Abstract

of the thesis submitted to the

University of Pune

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Education)

A CRITICAL STUDY OF CRESCENT ENGLISH COURSE
FOR SECONDARY STAGE IN YEMEN

By
Mohammed Mohammed Nasser Hasser

Under the guidance of

Dr. Madhuri Ludbe

Place of Research
Department of Education & Extension
Pune 411004
August, 2009
NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

1. English is an international language an instrument to communicate with the rest of the world.
2. Every day, there are more people in need of learning English.
3. The authors of Crescent English Course (Terry O’Neill and Peter Snow) are British and the book has been published by Oxford University Press.
4. This course created mixed reaction among the teachers, some of them finding it difficult and some others finding it suitable to them and their learners.
5. Teachers find it hard to implement Crescent English Course in real situation in schools. The reason behind that is basically the teachers’ lack of proficiency crowded classes, weakness of the learners and absence of supervision and administration.
6. As teacher’s book as one of the components of Crescent English Course isn’t available, that makes textbooks only theoretical rather practical.
7. This study will help authorities in Inspectorate Section in Ministry of Education as well as Curriculum Development Project improve and develop teaching methods, textbooks and educational philosophy in Yemen.
8. It would help teachers to overcome language in CECM, not culture within this language. Instead of giving new ideas about new course, there should be attempt to infuse Yemeni culture and Islamic values with the help of English.
9. It will provide guidelines to the teachers and syllabus designers in Ministry of Education.
10. It will help learners to overcome their problems in English textbooks.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A CRITICAL STUDY OF CRESCENT ENGLISH COURSE FOR SECONDARY STAGE IN YEMEN
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

1) **A critical study:** It has to do with judging writings or works of art for unfavorable judgment about anything. In this study, it implies knowing the positive and negative points in Crescent English Course for Yemen. This study also comes to reflect on the nature of the academic study of Yemeni education. According to the findings of the study, the researcher criticized with the supporting by the previous studies, some books and articles.

2) **Crescent English Course:** The Crescent English Course for secondary stage X, XI, XII prescribed by Ministry of Education in Yemen, which was prepared by two British authors and published by Oxford University Press for Arab World.

3) **Secondary Stage:** It is the X, XI, XII levels. After that, students can join university. The age group of the students at this stage is (16-18) years.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study attempted to achieve the following aims:

1. To investigate the facts of secondary school English teachers and students about CECM.
2. To assess the social setting in terms of its culture and beliefs towards a foreign language with a foreign culture accompanying the target language.
3. To criticize the X, XI, and XII Crescent English textbooks in secondary stage with reference to the above objectives.
4. To analyze the content of the Crescent English Course of secondary stage in terms of the stated curriculum.

METHOD OF RESEARCH:

PROCEDURES:

- The method of research was survey.
- The population was teachers & inspectors and students of secondary school in Yemen in the academic year 2006/2007.
- Survey was conducted in 393 schools in Sana’a, Aden and Al Mahweet. It was conducted for the teachers who are teaching English to secondary stage.
and students who are studying Crescent English Course in secondary stage in Yemen.

- 16 schools were randomly selected for the study.
- The Total sample for the study was 75 teachers and inspectors and 383 students.
- This treatment was given for the academic year 2006/2007.

Sample:
The sample of this study is selected randomly from three governorates (Sana'a-Aden, and Al-Mahweet). And the researcher drew a random sample of 175 students out of 86825 in Sana’a and 125 students out of 21618 students in Aden and 120 students out of 14793 in Al-Mahweet total 420 students out of 123236 students. Unfortunately, the researcher had to delete 37 questionnaires from the total number of questionnaires and their respondents because they were incomplete. (www.sampleclculationsurvey system 9.5 Evaluation Edition; accessed at 8:00 pm-15/12/2007). The sample size depend on the confidence intervals 5% out of 95%.

Then, the researcher was selected a random sample of 200 teachers and inspectors out of 1401. The researcher sufferings so much to collecting the questionnaires from inspectors as well as teachers, so only 128 questionnaires retuned with unserious answer and not complete. The researcher depended only 75 questionnaires which were serious and full answers.

The sample from English teachers &inspectors and students in secondary schools are in the selected governorates as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Teachers and Inspectors</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sana’a</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mahweet</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample of the Study

xvi
Tools for data collection:
The researcher for the purpose of the study prepared two sets of questionnaires. They were validated by experts in the Ministry of Education (the Center for Research and Educational Development and the Department of Inspectors and Curriculum Designers) and Sana’a University in the college of Education (Sana’a and Al Mahweet).

1- A questionnaire for Teachers and Inspectors:
It was used as tool for obtaining the responses of inspectors and teachers of English regarding their reactions about Crescent English Course for secondary stage. The questionnaire was administered to 75 inspectors and teachers out of 1401. Thus, 75 inspectors and teachers who completely filled the questionnaire were considered as the sample of inspectors and teachers of English language for the study.

2- A questionnaire for Students:
It was used as a tool for obtaining the responses of 1st – 2nd -3rd secondary school students in general education regarding their reactions about Crescent English Course for secondary stage. The questionnaire was administered to 383 students out of 123236. Thus, a total of 383 students who completely filled the questionnaire were considered as the sample of students in the secondary stage for the study.

3- Content Analysis of the CEC materials:
The content analysis is considered as secondary data in each level in secondary stage. Out of the two questionnaires prepared for inspectors and teachers consisted of 6 sections in both (Appendix 1and 2) and the total items in the teachers’ and inspectors’ questionnaire are fifty one. The second questionnaire format for students consisted of 6 sections (Appendix 2) and the total number of items in the students’ questionnaire are thirty-one. The questionnaire is designed in a structured way (closed-ended) questions with only three options multiple choice (Yes- No- not sure). The
responses are marked by a tick mark on the proper option. The two questionnaires included profiles of students and teachers. The researcher translated the entire questionnaire into the students’ mother tongue (Arabic) (Appendix3). Because the students could not understand the questions as they were written in the target language (English).

**Statistical Tools:**

In this study researcher adopted the following techniques:-

1. **Frequencies:** to know the number of respondents on each item of two questionnaires.

2. **Percentage (%):** to know the total number of respondents.

**MAJOR FINDING:**

The findings are discussed on the basis of the testing of the objectives of the study to arrive at a decision to criticize them. Moreover, these findings related to different sections of the teachers & inspectors and students questionnaires and content analysis. The major findings of the present study are as follows:

1) The objectives of CECM aren’t taking into consideration the social requirements, can’t meet the learner’s communicative needs of English Language, aren’t accomplished by its content; there aren’t instructional objectives in CECM for each unit and aren’t clear.

2) The content of CECM doesn’t concentrate on the language skills; isn’t confirming the culture, religion, social conventions in Yemen, isn’t start from simple to difficult, isn’t tested before being circulated, isn’t suitable and enough to number of periods, doesn’t motivate students to study higher education and doesn’t take into account student’s needs.

3) The CECM activities aren’t related to the environment of Yemeni learners’; there aren’t outdoor (field) activities, don’t help in achieving the goals and teachers don’t follow the proper steps for teaching while conducting activities.
4) The CECM doesn’t emphasize on teaching of pronunciation and offer suitable aids for this task, doesn’t emphasize on speaking and listening skills which is the need of learners and Cassettes aren’t available in secondary schools

5) English lab, libraries, halls, athletic, field, garden and teacher’s guide books aren’t available in secondary schools to do the educational activities.

6) The schools environment isn’t conducive to teaching English; there isn’t any contact between students’ families and school administration and school buildings don’t correspond with educational conditions (fresh air-light-restaurant-quits).

7) Teachers are unable to use technology of education in their jobs, don’t use modern techniques in the methods of teaching and the educational materials aren’t evaluated by experts continually.

8) The illustration of CECM don’t belong to the learner’s environment; isn’t enough for students to join universities and students aren’t a ware the important of illustration.

9) English textbooks in secondary don’t contain questions at the end of each unit.

10) There isn’t any redundancy and repetition in the CECM.

11) The matter of the textbook doesn’t encourage students for self-learning. Size and shape of textbooks aren’t suitable and attractive.

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

The implications of this study should be keeping in mind for:

1. The syllabus Designers and the Materials Writers:
   - This study has established conducive atmosphere for learning English Language.
   - It also provides the Ministry of Education guidelines to reappraisal The English Course Material.
   - This Critical study proved helpful in developing and evaluates the material.
2. The Language Teachers and Inspectors:
   - It gives guidance to the Teachers in the development of teaching English
     programme and its implementation.
   - It has provided educational guidebook (manual) to guide the teachers to
     adopt modern teaching methods.

3. The Language Learners:
   - This study helps the learners to facilitate undertaking for communicate
     in English Language as the target of CECM.
   - It also helps the students to discover and develop the ability to use
     English effectively for the purpose of practical communication.
   - It helps the learners to recover and solve the weaknesses points.

Therefore, based on the assumptions and findings of the study that emerged from
the data analysis, the following implications were reached. There are indicated in
Chapter Five.

CONCLUSIONS:
1. Textbook doesn’t fulfill the learners’ needs which stated in the objective and
didn’t reflect the needs of society because the material can’t able learners to
produce new language freely outside the classroom or otherwise. The
educational system isn’t ensuring the preparation of generations for their
responsibility towards the society.

2. The students who finished secondary levels can’t speak or communicate with
other who aren’t speaking Arabic or even with each other in target language.
They feel shy when they speak English because the English language doesn’t
find encouragement from parents and society.

3. The objectives and the content of CEC completely deficient in Yemeni culture
that could handle with foreign culture, religion, social conventions in Yemen. It
rarely talks about the learners’ culture, religion and doesn’t cultivate critical
thinking.

4. The content of CECM is a mixture of language items and language functions
with some explicit focus on grammar. The content doesn’t focus on
communication as it is one of the most important points to use English outside of the classroom.

5. Students aren’t studying the language that is going to help them in their life or communicative situations. In short the topics presented in the course couldn’t relate to the communicative needs.

6. The CECY adopted the material in general and try to get suitability. It presents variety of activities and exercises in order to improve Yemeni learner’s communicative competence. But this aim isn’t achieve. Because of the content is based on different cultural and the lack of qualified teachers, in-service teacher training program as well as the lack of equipment and aids. All these don’t meet Yemeni learners’ level of comprehension.

7. There is a big gap between the foreign environment and Yemeni environment which make problem in the process of teaching/learning English in Yemen. So the presence of the local environment is not noticeable.

The CECM are, nevertheless, good enough for any group of learners in English saturated learning environment, but seem to be anything but appropriate for the environment existing in Yemen where English has still to cover a lot of ground.

8. There are not enough communicative to encourage the learners to participate in language games involving productive and receptive language skills.

9. The material is required an ideal class and ideal period of time. This contrast in a large number of students and a short class period. So, teaching of pronunciation is a little bit ignored in the CECM and the classrooms situation is not suitable to carry out listening activities.

10. The new vocabulary items lack gradation; are presented at inappropriate pace and distribution; and not repeated in subsequent lessons.

11. The grammar rules aren’t logically presented or at an increasing order of difficulty.

12. There are some themes that have drawback to accomplish the criteria of designing. For example; in PB5 unit 3 and unit 4 are about “The United Kingdom” and “English Speaking Countries” meanwhile, the Unit 5 is about
“Yemen future development”. So, the Unit 5 should be stated before unit three and four. However, student’s culture has to be introduced first and the other culture can follow for the simplicity purpose.

13. The idea of the textbook lack logic and organization.

14. The themes of the units and topics of CECY are designed clearly, and selected carefully. But the organization and grading are not much satisfactory. Consequently, the content average is high as a content/textbook as EFL/ESL situation. Yemeni pupils are find difficulties to be familiar with the secondary series of CECY. And the organization and arrangement of the course units don’t follow any special criteria. Units look as if they were collected to form a book shape rather than well organized syllabus designed to achieve specific goals.

15. Its cover is neither informative nor attractive and no bibliography at the end. The two phrases “Republic of Yemen” and “Ministry of Education” are added to the cover with the flag, which indicates the course for Yemeni learners. And the cover page is durable. The binding is such that the book opens flat. Size of the book is bigger than other students’ books. It should be appropriate in view of the age-group of the students.

16. Students have common mistakes in speech, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and writing and teachers don’t care to correct these mistakes.

17. The content of CECM isn’t sufficient and satisfactory in order to pursue university education. The learners can’t join the college in which English is used as medium instruction such as medicine, engineering and agricultural colleges.

18. The teachers’ books presented the methodology which is used in CEC to communicate in real situation but the shortcoming of efficient teachers is making them using old method such as Grammar Translation Method and using Arabic language during teaching English isn’t accepted. Beside, the inductive way of teaching the grammar presented by communicative approach in CECY. It helps students acquire the grammatical items in better way. The inductive teaching approach requires standard class of
25-30 students. But the problem is that per-class not less than 70-100 students, sometimes more than it. This is the situation in Yemeni schools. Therefore, immediately, teacher change the inductive way into deductive teaching approach.

19. There are no practice tests at the textbook. This clearly points out as the textbooks itself in secondary levels.

**Recommendations of the study:**

The major recommendations are as follows:

- This study recommended that designers should make those objectives more related to Yemeni context. Moreover, it is recommended that the best methods and techniques of EFL teaching should be adopted. Furthermore, the aims of educations and the objectives of the course should be added at the beginning of teacher’s book so that teachers of English will know the aims and supposed to achieve them.

- The evaluation procedures at school should include different types of evaluation techniques and at the different phases of implementation.

- The content of CECM should decrease the quantity of the content to be fitted in weekly five periods or increase the periods to suit the content of the course.

- An intensive the Yemeni culture and social conventions have to dominate the other foreign cultures throughout CECM as well as the content should include themes from the learners’ religion teaching its values and ideals to help learners defend it when they need it. The content of CECM in secondary and preparatory stages should be based on an assessment of the learners’ entire needs.

- It is recommended reordering some units’ lessons to follow the logical order of EFL skills and follow reading passage with comprehension questions. The grammar items should be taught inductively.

- Routine activities and exercises should avoid cultivating learner’s critical thinking abilities. And the activities and exercises should be conducive from Yemen environment.
The cost of printing books is very high therefore in developing country like Yemen leads to a lot of pupils sharing books with their classmate. So, it is recommended that the cost of book should be reduced. And the size and shape of textbooks should be changed. It looks like science or geographic book.

All the necessary equipments and facilitates should be provided such as libraries, cassette recorders, athletic field and language lab.

In terms of technical aspects and illustration in the CECM, to arrange for in-service training for teachers to update them and connected to experts. Moreover, these technical and illustrations should belong to Yemeni environment.

Provide teachers’ book to teachers. So that, teachers will be able to deal with those materials properly. Refresher courses, sessions working and conferences should be conducted from time to time for teachers and inspectors to update new technical and methodology.

This study recommended introducing English course series from fourth standard of primary schools. This strategy will help learners to acquire the language easily and spent enough time dealing with it.

The course should contain glossary for each series to introduce new vocabulary and include enough modalities and real situations in order to enable students to practice their listening and speaking skills.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE FURTHER STUDIES:
The findings from data analysis and content analysis of the present study have outlined the need for further studies. These further studies will help evaluators, designers, teachers as well as learners to improve the status of the English language teaching in Yemen. The following topics for further studies could be made:

1. This study was criticized and evaluated for CEC in secondary school level in Yemen; it might be benefited to carry out the similar studies on preparatory series.
2. There is gap between the CECM and the current existence of CECM in Yemeni situation (educational environment), further studies can be done to investigate this gap and try to modify the content of CEC to Yemeni situation.

3. English language teaching in Yemen aim that Yemeni learners should communicate and use English in real life. Thus, further studies could be designing a course adopted communicative situations, Yemeni learners culture and real situation.

4. Conducting of further evaluative studies to reform intensive and extensive the English textbook prescribed for different educational levels.

There are the areas where researchers need to work. The findings of this research can be looked at as a pilot study carried out in one educational environment i.e Yemen. What can be useful for Yemeni learners may not necessarily be useful for others. A good diagnosis leads to a successful treatment which helps design a relevant syllabus and adopt effective teaching strategies in any English language learning/teaching process.