



A Critical Evaluation of Grade Twelve Textbook, English for Ethiopia (2023)

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<p>Abstract: In educational arena, teachers shouldn't be considered as the end uses of the curriculum; they have to take part in setting of educational policies, programs, and in the syllabus developments. In Ethiopia, the involvement of experts, teachers were ignored in such activates. Teaching materials, textbooks were prepared by top managers; those materials should be critically reviewed. Therefore, the researcher tried to evaluate the textbook of grade twelve, unite nine: English for Ethiopia. The evaluation criteria revealed that aims and objectives of the unit, design and organization of the unit, language content of the unit, topics of the unit, methodology used in the unit, social and cultural context in the unit, exercises and activities in the unit were seemed good; however, the activities portrayed in the unit didn't go in line with language skills. Even the methodologies to be used in the unit didn't invite teachers to employ appropriate teaching aids. Furthermore, the instructions in the unit were not telling students to comprehend better. Accordingly, the involvement of teachers in educational policies ratification, designing curriculum, and syllabus development should be up turned so as to bring quality education.</p> <p>Keywords: Textbook, Evaluation.</p>	<p>Review Paper</p>
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1.1. INTRODUCTION

English Language is so widely spoken; it has been referred to as a world language (lingua franca) of the modern era. Graddol (2000) states that English Language is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air traffic control, international business and academic references, science technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions and advertising. English as a foreign language (EFL) indicates the use of English in non-English-speaking regions. In Ethiopia, learning English occurs as part of the normal school curriculum. Barber (1993) states that it is taught as a subject starting from grade one to higher institutions in Ethiopia.

It is already understood that instructional materials are the most common tools for the sake of delivering the required lesson in educational settings. According to Cunningsworth (1995), instructional materials are teaching materials (resources) which enable being capable in academic issues; those materials may take two forms: printed ones, such as textbook, workbook, teacher's guide, readers, etc.; and non-print ones, such as audiotapes, videotapes and computer-based materials. They are considered as key component in most TEFL programs that are essential for both teachers and

learners. Especially, textbooks are the most used instruments for running the teaching-learning process in various institutions.

They do not only provide a framework for teachers in achieving the aims and objectives of the course, but also serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting lessons. "On behalf of the learners, a textbook truly affects their attitudes and performance to the lesson throughout the course" (Richards, 2001). This implies that text books are the means that language teaching is going to be provided through. It is a fact that when learners like their textbooks, they like the course as well and become active participants to the lesson. The textbook is an important source of input and a great opportunity for EFL learners to communicate in the target language which is realized only in classroom settings. However, no textbook or set of materials is likely to be perfect. These books need to be evaluated for disseminating the required lesson in the actual classroom situation. Therefore, in this part of critique, a detailed evaluation was given to grade 12 English for Ethiopia textbook. Specifically, an emphasis was provided to unit nine which is entitled "Traditional Versus Progress." In fact, criteria were set for assessing. Strong sides and limitations of the unit were going to be revealed.

1.1.1 Textbook

Textbook is as it is the course books which the teacher and, usually, each student has a copy, and which is in principle to be followed systematically as the bases for a language course (Ur, 2006). Moreover, as Hutchinson and Torres (1994) states that it is a guide for a teacher, a memory aid for the pupils and a permanent records or measure of what has been learnt.

1.1.2. Evaluation

The term evaluation has been used to define a variety of processes in the field of applied linguistics.

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are there clearly stated objectives in the unit?	✓	
Are the objectives attainable and realistic?	✓	
Do the stated objectives include all contents raised in the unit?	✓	
Do the stated objectives directly correspond with the language teaching aims?	✓	

It is obvious that there should be appropriate objectives in which learners are going to be able to perceive at the end of any provided chapters throughout the textbook. Regarding this issue Chambers (1997) claimed that textbook should be attractive and well organized in a clear, logical, and coherent manner; its objectives are expected be stated apparently. The way chapter objectives are designed and structured can provide a blue print how lessons shall be conducted (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). This is to say that textbooks can serve as a tool to motivate and stimulate language learning activities which are going to be included in discussion part. As result, an attempt is made to evaluate the textbook of grade 12 particularly unit 9 based on the first criterion. The objectives of this unit have been stated in a well manner in both parts (part A and part B) that the way learners are going to perceive easily. Therefore, we can say that objectives have been described clearly so that they are one of the strong side of this textbook because most of them touch the four language skills. Most objectives include all points which are stated in the main part of the unit.

In terms of attainability and realistic, the objectives of the unit that we evaluate are achievable. This is because; the objectives have been affirmed

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are the contents in the unit organized well?	✓	
Are the contents in the unit sequenced?	✓	
Is the length of the unit realized by the teacher?	✓	

The course book contains 12 main units and four expansion units. As it is stated in High Impact Teacher’s Manual (1996), each of the main units follows a format consisting of the following sections: *Warm up*--introduces the theme of the unit.

Listening---presents tasks that develop specific information, gist and inferential listening skills. *Conversation Topic*---presents vocabulary and dialog

Lynch (1996) defines evaluation as “the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgment or decision. Therefore, Hurmer (200) define course book evaluation, as it is a judgment on how well the book has performed in fact. Evaluation is made easier, more objective and valid when it is based on reliable instruments. Checklists are often used by experts in evaluating and selecting textbooks.

1.2 Criteria (Checklists) for Evaluating Textbooks

1.2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Unit

clearly for both the teacher and students. When objectives are determined clearly at the beginning of the unit, they provide direction to the teacher for selecting the instructional activities that promote achievement of the desired aims (Ground, 2004). This implies that objectives that are clearly stated show teachers the way how he/she propose the lesson accordingly.

The stated objectives in unit 9 of grade 12 textbook included all important contents raised in. according to Rohwer and Wandberg (2005), the essential contents of the unit should be included in the lesson objective. Therefore, all objectives stated in the unit enable learners for learning language contents. As a result, those objectives are the strong sides of the unit in the text book.

They also claimed that the aim language teaching is to improve the students’ communicative and linguistic competence; however, this happens when the objective corresponds directly with language teaching aims. Therefore, all objectives of the unit go in line with the teaching aims.

1.2.2. Design and Organization of the Unit

practice along with personalization. *Grammar Awareness*---presents tasks to help students notice grammar usage.

Pair Interaction---provides opinion gap and experience gap activities which allow students to share their own ideas and experiences.

Read and Response---provides both a model and a reason to read and write.

This implies that to be the textbook teachable, all these formats should be included. As stated above warm up: introducing the theme of the unit should be stated in order to keep the contents of the unit organized. However, in grade 12 unit 9 English text book the theme of the unit was stated at the end of the unit. Since it is all about warming up the students, it is better if it is stated at the beginning of the unit.

The rest of the formats stated above found in the unit that we evaluate. Apart from these, we have evaluated the way contents are organized. Thus, its

contents have been organized well and sequenced in the way students can easily understand it.

The length of each main unit must be realized by the teacher when deciding how it will harmonize into a given educational program. Each main unit of the High Impact course book has been designed for approximately three 50-minute class periods, or two 90-minute periods, or roughly 15-20 minutes per section. Expansion units are designed for two 50-minute periods, or one 90-minute period (McDonough and Shaw 1993: 69). Thus, in unit 9 grade 12 of English textbook the length of the unit can be easily realized by the teacher and it can be harmonized in a given period of time. Therefore, this is the main strength of the unit.

1.2.3. Language Content of the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are language styles and appropriacy matched to the social situation in the unit?	✓	
Do the content of the language fit with language conventions in the given unit?	✓	
Are there simple and common language expressions the unit?	✓	
Does the unit use familiar words to the learner and define technical terms (if there is)?	✓	

Language styles and social situation of the society should be portrayed in the content of text book. According to Richards (2001), textbooks often present an idealized view of the world to present real issues in order to make textbooks acceptable in many different social contexts controversial topics are avoided and instead an idealized white middle class view of the world is portrayed as a norm. The language style and appropriacy of the unit evaluated are matched with the social situation of the society. The unit talks about tradition versus progress and mainly about our tradition and the need to adapt to the modern world. This all are discussed by using different language styles in relation with different social situations.

Richards (2001) also claim that, text book may contain taboo language’s expressions that do not consider learners who come from different residential areas; perhaps the sections of the unit throughout the book should be omitted. Accordingly, we have evaluated the unit and it doesn’t have any jargons, taboo language expressions which are condemned by learners. Similarly, there are simple, common and familiar words used in the unit. Thus, students can easily improve their communicative competence and can easily understand what they are going to do.

1.2.4. Language Skills in the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Does the unit include all the four language skills?	✓	
Does the unit enable students to use integrated skills?	✓	
Do the activities portrayed in the unit go in line with language skills?		✓

Each and every unit of the textbook should include the four language skills and micro skills. Therefore, the unit of the textbook that we evaluate includes all language skills and micro skills.

In a given unit using integrated skill help the students to be effective in learning language. Integration of the receptive and productive skills is the trend in modern course book design Cunningsworth (1995). Each unit of the course book contains sections on listening, speaking and reading, while writing skills are integrated into most activities. Although equal weighting seems to be given to the four skills, unit 9 provides due attention mostly for speaking skills; specially writing skill is not given much emphasis. Therefore, writing and other receptive skills should be given attention.

The activities specified in a given language skill should go with the purpose of the mentioned language skill. However, the activities that have been portrayed based on the four language skills do not go in line with the specific language skills. For example, in unit 9 page 199 part a activity 9.5 speaking part what students pre request to do is listen their teacher while he/she reads. Then identify the emotions of the speaker about what they are saying. From this we can conclude that even though the activity is speaking, what students first do is listening which do not go in line with the specific language skill. So this activity should be given to listening skill.

1.2.5 Topics of the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are there enough variety and ranger of topics?	✓	
Do the topics enable to expand students’ awareness and enrich their experience?	✓	
Do the topics relate with the students’ real life situation?	✓	
Do all the topics stated give equal chance for both sexes?	✓	

Topics are the lessons that learners enhance their knowledge through. Richards (2001) stated that the textbook of the unit should contain enough topics for being learnable to students. Thus in unit 9 of grade 12 textbook there are enough variety of topics which touch different issues. These enable the students to expand their awareness and enrich their experience.

As stated above if there are various topics within a given unit, students can easily recognize the contents with their real life situation. In addition the topics raised in this unit give equal chance for both sexes.

1.2.6 Methodology Used in the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Does the unit’s activity invite teachers to use different teaching methodologies?	✓	
Does the methodology used in the unit advocate students’ active participation?	✓	
Does the methodology used in the unit help the students to develop their communicative ability?	✓	
Does the methodology used in the unit invite teachers to employ appropriate teaching aids?		✓

Activities in the unit may invite teachers to deliver the teaching-learning process through discussion, presentation, demonstration or showing methods in the actual classroom situation. It is important, then, that materials meet students’ needs by allowing for different methodologies of teaching styles through using pair work and group activities which are popular strategies for practicing information-gathering skills and expressing personal opinions (Ellis, 1993: 4). Therefore, unit 9 of grade 12 text book activities more invite teachers to use discussion method while they are teaching. And also the students can have more idea sharing time with their partners in the classroom.

in isolation”; being aware of this inevitable situation, students must be reminded that the more they engage in discussion through oral communication, the more their overall communicative competence will improve. Consequently, the answer is ‘Yes’ because tasks given in the unit encourage students to practice more and more in group.

In the above question, it has been said that the teaching methodology in this unit is more of discussion; as a result, students would have an opportunity to participate actively. All the activities in the unit allow students to carry out individually first and then discuss in groups by expressing their feelings, views about the tasks (Example, see page on 195, Unit 9, Grade 12 English Textbook).

Teaching aids are essential tools in the teaching-learning process. What visual material (teaching aid) does the unit contain and is it actually integrated into the text? Teaching aids: photographs, drawings and graphs are all attractively done and add an artful, contextual element to the activities. In addition, each unit contains a small comic strip that gives visual life to discourse, combining conversation with practiced functions. Most color photos might be teaching aids and illustrations are incorporated into the tasks for internalizing the lesson (Nunan, 1991; Swan and Walter, 1987; Skehan, 1996, Carter, 1998; Willis, 2000). This implies that activities in the unit should incorporate to use teaching aids whenever necessary. However, the unit that we evaluate does not inform teachers to employ different teaching aids; in fact, there is no any situation in which those teaching aids used in this unit. Therefore, we don’t think it as a limitation in this unit even though all the tasks do not force to employ accordingly.

The main aim of teaching language to learners is for developing their communicative competence and understands among/between people; this happens whenever pair and group discussion is exhaustively implemented based on the given activities. To this end, Brown (1994) has claimed that language learning is not a skill “where you can simply bone up on rules and words

1.2.7. Social and Cultural Context in the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are the content of the unit free from stereotypical images and information?	✓	
Do the topics consider cultural sensitiveness of the students?	✓	
Does the social and cultural contexts in the unit are comprehensible?	✓	

When textbooks are prepared in the way that learners easily understand, they should be free from any stereotypical assumptions (inferior and superior) outlooks. According to Prodromou (1988), there might be bias in textbooks preparation (looking one ethnic group is superior to others); however, there shouldn't be such awkward prejudice perspective. So in this textbook, an attempt is made to evaluate unit 9 of grade 12 textbook. Therefore, the unit is free from these situations; we haven't seen yet any kind of stereotypical attitudes, images towards the ethnic group of the society.

In EFL settings, the cultural representations of the target language in textbooks can be problematic since the learners try to acquire the unfamiliar input of the target language culture and need to be acknowledged concerning the stereotyped representations of the people in native speaking communities. Culture is the manifestation of one country; if it is so, the culture of the society should be acknowledged accordingly. Textbooks are expected to include the culture in which the people are going to be behaved through. Alptekin (1993) has focused on the use of the target language culture as a

vehicle for teaching the language in textbooks and suggest that it is not really possible to teach a language without embedding it in its cultural base. She argue that such a process inevitably forces learners to express themselves within a culture of which they have scarcely any experience and this may result in alienation, stereotyping, or even reluctance or resistance to learning. Hence, the unit advocates traditional culture which is interesting to the society. Even it talks about the culture of Africa, Western countries across the world. It blames traditional cultures of the society that doesn't any significance (value) to the contemporary world from all these countries. Thus, this is the main strength of the unit.

Those cultures that have been discussed in the unit of textbook are easily comprehensible; therefore, learners have an opportunity to contextualize and internalize the lesson based on the portrayed culture because there is a positive relationship between the content of the lesson and the culture presented.

1.2.7 Exercises and Activities in the Unit

Lists of evaluation	Yes	No
Are there interactive and task base activities that require students to use language?	✓	
Do the instructions in the unit tell students to comprehend?		✓
Is there any clear example before the activities are forwarded to learners in the unit?	✓	
Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the students?	✓	

Interactive and task based activities enable to use language and develop learners' communicative competence. Regarding this, Cunningsworth (1995) stated that the language learners need to gain confidence while carrying out activities and this can be achieved by narrowing the focus of an interactive (task based) activity or organizing the sequence of the activities in an appropriate way; these exercises also should focus on students' varied needs outside the classroom context. Another aim of task based activities to stimulate students' cognitive abilities in terms of problem solving, discovering and analyzing. By the use of interactive and task based activities, students should be trained in terms of developing specific skills and strategies. Hence, it is possible to claim that interactive and task based activities make learners eager for using language and mastering language skills. As a result, unit 9 of grade 12 textbook has subtended different interactive and task based exercises which help to use language in the required situation. Therefore, those activities should be considered the strong side of the unit.

instruction in activity 9.5 page 199. In the speaking section, there are activities that enable learners to listen, but the instruction request students to listen and comprehend about the emotions of the speakers after listening. This implies that instructions and activities are not compatible in the textbook; instruction of this activity is difficult to be easily comprehended. As a result, instructions must be clearly stated what students should do from the activity.

Even though much time is devoted by students in doing activities from a textbook due to the principle of CLT, there is a need to give a clear hint which shows the way tasks are going to be carried out in each unit of exercises. "Examples are the main methods of teaching learners to indicate them an illustration used as hint in those examples may portrayed in the unit before exercises are given to students" (Cunningsworth, 1995). Thus, there is at least one example in each exercise in the unit we evaluate; pupils can internalize the lesson by using those examples in doing activities.

Instructions of activities in the unit are crucial aspects of a textbook; they enable to comprehend the gist of the text easily. According to Alptekin (1993), instructions of exercises shouldn't be ambiguous that leads learners to misconceptions. Based on this criteria, we have tried to evaluate unit 9 among 12 units presented in grade 12. Therefore, the instructions that have included in the unit are good; however, there is no clear

If clear examples are forwarded about activities, there is no doubt that learners have an opportunity to think critically about the task. Duet to this, almost all activities in the unit help students for developing their cognitive skill which help them to solve problems; so it is considered as the strong side of the unit.

In addition, we can evaluate a text book in terms of its practicability. Most of the activities in the unit enable students to practice language skills by having different actions. Through those actions learners are able to practice the language outside the classroom. At this time students can have different equipment to practice the language which help them to develop their communicative competence. In unit 9 of grade 12 textbook activities and exercises present for students to have different practical sections which in other way ask the students active participation and invite teachers to use CLT method.

Implications of Textbook Evaluation

There are implications of textbook evaluation. Tomlinson (1998), stated that the main issue in evaluating textbooks is to search for the appropriateness of the textbook in a particular teaching context because it is difficult to find a perfect book which is suitable for particular group of learners, but the aim is to investigate for the write kind of book that fits into the current teaching situation better than other materials. Therefore this is to imply that units of the textbook are expected to show clearly stated aims and objectives.

In order to reflect the aims and objectives of the text book, a number of factors should be taken into account: learners' needs, culture, and background knowledge and student level of proficiency. Text book should involve different learning styles that students have: visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. Teachers need to understand that everything in a textbook may not be taught. Sheldon (1988) suggests that no general list of criteria can ever really be applied to all teaching and learning contexts without considerable modification. This shows that textbooks need adaptation in which teachers are engaged for adding other concepts from other course books; likewise, those teachers should leave irrelevant points in the text.

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