CHAPTER : SIX
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THE INDIAN COURSEBOOKS

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CHAPTER SIX

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THE INDIAN COURSEBOOKS

One of the aims of the present study was to identify the recent trends in EFL materials, and to find out whether these are reflected in the Indian coursebooks. The investigator undertook a systematic study of the recent thinking in linguistics and course design. In addition, he also reviewed the new-type EFL courses published in recent years. This enabled him to underline the features which distinguish these courses from the traditional ones. Then the investigator proceeded to examine the Indian coursebooks in the light of the recent trends. The outcome of this study is presented in the following sections.

6.1 Recent Thinking

It is already noted (see 2.2.4) how in the early 70s, sociolinguistics developed and emphasised language use rather than usage. Widdowson (1978) worked out the implications of this view of the nature of language for the teaching of English. He rightly argued that 'the teaching of usage does
not appear to guarantee a knowledge of use. The teaching of use, however, does seem to guarantee the learning of usage since the latter is represented as a necessary part of the former. The focus on language use has great relevance for course designs and materials. According to Widdowson,

it would seem sensible to design language teaching courses with reference to use. This does not mean that exercises in particular aspects of usage cannot be introduced where necessary; but these would be auxiliary to the communicative purposes of the course as a whole and not introduced as an end in themselves.

One of the manifestations of the communicative approach was the concept of notional-functional syllabus advocated by Wilkins (1976). He argued that the notional syllabus takes the communicative facts of language into account and therefore, "it is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence and because its evident concern with the use of language will sustain the motivation of the learners."

These developments have greatly influenced EFL courses in recent years. Swan (1985) has clearly brought out the difference between the traditional and the new-type courses in the following words:

(a) Older language courses taught forms, but did not teach what the forms meant or how to use them.
(b) Older language courses taught one kind of meaning (that found in the grammar and dictionary), but did not teach another kind (the communicative value that utterances actually have in real-life exchanges).

(c) Older courses failed to teach students how to express or do certain things with language. We must incorporate these things (notions, functions, strategies) into our syllabuses.4

It can be seen that the recent views on EFL materials show clear departure from the traditional thinking. These views are reflected in the rationale and the materials of the new-type courses which are described in the following section.

6.2 New-type Courses

It was necessary to review the recently published EFL courses to identify the new trends in materials production. For this purpose, the investigator selected four coursebooks which are illustrative of the recent trends. These courses were carefully reviewed in terms of the rationale, the type of materials included, the situations and themes, and their overall framework. A gist of the review is presented here.
6.2.1 ENGLISH FOR LIFE

English For Life, designed by V.J. Cook (1981) is a series of four books. Book 1 entitled People and Places is a course for the beginners. It has two goals: 1. to meet the learner's need to use English in the world outside the classroom, and 2. to enable the learner to communicate with the other learners within the classroom itself. The book contains functions and interactions such as greeting, accepting, advising, agreeing, describing, etc. It also contains grammatical structures such as articles, to be, simple past, present continuous, introductory there, etc.

The situations are set against the background of a fictitious town called Sanford. The topics aim at teaching the learner 'how to say things about his/her life, how to talk about things and people, and how to use language while travelling."

The materials include pieces to conversations, maps, telephone directory, tickets, time-tables, diaries, passport, notices, a credit card, hotel-guide, visitors' book, a menu, weather-chart, etc.

The exercises require the student's contributions in the form of conversational exchanges, opinions, information exchanges, class profiles, and dialogue strips.
The author has pointed out that 'the language presented in the book demonstrate the functional use of English which is practised in realistic interaction sequences, and the grammar needed to express these functions follows a cyclical progression.' V.J. Cook has clearly mentioned the following principles underlying the development of ENGLISH FOR LIFE,

(i) Use of authentic English.
(ii) Use of realistic classroom techniques simulating the world outside, and
(iii) Active role of the learners and their contributions in the learning process.

6.2.2 CHECKPOINT ENGLISH 1

CHECKPOINT by Norman Whitney was published in 1983. The main features of the coursebook are as follows:

(i) It is based on a balanced syllabus covering structures, functions, study skills, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

(ii) It provides self-study material.
## UNIT 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structures</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>How to study</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be: Present</td>
<td>Giving your name</td>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Earth The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affirmative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalities</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alert alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>Giving personal</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
<td>Countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Official Completing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here, there,</td>
<td>information</td>
<td>Official documents</td>
<td>Hand writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>documents words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this, that,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Materials in each unit consist of (a) language point illustrated through a conversation (b) practice point containing tasks for language use (c) checkpoint for self-assessment (d) study point for grammar, functions and pronunciation (e) study skills (f) reading material, and (g) skills point involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The materials include an application form, picture-stories, invitation card, posters, symbols, advertisements, cross-word, menu, road signs, and weather charts.

The tasks are use-focused, and they require the learners to work in pairs and groups. The book contains attractive pictures in colour, and the printing shows great variety.

6.2.3 THE CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH COURSE 1

The Cambridge English Course by Michael Swan and Catherine Walter was first published in 1984. Book 1 is for complete beginners, and it aims at 'taking the learners to a point at which they can use English fluently for simple, practical purposes.' The coursebook is based on multi-syllabus approach. Each unit includes some language functions, notions, grammar points, and aspects of pronunciation.
For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Students will learn to</th>
<th>Students will learn to talk about</th>
<th>Students will learn these grammar points</th>
<th>Students will study these aspects of pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ask and give names, say hello, ask and tell where people are from.</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>Present of to be, Possessive adjectives</td>
<td>Word-stress, weak forms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit 1 contains the following:

A. 1. Listening to a conversation and writing sentences in speech balloons.
   2. Hello, my name's .......
   3. What's your name?
   4. Is your name....... ?
   5. Listen and repeat: weak forms.
   6. Learn the numbers 1 to 10.

B. 1. Match the first name with the surname.
   2. Match the photo (of a famous person) with the name.
   3. Write sentences
   4. Ask others: What's his surname?
   5. Listen to the letters and practise saying them.
   6. Spell your name.
C. 1. Listen and practise: Hello, Dan
   Hi, Mary

2. Listen to the conversation and complete the sentences.
3. Listen to the conversation and answer.
4. Learn numbers 77 to 20.

D. 1. Photos of famous people with the names and maps of their countries:
   Where's he/she from?

2. Where are you from?
   I'm from ________.

3. Use dictionary
   Carla's from Italy She's Italian.

4. Pronunciation: ENGLAND. CHINESE

5. Grammar points in summary
   I am   I'm
   You are You're, etc.

The materials are in the form of conversations, job application, photos of famous people, family tree, maps, phone numbers, addresses, postcard, calendar, bio-data, quiz, reports, and weather charts.

Tasks and activities require the learners to work in pairs and groups, and use English for the purpose. The book
contains interesting and purposeful pictures, and the general appearance is attractive. It is pointed out in the Introduction that this course was 'extensively piloted before publication, and the materials were tried out successfully in a variety of situations.'

6.2.4 PROJECT ENGLISH 1

Project English, designed by Tom Hutchinson was first published in 1965. It is a course for the beginners, and is based on 'a new approach to language learning.' According to the author, this course has the following key features:

(i) Grammar is treated as a problem-solving activity, and the pupils are treated as thinkers.

(ii) Through project work, pupils are given the opportunity to talk and write about their own life, and to relate language to their experience.

(iii) A strong element of fun, competitions, games, jokes and quizzes.

Teaching points are organized in terms of topics, structures and vocabulary, functions, and project work.

Project 1 includes the following:
### Project 1: Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Areas</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Structures &amp; Vocabulary</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Student Project Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb: to be</td>
<td>1. Talking</td>
<td>He's, She's</td>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>Make a collage of famous people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>Mr. Mrs.</td>
<td>Mr. Mrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Numbers 0 - 9</td>
<td>Numbers 0 - 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 0 - 20</td>
<td>2. The Telephone</td>
<td>What's this? It's, Is it? a/an, my</td>
<td>Identifying things, asking what something is called.</td>
<td>Make and label a collage of different types of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Television</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are. They are. Are they? aren't.</td>
<td>Postcard messages</td>
<td>Write a postcard from your own holiday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Radio</td>
<td>Numbers 10 - 20</td>
<td>Numbers 10 - 20 his/her, your you are, Are you?</td>
<td>Asking for and giving personal information</td>
<td>Make your own radio show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Letters and</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are. They are. Are they? aren't.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcards</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not Adjectives</td>
<td>Denying something</td>
<td>Make a classroom survey on favourite TV programme, comic, radio programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mickey,</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not Adjectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millie and Mut</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not Adjectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(cartoon strip)</td>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not Adjectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The materials are in the form of speech bubbles.
learning. Through the coursebook the students should be able to learn:

(i) key functions such as greeting, agreeing, requesting, warning.

(ii) basic notions such as size, definiteness, duration.

(iii) appropriate use of language in specific situations such as in shops, on the telephone, at meetings.

(iv) the language expressions to discuss the topics which correspond to their main interests and needs such as cricket, TV programmes, festivals.

(v) phonological aspects such as pronunciation, word stress, tones.

(vi) basic structural words and patterns, and

(vii) vocabulary which they need to use.

3. The coursebook should expose the students to the samples of appropriate and natural language.

4. It is desirable to use both scripted and authentic material at different points in the coursebook. As Swan (1985) has pointed out, 'scripted material is useful for presenting specific language items economically and effectively. Authentic material, on the other hand, gives students a taste of 'real' language in use.

5. Exercises, tasks and activities should be relevant, motivating and engaging.
6. The coursebook should use materials with the elements of guessing, ambiguity, information-gap and problem solving.

7. The materials in the coursebook should be enjoyable with the elements of fun and fantasy.

8. Situations and themes should be related to the learner's life and interests.

9. A beginners' course should be lively with attractive pictures, print, and layout.

10. The coursebook should contain activities for pair/group work providing opportunities of interaction among the learners.

Having identified the main features of the present-day EFL materials, the investigator proceeded to find out how far these are reflected in the Indian coursebooks.

6.4 Recent Developments and the Indian Coursebooks

The investigator carefully surveyed the Indian coursebooks in terms of their rationales, framework, language samples, practice materials, situations, and format. The main purpose was to find out whether the books under study reflect the recent thinking and practices in EFL materials. This study led to the
following observations:

1. The focus of the Indian coursebooks is on the structures and vocabulary. They do not show explicit or implicit concern with meaning and language use. Coursebook No. 6 (West Bengal) is the only exception as it aims to develop the ability to use English.

2. Except for Coursebook No. 6, none of the books is based on a multi-syllabus approach. The Indian coursebooks have rigid structural framework, and they seem to show overconcern for language control.

3. The Indian coursebooks fail to present samples of natural, realistic English.

4. Except for coursebook No. 6, no book includes authentic or unscripted materials.

5. Most of these books do not contain tasks and activities which are meaningful, relevant, realistic, and enjoyable.

6. Most of these books do not contain interactive activities to promote language use.

7. The exercises in most of the books do not have elements of guessing, ambiguity, information-gap, and problem-solving.

8. Most of the books do not use situations which are related to life outside the classroom.
9. The books do not include any materials either for study-skills or self-assessment.

10. Except for Coursebooks 6 and 12, all the books contain exercises to be worked out by the learners individually. They do not seem to recognize the importance of pair and group work, nor the need for interaction among the learners.

11. The Indian coursebooks do not reflect the recent trend of making learning enjoyable. The elements of fun, interest, and variety are sadly missing in them.

Having completed the survey and the evaluation of the Indian coursebooks, the investigator proceeded to draw the conclusions regarding their strengths and weaknesses. This also enabled him to offer a set of suggestions, and to make recommendations for further research in the area. All this is presented in the next chapter.

References

1. H. Widdeson, Teaching Language as Communication

2. Ibid, p. 20.

3. D.A. Wilkins, Linguistics in Language Teaching


