CHAPTER SEVEN

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The aim of this study was to analyse and evaluate the coursebooks of English used at the beginners' level in Indian schools. In all, 12 coursebooks were rated by 10 ELT experts and teachers of English with the help of the rating scale prepared for this purpose. The evaluation of each coursebook was undertaken in terms of language models, practice materials, testing exercises, situations, themes, format and rationale. In addition, the coursebooks were also examined with reference to the recent trends in EFL materials. Based on the analysis and evaluation of the coursebooks the investigator has reached the following conclusions:

7.1 Conclusions

1. Most of the textbooks of English used at the beginners' level in India contain artificial and inappropriate language.

2. Most of the textbooks contain materials which are form focused. Meaning and use of the language items are not properly illustrated.
3. The textbooks do not contain the staples of realistic language illustrated through authentic or genuine materials. It is a general trend to use only the 'scripted' material in the book.

4. Drills and exercises included in the textbooks for language practice are form-focused.

5. The textbooks do not contain tasks and activities to practise meaning and use of the item.

6. The exercises do not show much variety. They are confined to substitution tables, look and say, completion, and matching.

7. Most of the textbooks use exercises to be worked out individually by the pupils. There are no materials for group and pair work.

8. The exercises are dull and mechanical. The learners are not likely to find them enjoyable.

9. Most of the Indian textbooks of English at the beginners' level are inadequate tools for the teaching and learning of English.

10. Most of the textbooks contain exercises to test the form. Understanding of meaning and the ability to use the item in communication are not tested.

11. The textbooks do not contain exercises for self-assessment on the part of the learner.
12. Most of the textbooks use situations which are unrealistic, uninteresting, and hackneyed.

13. The situations used in most of the textbooks are dull, and there are no elements of fun.

14. The lessons are full of stereotyped, flat, cut-and-dried characters.

15. Most of the lessons are based on uninteresting, commonplace themes.

16. The themes in most of the books do not show much variety.

17. Most of the coursebooks look unattractive and sullen.

18. The textbooks do not show variety of print and page appearance.

19. Most of the textbooks are based on the narrow view of the nature of language advocated by the American structuralists in the forties.

20. Most of the textbooks are based on the behaviourist theory of language learning with exercises for mechanical repetition and reinforcement.

21. Materials in most of the textbooks are not related to the learner's need which is to be able to use English for real purposes.
22. Functions-based coursebook is a more adequate and effective tool than the coursebooks with rigid structural framework.

23. The Indian coursebooks of English do not reflect the recent rationale of EFL materials with its emphasis on language use.

24. The Indian coursebooks are not as cheerful as the recent coursebooks produced in Britain.

25. The materials in the Indian coursebooks at beginners' level do not contain the elements of ambiguity, guessing, information gap, and problem solving.

26. The main concern of most of the Indian coursebooks seems to be usage and language skills rather than language use and communicative competence.

7.2 Suggestions

The above-mentioned conclusions regarding the weaknesses and limitations of the coursebooks have implications for the syllabus designers, textbook writers, textbook evaluators, and the teachers of English. As argued elsewhere, the textbook occupies the central place in the ELT programmes in India, and it is an essential tool for the teacher as well as the learner. It is very important, therefore to maintain
'quality control' in designing the coursebook. The following suggestions may be useful in improving the courses and materials at the beginners' level.

### 7.2.1 Suggestions to the Syllabus Designers

1. A rigid, structural framework of the syllabus restricts the textbook writer in many ways. This may be made flexible.

2. The functions-based textbook used in West Bengal is found most adequate by the raters in this study. The syllabus designers may use functional categories rather than grammatical categories or structures, as the focal point of the syllabus.

3. In addition to the notions, functions, and language forms the syllabus should also specify the tasks and activities through which they are to be taught.

4. So far the syllabus makers in India have adopted the Formal Design of the syllabus. Recent developments in applied linguistics have offered Functional Syllabus as the alternative to Formal Syllabus types. This should be examined and adopted in the Indian context.
7.2.2 Suggestions to the Textbook Writers

1. The textbook writer should not be conditioned by structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology. He should be able to visualize a textbook in the form other than what it is in today.

2. The textbook writer should evolve a rationale based on the recent thinking in ELT and recent trends in materials production. Recent views on the nature of language and language learning should be reflected in the textbook.

3. It is necessary to emphasize language use in the teaching-learning process, and the textbook should provide materials which are use-focused.

4. The textbook writer should provide samples of natural and acceptable language.

5. The textbook writer may use both scripted and unscripted or authentic materials in the lessons.

6. In addition to the language items, the textbook writer should illustrate functions such as seeking and giving information, identifying, requesting, agreeing, disagreeing, and so on.
7. The textbook writer should avoid dull and mechanical exercises, and use a variety of exciting and engaging practice activities. These may be based on ambiguity, information-gap, guessing, and problem-solving.

8. The textbook writer should include tasks and activities which could promote interaction and language use among the learners.

9. It is important and essential to include materials for self-assessment on the part of the learner.

10. The textbook writer should avoid using commonplace and hackneyed situations. He should bring in variety in situations to create and sustain interest.

11. The textbook writer should use realistic situations which are related to the learner's interests and experience.

12. The textbook writer may avoid direct preaching and sermonizing through the lessons.

13. Situations and themes should be imaginatively conceived, and should have elements of fun and fantasy.

14. The textbook writer should make the book look cheerful and attractive. It should make learning a pleasurable experience for the students.

15. The textbook materials should be related to the learners' needs. Needs analysis may be carried out for this purpose.
16. The material should be piloted and tried out before it is finally published in the form of a coursebook. A scheme for continual feedback and subsequent modifications should be devised to ensure a better quality of the coursebook.

In the course of the study, the investigator faced a few problems and gained experience in the task of evaluating an EFL coursebook. The following suggestions will be found useful to those who wish to undertake this kind of evaluation.

7.2.3 Suggestions to the Textbook Evaluators

1. The traditional tools in the form of checklists and inventories may not be very useful in judging the quality of the materials.

2. It is necessary to include the rationale and the quality of language samples in the evaluation.

3. It is useful to examine the coursebook in terms of the recent thinking in ELT, and new developments in course design.

4. A mechanical evaluation in terms of frequency counts and distribution of words may not be very revealing as far as the quality of the material is concerned.

5. In the process of evaluation, it is necessary to examine the paradigm adopted by the course designer.
6. It is useful to examine how the coursebook is related to the needs of the learners for whom it is intended.

7. It may be more useful to undertake the evaluation of materials in the form of pilot-try outs.

It is the teacher who uses the textbook as an essential tool, and who implements it in the class. This study has made the investigator aware of the problems which the teacher of English may face if the textbook placed in his hands is inadequate. It may be useful to offer some suggestions to the teacher regarding the use of the textbook.

7.2.4 Suggestions to the Teacher of English

1. It is important for the teacher to evaluate any new textbook prescribed for use.

2. Most of the Indian coursebooks in use today are inadequate, having a large number of gaps. It is necessary for the teacher to supplement these coursebooks in day-to-day teaching.

3. Most of the books covered in this study contain samples of artificial, unrealistic language. The teacher may use pieces of authentic materials in the class.
4. The teacher may use dialogues and conversations which illustrate natural, acceptable English.

5. The exercises in most of the books have limited range and are form-focused. The teacher may use tasks and activities to practise meaning and use of the items.

6. Most of the situations used in the coursebooks are dull, uninteresting, and far-fetched. The teacher may create more relevant situations with the help of realia.

7. Since most of the coursebooks contain meagre material, it is necessary for the teacher to build a repertoire of teaching materials in the form of conversations, posters, tickets, forms, songs, timetables, cartoons, advertisements, etc.

8. It will be useful to use pair and group activities to give practice to the students. For this, the teacher should collect and adapt suitable materials from sources such as magazines, newspapers, cards, calendars, notices, etc.

9. The teacher may undertake a systematic analysis of his learners' needs, and try to find out whether the prescribed coursebook can meet these needs.

10. The teacher can show more awareness and provide feedback to the textbook writer which would improve the quality of the material and make it more relevant.
ELT specialists in India have often complained that the evaluation of coursebooks is one of the neglected areas in EFL materials. Since the quality of most of the Indian coursebooks is less than adequate, it is essential to continue further studies in the field. The present study has made the investigator aware of certain related issues which could be explored by the future researchers. Areas which deserve intensive investigation are suggested below.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research


2. A survey of the textbooks of English used in India during the last century.

3. A critical study of the dialogues and conversations used in the Indian coursebooks of English.

4. An evaluation of the exercises, tasks and activities included for language practice in the Indian coursebooks.

5. A comparative study of the ways in which the present perfect (or any other item) is introduced and practised in five different textbooks.

6. A study of the themes and situations used in the Indian coursebooks with special reference to the
learners' age-level, interest, background, and experiences.

7. A comparative study of the coursebook which exercises rigid language control and the coursebook in which language control is relaxed.


The field of English Language Teaching is constantly being explored by applied linguists and classroom practitioners in various parts of the world. These recent developments must be reflected in the teaching materials at all levels. Outdated framework and traditional format must be replaced by innovative and experimental designs in instructional materials. The endeavours to improve the coursebooks must be based on systematic investigations and researches in the area. It is hoped that such studies will continue, and will offer practical suggestions to improve the quality of the Indian coursebooks.