

CHAPTER II

Methods of Textbook Analysis and Assessment

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2.0 Introduction:

There are different types of teaching material. Textbook is one of them. Here, the methods of textbook analysis and assessment, criteria for assessment of the textbook, the syllabus recommended by the University Grant Commission (U.G.C.) for compulsory English of B.A.I, B.A. II and B.A.III level and the categories used by the researcher to analyze and assess the textbooks are discussed.

2.1 Teaching Materials :

Teaching materials are of many kinds, like textbooks, audio and video cassettes, charts, handouts, teaching aids of various kinds which can all be used for different purposes by the teachers. Different principles of language learning and teaching are reflected in a variety of materials, e.g. motivation, interest, familiarity, relevance, gradation etc.. Materials are graded because we can not start anywhere. Everything cannot be presented at once. What is the easiest for the learners has to be presented first. Materials are graded in terms of linguistic and cognitive complexity. Linguistically, graded materials are constructed on the basis of word lists like *The General Service List of English Words* edited by Michael West (1953). Word lists are organized according to several criteria like frequency of use, availability, difficulty, productivity, universality and subject range. Materials are also graded on the basis of structural complexity. Cognitive principles of gradation have been justified on psychological grounds. Cognizance is made of the learner's own sense of difficulty. Sometimes, new material is confused with old material in such a way that neither can be remembered. Material producers can avoid it by some

sort of grouping and sequencing of their material. Method (1972), Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Tomilson (1998), Nunan (1988) have discussed the characteristic features of good teaching materials. Teaching materials need to be observed the following principles in order to be good.

- i. Materials should help learners to develop communicative competence.
- ii. Materials should encourage interaction among learners and between learners and teachers.
- iii. Materials should develop learner's confidence.
- iv. Materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills and skills in learning.
- v. Materials should consider time constraints.
- vi. Materials should take into account local conditions like classroom environment, teachers' and learners' background knowledge and their proficiency level in English.
- vii. Materials should follow the objectives of the course.
- viii. Materials should consider the needs of learners.
- ix. Teachers and learners should feel easy to handle materials.
- x. Materials should be authentic in terms of text and task.
- xi. Materials should develop creativity among learners and motivate them to be independent users of language.
- xii. Materials should be balanced. Average learners should feel easy to handle and above average learners should feel materials challenging.

These are some of the principles to which material producer should necessarily refer for guidance.

According to Cunnigsworth (1979), course materials are not intrinsically good or bad-rather they are more or less effective in helping students to reach particular goals in specific situations.

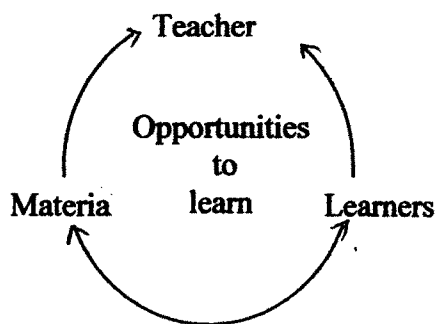
Teaching materials are evaluated to find whether what one is looking for is there, and if it is, to put a value on it. Ian McGrath (2002) describes the evaluation of materials as a cyclical process. There are three types of evaluation- Pre-use, In-use and Post-use. Pre-use evaluation indicates potential suitability. In-use and Post-use evaluation is necessary to establish

whether materials are suitable. The objective of In-use evaluation is to revisit the decision taken at the selection stage. The materials can be tested by planning lessons on it, by teaching them and by observing the effects. Post-use evaluation necessitates the consideration of effects. The learners can be involved in In-use and Post-use evaluation.

In short, teaching materials play an important role in the teaching and the learning processes.

2.2 Textbook : A Teaching Aid

Textbook is widely used in the classroom. It is considered as the main teaching-learning aid. It influences what teachers teach and, to some extent, how learners learn. It is considered as the provider of input into classroom lessons in the form of texts, activities, explanation etc.. Allwright (1981) presents a model which characterizes the 'lesson' as an interaction between three elements—teachers, learners and materials. This interaction produces opportunities to learn. This model is given below.



(Adapted from Allwright-1981)

The principle users of textbook are teachers and learners. Parents, researchers and publishers are also interested in textbook. There has been debate concerning the use of textbook for teaching. The objection has been made that ready-made textbook absolves the teacher's responsibility. Teachers just follow textbooks believing that the wise and virtuous people

who produced the textbook knew what was good for teachers and also learners. Brumfit (1979) claims that although textbooks can help teachers, many of them don't and that even the best textbooks take away initiative from teachers by implying that there is somewhere an expert who can solve problems for the teacher and individual student.

Some arguments are made for textbook in relation to the needs of learners and teachers. These are summarized below. The summaries draw on Grant (1987), O'Neil (1982, 1993), Hutchinson and Torres (1994), and Ur (1996).

(The term 'coursebook' is used to refer to a textbook on which a course is based.)

1. Why teachers and learners need a coursebook?

- i. A course book is a map. It shows where one is going and where one has been.
- ii. It provides language samples.
- iii. It offers variety.

2. Why learners need a course book?

- i. It defines what is to be learned and what will be tested.
- ii. It reinforces what the teacher has done and makes revision and preparation possible. It, thus, offers support for teaching outside.

3. Why teachers need a coursebook?

- i. It provides a structure for teaching.
- ii. It saves time.
- iii. It offers linguistic, cultural and methodological support.
- iv. It is easy to keep track of what you have done and to tell others where you have reached (e.g. when reporting to the Head of Department or briefing a substitute teachers)

(Adapted from Ian McGrath 2002:10-11)

According to Grant (1987), to be perfect, the textbook should follow three conditions. First, it should suit the needs, interests and abilities of

students. Second, it should suit the teachers. Third, it must meet the needs of official public teaching syllabuses or examinations.

A good textbook promotes learning outcomes in the average teaching learning situation. It ensures certain desirable outcomes even in situations where teachers are not prepared, not reflective, untrained and indifferent. A learner can become more independent with the help of a good textbook, in spite of bad or even non-existing teaching.

2.3 Textbook Analysis and Assessment:

The purpose of the textbook analysis is to provide a description. The concern is to understand the basic assumptions and beliefs and their effects. Analysis involves inference and deduction. The distinction between analysis and assessment is an important one. Analysis is a process which leads to an objective, verifiable description. Assessment involves the making of judgments.

Littlejohn(1998) has described three levels of the textbook analysis.

Level 1: What is there. e.g. publication date; intended users; type of materials; physical aspects such as durability, components, use of color; the way the material is divided up across components; how the student's book is organized, and how learners and teachers are helped to find their way around.

Level 2: What is required of users. e.g. tasks; what the learner has to do; their focus ; classroom organization; the source of language or information.

Level 3: What is implied. e.g. selection and sequencing of content and tasks; distribution of information etc.

There are three methods of textbook analysis and assessment.

i) The Impressionistic Method:

It is concerned to obtain a general impression of the material. One can have an impression of a book by looking more carefully at representative features such as the design of a unit or lesson or more specific features such as the treatment of particular language elements. One can add the analysis of a

single unit and examination of the treatment of the language skills across the book as a whole.

ii) **The Checklist Method:**

In its literal sense, a checklist consists of a list of items which is referred to for comparison, identification or verification, the items being 'checked off', once their presence has been confirmed. The checklist is systematic and explicit and effective. The information is recorded in a convenient format in the checklist. However, the checklist method has its potential limitation. The checklist cannot be a static phenomenon. The categories in all material evaluation checklists are reflection of the time at which they were conceived and of the beliefs of their designer.

iii) **The In-depth Method:**

It involves the publisher's and authors' claims to look at, for instance, 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. But it has certain disadvantage. The sample selected for analysis may not be representative of the books as a whole; this may distort any judgment. In fact, In-depth analysis is narrowly focused; it gives only a partial insight into what the material offers. Some proposals for the In-depth assessment would involve a good deal of time; where as others would require expert knowledge.

It is argued that the use of these methods in isolation has limitations and specific use. That's why, an integrated approach is essential.

2.4 Criteria for Assessment of the Textbook:

Criteria used for assessment should be appropriate and transparent. Numerous checklists have been designed for the systematic assessment of textbooks. Some of the best-known published examples are-Tucker (1975), Hycraft (1978), Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979), Cunnigsworth (1979,1984), Williams (1983), Sheldon (1988), Harmer (1991), Skierso (1991), and Ur

(1996). Most of the checklists refer to the topics like design, language content, subject matter, practical considerations.

Mc Donough and Shaw (1993) discuss External, Internal and Overall Evaluation of material.

i. External Evaluation:

The factors used in external evaluation are-the interested audience, the proficiency level, the-context and presentation of language items, whether the materials are to be core or supplementary, the role and availability of a teacher's book, the inclusion of vocabulary list/index, the table of contents, the use of visuals and presentation, the cultural specificity of the materials, the provision of audio/video material and inclusion of tests.

ii. Internal Evaluation:

It includes criteria like the treatment and the presentation of skills, the sequencing and grading of the materials, the type of reading, listening, speaking and writing materials contained in the materials, appropriacy of tests and exercises, self-study provision and teacher-learner 'balance' in use of materials.

iii. Overall Evaluation:

It includes the factors like the usability, the generalizability, the adaptability and the flexibility.

Different criteria are suggested by different people. Out of them, the researcher has selected some criteria to analyze and assess the textbooks.

2.5 Shivaji University Curricula in English:

In Shivaji University the position of English as a subject for learning in the faculties of Arts, Commerce and Science is not the same. In the three years integrated B.A. degree course, English is a compulsory subject at all the levels i.e. B.A.I, B.A.II, B.A.III. In the three years B.Com. degree course, English is a compulsory subject at B.Com. I and B.Com. II. At B.Com.III English is not a compulsory subject. In the faculty of science, English is

compulsory at B.Sc.I and B.Sc.III; but at B.Sc.II level English is not a compulsory subject. Marks secured by the candidate in Compulsory English in the annual examinations of all the three years of B.A. are taken into account while declaring the class of the candidate. Even in the faculty of Commerce, the marks of two Compulsory English papers are added to the total percentage of the candidate. But marks secured by the science student in Compulsory English are not considered while declaring the class of the student.

Shivaji University prepares and publishes textbooks of Compulsory English for the undergraduate classes of Arts, Commerce and Science. These textbooks take into account the kind of English students need when they step into the world outside. The textbooks prepared for B.A. students of the university are entitled as *English for Communication*. This title has been accepted for B.A. I textbook since 1996, for B.A. II textbook, since 1993 and for B.A. III textbook, since 1994. The purpose of these textbooks is to enable students to face demands made on their use of English in the competitive world outside through learning communication skills and to make students aware of the use of English in different situations and fields and to make students aware of the use of English for practical purposes. These textbooks are changed after every three years. The present textbooks are prepared following the guidelines given by the University Grant Commission (U.G.C.).

A Curriculum Development Committee for English and Other Western Languages was formed by U.G.C. in September 2000 to suggest the recommendation to formulate college and university curriculum in English. The committee had prepared sample curriculum for a wide range of compulsory and optional components. It was suggested that each institution is free to select or to add other item.

The committee assumed the following levels of attainment for General/Compulsory English Programme:

- i. General/Compulsory English Programme should ensure ability to comprehend English texts of a moderately advanced nature, such as may be studied by all college and university students in the pursuit of their disciplines;

- ii. It should ensure certain compositional skills in English required various professions and activities in India, e.g. letter-writing, précis or summary writing, paragraph composition, etc.. This may extend to more specialized skills such as report-writing, copy-editing, copy writing, script-writing, translation, etc..
- iii. It should ensure the first entry into the more complex literary use of English, and the human values and perceptions conveyed through it.

The present textbook *English for Communication* prescribed for B.A.I students of Compulsory English was published in 2003. The textbook prescribe for B.A.II and B.A.III students of Compulsory English, entitled as *English for communication*, were published in 2004 and 2005 respectively. These textbooks are prepared in view of the syllabus for Compulsory English recommended by U.G.C. to bring some uniformity in teaching of English all over the country.

2.6 Categories Used in the Textbook Analysis and Assessment:

In this investigation, the researcher wishes to assess to what extent the *English for Communication* textbooks prescribed for B.A. students of Shivaji University have been successful in enabling the users to acquire and to develop the communicative competence over the period of three years. The researcher also wishes to analyze the textbooks to provide description which will help in the assessment. The categories used in the analysis and assessment of the textbooks are stated below.

A) Analysis of the textbooks:

The textbooks are analyzed in the context of the following points:

- i. The objectives of the textbooks.
- ii. The design of the textbooks.
- iii. The content of the textbooks.
- iv. Tasks and Exercises in the textbooks.

B) Assessment of the textbooks:

The textbooks are assessed focusing on the following points:

- i. The co-relation between the objectives and the selection of the content.**
- ii. Gradation of the material.**
- iii. Appropriacy of Tasks and Exercises.**
- iv. Teacher-Learner balance.**
- v. Balance of Language skills.**
- vi. General comments based on the overall assessment of strengths and weaknesses.**
