state that textbooks provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities, readings and explanations. Thus, textbooks will always survive on the grounds that they meet certain needs. Textbooks are regarded for both teachers and students as 'the visible heart of any ELT programme' (Sheldon, 1988-237). Sheldon (1988) identified three main reasons that the textbooks are so heavily utilized. First of all, teachers find developing their own classroom materials an extremely difficult, arduous practice. Secondly, teachers have limited time in which to develop new materials due to the nature of their profession. Thirdly, external pressures restrict many teachers. Each of these reasons present an accurate analysis of the strains experienced by teachers, and using course books is one of the most efficient and readily available ways in which to relieve some of these pressures. Richards (2001) states any learning program may have no impact if it does not have textbooks as they provide structure and a syllabus. Besides, the use of a textbook can guarantee that students in different classes will receive a similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way. In other words, textbooks provide the standards in instruction. Moreover, they include a variety of learning resources such as workbooks, CDs, cassettes, and videos, etc., which make the learning environment interesting and enjoyable for learners. They do not only provide a framework for teachers in achieving the aims and objectives of the course, but also serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting lessons. The content of English language textbooks influences what teachers teach and learners learn.

In the selection of a textbook, it is important to conduct an evaluation to ensure that it is suitable. Evaluation is widely acknowledged as a powerful means of improving the quality of education. Evaluation is defined as 'an assessment of the worth or merit of some educational objects' (Stufflebeam, 2000a, 2000b; Trochim, 2006). TenBrink (1974) defines evaluation as "the process of obtaining information and using it to form judgments which in turn are to be used in decision making." (p. 8). M. C. Alkin (1973) defines evaluation as "the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision makers in selecting among alternatives" (p. 150). Cronbach (1975) broadly defines evaluation as "the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational program" (p. 244). Although some definitions focus on the attainment of objectives, the passing of judgment, or the process of scientific inquiry, deciding a course of action is a common thread in most definitions of evaluation (Stevens, Lawrenz, & Sharp, 1997).

There are varied reasons for materials evaluation activities. One of the major reasons is the need to adopt new course books. Another reason as Cunningsworth (1995) emphasized is to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. Tomlinson (1996) also states that the process of materials evaluation can be seen as a way of developing our understanding of the ways in which it works and, in doing so, of contributing to both acquisition theory and pedagogic practices. It can also be seen as one way of carrying out action research. (p.238). Grant (1987, p.8) claimed that 'Perfect book does not exist', yet the aim was to find out the best possible one that

will fit and be appropriate to a particular learner group. Sheldon (1988) suggested that textbooks offer considerable advantages for both students and the teachers when they were being used in ESL/EFL classrooms. Cunnigsworth (1995) argued that textbooks were an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective source for presentational material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflected pre-determined learning objectives, and supported for less experienced teachers to gain confidence.

As we have discussed the significance of evaluating the textbooks, we are now concerned with the criteria we follow in the process of their evaluation. Sheldon (1988) suggests that as no one set of criteria is applicable to all different situations, we can only commit ourselves to checklists.

In the present study, our aim is to have an evaluation of one English text book of matriculation level and to point out strengths and weaknesses of that book in order to make decision about the implementation of that book in future in educational program.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Evaluation is considered as an integral part in the educational process. Many researchers have been very enthusiastic to conduct their studies in this field for the sake of the textbook improvement and modification. According to Hutchinson and Waters, textbook evaluation is basically a straightforward, analytical ‘matching process: matching needs to available solutions’ (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:97).

Tyler, in his book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1950), asserted:

The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized . . . However, since educational objectives are essentially changes in human beings, that is, the objectives aimed at are to produce certain desirable changes in behavior patterns of the students, then evaluation is the process for determining the degree to which these changes in behavior are actually taking place. (p. 69)

This formulation of the evaluation process, straightforwardly based on the concept of objectives, allowed for a systematic and intelligent study of an educational program.

The words evaluation, assessment, and measurement appear to be used interchangeably. Choppin (1985) attempts to “maintain the semantic distinctions” between these words and identifies the “ultimate objective” (p. 1747) of each. Measurement implies a numerical assignment of value, using instruments such as rulers, stopwatches, etc. “Measurement is rarely carried out for its own sake. It may be included in an assessment or evaluation, but is more to be regarded as a basic research procedure.” Choppin argues that the term assessment should be reserved for application to people, including grading, certifying, etc. Assessment may often utilize a test for measurement, but it rarely has “much in common with scientific measurement.” Choppin reserves the term evaluation for application to “abstract entities such as programs, curricula, and organizational variables” (p. 1748). Evaluation implies determining value and worth, and often involves making comparisons to other programs, curricula, or organizational schemes. Choppin writes, “Just as assessment may be characterized as a routine activity in which most educators will be involved,

evaluation is an activity primarily for those engaged in research and development.” Evaluation can serve several important purposes including goal refinement, documentation, determination of impact, and program improvement (Hawkes, 2000). Hanson (1978) writes, “Good evaluation is central to the continued development of a profession.” (p. 97).

In the field of textbook evaluation research, methods are rarely discussed clearly and in-depth. Taking into account research procedures, data processing, and interpretation; textbook evaluation methods can be classified into a very detailed list: a) methods of theoretical analysis: 1) the theoretical-analytical methods (e.g. the determination of the conformity between the textbook and the syllabus – comparative study), 2) the special analytic method (i.e. analysis according to a set of internal didactic criteria), and 3) the comparative analysis of textbook (i.e. two or more textbooks are mutually compared); b) empirical-analytical methods: 1) experimental investigation in the use of textbooks, 2) public inquiry applied to teachers, 3) public inquiry applied to learners, and c) Statistical (quantitative) methods (Hrehovcik, 2002).

However, from a simpler perspective, only three basic methods of textbook evaluation can be discerned in the related literature: impressionistic method, checklist method, and in-depth method. The impressionistic method is concerned to obtain a general impression of the material and involves glancing at the publisher's blurb and content pages of each textbook, and then skimming throughout the book looking at various features of it. In-depth techniques go beneath the publisher's and author's claims. It considers the kind of language description, underlying assumptions about learning or values on which the materials are based or, in a broader sense, whether the materials seem likely to live up to the claims that are being made for them (McGrath, 2002). The checklist method contrasts system (objectivity) with impression (subjectivity). Compared to the two other alternatives, impressionistic evaluation and in-depth evaluation, the checklist has at least four advantages: it is systematic which ensures that all elements that are deemed to be important are considered, it is cost effective which permits a good deal of information to be recorded in a relatively short space of time; the information is recorded in a convenient format which allows for easy comparison between competing sets of material; and it is explicit, and, provides the categories that are well understood by all involved in the evaluation while offers a common framework for decision making (McGrath, 2002).

A checklist is an instrument that helps practitioners in English Language Teaching (ELT) evaluate language teaching materials, like textbooks. It allows a more sophisticated evaluation of the textbook in reference to a set of generalizable evaluative criteria. These checklists may be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative scales have the merit of allowing an objective evaluation of a given textbook through Likert style rating scales (e.g., Skierso, 1991). Qualitative checklists, on the other hand, often use open-ended questions to elicit subjective information on the quality of course books (e.g., Richards, 2001). While qualitative checklists are capable of an in-depth evaluation of textbooks, quantitative checklists are more reliable instruments and are more convenient to work with, especially when team evaluations are involved.

Evaluative criteria of checklists should be chosen according to the learning-teaching context and the specific needs of the learner and teacher. However, a review of the available checklists indicates that they have many identical evaluative criteria regardless of the fact that they had been

developed in different parts of the world for different learning-teaching situations and purposes. Most well-established checklists such as Cunningsworth and Kusel (1991) or Skierso (1991) examine similar dimensions like physical attributes of textbooks including aims, layout, methodology, and organization. Some other criteria that are present in most checklists include the way language skills (speaking, listening, etc.), sub-skills (grammar, vocabulary, etc.), and functions are presented in the textbook depending on the present socio-cultural setting (Zabawa, 2001; Ur, 1996; Cunningsworth, 1995; Harmer, 1991).

When selecting an English language textbook to be used for teaching English language to students, it is very necessary to carefully examine that material to make sure that it is suitable for their particular institute setting. In this examination, a number of different aspects are taken into consideration, for example the age and proficiency level of the students, what language factors that the students need to learn, the course syllabus and so on. This is the message that previous studies tried to prove.

METHODOLOGY

An English text book prescribed for 9th by Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore, Pakistan was selected for evaluation purpose. The text book consisted of 12 units each of which having activities on reading, speaking and writing skill, vocabulary building, pronunciation and grammar competence.

Data Collection

Evaluation was done at two levels.

At level 1: First-Glance evaluation involved an analysis of different activities of the textbook.

At Level 2: Close-evaluation examined separately and more analytically general appearance, layout and design, visuals, objectives, teaching aids and methods, table of contents, exercises and social and cultural context provided through the book. For this kind of evaluation, we adapted 75-items evaluative checklist. The items of the evaluative checklist were grouped under three domains: 1) Physical and utilitarian attributes (25 items); 2) Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials (32 items), and 3) learning-teaching content (18 items). The first category was further divided into three sub-categories; 1) General appearance (9 items) 2) Layout and design (12 items); and 3) Visuals (4 items). The criteria in the second category, on the other hand, included the following; 1) Book objectives (10 items); 2) Teaching aids (8 items); and 3) Teaching methods (14 items). The criteria in the third category included the following sub-categories; 1) Subject and content (9 items) and 2) social and cultural contexts (9 items).

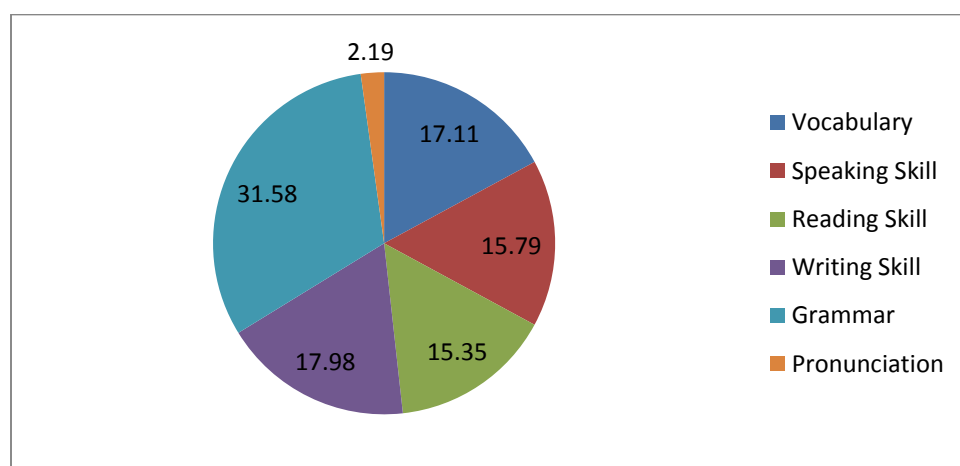
FINDINGS

Findings from Analysis Level 1

At level 1, the English text book for matriculation level (9th class) was deeply evaluated with respect to different types of activities employed by the authors. Evaluation of the book exhibited that 228 different activities were employed. The detail of activities is given below in table 1 and these activities are further elaborated with the help of figure 1.

Table 1: Activities throughout the textbook

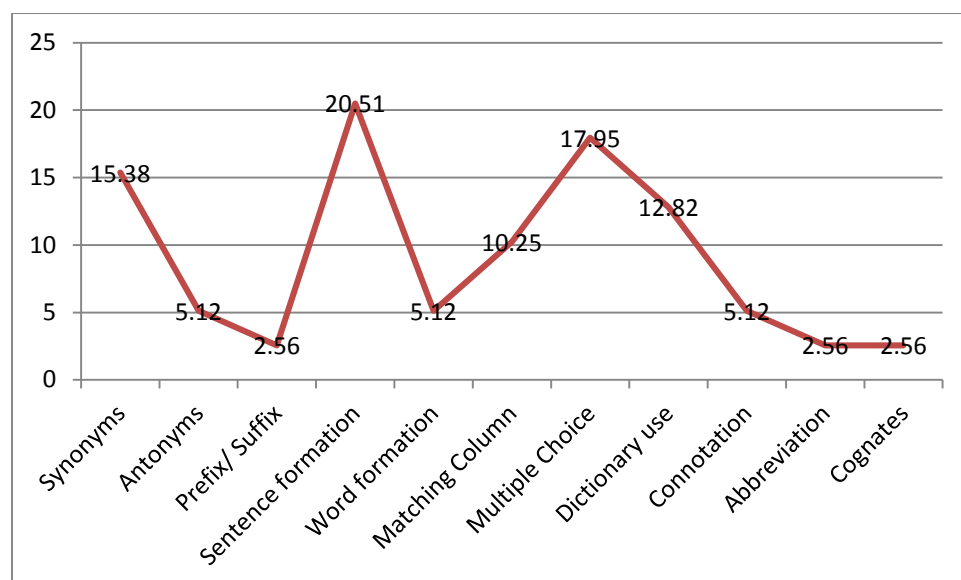
Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Total Activities	Percentage
1	Vocabulary	39	228	17.11
2	Speaking Skill	36	-----	15.79
3	Reading Skill	35	-----	15.35
4	Writing Skill	41	-----	17.98
5	Grammar	72	-----	31.58
6	Pronunciation	05	-----	2.19

Figure 1: Activities throughout the textbook

There were 39 vocabulary items in the book. For detail, see table 2. Figure 2 gives graphic representation.

Table 2: Detail of vocabulary items.

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Synonyms	06	15.38
2	Antonyms	02	5.12
3	Prefix/ Suffix	01	2.56
4	Sentence formation	08	20.51
5	Word formation	02	5.12
6	Matching Column	04	10.25
7	Multiple Choice	07	17.95
8	Dictionary use	05	12.82
9	Connotation	02	5.12
10	Abbreviation	01	2.56
11	Cognates	01	2.56

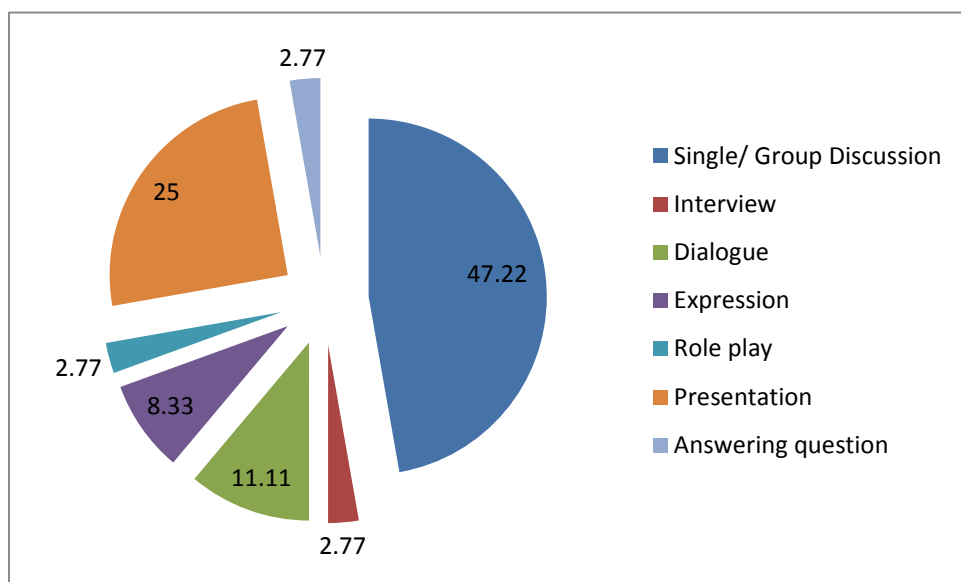
Figure 2. Detail of vocabulary items.

Total activities for speaking skill were 36 throughout the book. For detail, see table 3/ figure 3.

Table 3: Detail of activities related to speaking skill

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Single/ Group Discussion	17	47.22
2	Interview	01	2.77
3	Dialogue	04	11.11
4	Expression	03	8.33
5	Role play	01	2.77
6	Presentation	09	25
7	Answering question	01	2.77

Figure 3: Detail of activities related to speaking skill

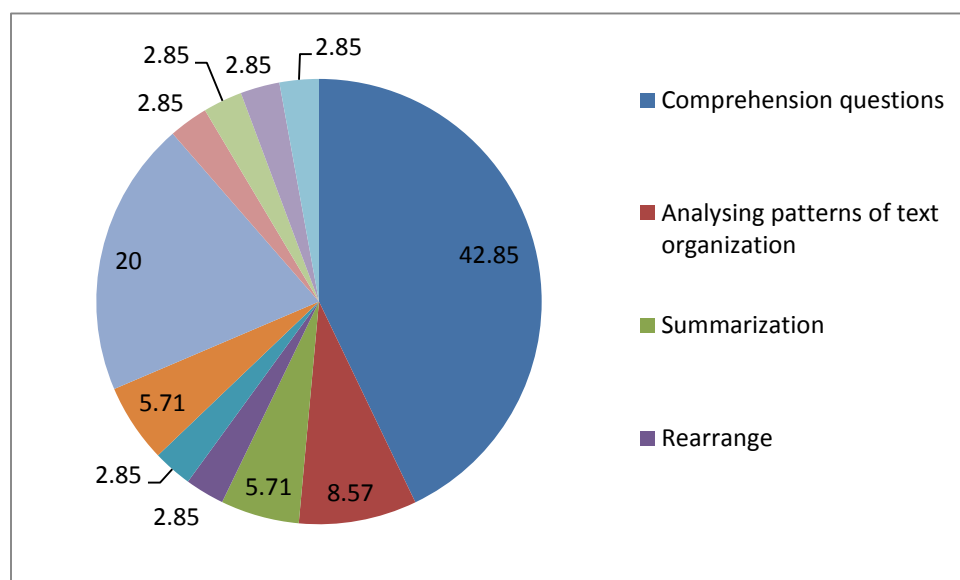


Total activities for reading skill were 35. See table 4/ figure 4 for complete detail.

Table 4: Table shows detail of activities for reading skill

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Comprehension questions	15	42.85
2	Analysing patterns of text organization	03	8.57
3	Summarization	02	5.71
4	Rearrange	01	2.85
5	Anaphoric/ Cataphoric	01	2.85
6	Paraphrase	02	5.71
7	Comprehension questions related to Figure of Speech	07	20
8	Arrange chronologically	01	2.85
9	Arrange alphabetically	01	2.85
10	Analyse cause and effect solution	01	2.85
11	Putting material in right column	01	2.85

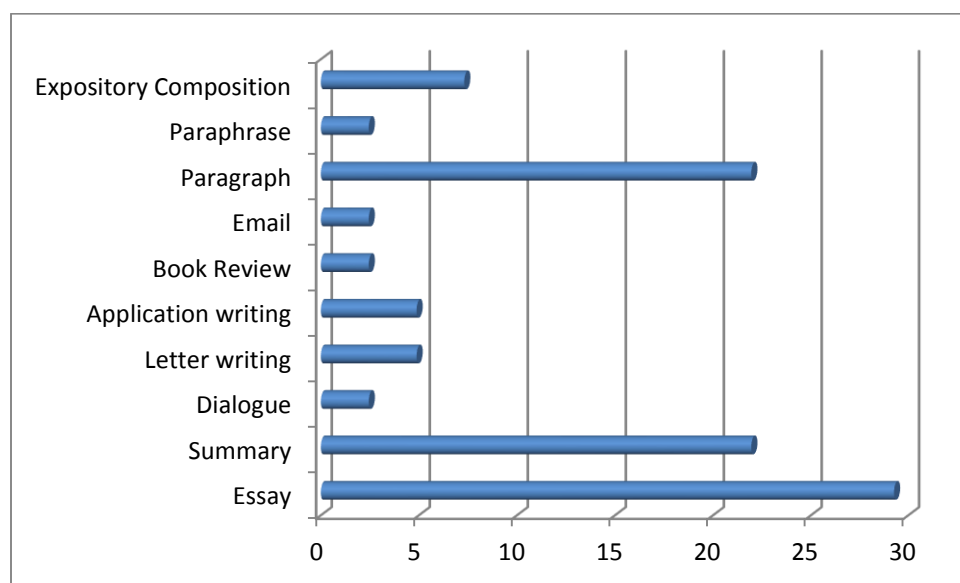
Figure 4: Figure shows detail of activities for reading skill



There were 41 different activities for developing writing skill. See table 5 or figure 5
Table 5. Detail of activities for writing skill

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Essay	12	29.27
2	Summary	09	21.95
3	Dialogue	01	2.44
4	Letter writing	02	4.88
5	Application writing	02	4.88
6	Book Review	01	2.44
7	Email	01	2.44
8	Paragraph	09	21.95
9	Paraphrase	01	2.44
10	Expository Composition	03	7.31

Figure 5: Detail of activities for writing skill

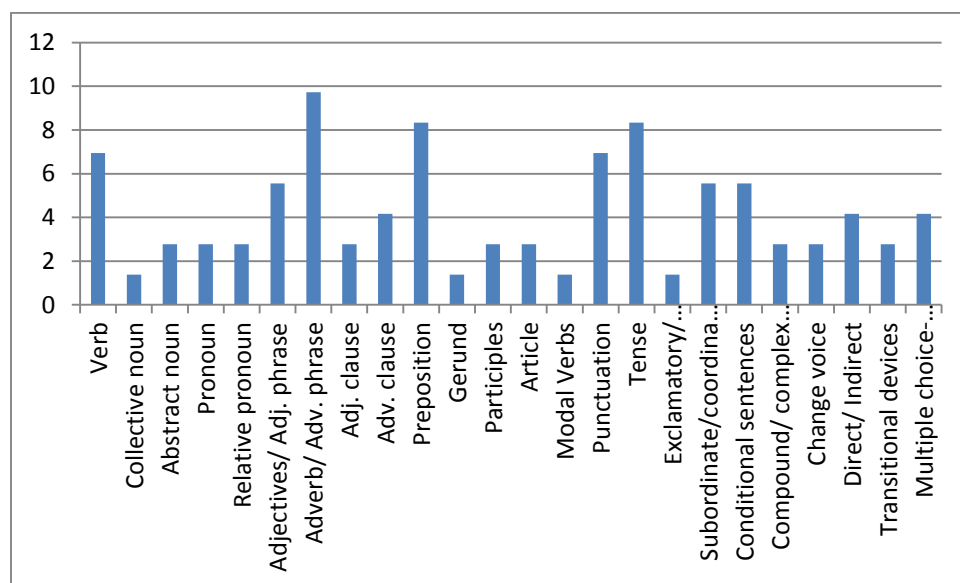


For detail of grammar items, see table 6 or figure 6

Table 6. Detail of grammar items

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Verb	05	6.94
2	Collective noun	01	1.38
3	Abstract noun	02	2.77
4	Pronoun	02	2.77
5	Relative pronoun	02	2.77
6	Adjectives/ Adj. phrase	04	5.55
7	Adverb/ Adv. phrase	07	9.72
8	Adj. clause	02	2.77
9	Adv. clause	03	4.16
10	Preposition	06	8.33
11	Gerund	01	1.38
12	Participles	02	2.77
13	Article	02	2.77
14	Modal Verbs	01	1.38
15	Punctuation	05	6.94
16	Tense	06	8.33
17	Exclamatory/ Assertive/ Imperative.....	01	1.38
18	Subordinate/coordinate conjunction	04	5.55
19	Conditional sentences	04	5.55

20	Compound/ complex sentences	02	2.77
21	Change voice	02	2.77
22	Direct/ Indirect	03	4.16
23	Transitional devices	02	2.77
24	Multiple choice- based on mixed grammar items	03	4.16

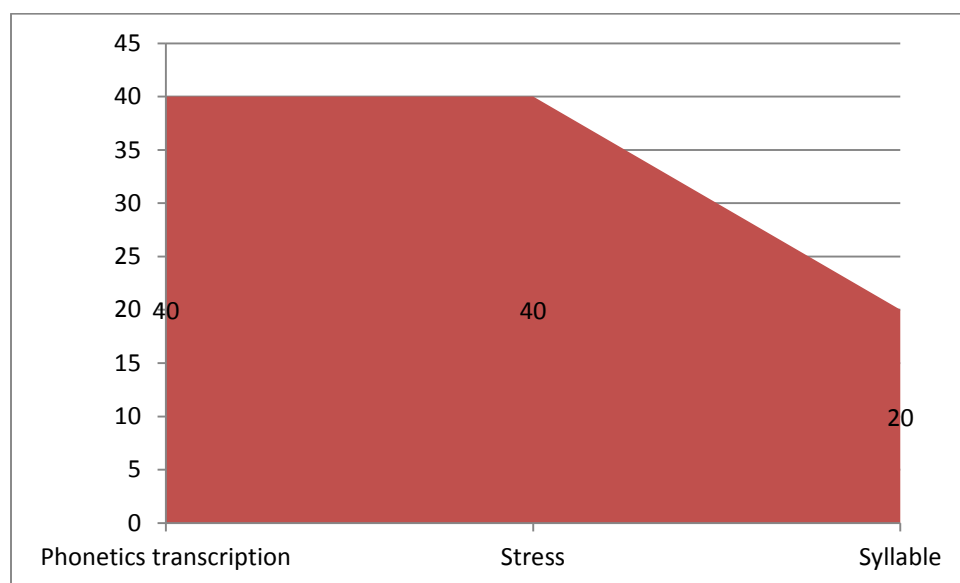
Figure 6: Detail of grammar items

Pronunciation was given least touch in the book. Only five activities were about pronunciation. It is clear from table 7. Same is apparent from figure 7.

Table 7: Detail of Pronunciation activities

Sr. No.	Name of Activity	No. of Activity	Percentage
1	Phonetics transcription	02	40
2	Stress	02	40
3	Syllable	01	20

Figure 7: Detail of Pronunciation activities



Findings from Analysis Level 2

Close evaluation was done through adapted checklist. See Appendix

DISCUSSION

The textbook prescribed for 9th class by Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore, Pakistan was examined in depth. There are some flaws in general appearance. The paper used for the textbook is of very rough. The outside cover is not informative and attractive. The book has no any bibliography. The textbook does not fulfill the general objectives of teaching English language at the specified educational institute. The objectives do not make any balance between four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The book is very dull and drab. Visuals are also very poor. Audio-visual aids are altogether ignored. There is no workbook and CD accompanying the student's book. There is no any teacher's guide to aid the teacher. The activities of book are not designed in a way to encourage students to bring real objects in class to illustrate some points of learning. Inductive approach is not used. Fun elements are missing. The textbook does not provide models for final achievement tests. Pronunciation is given least attention. Activities for Listening skill are not included. There are no any cassettes/CDs for pronunciation and listening practices. The activities do not promote confidence in language learners to speak fluently and to write critically in real life situation. So far as reading skill is concerned, the students are required to read the provided text and then respond factually to the given question. With the exception of a few questions, these activities do not utilize any cognitive abilities (like evaluation, prediction and analysis). Similarly least efforts are done in developing sense of self-worth among learners of English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above conclusions, and to achieve the avowed goals of this study we put forward the following recommendations. It is hoped that the process of selecting the content of textbook could be improved by following these recommendations:

- 1- Textbooks should be revised from time to time to make sure they are free from spelling, grammatical and lexical mistakes.
- 2- An appropriate plan should be organized in which the roles of textbook developers, teachers, students, and educational managers at a specific stage of learning and teaching are stated clearly.
- 3- In revising the textbooks, good qualities of the textbooks should be retained and the shortcomings should be eliminated or at least reduced.
- 4- Teachers and supervisors should be consulted when selecting the textbook material, and they should participate in making any modifications or improvements concerning the textbooks.
- 5- Finally, materials development is by now an area of specialization with abundant literature; therefore, textbook writers are required to appreciate and use principles of materials development in the process of writing and revising books.

CONCLUSION

The study employed two levels of evaluation. Thus, the findings indicate that book is not without shortcomings. The textbook fails to meet the general objectives of the target language and is incompatible with the needs of promoting fluency and enhancing language skills. The evaluation highlights a diverse set of shortcomings which need urgent focus and subsequent remedies in order to improve the English language skills of the learners. It is essential to say that a new textbook should be designed utilizing updated material which is of interest and value to a variety of learners. The textbook book should be balanced in all respects. The said book needs to address all skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). It should include more activities which promote linguistic and communicative competence. There is immediate need to involve activities making a learner a creative writer. There is immediate need for attention retaining factors. The text book should also contribute in developing self -confidence among learners. Here it is essential to assert that the matriculation programme is a pivotal for Pakistani students, therefore this course should ideally train them to gain admission to the higher educational institutions and to continue their education.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study involved a very small scale evaluation limited to a single textbook. However, considering the illuminating nature of the data obtained through this research project, it is imperative that similar studies should be undertaken on a larger scale, and that the views and experiences of learners and teachers from all over Pakistan should be incorporated in the research. At the same time, similar research programmes conducted in abroad can also contribute towards materials improvement in Pakistan and beyond.

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Appendix**An Evaluative Checklist**

Items of Evaluation	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	NA
1- Physical and utilitarian attributes A- General Appearance 1 The outside cover is informative and attractive.			✓	
2 The font size and type used in the book are appropriate.	✓			
3. The paper used for the textbooks is of good quality			✓	
4. Binding is strong enough.		✓		
5. Printing used is good.		✓		
6. There is enough white space to achieve clarity.		✓		
7. The titles and sub-heading titles are written clearly and appropriately	✓			
8. Its size is appropriate	✓			
9. The textbook has sufficient number of pictures to make the situation more life-like.			✓	
B- Layout and design 1 There is a variety of design to achieve impact.			✓	
2. There is consistency in the use of headings, icons, labels, italics, etc.	✓			
3. The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions and structures that will be taught in each unit.	✓			
4. The textbook includes a detailed overview of vocabulary that will be taught in each unit.	✓			
5. The textbook has a complete and detailed table of contents.	✓			

6. Every unit and lesson is given an appropriate title.	✓			
7. The textbook has a complete bibliography.				✓
8. The textbook is organized logically and effectively.		✓		
9. An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.		✓		
10. Adequate review sections and exercises are included.		✓		
11. The textbook is free of mistakes		✓		
12. The textbook is durable.		✓		
C-Visuals			✓	
1. The Visuals are well produced ,varied and attractive			✓	
2. The Visuals stimulate students to be creative.			✓	
3. The Visuals are functional.			✓	
4. The Visuals are compatible with students' own culture.			✓	
2. Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials.				
a. Book Objectives				
1. The textbook fulfills the general objectives of teaching English language at the specified educational institute.			✓	
2. The objectives are related to the learners' needs and interests			✓	
3. The objectives are specified explicitly in the textbook.	✓			
4. The objectives are measurable	✓			
5. The objectives are relevant to the students' local culture.	✓			
6. The objectives make a balance between the four main skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing			✓	

7. The objectives help the teacher to choose the right aids and the best methods of teaching.		✓		
8. The six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are dominant in the textbook.		✓		
9. The content underlines the importance of knowledge for students.		✓		
10. The textbook raises students' interest in further English language study.			✓	
b. Teaching Aids				✓
1. The textbook book is supported efficiently by audio-materials.				✓
2. There is an available teacher's guide to aid the teacher.				✓
3. Workbook is available to give useful guidance.				✓
4. Cassettes that accompany the book are available.				✓
5. The pictures and diagrams required to be brought by students are available for them.				✓
6. The aids used help to build students' confidence.				✓
7. Students are encouraged to bring real objects in class to illustrate some points of learning.				✓
8. The posters and flash cards that accompany the book are available and suitable.				✓
c. Teaching Methods		✓		
1. The teaching methods used in the book are the latest in the field.				
2. The methods used are student-centered.			✓	
3. The activities allow students to talk more than teachers.			✓	
4. The activities used allow various class activities.			✓	
5. The activities used enable the learners to use English outside the classroom situation.			✓	
6. The activities can be exploited fully to acquire different language skills.			✓	

7. Activities can work well with methodologies in ELT.		✓		
8. The textbook encourages inductive approach to learning.			✓	
9. The textbook helps teachers exploit the activities to meet the students' expectations.			✓	
10. Activities and exercises introduce the main principles of CLT.			✓	
11. The textbook helps teachers cater for mixed-ability students and classes of different sizes.		✓		
12. The textbook includes lessons that reflect on study techniques.		✓		
13. Students are encouraged to take some degree of responsibility for their learning.			✓	
14. The textbook provides opportunity for teachers and students to localize activities.		✓		
3. Learning-teaching content				
A. Subject and content				
1. The material is up-to-date.		✓		
2. It covers a variety of topics from different fields.		✓		
3. The textbook contains fun elements			✓	
4. The language in the textbook is natural and real			✓	
5. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.		✓		
6. The topics encourage students to express their own views		✓		
7. The topics allow students to think critically.		✓		
8. The course components are effectively and clearly organized around specific topics	✓			

9. The topics provide a list of new or difficult words.		✓		
C- Social and Cultural Contexts	✓			
1. The social and cultural contexts in the textbook are comprehensible				
2. The content of the textbook is free from stereotypical images and information.		✓		
3. The textbook expresses positive views of ethnic origins, occupations, age groups and social groups.	✓			
4. The content presents different cultures.		✓		
5. The content discusses some well-known characters from different areas of the world.			✓	
6. The content helps students be aware of how to interact using the language within a new culture that is often very different from their own.			✓	
7. The content displays different traditions and customs.			✓	
8. The three Ps of culture are represented in the content.		✓		
9. The topics of the content cope with the criteria of the students' culture.	✓			