ENGLISH FOR TODAY, FOR CLASSES 9-10: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the evaluation of the English textbook currently used for classes 9-10 of secondary schools in Bangladesh. Our students' level of English proficiency in all the four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking, even after the completion of SSC, is very inadequate. One of the major reasons for this may be the absence of effective textbook/materials. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the effectiveness of the textbook/materials in light of the recent theoretical developments in the field. The purpose of the study is to examine: (a) layout and design of the book, (b) activities and tasks in the book, (c) skills covered and balance of skills, (d) language type provided, (e) grading and sequencing of the items, and (f) subject and content used. For empirical research, the study used teachers' and students' questionnaires survey and for the researcher's own evaluation of the book, the teacher's questionnaire in the form of a checklist was used. The results show that the textbook in question has a number of strengths, but at the same time it has several weaknesses too. Finally, the study suggests measures to overcome the weaknesses of the book.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is a well established fact that it is not possible to teach and learn language effectively in formal settings of classroom without effective materials. In our context the materials for the Secondary and Higher Secondary classes are centrally produced textbooks and they are used for the entire country. As the issue of English language teaching is of great national significance due to the growing demand for English in an increasingly globalized world, having an effective ELT program is a priority area for national progress and prosperity. As the present state of ELT in the country does not seem satisfactory, despite various efforts to improve the conditions, it is important to examine the problems and prospects of ELT practices in Bangladesh. Materials being one important factor for language learning, evaluation of ELT textbooks and materials, especially of the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels, which are very important levels of education, is highly significant for Bangladesh.

The study is significant because by examining the effectiveness of the teaching materials in light of the developments in the field of material development, it will be possible to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the existing textbook and, if there are any weaknesses, the study will help overcome them and suggest measures to produce more effective and meaningful materials. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 105) have stated that while writing new materials, the evaluation of existing materials can provide a good source of ideas (of what to avoid as well as what to include) and techniques. Identifying particular strengths and weaknesses in the textbook through this evaluation will also play an important role in assisting teachers to exploit the book's strong points and recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks, and entire texts.

1.2 Background information on *English For Today*, For Classes 9-10

The English textbook has been written by English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) jointly funded by the Government of Bangladesh and DFID of the UK Government. A team of 3 writers trained in the UK through ELTIP has written the book. The publisher of the book is the National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB). This is the core text currently used for classes 9-10.

As claimed in the prefaces to the book, the book follows the communicative approach to the teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh

context. The book provides learners with a variety of materials such as reading texts, dialogues, pictures, diagrams, tasks and activities. Using these materials learners can practice all four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They can actively participate in pair or group or individual work.

The NCTB claims that it includes a wide range of topics from both national and global contexts. Topics are appropriate and interesting to the learners thematically, culturally and linguistically. Also adequate grammar elements are integrated with language skills so that learners can transfer the elements learned to the real life situations. This opposes the memorization of discrete grammar items.

The present evaluation will also exhibit whether the claims made by the NCTB in the preface to *English For Today*, For Classes 9-10 are genuine.

2. Theoretical Developments in Materials Design and Evaluation

There have been significant developments in the theories and practices of material development and evaluation. Some of the important considerations for designing, selecting, adapting and evaluating language teaching materials have been discussed briefly here with reference to the available literature in the field.

2.1.1 Layout and Design

The layout and design of the materials must be appropriate for the students. It is also important to know whether the materials look attractive to them. Two other important aspects of good materials are that they are clearly written and the objectives are clearly stated for both students and teachers. (Harmer, 1991: 279-284)

Harmer (2001: 302) has provided materials evaluators with a checklist for evaluating the layout and design of the materials. They are: 1) the page should look clean and uncluttered, 2) the lesson sequence should be easy to follow, 3) the illustration should be attractive and appropriate for the age group and 4) the instructions should be easy to read.

According to Sheldon (1988: 243), in an ELT textbook, there should be an optimum density and mix of text and graphical material on each page. The artwork and typefaces should be functional, colorful and appealing.

2.1.2 Setting Objectives

Cunningsworth (1995: 15) points out that "aims and objectives can reflect learners' needs in terms of both language content and communicative abilities." In designing or selecting coursebooks, it should be made sure that they help achieve these objectives. It is very important that coursebooks should facilitate learners' progress and take them forward as effectively as possible towards their goals. Consequently the content of the material should correspond to what students need to learn, in terms of language items, skills and communicative strategies (ibid).

2.2.1 Activities and Tasks:

In describing the theory of learning in Communicative Language Teaching, Richards and Rodgers (2001: 161) point out three principles which promote language learning: firstly, activities that involve real communication; secondly, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks; and finally, language that is meaningful to the learner. Learning activities should be designed to engage the learners in meaningful and authentic language use (rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns).

Savignon (2001) looks at communication in terms of interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning. A number of theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) and Long (1990) advocate the cognitive value of student-student/social interaction for promoting learning. Long (1990), for example, cites five benefits of interactive group activities in comparison with teacher-fronted whole class instruction. These include increased quantities of students' language use; enhanced quality of the language students use; more opportunities to individualize instruction; a less threatening environment in which to use the language; and greater motivation for learning. In addition, peer interaction gives students an opportunity to share, clarify, elaborate, reorganize, and re-conceptualize information, express ideas, get feedback, and justify their claims (Bruning, Schraw, and Ronning, 1995).

2.2.2 Negotiation of Meaning/Task-Based and Co-operative Learning Activities

Proponents of the 'Communicative Approach' to language teaching stress the importance of language use versus knowledge about language (Harmer, 1996). Observation of social interactions attests to the importance of communicative competence and shows that authentic language communication also involves the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors. Negotiation of meaning occurs when some form of information exchange transpires for a real purpose thereby making the context of communication as relevant as the content (Harmer, 1996).

Jacobs and Ball (1996: 99-101) suggest that the best types of activities are those that encourage negotiation of meaning or those that promote positive interdependence and facilitate individual accountability through cooperative learning strategies. Negotiation of meaning, they argue, ensures that communication has been successful among all the group members. It helps create positive interdependence and co-ordination among group members to complete as assigned task.

Alternately, some exercises may exemplify 'non-communicative' situations that demand controlled responses, such as listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, matching and filling-in-the-blanks. Rossner and Bolitho (1990) and Harmer (1991) suggest that a variation in activity types, tasks and interaction patterns such as these may not be particularly genuine or authentic but they are still effective in the sense that they play an important role in striking a balance in the activities.

2.2.3 Balanced Activities and a Few More Considerations

The need for balance is a motivational consideration since similar activities day after day will bore the students (Harmer, 1991:286). Garinger (2002) in his article *Textbook Selection for the ESL Classroom* says that when evaluating the quality of a textbook's exercises and activities, four key questions should be answered:

1. *Do the exercises and activities in the textbook contribute to learners' language acquisition?*
   Textbooks should include exercises that give students opportunities to practice and extend their language skills. For example, activities that require students to negotiate meaning in English (e.g., information gaps, jigsaw activities, role plays) may support the development of speaking skills and help students apply the skills in real-life contexts.

2. *Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice?*
   Controlled exercises refer to those that ask for a single correct answer such as a fill-in-the-blank grammar activity, whereas free practice involves exercises in which the answers are limited only by the students' creativity and knowledge. This includes open-ended discussion questions. A proper balance of such exercises ensures effective language learning.

3. *Are the exercises progressive as the students move through the textbook?*
   Exercises should build on and reinforce what students have already learned and should progress from simple—both linguistically and cognitively—to more complex and demanding topics and items. A textbook should require more from students as their language skills develop, so they are continually stimulated and challenged.

4. *Are the exercises varied and challenging?*
   Keeping students motivated and interested as they work through a textbook is much easier if the students see something new in each chapter. Familiarity and routine can be comforting, but too much familiarity can lead to lack of interest and boredom. The textbook should fulfill its role as a stimulus for communication and not be simply an organizational tool for the teacher.

Cunningsworth (1995:117) opines that it is possible to include realistic activities at most levels, often based on contrived information gaps of various kinds, which involve language use which is communicative in the context of the classroom. When evaluating such activities, we must consider to what extent the skills and strategies learned and practiced are transferable to the real world. In general, the grater the potential for transfer, the more valuable the activity.

2.3.1 Skills

The four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are seen as central to language

learning. It is important to check if the coursebook adequately covers all four skills, taking the level and overall aims into account, and if there is a suitable balance between the skills. In order to use language skills competently the users of language need a number of sub-skills for processing the language that they use and are faced with. If we concentrate on these skills and sub-skills it will help the students to approach the language with more confidence and a greater experience of success. (Harmer, 1991:16-17, 25)

2.3.2 Integrated Skills

Many prominent authors in ELT, such as Swan (1985), Harmer (1996) and McDonough and Shaw (1997) advocate for integrated, multi-skills syllabus because it considers and incorporates several categories of both meaning and form.

People rarely use one skill in isolation while using the language for practical purposes. In actual language use, people rarely use one skill in isolation. In real life most of the communicative situations involve integrating two or more of the four skills. For example, taking a message over the telephone, taking part in any sort of conversation, filling in a form, writing an abstract of an article, and taking notes from a talk or lecture. In all these situations, and in many more, the user of the language exercises his abilities in two or more skills, either simultaneously or in close succession (Cunningsworth, 1984:46).

The integrated-skill approach helps learners get exposed to authentic language and encourages them to interact naturally in the language. That is how learners rapidly develop an understanding of the richness and complexity of English language as found in communication. (Oxford, 2001)

2.4.1 Language Type

It is important to know whether the language included in the materials is realistic and authentic. It is also important to examine whether or not the language is at the right level or of the right type for the students and whether the progression of new language is both logical and appropriate for the students (Harmer 1991:280).

2.4.2 Authentic and Realistic texts

Since the advent of the 'Communicative Approach' to language teaching in the 1970's and 1980's, that

says that authentic reading, speaking, listening, writing and grammatical language models should be used to teach English language skills, the activities or tasks associated with them should also be authentic and suitably graded to the level of the students with whom they are being used. Proponents of authentic materials such as Cathcart (1989) and Lee (1995) suggest that when we expose our students to these types of materials we can be confident that the models of language are not only genuine but also representative of real life language use, particularly in terms of discourse structure. In addition, they point out that the use of these materials brings greater realism and relevance to the ESL / EFL classroom and they can increase learner motivation.

2.4.3 Language Form and Language Use

Cunningsworth (1995: 31) says that coursebooks are concerned with the teaching and learning of the language itself, in some or all of its aspects. Themes, topics, communicative strategies, cultural issues and other factors are also important. But the actual items of language taught – grammar, vocabulary and phonology – form the foundation of everything else that contributes to the complex process of language teaching. So, part of a lesson may concentrate on teaching a new grammatical form and another part may focus on vocabulary development.

2.4.3.1 Grammar

According to Cunningsworth, (1995:32), grammar is a major component of any general language course, whether it is acknowledged as such, or disguised as something else. It is an understanding of and an ability to use grammar that equips learners with the ability to create their own utterances and use language for their own purposes. Harmer (1991: 42-43) argues that since the knowledge of grammar is essential for competent users of a language, it is clearly necessary for our students. Our aim in teaching grammar should be to ensure that students are communicatively competent with the grammar they have at their level.

2.4.3.2 Vocabulary

Sustained communication is virtually impossible without access to a relevant and fairly wide range of vocabulary (Cunningsworth, 1995: 38). So, it is

important for a textbook to help students enrich their vocabulary. For teaching as many new words as possible, coursebooks can equip students with strategies for handling the unfamiliar vocabulary items that they will inevitably come across. It is worth examining the nature of the activities and exercises to ensure that they help learners to extend and develop their vocabulary in a purposeful and structured way.

2.4.4 The Progression of New Language

In order to learn effectively, students should be presented with a small or limited amount of new language (an 'i + 1' input, Krashen, 1982) at a time and materials should be planned and divided into learning units. These learning units should be related to each other in such a way that the learner can relate new language to what s/he already knows and can build up his/her knowledge of English by moving to new language units that should be carefully graded and sequenced.

Harmer (1991: 40) also says that the roughly-tuned input is language which is comprehensive, i.e. the students can more or less understand even though it is above their own productive level. While evaluating a textbook, it is important to evaluate, as Harmer (ibid: 280) says, "how, and in what order, students are asked to produce new language." In general, we would expect some intelligible connection or sequence between what students have previously learned and what they are learning now.

2.4.5 Style and Appropriacy

Language is very sensitive to its context of use and is stylistically variable. We should look at the coursebooks from the angle of appropriacy to see how far they go in preparing learners to use appropriate style in varying situations. Stylistic differences in English can be signaled by aspects of grammar, choice of vocabulary, discourse structure and aspects of phonology. For example, in the area of grammar, use of the passive as opposed to the active form of verbs can be cited as an example of formal style. Turning to discourse, the discourse structure of a formal speech is very different from that of a conversation between friends. Similarly, an informal letter is structured and set out differently from a business letter. (Cunningsworth, 1995: 50)

2.5.1 Grading and Sequencing Items and Relating Them to Communicative

Functions

The organization of the content in the syllabus or coursebook refers to grading which especially involves the order of items and the speed with which the students progress through the course (Cunningsworth, 1995: 59). Sequencing refers to the order in which new items are taught, how the components fit with one another and how the range of language taught develops as learners progress through the course (ibid). The concept of progression is implicit in sequencing. In it there will be a principled development from the beginning to the end point. To meet the learners' communicative needs there should be a coherent functional organization in grading the introduction the grammatical items and vocabulary, in presenting them in context and also in giving exponent of them (ibid).

2.5.2 Recycling

According to Cunningsworth (1995: 59) recycling is an important consideration within the sequencing of material. . It is insufficient to present and practice a language item once only. Cunningsworth (ibid) observes that "learners need to meet items on several occasions, and preferably in different contexts, in order to fix them in memory, gain fluency in using them and come to a full understanding of their meanings." Therefore it is important to check that new items are recycled sufficiently frequently in the course. This applies to grammar and particularly to vocabulary items.

2.6.1 Subject and content

While evaluating course materials, according to Harmer (1991: 280), it is necessary to analyze what topics, etc. are included in the materials and whether they match up to the students' personalities, backgrounds and needs. It should be checked, therefore, if the subjects and contents are relevant to the students' needs, whether they are realistic, interesting and sufficiently diverse to sustain motivation.

Language is used in real situations for real purposes. A study of language solely as an abstract system would not equip learners to use it in the real world. As a consequence, coursebook must and do

represent language as it is actually used and therefore, they contain subject-matter and deal with topics of various kinds. (Cunningsworth, 1995: 86)

Learners come to the class with, among other attributes, knowledge, attitudes, skills, cognitive abilities, curiosity and experience. Language learning as a process will relate to and engage these attributes so that the learning process is enriched and made more meaningful. Coursebooks can contribute to this process by including subject matter which, whilst being primarily designed for language teaching, is also informative, challenging, amusing, exciting and occasionally provocative. They can provide opportunities for expanding student's awareness and experience in general, as well as in language learning. (Cunningsworth, loc. cit)

2.6.2 Social and Cultural Values

It is also important to analyze whether different and appropriate religious and social environments are catered, both in terms of the topics/situations presented and of those left out. It is worth assessing whether the materials avoid harmful stereotyped, inaccurate, condescending or offensive images of gender, race, social class, or nationality. (Sheldon, 1988 and Harmer, 1991: 280)

It needs to be made sure that the social and cultural contexts set by the textbook are understandable and recognizable to the learners in terms of location, social background, age group, etc (Cunningsworth, 1995: 90). The students need to comprehend the relationships, modes of behavior and intention of the characters in the book so that they can relate the language used to its purpose in the social context (ibid).

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

The methods used for this study include:
- Students' questionnaire survey
- Teachers' questionnaire survey
- Researcher's own evaluation using a checklist.

Using questionnaire as a method of data collection is one of the most useful methods. Questionnaires have a number of advantages. Questionnaires are designed to make the quantification and interpretation of the results easier. For the respondents, to fill in structured questionnaire requires little time. The answers are relatively objective and easy to analyze and discuss (Best, 1977).

According to Cunningsworth (1995: 2), evaluation of materials using a checklist is characterized by its active nature because we actively seek out information about the material in line with an agenda that we have already decided on.

3.2 Designing Instruments

Sheldon suggests that no general list of criteria can ever really be applied to all teaching and learning contexts without considerable modifications, most of these standardized evaluation checklists contain similar components that can be used as helpful starting points for ELT practitioners in a wide variety of situations (237).

A number of textbook evaluation checklists and guidelines were browsed for the study. In designing the checklist and questionnaires to evaluate the *English For Today,* For Classes 9-10, the researcher was highly influenced by Sheldon (1988), Harmer (1991), Garinger (2002), Cunningsworth (1984) and Cunningsworth (1995). He thoroughly studied the checklists/ questionnaires proposed by them and selected 28 items in 6 areas which are common to most of these checklists/questionnaires. In some cases he modified the statements of items in the questionnaires to fit best to Bangladeshi teaching and learning contexts. The items also have their basis in the theoretical development for designing, selecting, evaluating and adapting materials for language teaching and learning discussed in this paper.

In designing students' and teachers' questionnaires, the same items were used with some changes in the language to fit the respondents. The researcher adapted a well-organized pattern, so that the informants felt easy and comfortable in answering the questions and expressing their opinions. The items basically asked the respondents about their positive and negative attitudes towards different aspects of the English textbook for classes 9-10. In the questionnaire, a respondent had to tick an appropriate box from five options for each item. For analysis, the responses were converted into mathematical figures as follows:

Entirely disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Not sure = 3, Agree = 4, Entirely agree = 5

The checklist used in this study for the researcher's own evaluation of the textbook has been constructed with the same items and their order as were in the teachers' questionnaires but in it they are in the form of questions, not statements.

3.3 Sampling of the Study

To collect the data the main task was to set a sample unit where 5 public and private schools of the country were chosen for the study and the number of subjects was 17 teachers and 83

students. The respondents were co-operative in filling up the questionnaire.

Samples selected for the survey are shown below:

Table 1: Samples for the survey

Type	Number
1. Students' questionnaire	83
2. Teachers' questionnaire	17

Institution wise numbers of student and teacher respondents are given bellow:

Table 2: Detailed Sampling Plan

Institution	Teachers No.	Students Class	Students No.
1. Faizur Rahman Ideal Institute, Dhaka	4	IX	5
		X	8
2. Mohammadpur Govt. High School, Dhaka	3	IX	7
		X	13
3. Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt. Boys' High School,	3	IX	5
		X	10
4. Dhanmondi Govt. Boys' School, Dhaka Dhaka	4	IX	7
		X	13
5. Mohammadpur Girls' High School, Dhaka	3	IX	5
		X	10

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected by using the instruments from the samples described above were hand tabulated and analyzed in terms of mean scores. The mean is the sum of all scores of all subjects in a group divided by the number of subjects, $[X = \sum X/n]$ (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 215). The mean of each of the items, therefore, is the average score for each item and it is the summation of all the scores divided by the number of subjects.

The mean provides information on the average performances or behavior of a group on given tasks, and help the researcher obtain insight by condensing large amounts of data. The mean tells the researcher how the group as a whole performed and that does provide more significant information. (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 216)

3.5 Limitation of the Study

For the researcher it was not possible to cover a good number of schools from all around the country, which would have involved a lot of

money, manpower and a long period of time. Therefore, the sample size was rather small and the universe was only a few schools. However, this small universe and small sample size was examined closely and carefully to analyze the situation in Bangladesh. The researcher also took every step to make the study as objective and valid as possible.

For the publication of this paper, space constraint has been a major limitation. It has forced the researcher not present detailed discussion of the results. Only the major findings of the study have been presented briefly in the conclusion.

4. Result found from Students' and Teachers' questionnaire survey

The survey results in terms of mean scores are presented in the table below:

** (The interpretation key of teachers' and students' attitude is: 1.00-2.25 = negative attitude, 2.26-3.00 = not satisfactory, 3.01-4.25 = satisfactory and 4.26-5.00 = very satisfactory.)

Table 3: Survey results

No.	Statements	Mean score	
		Students' questionnaire results	Teachers' questionnaire results
A. Layout and Design			
1.	The layout and design of the textbook is appropriate, clear and attractive.	3.27	2.94
2.	The textbook's objectives are clearly stated for both teachers and students.	3.41	3.74
3.	The textbook is organized effectively.	3.22	2.88
4.	The artwork and typefaces are functional, colourful and appealing.	2.41	2.18
B. Activities and Tasks			
5.	The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free Vs. control exercises and task that focus on both fluent and accurate production).	3.01	2.76
6.	The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.	3.28	3.24
7.	The activities incorporate individual, pair and group works.	3.07	3.35
8.	The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	2.94	3.12
9.	The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	3.16	2.76
10.	The exercises are varied and challenging.	3.33	2.94
C. Skills			
11.	The materials include and focus on the skills that learners need to practice.	3.02	3.59
12.	The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing).	2.95	3.06
13.	The textbook pays attention to sub-skills – i.e. listing for gist, note taking, skimming for information, etc.	2.69	2.82
14.	The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.	2.98	3.59
D. Language Type			
15.	The language used in the textbook is authentic- i.e. like real-life English.	3.46	3.35
16.	The language used is at the right level for learners' current English ability.	3.37	3.00
17.	New language is introduced in motivating and realistic context and the progression of 'new' language is appropriate for learners.	3.29	3.29
18.	The language functions exemplify English that learners will be likely to use.	3.28	3.00
19.	The textbook teaches formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations.	3.33	3.24
E. Grading and Sequencing			
20.	The grading and sequencing is suitable for learners.	2.96	2.82
21.	The progression of the language and vocabulary activities is cyclical.	3.13	2.94
F. Subject and Content			
22.	The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to learners' needs.	3.20	2.82
23.	The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.	3.51	3.65
24.	The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.	2.82	2.82
25.	There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	3.57	3.82
26.	The textbook will contribute to expanding learners' awareness and enriching their experience.	2.96	3.59
27.	There is nothing which is culturally and religiously inappropriate, negative and offensive.	3.46	3.76
G. Overall View			
28.	The textbook raises learners' interest in further English language study.	3.04	2.76

5.1 Conclusion

The objectives of the study have been to evaluate the English textbook for classes 9-10 under a number of headings. The major findings of the study are presented briefly in the following sections.

A. Layout and Design

Layout and design of the English textbook for classes 9-10, according to the survey results and checklist evaluation, is not attractive and effective. Teachers' overall view of the area is dissatisfactory (attitude to 3 items out of 4 is 'not satisfactory'), with a negative attitude to the quality of the artwork and typefaces. However, the students' attitude is 'satisfactory' for the organization of the book. But they too do not think that the artwork and typefaces are functional, colorful and appealing. The checklist evaluation also shows that the cover pages of the book are not in hard or thick enough papers and the paper quality of the book is not good. About the artwork and typefaces, the researcher finds that the artworks and pictures in the book are in one color – black and white and most of them are not clear and therefore, fail to appeal to the learners.

About aims and objectives, the checklist evaluation reveals that the overall objectives of the book – the purposes of this book, what it wants students to achieve in the end and in what ways and how far those will be achieved are not stated clearly for both teachers and students. On the other hand, lesson wise objectives are very clearly mentioned on top of each lesson and a detailed overview of the topics, functions, structures/grammar, and skills within each unit can be found in the introductory tables of content.

B. Activities and Tasks

Survey results and checklist evaluation display that the textbook does not provide a balance of activities, that means there is no well thought-out distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production. The book has only a very little amount of listening activities.

Students' and teachers' questionnaire survey results demonstrate that the activities satisfactorily encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice, while checklist evaluation reveals that there are sufficient activities for communicative and meaningful practice but many of them are repetitive and fail to promote realistic discourse.

The activities incorporate individual, pair and group works. Vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts. But grammar points are not introduced in motivating contexts. Checklist evaluation and students' questionnaire survey results show that activities promote creative, original and independent responses, while teachers' questionnaire survey displays a 'not satisfactory' result. This difference may mean that there is a lack of motivation in some of the activities.

The exercises are varied and challenging, according to students' questionnaire survey results and checklist evaluation, while teachers' questionnaire survey results show that they are not varied and challenging enough.

C. Skills

According to the checklist evaluation of the book, the materials do not effectively focus on the skills that the learners need to practice. Listening and speaking, specially listening is neglected. But teachers' and students' questionnaire survey results show that the materials satisfactorily includes and focuses on the skills that learners need to practice.

The textbook does not provide a balance of the four major skills. Reading and writing are dominant skills throughout the book.

All the results show that textbook pays little attention to many of the sub-skills of the major skills. But the practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.

D. Language Type

The language used in the textbook is not completely authentic, but a degree of authenticity has been maintained which seems to be more or less appropriate in our context, because for the students of classes 9-10, fully authentic language might be difficult to cope with.

The language used is at the right level of the learners' current English ability. Students do not find it difficult to understand.

About whether or not the language functions exemplify English that the learners will be likely to use, students' attitude is 'satisfactory'. But the researcher's evaluation and teachers' attitude to it are not satisfactory. Actually, the language functions exemplify mostly written forms of English, not spoken forms, whereas in the preface to the book it has been claimed that materials in the book have been designed and developed to practice the four basic language skills.

Checklist evaluation of the book exhibits that formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations has got little attention in it, though teachers' and students' questionnaire survey results indicate otherwise.

E. Grading and Sequencing

Students' and teachers' attitude to the grading and sequencing of the materials is not satisfactory. And at the same time in the checklist evaluation, the researcher finds it to be satisfactory. The progression of language activities is cyclical, but vocabulary activities are not cyclical.

F. Subject and Content

The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to the learners' needs. They are also realistic. Students' and teachers' questionnaire survey results manifest that the subject and content are not interesting, challenging and motivating enough. But checklist evaluation of the book reveals that though not all, there are a good number of subjects and contents which are interesting, challenging and motivating.

There is sufficient variety in the subject and content. In all the units, each individual lesson deals with a new subject, but each lesson is related with the other lessons of the unit. The textbook will also contribute to expanding learners' awareness and enriching their experience. And there is nothing which is culturally and religiously inappropriate, negative and offensive.

G. Overall View

Teachers' questionnaire survey results show that the textbook does not make interested in further English language study. Students' questionnaire survey results show that it does but the mean score is 3.04, just a bit above the 'not satisfactory' level.

Researcher's own evaluation of the textbook using the checklist shows that it raises the interest, though not to the expected degree.

5.2. Recommendations

To ensure a good and effective textbook, the researcher makes 16 suggestions to eliminate or overcome the weaknesses and shortcomings of different areas. They are as follows:

A. Layout and Design

1. To make it appropriate, clear and attractive, presentation of texts, artworks, illustrations, etc need to be attractive, clear and catchy.
2. Overall objective and purpose of the book may be clearly stated for both teachers and students.
3. Artwork and typefaces may be colorful, functional and appealing.
4. The quality of paper and cover pages may be enhanced and the density of texts may be optimum.

B. Activities and Tasks

5. It may provide a balance of activities, i.e. there may be an even distribution of free and control exercises, and tasks may focus on both fluent and accurate production.
6. Too much repetition of the same type of communicative activities may be avoided to prevent monotony and boredom, otherwise it would be demoralizing and optimum outcome would not be possible to achieve.
7. Grammar points may be introduced in motivating and realistic context.

C. Skills

8. An appropriate balance of four major skills may be provided for preparing the learners communicatively competent.
9. Careful attention to the sub-skills of all the four basic skills may be ensured.

D. Language Type

10. To make use of real life like language, authentic language of both written and spoken forms may be introduced or the degree of authenticity should be improved.

11. Along with the existing written form of English, language function may exemplify the spoken form of English which learners are likely to use in practical life.
12. The book may teach formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations.

E. Grading and Sequencing

13. The progression of both language and vocabulary activities may be properly cyclical.

F. Subject and Content

14. The subject and content may be more interesting, motivating and challenging.
15. More items for the expansion of learners' awareness and enrichment of experience may be introduced (surely in interesting, motivating and realistic context).
16. The present relevance of the subject and content to learners' needs may be enhanced to an optimum level.

Overall: The size of the book, number of units and activities, has to be increased. If necessary, supplementary reading and writing materials may be included. Listening skills should be also emphasized.

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Appendices

Questionnaire for the students

A note for the students:

This questionnaire is meant for a study on 'An Evaluation of the English Textbook for Classes - IX & X' for a Master's thesis in English. Your answers will be strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of the research. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Section A: Personal Information
1. Name:
2. Class:
3. Institution:

Signature------------------------------

Section B: Instruction

Each of the items has 5 points scale where **1= Entirely disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= Agree, 5= Entirely agree.** Tick the appropriate number for your opinion about each statement.

No.	Statements	Entirely disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Entirely agree
A. Layout and Design						
1.	The layout and design of the textbook is appropriate, clear and attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The textbook's objectives are clearly stated for both the teachers and students.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The textbook is organized effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The artworks and typefaces are functional, colourful and appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
B. Activities and Tasks						
5.	The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. control exercises and task that focus on both fluent and accurate production).	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The activities incorporate individual, pair and group works.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	1	2	3	4	5

10.	The exercises are varied and challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
C. Skills						
11.	The materials include and focus on the skills that you need to practice.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing).	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The textbook pays attention to sub-skills – i.e. listing for gist, note taking, skimming for information, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.	1	2	3	4	5
D. Language Type						
15.	The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	The language used is at the right level for your current English ability.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	New language is introduced in motivating and realistic context and the progression of 'new' language is appropriate for you.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	The language functions exemplify English that you will be likely to use.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	The textbook teaches formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
E. Grading and Sequencing						
20.	The grading and sequencing is suitable for you.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The progression of the language and vocabulary activities is cyclical.	1	2	3	4	5
F. Subject and Content						
22.	The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to your needs.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	The textbook will contribute to expanding your awareness and enriching your experience.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	There is nothing which is culturally and religiously inappropriate, negative and offensive.	1	2	3	4	5
G. Overall View						
28.	The textbook raises your interest in further English language study.	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire for the teachers

A note for the teachers:

This questionnaire is meant for a study on 'An Evaluation of the English Textbook for Classes- IX & X' for a Master's thesis in English. Your answers will be strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of the research. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Section A: Personal Information
4. Name:
5. Teaching experience (year/s):
6. Teaching institution:

Signature-----------------------------

Section B: Instruction

Each of the items has 5 points scale where **1= Entirely disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= Agree, 5= Entirely agree.** Tick the appropriate number for your opinion about each statement.

No.	Statements	Entirely disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Entirely agree
A.	**Layout and Design**					
1.	The layout and design of the textbook is appropriate, clear and attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The textbook's objectives are clearly stated for both the teachers and students.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The textbook is organized effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The artworks and typefaces are functional, colourful and appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
B.	**Activities and Tasks**					
5.	The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free Vs. control exercises and task that focus on both fluent and accurate production).	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The activities incorporate individual, pair and group works.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The exercises are varied and challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
C.	**Skills**					
11.	The materials include and focus on the skills that the students need to practice.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The textbook pays attention to sub-skills – i.e. listing for gist, note taking, skimming for information, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.	1	2	3	4	5

	D. Language Type					
15.	The language used in the textbook is authentic- i.e. like real-life English.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	The language used is at the right level for the students' current English ability.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	New language is introduced in motivating and realistic context and the progression of 'new' language is appropriate for the students.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	The language functions exemplify English that the students will be likely to use.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	The textbook teaches formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
	E. Grading and Sequencing					
20.	The grading and sequencing suitable for the learners.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The progression of the language and vocabulary activities is cyclical.	1	2	3	4	5
	F. Subject and Content					
22.	The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to the students' needs.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	The textbook will contribute to expanding learners awareness and enriching their experience.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	There is nothing which is culturally and religiously inappropriate, negative and offensive.	1	2	3	4	5
	G. Overall View					
28.	The textbook raises the students' interest in further English language study.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix: III

Checklist for the Researcher

A. Layout and Design
   1. Is the layout and design of the textbook is appropriate, clear and attractive?
   2. Are the textbook's objectives clearly stated for both the teacher and the student?
   3. Is the textbook organized effectively?
   4. Are the artwork and typefaces functional, colorful and appealing?

B. Activities and Tasks
   5. Does the textbook provide a balance of activities (Ex. there is an even distribution of free vs. control exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production)?
   6. Do the activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice?
   7. Do the activities incorporate individual, pair and group works?
   8. Are the grammar points and vocabulary items introduced in motivating and realistic contexts?
   9. Do the activities promote creative, original and independent responses?
   10. Are the exercises varied and challenging?

C. Skills
   11. Do the materials include and focus on the skills that the learners need to practice?
   12. Do the materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing)?
   13. Does the textbook pay attention to sub-skills – i.e. listing for gist, note taking, skimming for information, etc?
   14. Is the practice of individual skills integrated into the practice of other skills?

D. Language Type
   15. Is the language in the classroom authentic – i.e. like real life English?
   16. Is the language used at the right level for the learners' current English ability?
   17. Is the new language introduced in motivating and realistic context and is the progression of 'new' language appropriate for the learners?
   18. Do the language functions exemplify English that the learners will be likely to use?
   19. Does the textbook teach formal and informal styles and appropriate use of language in different social situations?

E. Grading and Sequencing
   20. Is the grading and sequencing suitable for the learners?
   21. Is the progression of the language and vocabulary activities is cyclical?

F. Subject and Content
   22. Is the subject and content of the textbook is relevant to the learners needs?
   23. Is the subject and content of the textbook generally realistic?
   24. Is the subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating?
   25. Is there sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook?
   26. Will the textbook contribute to expanding learners' awareness and enriching their experience?
   27. Is there anything which is culturally and religiously inappropriate, negative and offensive?

Overall View
   28. Does the textbook raise learners' interest in the further English language study?