RESEARCH ARTICLE

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF TIME FOR ENGLISH IV

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at analyzing and evaluating the English textbook of Time for English IV that is taught at Khartoum some private schools in Sudan. The researchers follow the analytical method to evaluate the textbook. They probe the objectives, content, activities and gradation that reflected by the textbook of Time for English IV. The research results show: The terminal and developmental objectives are clearly stated; the content of the book is appropriate and satisfy the various needs of the learners; and the activities of the book are clear and suitable for learners, but insufficient to test learners' comprehensive language skills.

Keywords: analysis, evaluation, syllabus, textbook, gradation.

INTRODUCTION

Educational goals and the means of achieving them can never be kept statistic. They are bound to change through time. Marinai (1980) states, that people should think of possible ways of keeping educational institutions and their programmes up to date. The trend now is toward an approach of education that takes account of the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes. For this reason "Time for English" series was introduced in 1999. It has been in use in Khartoum states for several years in some private schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The effectiveness of the textbook usually determines among other factors, the achievement of the course's objectives. Out of the belief the researcher decided on evaluation of "Time for English IV".

Language teaching materials are no exception; therefore, evaluating these materials is of great importance if one wants to discover the strengths and weaknesses in teaching – learning process. "Time for English" is used in some private schools and institute in Khartoum state whether it is suitable or unsuitable the researcher then, intends to venture into evaluating "Time for English" textbook: making book 4 of this series as a case study.

AMIS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study is out lined as follows:

1. Conduct an evaluation of the textbook so as to obtain comprehensive view of the material.

2. Focus some light on the tasks and activities of the textbook which may be useful for those involved in the task of the syllabus design, material evaluation and their development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of activities and exercises are included in the textbook?

2. Are vocabulary and grammar suitable for the pupils who learn the textbook?

3. How does the textbook treat the four skills?

4. Is this textbook suitable for Sudanese Basic school pupils?

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the purpose of this study.

1. The activities in "Time for English" are different from the learners' environment they do not meet students and social needs.

2. The contents of "Time for English" present the four skills equally.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study tries to evaluate the effectiveness of "Time for English IV" in terms of its being communicative for pupils, and teachers. The findings of this research may help other researchers to make other suggestions towards the development of the syllabus.

THE LIMITED OF THE STUDY

This research was limited to the basic schools sixth level, Khartoum state. "Time for English" book IV published in 1999 and reprinted several times from Macmillan Education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature relevant to this study is divided into three parts: Part(1) deals with the definition of syllabus and a review of the evaluation criteria, as present in books, researches and articles. Part(2) surveys the various views related to language learning, syllabus design and language teaching. Part (3) states the criteria and principles that should be taken into consideration in designing textbooks and in judging time for English.

Part 1 SYLLABUS AND THE TEXTBOOK EVELUATION

Pre-evaluation: analysis: Most textbook evaluation schemes distinguish two essential stages that are necessary at the pre-evaluation phase: a description or analysis phase, and an interpretation or evaluation phase. In the first phase, the contents of the book have to be carefully described in terms of scope and sequence, organization, and the types of texts and exercises contained within. The analysis phase will involve identifying these kinds of information:

a) Aims and objectives of the book.
b) Level of the book.
c) Skills addressed.
d) Topics covered.
e) Situations it is intended for.
f) Target learners.
g) Time required.
h) Components.
i) Number and length of units.
j) Organization of units.

Wilfred (1984:26) defines syllabus as that: "simply a frame work within which activities can be carried out and a teaching device to facilities learning. A syllabus expresses indirectly certain assumption about language the psychological process of learning, the pedagogic and social processing within a classroom".

Language is highly complex and not be taught all at the same time, so successful teaching requires a selection of materials depending on the definition of objectives proficiency level duration of course and specification of testing. Thus the syllabus is vehicles through which information is convoyed to teacher, textbook writers, examination committees and learners who are concerned with programmes.

Williams (1983: 251 -255) suggests criteria bases on four basic assumptions; up-to date methodology of foreign language teaching.

      a.   Guidance for non-native speakers of English.

      b.   Needs for learners.

      c.   Relevance to socio-cultural environment.

Bruder (1978: 205-218) suggests a simplified procedure for English language textbook (as foreign language) evaluation. Briefly the technique is to use a checklist of eight criteria: level, objectives, style, language, age, time, convictions and competency. Bruder considers the criteria from the point of view of the teachers and textbook designer as well as from the point of view of students, he assigns a plus(+) if there is a match, a minus(-) if there is mismatch and a zero (0) if the text is neutral.

Part 2: THEORTICAL BASIS OF TEXTBOOK DESIGN

In this part, the researcher will discuss two phases of material development and all the views related to them. The two phases of material development are:

a.   Determining the objectives:

b.   Choosing the content of the pupil's book or the selection, gradation, presentation drilling in various exercises and providing a means for testing.

THE OBJECTIVES

Defining the objectives of a course book is a necessary preliminary step to any successful work. In designing course material educational objective have a variety of functions. They serve as guide for the decisions about each and every process involved in course design. In other words the objectives determine the criteria of what to each, how to teach it and how to test it, Taba(1962).

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES

They are intermediate aims that have to be attained in order to accomplish the desired terminal objective. These are usually state at the beginning of each lesson either in a pupil's book or in the teacher's manual. This is because every lesson should contribute to the attainment of the terminal objectives.

Nunan (1988:63) mentioned that there are four possible ways of stating the objectives.

a.   Specifying the things the teacher is to do.

b.   Specifying course content (topic, concept).

c.   Specifying generalized pattern of behavior.

d.   Specifying the kinds of behavior which learners will be able to exhibit after instruction.

TEXTBOOK WRITING

In this part the researcher will review textbook writing criteria and will state what is relevant of these criteria for judging "Time for English IV".

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Mackey, (1965:162) mentions three factors in terms of which the selection of elements, whether structural or semantic should be justifiable.

These are: The purpose, level, and duration of a course. The researcher will first give a brief explanation of each factor and discuss how they affect the selection processes.

A.   THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Mackey lumps two questions under these factors:

- Why was there a selection?

- For whom was it made?

The answer to the first is definitely, the objectives of the course; where as the answer to the second are the characteristics of the learner and his needs i.e. to appreciate the relation between the objectives of the course and the learners' needs.

B.THE LEVEL OF THE COURSE

The important question is what is the level of the course? Is it for absolute beginners, advanced learners?.......etc.

B.   DURATION OF THE COURSE.

What is the length of the time allowed for the course?

SELECTION

Sometimes, the general principles may specify certain items to be included in the course. When no specification is available, it is usually the purpose that determines most of the type amount of material selected. In structural syllabuses, for example the terminal objective of language course is a mastery of sound, vocabulary and structure system of the language.

Mohammed .Ishraqa (2001) mentioned that " the last factor that affects the choice of material in general is duration of the course. It is evident that the length of the course affects the decisions in selecting items. This time the effect more related to amount rather than the type of selection. since this last factor is self-evident, it will not be expanded. Instead, the criteria that should be considered in relation to particular elements will be discussed".

For he purpose of convenience, the elements that should be included in a textbook are two kinds:

1.   Structural elements.

2.   Semantic elements.

The former include

a.   Phonology.

b.   Vocabulary.

c.   Notions.

A.PHONOLOGY

Phonology is the study of the sound system of the language. It includes the study of different phonemes in the language and how they combine to form words and sentences.

B.VOCABULARY

Vocabulary choice is one of the most central decision in the selection of content. This is because the vocabulary of any language is almost infinite and hence, it can never be aimed to teach it all. All criteria for the

choice of vocabulary whether structural or communicative, are highly valuable in directing course design decisions during the process of selection. Yet, because of shortage of research in some of these area, the course designers, unfortunately, do not possess all the relevant information to make use of them all in syllabus design. Nevertheless, they do possess some valuable means to which they can refer to make the best possible scientific selection or to evaluate the selection made by others. Of these means, the best known as far as frequency is concerned is West's general service list of English words(1953); and the most current is the list of Collins Co-build English course(1988). By Willises.

West's list consisted of 2000 common words extracted from five million words occurring in written discourse. A semantic count, computed by Dr. Lorge, of the frequency of occurrence of the various meanings of each word has also been appended to the list.

The Colins' list, has complied a special frequency list for course design. The list consists of 700 words. The first 500 are the most frequent, words both in oral and written discourse. The second 150 items are not frequent, but they are selected for their utility value in writing of course material, the rest 50 words are topic related (i.e., they are justifiable in terms of availability), such as days of the week, point of compass….etc" Renouf, (1987:167-178).

GRAMMAR

In teaching grammar, in contrast, in contrast to vocabulary, it is more a matter of grading than of selection. This is because the basis of grammar has to be taught, but never all the vocabulary of any language. Therefore, most of the criteria cited in literature are mainly for grading grammar. However, two of these are connected to selection as much as grading. These are increasing complexity, and saliency for communicative purpose Van Ek,J. (1975:8); Bruder, (1978:2).

Increasing complexity means that, the simple should be taught before the difficult or complex. Although theoretically there is no consensus on what is simple and what is difficult or complex, in practice,, there seems to be a general consensus on which item, should be selected first. On the other hand, communicative saliency means that, these items which appeal directly to the learner's communicative needs, should be chosen first.

A cording to Mackey, the grammar of a language is made up of :

a. Structures (structural pattern).

b. Inflections and structure words Mackey(1965:191).

As far as the first two categories are concerned, the previous criteria do suffice. As far as structure words are concerned, the various criteria proposed for selecting vocabulary do apply here equally well since these are usually listed as vocabulary and not grammatical item.

METHODOLOGY

The pupils who respond to the questionnaire are girls and boys, their ages are 10, 11, 12 and 13 years old all of them study in Khartoum state.

Tools

A questionnaire was used to collect the data about content " Time for English IV". The researcher analyzed the questionnaires manually and puts it in table. The researcher always chooses the highest and lowest percentages to analyze " Time for English IV" and add, the researchers' own views.

Pupils Questionnaire :

ANALYSES AND EVALUATION OF TIME FOR ENGISH IV

This part is divided into two sections in section one the researcher will make analyses and evaluation of time for English IV on the basis of criteria . In section two the researcher analyses the data which has been collected by distributing the questionnaire to learners.

Section One:

COURSE CONTENT

This text book is divided into twenty-four units each units consist of three lessons each unit introduces phonology, vocabulary, and grammar.

PHONOLOGY

The course's contents are :

a) Stress

    e.g. Unit 2 lesson 1 e.g. elephant

       Unit 6 lesson 3 stress with in a sentence practiced through a rhyme e.g

        Put your coat on a chair.

       Unit 23 lesson 3 sentence stress practiced through rhyme.

VOCABULARY

The general principles specifications state that the number of words that should be learnt thoroughly during the teaching of the intermediate level is (400 – 500) words, but it is left to the course designers to choose these words.

This is textbook consists of 166 words:
Unit 1 consists of 5 new words.
Unit 2 consists of 10 new words.
Unit 3 consists of 6 words.
Unit 4 consists of revision words.
Unit 5 consists of 7 new words.
Unit 6 consists of 13 new words.
Unit 7 consists of 9 new words.
Unit 8 Revision unit.
Unit 9 consists of 13 new words.
Unit 10 consists of 5 new words.
Unit 11 consists of 10 new words.
Unit 12 Revision unit.
Unit 13 consists of 8 new words.
Unit 14 consist of 7 words.
Unit 15 consists of 9 new words.
Unit 16 Revision unit.
Unit 17 consists of 7 new words.
Unit 18 consists of 11 new words.
Unit 19 consists of 13 new words.
Unit 20 Revision unit.
Unit 21 consists of 9 new words.
Unit 22 consists of 16 new words.
Unit 23 consists of 8 new words.
Unit 24 Revision unit.

    It shows that this book has less new words and sometimes it finds that difficult words teach before the easy one.

The main criterion for the vocabulary selection is the functional range of items. It means that the selection should enable the learners to talk about as many things as possible within the time planned for course.

In the analysis of vocabulary of this course it makes learners to talk about the many things.

GRAMMAR

There are many structure patterns in the text book:
DETERMINERS: a, an, the, this, that, these, those
PREPOSITION: on, in, at, next to, near, opposite, above
CONJECTIONS: and, but, or
PRONOUNS (subject) I, you, she, he, it, we, they.
(Object) me, you, him, her, it, us, and them.
(Pronominal possessive adjectives) my, your, his, their.
AUXILIARIES: do, does, am, is, are, have, has, can.
NEGATIVE PARTICLES: no, not.
QUESTION WORDS: what, where, how, how many, how long, how tall, whose, which, when.
QUANTIFIER: many, some, any, much, a lot of
Concerning inflections and structural patterns the following list includes the items derived from the course materials.
Inflections: /s/ /z/
Plural of nouns: bags boxes meters
Irregular a man   men
　　　　A child   children
The possessive of nouns /s/
Nadia's　　　Ayman's
Post of regular and irregular verbs
Visit - visited
Play - played
See - saw
Come – came
Polite requests   using (would)
Use of infinitive with to.
Use of infinitive without to:
The use of future.

QUESTIONS FORM

Time for English teaches the following question forms

   a) Question with question word.

   b) With How long/ tall/ aux + noun.

   c) Yes/No question.

As Finocchiaro, (1969) and Bruder's list of items as it mentioned in chapter two it can be concluded that the terms selected by course designers are on the whole generally agreed on and are suitable for the sixth level grades.

Section B

In this section the researcher analyses the data which has been collected by distributing the questionnaire to learners. The researcher analysis the objectives content and activities and means.

Objectives: Statement 1 (time for English IV helps me to deal with the computer).

Table 1: The learners' opinion about statement 1

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	33,3
Not sure	8	24,3
No	14	42.4
Total	33	100.0

Table (1) shows that, out of thirty-three learners who respond to the questionnaire, 11 learners (33.3%) said yes, while 14 learners (42.4) said no and the 8 learners (24.3%) couldn't decide. This result means that, the time for English don't help the learners to deal with the computer.

Statement 2 (time for English helps me to comprehend the importance of English language)

Table 2 : The learners' opinion about statement 2

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	84.4
Not sure	4	12.3
No	1	3.3
Total	33	100.0

Table (2) shows that out of thirty – three learners who respond the questionnaire, 28 learners (84.4%) said yes, while I learner (3.3%) said no, and 4 learners (12.3%) could not decide. So it can be said that time for English helps the learners to comprehend the importance of English language.

Contents

Statement 4 (time for English is easy to study).

Table 3 : The learners' opinion about the statement 3

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	75.6
Not sure	7	21.1
No	1	3.3
Total	33	100.0

Table (3) shows that out of thirty-three learners who respond the questionnaire, those who said yes are 25 learners (75.6) while those who said no is only one learner (3.3%) and the remaining 7 learners of percentage (21.2%) could not decide. This result indicates that the time for English is easy of learners to study.

Statement 4 (I cover with my class mates and friends outside the classroom using some of the items, which I studied in time for English IV).

Table 4 :   The learners' opinion about statement 4

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	78.1
Not sure	2	6.3
No	5	15.6
Total	33	100.0

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Table (4) indicates that 26 learners (78.1%) said yes while 5 learners (15.6%) said no, and 2 learners (6.3) could not decide. So it can be pointed that time for English helps learners to converse with each others outside the classroom suing some of the items which they studied in it.

Statement 5 (time for English helps me to understand other topics).

Table 5 : The learners' opinion about statement 5

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	57.6
Not sure	13	39.1
No	1	3.3
Total	33	100.0

The data in table (5) indicates that, 19 learners (57.6%) said yes while I learner (3.3%) said no, and the remaining 13 learners (39.1%) could not decide. So it can conclude that time for English helps learners to understand other topics.

Activities

Statement 6 (I participate in the activities associated with time for English IV, inside the class)

Table 6: The learners' opinion about statement 6

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	57.6
Not sure	9	27.3
No	5	15.1
Total	33	100.0

The data in table (6) shows that 19 learners (57.6%) said yes while 5 learners (15.1%) said no and the remaining 9 learners (27.3%) could not decide. This indicate that, learners participate in the activities associated with time for English IV, inside the class.

Statement 7 (I participate in the activities associated with time for English IV, outside the class).

Table 7: The learners' opinion about statement 7

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	97.0
No	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

Table (7) indicates that, 32 learners (97%) agreed with the statement while only one learner (3%) disagreed with it. So it concludes that, learners participate in the activities associated with time for English IV, outside the class.

Statement 8 (the exercises help me to understand the lesson).

Table 8 : The learners' opinion about statement 8

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	90.9
Not sure	2	6.1
No	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

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The data in table (8) shows that 30 learners (90.9%) said yes while 1 learner (3%) said no and 2 learners (6.1%) could not decide. So it can be pointed out that the exercises help learners to understand the lessons.

Statement 9 (time for English IV is beautiful and attractively printed).

Table 9: The learners' opinion about statement 9

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	75.7
Not sure	6	18.2
No	2	6.1
Total	33	100.0

The data in table (9) indicates that 25 learners (75.7%) agreed with the statement while 2 learners (6.1%) disagree and remaining 6 learners (18.2) could not decide. So it concludes that. Time for English IV is beautiful and attractively and printed.

Statement 10 (the illustrations help me to understand time for English).

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	81.8
Not sure	5	15.2
No	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

Table (10) shows that 27 learners (81.8%) said yes while 1 learner (3.0%) said no and 5 learners (15.2%) could not decide that. The illustrations help the learners to understand Time for English IV.

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

The researcher has put the hypotheses and started the study. First the researcher consulted many references to have a thorough background about the literature of subject matter. Then decided that the study will concern the selection, gradation and sequence of course book materials. To investigate the problem the researcher distributed the questionnaire to check learners point of view about " Time for English IV" from those points of view the researcher could be able to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook.

The researcher came out with the believe that Time for English IV objectives enhance the skills of language, also the content of textbook appeals for the needs of learners.

At the end the researcher would like to say that the selection of " Time for English IV" emphasizes areas of use.

THE TEXTBOOK FINDINGS

   a. The terminal objectives are clearly.
   b. The developmental objectives are clear too.
   c. The content of the book is suitable.
   d. The content of the book does not satisfying the varied needs of the pupils.
   e. The activities of the book are clear and suitable for learners.
   f. The activities of the book are not enough to test them understanding.

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