presented are just some schematic drawings which are not coloured and are not attractive to the students. There are no maps to help students locate the places referred to. The printing style, the type, and the layout are ordinary. The binding, cover, quality of paper, and clarity of illustrations are satisfactory. And finally, the coursebook is readily available all over the country.

G. Enjoyment Idnex

The coursebook provides scope for individual teaching styles. Most active teachers enjoy working with such material at this level. However, it is quite demanding on the teacher. It requires the teacher to be organized, otherwise s/he will be short of time. Therefore, most inexperienced or less active teachers do not enjoy working with it.

Conclusion

This article has provided a brief overview of the issues on evaluating language materials. To this end, using the checklist textbook evaluation proposed by Rivers (1981), an evaluation of "A Preparatory English Course", published by The Iranian Ministry of Education, was presented. The writer of this article believes that the elimination of the weaknesses pointed out throughout this evaluation would lead to an improvement of the course.

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English. In other words, the material does not bring out contrasts between the foreign culture and the culture of the students. The emphasis is on similarities and common experiences or practices among people all over the world. Consequently, there are no explicit chauvinistic, racist, or sexist elements in the text material or illustration.

D. Linguistic Coverage and Organization of Material

Pronunciation is not dealt with satisfactorily and systematically in this coursebook. The treatment is just confined to teaching stress and intonation and little attention has been paid to the teaching of English sound system as an interdependent whole. The similarities and differences between English and Persian sound systems could have been compared in the pronunciation section of each lesson.

Grammar is presented both deductively and inductively depending on the type of structures and their degree of complexity. The choice of these structures has been such that the most frequently used structures have been introduced. However, there seems to be no ordering of the structures according to their difficulty level, and no continual reentering of the structures. Instead, there are plenty of drills and exercises of various types which provide ample practice.

Vocabulary is well-presented throughout the coursebook. An average of about fifteen vocabulary items with synonyms or definitions and examples of their use is presented at the beginning of each lesson. These words are considered as the new or problematic words used in the reading passages following them. Moreover, there are some incidental vocabulary presented in other sections of each lesson. In addition, a lot of attention has been paid to word formation, specially the way common suffixes are used to change parts of speech.

Reading is introduced from the beginning. The reading materials provide for progressive teaching of the reading skill. As mentioned earlier, the content of the passages is appropriate for the intended students and can motivate them. As a result, it becomes quite possible for the teacher and the students to work on all language skills through such reading materials.

E. Types of Activities

Each lesson contains some dialogues representing realistic situations. The language used is authentic and most sentences are short enough for students to handle. In most cases, there are segments within the sentences which can be useful in creating variants for communicative interaction. The dialogues are not too lengthy, so they can easily be used in the classroom.

As mentioned before, there is a wide variety of useful drills and exercises to engage students in language production. However, there seems to be no indications of the ways in which students can be encouraged to use what they have learned in "actual communication" (in speech and writing). The coursebook lacks "extra activities" such as games, songs, poems, crossword puzzles, and material for fun and relaxation which is usually introduced in the form of humor, problems to solve, anecdotes, rhymes, cartoons, and curious customs.

F. Practical Considerations

The illustrations are very few and the ones
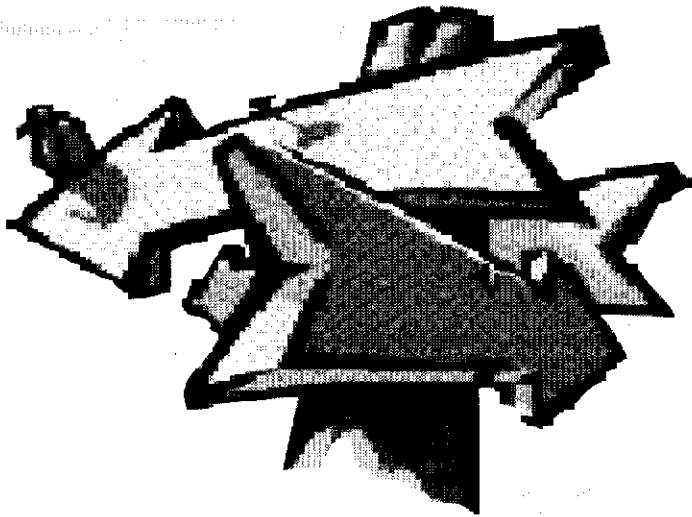
The course is a teacher taught intensive one with four hours of instruction per week. Each book contains four lessons containing interesting passages and helpful activities such as drills, exercises, and short cloze passages. All the materials are at the appropriate level and pace if the students' previous experience with the language is taken into consideration.

B. Appropriateness for Teacher and Student

The method based on which the coursebook has been prepared seems to be the Eclectic Method. However, whether or not the materials are used "eclectically" is a matter of practice and depends on the users. For example, though the course is designed in such a way as to minimize the use of native language in the classroom, there may be some teachers and students all over the country who prefer to make excessive use of their native language mainly as a direct consequence of their limited proficiency in English.

There are some cassettes and films with relatively acceptable quality, but there are no slides, filmstrips, transparencies, large pictures, or flashcards available with the coursebook. The publisher has provided a teacher's guide in a separate volume containing some strategies in teaching reading passages and grammatical structures presented in each lesson, and a word a list at the end of each book, which shows the lesson in which every vocabulary item has been used.

C. Language and Ideational Content

The language used in both books is authentic academic English. However, there are some cases of strange forms which may not be used by native speakers of English. For example, the sentence: "...he hates to be confined within the four walls of an office..." in book two (p.93) seems to have been produced under the influence of Persian. Besides, there are some other language forms like "as payment for" (p.20), "have high opinion for" (p.21), and "He's remembering" (p.35) which are the deviant forms of "as a payment for", "have a high opinion of", and "He remembers", respectively.

The content of the reading material, the situations in dialogues, and practice activities are interesting and worthwhile enough to attract the attention of nearly all the students. However, there is no theme or related themes for different sections through the books.

No direct reference is made to the culture and contemporary life of the people who speak

Introduction

Language teaching and language learning are multifaceted enterprises. Every language teaching/learning situation is unique because of the complexity of language, language learners, language teachers, and diversity of language materials. Ideally, the development of new programs and curriculums is initiated by thorough needs analyses and, once implemented, programs and curriculums are modified continuously in response to ongoing assessments of their effectiveness. Therefore, evaluation is essential to successful education because it forms the basis for appropriate and effective decision making (Genesee, 2001).

James Brown (cited in Johnson, 1989) defines evaluation as the "*systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its effectiveness and efficiency as well as the participants' attitudes within the context of the particular institutions involved*".

Evaluating materials is a complex process. First, it demands that we establish their relative merits from among a wide range of features. Pedagogical factors to be considered include suitability for the age group, cultural appropriateness, methodology, level quality, number and type of exercises, skills, teacher's book, variety, pace, personal involvement, and problem solving. Second, we have to bear in mind not only construct validity or 'the extent to which a reviewer thinks that a book will or will not be useful to a specified audience', but also the materials already in use. Third, we need to consider whose views we wish to consider in exercise (Chambers, 1997).

The need to evaluate materials takes on special importance. Such an evaluation, according to Ellis (1997), provides the teacher with information which can be used to determine whether it is worthwhile using the materials to make them more effective for future use. However, there are limits to how '*scientific*' such an evaluation can be. As Sheldon (1988; cited in Ellis, 1997:37) observes, '*it is clear that coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick*'.

It is, therefore, essential for teachers to know for what qualities they should look when evaluating a textbook. In this article, we are going to evaluate the coursebook "*A Preparatory English Course, Books 1&2*" published by the Iranian Ministry of Education. In so doing, we will use the checklist for textbook evaluation proposed by Rivers (1981:477). It consists of : 1) appropriateness for local situation, 2) appropriateness for the teacher and student, 3) language and ideational context, 4) linguistic coverage and organization of material, 5) types of activities, 6) practical considerations, and 7) enjoyment index.

Evaluation

A. Appropriateness for Local Situation

The course is eclectic in its approach and is intended develop all the four language skills (listening speaking, reading, and writing) in the students through a variety of activities concerning vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, language functions, and pronunciation. In other words, the writers' main concerns are the development of general proficiency and a "*preparation*" of the students for their future studies in case they enter university, as stated in the teacher's guide provided and as the name of the course itself implies.

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An Evaluation of "A Preparatory English Course, Books 1&2": An EAP Coursebook Evaluation

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چکیده

در این مقاله سعی شده است ، ملاحظات اساسی در مورد ارزشیابی کتاب‌های درسی و مراحل ارزشیابی مطالب زبانی معرفی شوند . برای نیل به این هدف ، با استفاده از فهرست معیارهای ارزشیابی کتاب‌های درسی که ریورز (۱۹۸۱) ارائه کرده است ، نحوه ارزشیابی کتاب‌های زبان پیش دانشگاهی تألیف وزارت آموزش وپرورش ارائه شده است . نویسندهٔ مقاله امیدوار است که این تلاش ، مؤلفان را در بهبود بخشیدن به مطالب خود یاری کند .

کلید واژه : ارزیابی ، ارزشیابی ، برنامهٔ آموزشی ، قیاس از کل به جزء ، قیاس از جزء به کل ، رویکرد تلفیقی ، تعامل ارتباطی .

Abstract

This article attempts to introduce the major considerations in textbook evaluation and the steps to be followed in evaluating language materials. To this end, an evaluation of "A Preparatory English Course"- a coursebook published by The Iranian Ministry of Education-has been done using the checklist for textbook evaluation proposed by Rivers (1981:477). The writer of the article hopes that such an attempt would help the authors of the coursebook to improve their materials.

Key Words: assessment, evaluation, curriculum, deduction, induction, eclectic, approach, communicative interaction