Textbook Evaluation: A Case Study of Cutting Edge

Mohd Nazim

Dept. of English, Najran University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This paper, in deviation from the traditional practices of textbook evaluation, reports the faculty members' evaluation of Cutting Edge, Student Book, KSA Third Edition Intermediate Level, by Sarah Cunningham & Peter Moor, published by Pearson 2013 in terms of Language Development Skills, in general, and, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar & Vocabulary, and Style & Appropriacy in particular. 20 EFL teachers participated in this mixed method approach of study who work at the Department of English Skills, Preparatory Year, Najran University, Saudi Arabia. A google form questionnaire, consisted of 57 numerically rated items & open-ended questions under 7 domains, was created to elicit faculty members' responses. The validity of the questionnaire was examined by a group of experts in the textbook evaluation and content analysis. The analysis indicates that the respondents evaluated the textbook contents positively and the majority viewed them mostly suitable in terms of language skills, usage, and appropriacy. However, the researcher, based on the adverse comments like video material for listening, lack of specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities, and hardly distinction between active and passive vocabulary under listening, speaking and grammar & vocabulary domains, suggests that a latest EFL commercial textbook or series be reviewed which, potentially, will cover the space. To conclude, the researcher recommends developing authentic materials that are tailored to the needs and interests of the learners.

Index Terms—cutting edge, EFL teachers, textbook evaluation etc

I. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks guide teachers and students alike and have been a great resource in teaching and learning contexts. However, if not carefully analyzed, a textbook can have an adverse influence on teaching and learning environment. Crawford (2002) stated that when choosing classroom resources, practitioners should consider the concepts that underlying them to ensure that they contribute positively to the learning environment. When a textbook is first introduced, it should be thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that the content is appropriate for the classroom (Fredriksson and Olsson 2006). Textbook evaluation is not an easy task and therefore, evaluators must make several decisions while doing textbook evaluation (Abbasian & Khajavi, 2011). Textbook selection can be approached in a variety of ways, although it is frequently done based on the educators' personal preferences and may be influenced by factors unrelated to education (Garinger, 2002). In EFL/ESL contexts, textbook evaluation is essential to evaluate the content of the textbook and to associate it with the teaching/learning conditions (Ahour, Towhidiyan, and Saeidi, 2014). Nunan (1991) points out that, "The way materials are organized and presented, as well as the types of content and activities, will help to shape the learner's view of language." Sheldon (1988) argues that the book should have an optimum density and mix of text and graphical material on each page. Good textbooks should be supplied with various activities and tasks that engage learners in the use of skills and processes related to specific language teaching objectives. Also, they should include variety of exercises that give students opportunities to practice and extend their language skills. Tomlinson (1998) relates tasks with learners' self-confidence. Richards (2001) elaborates that the tasks in the textbooks should be flexible and appeal to different styles and strategies and should not favor one type of learner over another. McDonough and Shaw (2003) argue that materials should enable the learners to see how the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) can be used effectively in appropriate contexts. This study evaluates Cutting Edge, Student Book, KSA Third Edition Intermediate Level, written by Sarah Cunningham & Peter Moor, published by Pearson 2013. In doing so, the researcher employed a questionnaire inspired by various checklists (Daoud, A.M., and Celce-Murcia, M. 1979; Byrd, 2001; Byrd & Schuemann, 2014; Cunningworth, 1995; Littlejohn, 1998; Mann & Copland, 2015; Mukundan & Ahour, 2010), which is based on a set of general attributes that not only meet this research criteria, but also have enough flexibility to be used universally with some further modifications.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies on textbook evaluation have been conducted around the world. In 2013, Sarem, Hamidi, and Mahmoudie evaluated a book of English for International Tourism adapting Daoud and Celce-Murcia checklist, conclude that the current book can be used as an acceptable textbook to teach to students who are interested in studying tourism. Birjandi and Alizadeh (2012) investigated the extent to which the Top Notch, Interchange, and English File

series include critical thinking skills. Using a checklist based on Bloom's taxonomy, they opined that the books primarily tapped knowledge, comprehension, application, and the ability to form a community of thinkers.

Yasemin (2009) evaluates three English textbooks. Teachers and students took part in a 37-item textbook evaluation scheme to convey their thoughts on various aspects of the textbooks. In addition, interviews were done to understand more about how the textbooks were used. The data suggested that the three textbooks used by young learners were adequate to a certain level. The study advises that textbooks for young English learners be revised and/or designed. Riasati and Zare (2010) assessed the Interchange textbooks' overall instructional value and appropriateness from the perspective of Iranian EFL teachers. The findings revealed that most teachers agreed that the textbooks were useful and acceptable. Despite these benefits, several shortcomings were identified in this series, including a lack of supporting teaching resources, too many testing activities, and an insufficient number of teacher's handbooks among many. Rashidi and Kehtarfard (2014) use a needs analysis framework to report on the outcomes of a study that employed a needs analysis framework to evaluate an English textbook (the third-grade high school English book) that is used in all Iranian state high schools. The textbook evaluation found that, while all language skills and components were virtually equally significant to the majority of students, the textbook could not adequately support all of them at the same time. Hussin, Nimehchisalem, Kalajahi, and Yunus (2016) assessed how new vocabulary items are presented in three English language textbooks used in Malaysian secondary schools. The presentation of vocabulary items in the textbook was evaluated using a checklist by a group of carefully selected instructors (n = 5). The research revealed that the vocabulary presentation in the textbook lacks many aspects. The new vocabulary was taught using no specific approach. At the end of the textbook, there was no index to the new terminology. The results though indicated implications for all stakeholders including learners, teachers as well as textbook developers.

III. METHODOLOGY

Participants

For this study, 20 teachers who were teaching *Cutting Edge* participated in this study. The teachers had taught (at the intermediate level) this textbook for 2 years.

Instrument

For data collection from the participants, a google form questionnaire was used. The questionnaire had 57 numerically rated items & open-ended questions under 7 domains.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher held a meeting and explained the nature and purpose of the study. After the meeting the google form questionnaire was emailed to the participants to respond electronically. The responses were downloaded, analyzed, and discussed.

IV. ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

To report the outcome of the textbook evaluation, this paper analyzed the responses and comments. Following are the discussions and analysis at length. This is also to note that the researcher, in open ended questions, had selected only distinct comments/responses, both positive and adverse. Similar and repetitive comments/contexts had been deleted.

Language Development Skills (scale Q1)

i) Are all four skills adequately covered, keeping the course objectives and syllabus requirements in mind?
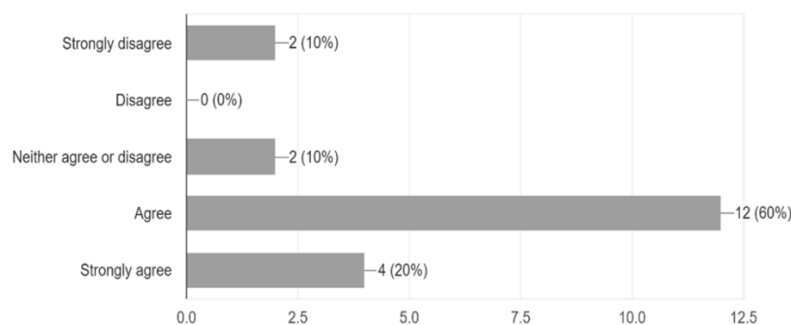

Figure1

Figure 1 indicates that most of the participants (80%) responded positively. Only 2 respondents (10%) chose the adverse response followed by the same number (10%) who decided to remain neutral.

Language Development Skills (Open ended Qs 2-4)

TABLE1

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
ii) Is practice in all four skills included? If so, is it balanced? If not, which skills are omitted, and why?	• practice in all four skills is included and balanced. in every skill, examples and different activities are given. • yes, writing, listening tasks, speaking and pronunciation and reading skills are included.	• it is included but the materials are vague and obscure.
Analysis: The above responses revealed that the majority (80%) responded in support of the motion. Only (20%) reacted adversely.		
iii) Does the material progress in terms of complexity and difficulty, in line with the grammatical and lexical progression of the course? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "unit 4 page 40 - vocab and language focus • ex 1 grammar, chapter 4 page 40 • ch#2 page 19 ch#3 page 30" • yes. eg ch-2 is more upgraded in terms of complexity and difficulty than ch 1 and the pattern continues.	• no, the objectives are not clear.
Analysis: The above responses revealed that the majority (70%) support the material progression. 6 participants (30%) responded adversely too.		
iv) Do the presentation and practice activities include the integration of skills in realistic contexts? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "unit 4 p.36 3- page 37 2.b unit 5 p49 .2 unit 9 p 89 • "yes. e.g. Jamal's party, ch 1, pg 8." • yes, ch#4,36,37,38, and 39. grammar, reading, L/S are integrated. • yes. there are practice activities catering to all the 4 skills. eg. all practice activities of the chapters.	• the integration is not clearly understood. • not that much
Analysis: The above data showed that the majority (85%) support the material progression. Only (15%) responded adversely.		

Additional comments: Table 1 implies that most of the respondents perceived language development skills components positively. Only a few respondents chose to comment adversely.

Listening (Open ended Qs 1-7)

TABLE 2

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
i) Are listening materials well recorded, as authentic as possible, accompanied by background information, questions and activities which help comprehension? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• unit 4 p.40 language focus 2 1,2 • yes, ch#1, page,8 .ch#4 page 36. • eg, pg 47 (ch 5) ,pg 53 etc • yes. unit 2- page 18/ ex.2.1 • "yes. ex: students' book, chapter 2, pages 18, 19 and 22 students' book, chapter 3, pages 27, 30, 31 and 32	• not at all. there are different versions of same recordings as well. • no, some listening tracks do not match with the script. chapter 1 and 2. • the listening material is well recorded, but it is fast so students cannot understand.
Analysis: The above responses revealed that the majority (75%) responded in support of the audio recordings authenticity. Only (25%) commented adversely or hesitantly.		
ii) What kind of listening material is contained in the course? Does listening form part of dialogue conversation work? Are there specific listening passages? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• a true story (ch 2, pg 19) personal experience (ch 2, pg 22) conversation (ch 3, pg 30, 3.5) conversations (ch 1, pg 6, 1.1) etc." • "it's both dialogue and monologue. ch#4 page.42" • it includes conversations, students book page 16,35	• no. there aren't different types of listening exercises and most of them are not clear. • no, all the chapters.
Analysis: The above responses showed that the majority (90%) named the kind of listening materials. Only (10%) responded had adverse comments.		
iii) If there are specific listening passages, what kind of activities are based on them: comprehension questions, extracting specific information, etc.? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• comprehension questions and taking notes • "comprehension questions, true and false, • comprehension questions as well as specific information, eg , pg -6 , 7,13 (ch 1), pg-18,19,23 (ch 2), pg -37,41 (ch 4) etc. • extracting specific information/ unit 3 / page 27 ex. 3.2"	• some of them are based on reading exercises but most of them are taken from here and there.
Analysis: The above responses showed that the majority (95%) specified the listening passages areas. The only (5%) comment even does show no specifications.		
iv) Is the listening material set in a meaningful context? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• chapter 4, page 37 • yes, ch#1 page 8 ch#5 page 47 • eg. pg. 47, 53, 37, 41 etc. • yes, chapter three page 31. • yes, chapter 1, page number 7, chapter 2, page number 19 and 22. chapter 3, page number 31 and 32.	• it is not separated from the content of the unit. • yes, the listening exercises fit the grammar and speaking parts, but it is not separated from the content of the unit.
Analysis: The above comments revealed that the majority (75%) viewed the listening material set in a meaningful context. However, some respondents (25%) countered the majority as well.		

v) Are there pre-listening tasks, questions, etc.? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes.ch#3 page 26,32 ch#12,13 • yes chapter 2 page 19. • yes chapter 4 , page number 42 • "yes. ex: students' book, chapter 4, page 42 ""preparation"	• no, there aren't any. but teachers provide them the background of the listening task.

Analysis: The above comments revealed that the majority (65%) confirmed to have pre-listening tasks in the textbook. However, some respondents (35%) countered the claim with a straight "no" in addition to the adverse comments.

vi) What is the recorded material on audio-tracks like in terms of sound quality, speed of delivery, accent, and authenticity? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• ex 1c, page 7, chapter 1 • ch#1 page 8 ch#2 page 18 • sound quality, chapter 1, page number 7, chapter 2, page number 19, • "overall, it is good, clear and comprehensive.	• most of them are obscure and vague for the Arab students in terms of quality and speed. • the accent is difficult, • the same dialogues and conversations are fast.

Analysis: The above observations showed that the majority (85%) responded highlighted the audio-tracks sound quality, speed of delivery, accent, and authenticity. Only few, some respondents (15%) countered the claim and highlighted the issues with audio-tracks.

vii) Is there any video material for listening? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes. world culture: flashbulb memories (ch 2, pg 24)" • yes, chapter 4 world culture page 44	• maybe, but not in use, nor we have any equipment for it. • there's not any video material for listening.

Analysis: The above remarks are very critical and revealed that only a very limited number of respondents (20%) stated to have video material for listening. However, this claim finds no space when we look at the majority of the respondents (80%) who countered their peers.

Additional comments: Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents identified listening components positively except for the last question in the domain where responses are upside down.

Speaking (scale Q1)

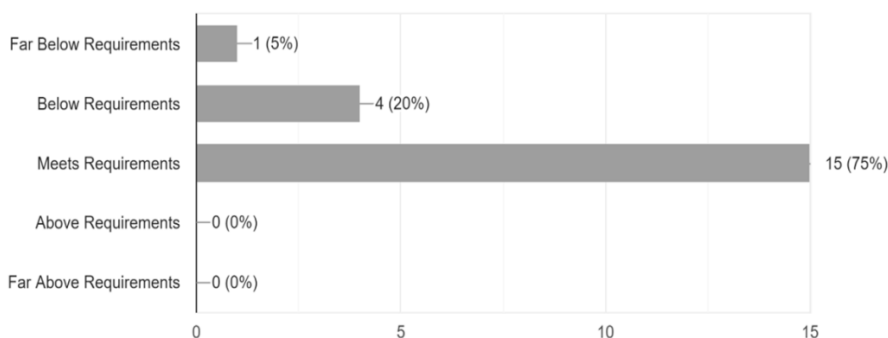i) How much emphasis is there on spoken English in the textbook?

Figure 2

Figure 2 indicates that most of the participants (75%) observed the emphasis on spoken English in the textbook and checked the "meets requirements" option. However, 5 respondents (25%) decided to go with "below/far below requirements".

Speaking (Open ended Qs 2-5)

TABLE 3

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
ii) What kind of material for speaking is contained in the course? This may include: oral presentation and practice of language items, dialogues, role-plays, communication activities (information gap) write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• mostly group work, oral, communication activities • telling stories/memories (ch 2, pg 23. 1a) • Role play, communicative activities, dialogues, chapter3, 23 • "communication activities: chapter 2, page number 17. chapter 1, page 14. Oral presentation: chapter 2, page number 22."	• "actually, speaking activities are very limited. • only a little.
Analysis: The above statements showed that the majority (90%) named the types of material for speaking. Only 2 respondents (10%) didn't specify anything with adverse comments.		
iii) Are there any specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities, eg debating, giving talks? If yes, write chapter/s and page numbers	• elicitation u5 p35 task 1a,b • "yes. argument (ch 4, pg 43, 1,2,3, 4)" • yes, ch# 5 page 53 ch#7 page 68	• almost no

or write No.	• talking about topics and conversation on specific topics of interest. eg- pg 10,17, 38 etc • giving talks/ unit 3 / p. 34/ ex. 1.a • giving talks and debate. chapter 4, page 43	

Analysis: The above responses show that only (45%) responded named specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities. While majority (55%) found no specific strategy in the textbook as claimed by their colleagues.

iv) Is any practice material included to help learners to cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse? If yes, write chapter/s and page numbers or write No.	• u7 p 68 speaking 1.2 • "yes, chapter 2 useful language" • yes chapter 4 page 38	• Yes, there are but all of them are not useful for Arab students. • have not come across so far.

Analysis: The above responses reveal that only (30%) found practice material included to help learners to cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse. While majority (70%) discovered no materials that could help learners.

v) Is material for spoken English (dialogues, role plays, etc.) well designed to equip learners for real-life interactions? If yes, write chapter/s and page numbers or write No.	• yes, chapter 3. 34 • yes, chapter -2, page-20 • yes, ch#7 page #68 ch #9 page 92 • yes . eg - pages - 38 , 17 , 10 etc • yes/ role-plays/ unit 3/ page 34/ ex. 1.a	• no role play and dialogue is given. • actually a few speaking activities are given. I can say no.

Analysis: The above comments revealed that a big number of respondents (65%) viewed dialogues, role plays, etc. as well designed and can assist learners for real-life interactions. However, some respondents (35%) countered the claim with "no" and adverse comments.

Additional comments: Table 3 shows the mixed reactions to speaking domain's questions. Questions like 3 & 4 had most adverse comments where respondents countered their colleagues.

Reading (Open ended Qs 1-6)

TABLE 4

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
i) Are reading passages and associated activities suitable for your students' levels, interests, etc.? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes.ch# 2 page 16 ch#4 page 38,39 • yes/ unit 1/ p. 10/ ex. 1a-4a • yes, chapter 4, page 39 • "yes they are associated with students level , interest. the examples are chapter 1, page number 10 . chapter 2 , page number 16 chapter 3 , page number 29 chapter 4 , page number 39"	• level is a little bit higher than the students level • no, not at all. the students do not take any interests in reading skill at all.

Analysis: The above comments revealed that the majority (85%) viewed reading passages and associated activities suitable for your students' levels and interests. However, the minority (15%) felt contrary and commented adversely.

ii) Is there sufficient reading material? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes, the secret of memory chapter 2, page 16 • yes , there are . eg - pages - 46, 13 , 17 , 38 etc. • yes chapter 5 page 46. • "yes. chapter 1 , page number 10. chapter 2 , page number 16 chapter 3 , page number 29 chapter 4 , page number 39	• no

Analysis: The above responses for this question revealed that the majority (95%) felt the materials provided in the textbook are sufficient. However, interestingly, 1 response (5%) is registered as "no".

iii) Is the reading text used for introducing new language items (grammar and vocabulary), consolidating language work, etc.? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes, , eg - pages - 17 , 13 , 10 , 38 etc • "yes the reading texts contains new terms and vocabulary in unit 2+4+5+6+7" • "yes, sure. ex: students' book, chapter 4, page 39 to introduce present perfect, past simple and present perfect continuous. students' book, chapter 1, page 10	• all the skills in one unit meet the goals of the unit not just reading.

Analysis: The above comments revealed that the majority (85%) considered reading texts used for introducing new language items consolidate language work. However, very few (15%) still felt otherwise, not completely adverse though.

iv) Is there a focus on the development of reading skills and strategies? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes, chapter 2, 16 • yes, chapter-4, page-39, • ex 1/ page 54 /unit 5 • yes ch #1 page 10 ch# 8 page 50 • yes , there is . eg - pages 10, 13 , 38 , 17 etc • "yes, page 17"	• not much • no, not at all. • somewhat

Analysis: The above comments revealed that a big number of respondents (60%) viewed the development of reading skills and strategies as positive aspect of the textbook. However, 8 respondents (40%) countered their peers with "no, not much, not at all, & somewhat.

v) Is the reading material linked to other skills work? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes to, speaking and writing and reading such as in unit 4 p39 • "yes. e.g. reading and speaking (good at/bad at) e.g. listening and reading (ch 1, pg 18, 1a,b, etc)" • "yes, they are linked to grammar unit 2+4+5+6 also related to vocabulary	• somehow • sometimes no

Analysis: The above responses revealed that majority (80%) viewed a compatibility between the reading materials and other skills. However, some respondents (20%) countered their peers with their adverse observations.

vi) How many reading texts are there, and how frequently do they occur?	• average 2 in every chapter • in each unit 3 to 4 as unit 5	--

write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "all the chapters have one or two reading texts. chapter 3 , page number 35 chapter 5 , page number 48" • "for each chapter, there is one reading text. ex: students' book, chapter 1, page 10 students' book, chapter 4, page 39	
Analysis: The above data revealed that all (100%) responded positively. Interestingly, none of them provides the number of the text (as the first half of the question asks exclusively).		

Additional comments: Table 4 indicates the positive reactions to reading domain's questions. Contrary to other questions analysis, last question recorded no adverse comments.

Reading (scale Qs 7-8)

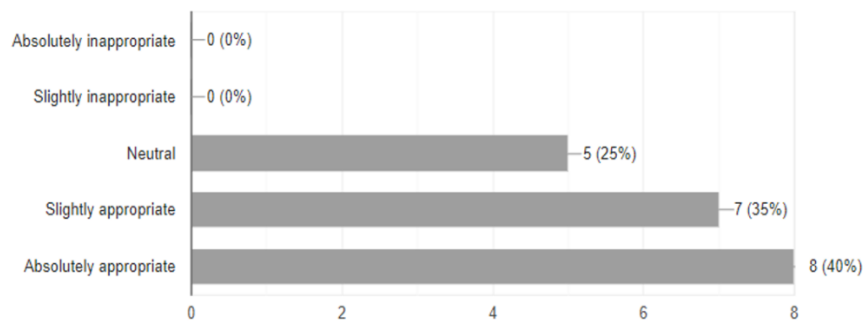vii)   How authentic/appropriate are the texts?

Figure 3

Figure 3 reveals that the majority (75%) viewed the reading texts as "absolutely/slightly appropriate". While 5 respondents (25%) decided to remain neutral and didn't go for any adverse choice.

viii)   Is the subject matter appropriate (interesting, challenging, topical, varied, culturally acceptable, etc.)?
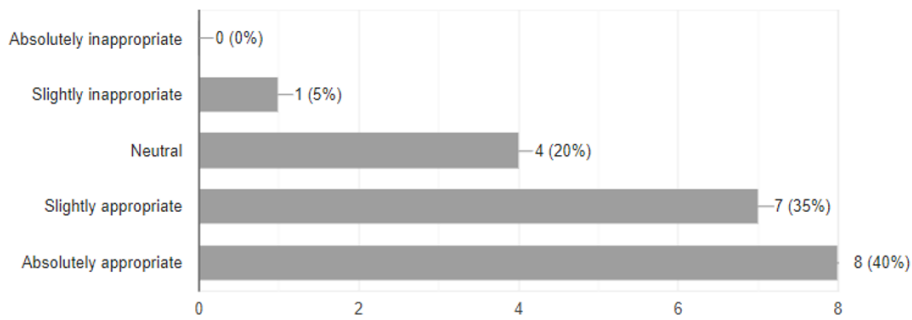

Figure 4

Figure 4 reveals that the majority (75%) perceived the subject matter as "absolutely/slightly appropriate". However, 4 respondents (20%) decided to remain neutral followed by 1 (5%) who hit "slightly inappropriate".

Reading (Open ended Qs 9-10)

TABLE 5

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
ix) Does the material help comprehension by, for example, setting the scene, providing background information, giving pre-reading questions? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• u8 p 76 • yes, chapter2, 16 • yes.ch# 9 page 86 • yes/ unit 1/ p. 10/ ex. 1.a-4.a/ • "yes, chapter 3 page 28 activity 1,2,3,4" • "giving pre reading questions and providing background chapter 4, page number 38 • "yes. ex: students' book, chapter 4, page 38 students'	• no • sometimes

		book, chapter 3, page 28	
*Analysis: The above answers revealed that majority (90%) viewed reading materials help comprehension. However, 2 respondents (10%) felt differently as evident from their observations.*		
x)	What kinds of comprehension questions are asked: literal (surface) questions, discourse-processing questions, inference questions?	• literal, interference, processing questions • literal (surface) questions, discourse-processing questions, and inference questions are asked in different chapters.	--
	Analysis: The above data revealed that all (100%) responded exclusively i.e. list various kinds of comprehension questions. However, some responses may be names as 'ambiguous' (positive though).		

Additional comments: Table 5 demonstrates the high positive responses to reading domain's questions. Interestingly, again, last question witnessed no adverse comment.

Reading (scale Q11)

xi) To what extent does the material connect learners with knowledge (knowledge of the world)?
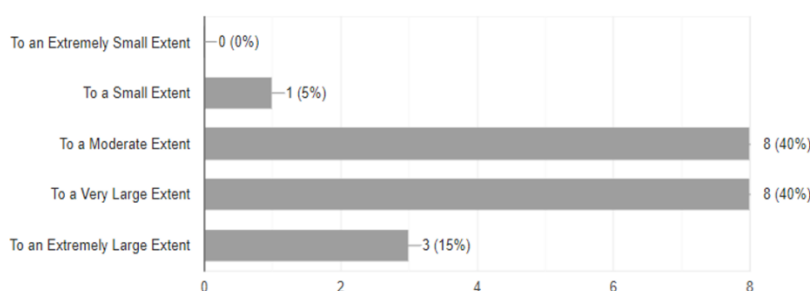

Reading

Figure 5

Figure 5 shows that the majority (95%) perceived the materials connect (to a greater extent) learners with the knowledge of the world. However, the lone respondent (5%) felt differently.

Writing (Open ended Qs 1-5)

TABLE 6

Questions		Responses	
		positive	**adverse**
i)	How does the material handle controlled writing, guided writing and free or semi-free writing? Explain.	• starts from controlled to free writing u5 • "guided writing (ch 1, pg 14, 5a, b, 6, 7a b) • "controlled writing: correcting sentences, completion of grammatical items, etc. guided writing: filling the gaps, completing a paragraph according to the given information. free writing: writing about any topic." • free and semi free writing. students are asked to write an informal email (page 14), a group task of writing a cv on page 54 etc.	• there isn't any format or guideline on how to write.
	Analysis: The (95%) respondents for the above question stated the ways the textbook handled controlled writing, guided writing and free or semi-free writing. However, very interestingly, 1 respondent (5%) felt "otherwise".		
ii)	Is there appropriate progression and variety of task? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• u6.p59 vocab.1.2.3 • yes, chapter 3, 35 • yes, ch #1 page 13 ch# 2 page 23 • "yes, chapter 5 page 55" • yes/ write a travel blog/ unit 3/ p. 35/ ex. 4.a	• no variety of task
	Analysis: The above comments revealed that a big number of respondents (65%) viewed the textbook appropriate as far as progression and variety of writing tasks are concerned. However, some respondents (35%) countered their peers with adverse comments.		
iii)	Are the conventions of different sorts of writing taught? If so, which ones, and how are they presented? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "yes, informal letters (ch 1, pg 14) blog writing (ch 3, pg 35) story writing (ch 2, pg 15, wb)" • "yes. guided and controlled writing .group and individual writing ch#1 page 13 ch# 2 page 23" • "yes email writing chapter 1, page number 14 blog writing chapter 2 , page number 35	• to some extent
	Analysis: The above responses reveal that the majority (75%) spotted the instances of the conventions of writings i.e. different sorts. However, 5 respondents (25%) countered with adverse comments.		
iv)	Is there emphasis on the style of written English? At an appropriate level, is there attention to different styles according to text type? write examples: chapter/s and	• yes. formal, informal, written and spoken styles. • yes, chapter-9 thank-you message page 95 • "yes email writing chapter 1, page number 14 blog writing chapter 2 , page number 35 paragraph writing chapter , page number 23 • "yes. different styles are presented. ex: students' book, chapter 2, page 23 ""memory"". this paragraph writing. students' book,	• not too much attention to different styles of writing

page numbers	chapter 1, page 14 ""informal e-mail".	
Analysis: The comments revealed that a big number of respondents (65%) responded positively and cited the references to make their claim evident. However, some respondents (35%) countered their peers with "no".		
v) Is attention given to the language resources specific to the written form, such as punctuation, spelling, layout, etc.? If yes, explain how…?	• yes, students' pre-knowledge of sentence structure is utilized. help is also taken from technical report writing course • yes. students attention are drawn to the fact that sentences must begin with capitals and to end with periods.	• "in the book, there is nothing about punctuation, spelling or layout. • no, not at all.
Analysis: The comments for the first time reveal that the opinion is equally divided. Half of the claims cited the references to make their claim evident while a similar number (50%) countered their peers with adverse commentary and straight "no's".		

Additional comments: Table 6 demonstrates the responses to writing domain's questions a mixed opinion, positive though. Interestingly, last question witnessed claims divided among respondents as 50%-50% when asked a question: **Is attention given to the language resources specific to the written form, such as punctuation, spelling, layout, etc.?**

Writing (scale Q6)
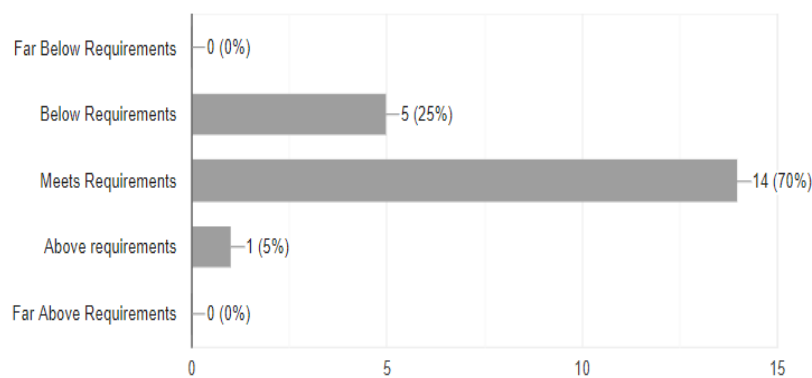vi) How much emphasis is there on accuracy?

Figure 6

Figure 6 reveals that the majority (75%) perceived the emphasis on accuracy under the category "meets requirements". However, 5 respondents (25%) felt differently and decided to choose "below requirements".

Writing (Open ended Qs 7-9)

TABLE 7

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
vii) Are learners encouraged to review and edit their written work? If yes, explain the process...	• yes, they exchange their writings and make a self-review of the tasks. the teacher also reviews it . • yes/ to give the students writing task in each chapter then to review their writing together • yes, they are encouraged and to review and edit their written work, after writing task they are asked to review and correct the mistakes.	• no (4 times)
Analysis: The above responses reveal that the majority (80%) agreed the claim that learners are encouraged to review and edit their written tasks. However, 4 respondents (20%) countered with straight negatives.		
viii) Is a readership identified for writing activities? If yes, explain how...?	• yes, the students are advised to read magazines, books, newspapers, internet sites and the like to enrich their knowledge about different subjects. • yes, a reading passage is used to collect and gather information to be used for writing activities. • somewhat yes, like letter to future boss	• no (10 times) • not much
Analysis: This question's responses should be taken into consideration critically because 8 respondents (40%) commented positively and cited references. While the majority (60%) decided to refute and viewed no such instances in the textbook.		
ix) Are writing activities suitable in terms of amount of guidance/control, degree of accuracy, organization of longer pieces of writing (eg paragraphing) and use of appropriate styles? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "yes. guided writing (ch 1, pg 14, 5a, b, 6, 7a b) • yes, chapter 3, 35 • language live /page 54/unit 5 • yes ch# 1 page 13 ch# 5 page 544 • yes, chapter 2 page 23	• yes, but students are not asked to write longer pieces of writing. • no (7 times)
Analysis: The comments here reveal that the opinion is almost equally divided. 55% respondents commented and cited the references		

> to make their claim evident while a very close number (45%) countered their peers with adverse commentary and straight "no's".

Additional comments: Table 7 demonstrates the responses to writing domain's questions a mixed opinion. Two out of 3 questions, a critical instance in this evaluation, were perceived "adverse" as apparent from the comments.

Grammar & Vocabulary (Open ended Qs 1-2)

TABLE 8

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
i) What grammar items are included? Do they correspond to students' language needs? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• tenses reported speech comparison active and passive countable and uncountable relative cluses" • "tenses, degrees of adjectives, future clauses, ch#1 page 9 ch#2 page 18,19 ch# 5 page 31" • formation of question, present simple, present continuous in chapter 1, past simple, past continuous, used to and would chapter 2. Yes, they correspond to each other.	• no
Analysis: The respondents (95%) for this question named grammar items included in the textbook and viewed that they correspond to students' language needs. However, very interestingly, 1 respondent (5%) commented "otherwise".		
ii) How are new grammar items presented and practiced? Explain.	• through inductive and discovery methods then drills on them • in a cohesive manner • in a pragmatic way (eg page 18, page 6 etc) • drills/discussed form • they are presented implicitly or explicitly, and it is taught inductively or deductively.	• no new grammar items. all grammar items were presented in level 1.
Analysis: The majority (85%) named the ways new grammar items presented and practiced. However, very few, 3 respondent (15%) countered the majority's claim with adverse commentary.		

Additional comments: Table 8 categorizes grammar & vocabulary domain's questions as high positive. All comments were positive followed by some adverse.

Grammar & Vocabulary (scale Q3)

iii) To what extent is the presentation and practice: related to what learners, already know and to what has already been taught, appropriately controlled & organized, representative of the grammar rule to be learned, relevant to learners' needs and interests?
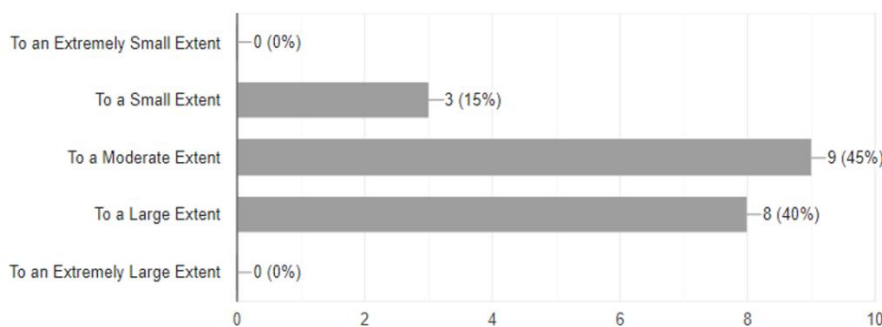

Figure 7

Figure 7 reveals that the majority (85%) perceived the presentation and practice relevant to learners' needs and interests. However, 3 respondents (15%) felt differently and chose "to a small extent".

Grammar & Vocabulary (Open ended Qs 4-6)

TABLE 9

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
iv) Are they (grammar items) presented in small units for easy learning? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• unit 5 p43 grammar 1.2 • yes, chapter 2, 18 • ex 1,2 (grammar page 49) unit 5 • yes, ch#1 page 6,9 ch#2 page 18,19 • yes . eg - pages - 6 , 18 etc. • "yes, chapter 1 page 9"	• they are presented in a small and confusing manner without adequate explanations of the grammar rule. • small units, but scanty.
Analysis: The majority (80%) cited the references for grammar items presented in small units for easy learning. However, 4 respondent (20%) countered the majority's claim with adverse comments.		
v) Is there an emphasis on language form? write examples: chapter/s and	• yes, chapter 1, 6 • ex 1 (practice) unit 5 ,page 49	• not much • sometimes

page numbers	• yes.ch#5 page 53 • "yes. unit-4/ p. 41/ ex. 1/ • yes , chapter two page 20. • "yes chapter 1 , page 6 chapter 3 , page 18 • "yes. ex: students' book, chapter 1, page 6 students' book, chapter 2, page 18	

Analysis: The majority (85%) cited the references to support their views i.e. emphasis on language form as evident from the comments. However, 3 respondent (15%), as per the comments, didn't find any such instances.

vi) Is there an emphasis on language use (meaning)? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes, chapter 3, 35 • unit 5page 23 ex 3 workbook • yes ch# 9 page 87 • yes. unit 1/ p. 9/ ex. b/ present simple and present continuous • "yes chapter 2 pages 20, 21" • yes, chapter three page 35.	• no (3 times) • not much

Analysis: The majority of the respondents (80%) referenced their views i.e. emphasis on language use as evident from their comments. However, 4 responses (20%), as evident from the comments, viewed the question adversely.

Additional comments: Table 9 categorizes grammar & vocabulary domain's questions as high positive. All comments were positive followed by some negatives.

Grammar & Vocabulary (scale Q7)

vii)   How balanced is the treatment of form and use?

Grammar & Vocabulary

- Very poorly — 1 (5%)
- Poorly — 1 (5%)
- Adequately — 11 (55%)
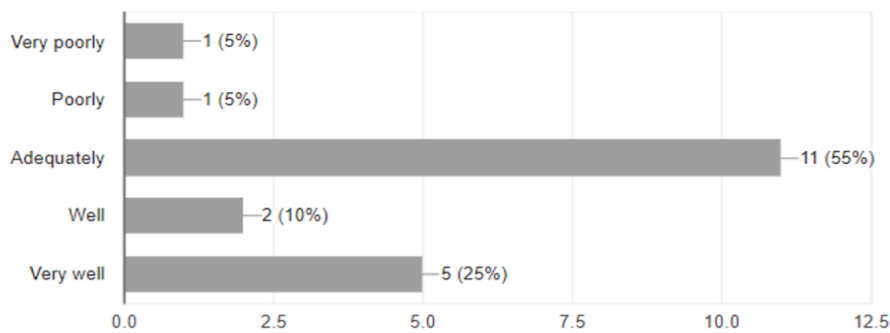- Well — 2 (10%)
- Very well — 5 (25%)

Figure 8

Figure 8 shows that the majority (90%) perceived the treatment of form and use as balanced. However, 2 respondents (10%) felt differently and viewed as "poorly/very poorly".

Grammar & Vocabulary (Open ended Qs 8-16)

TABLE 10

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
viii) Are newly introduced items related to and contrasted with items already familiar to the learners? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• unit 4 page 42 ex 2a • yes, ch#1 page 6,9 ch#2 page 18,21 • yes , they move from the familiar to the unknown. • "yes, chapter 4 page " • yes, chapter 1,2,3 4,5 and 6 • "yes they are related to the students pre knowledge unit 1 present simple page 9 unit 2 past forms page 18 "	• "actually, there are no new items. students are familiar with the given items because they have been taught these items in level 1. • to some extent • somewhat as matter of opinion
Analysis: The comments revealed that majority (60%) cited the references in terms of newly introduced items related to and contrasted with items already familiar to the learners. However, a good number of respondents (40%) countered their peers with no and adverse comments.		
ix) Where one grammatical form has more than one meaning, are all relevant meanings taught (not necessarily together)? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "future forms u5 p49 grammar 1.2" • "yes. use of present continuous for actions happening at this moment, in the present period, as temporary, for gradual changing) ch 1,pg 9 " • "i used to play football. i would play football. chapter 2, 20" • yes, unit 3 page 30 • "yes, chapter 1 page 9" • chapter five e.g present continuous for future.	• No (2 times) • not (so far)
Analysis: Most of the respondents (80%) referenced their views and commented positively. However, 4 responses (20%), as evident from the responses, commented adversely.		

x) Is material for vocabulary teaching adequate in terms of quantity and range of vocabulary, emphasis placed on vocabulary development, strategies for individual learning? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• yes, chapter 2, 21 • unit 1,page 11 ,3 and 1a • yes, ch# 4 page 40 ch# 5 page 49 • yes . for eg pages - 21 ,40 , 8 , 47 etc • yes, chapter 1,2,3 and 4. • "yes. ex: students' book, chapter 2, page 16 and 21 students' book, chapter 3, page 26 and 28	• not much • higher in level for most students

Analysis: Most of the respondents (70%) commented positively in support of materials for teaching vocabulary. However, 6 responses (30%), as evident from the comments, countered negatively.

xi) How is new vocabulary presented? List.	• in word list and in text • nicely presented • word lists, in context, with visuals • in numerous ways. • different techniques are used • in context	• ruthless egotistical

Analysis: The respondents (95%) for this question enlisted the new vocabulary presented in the textbook. However, very interestingly, 1 respondent (5%) commented with "ruthless egotistical", which, for the researcher, remains a "puzzle".

xii) How is the meaning of new vocabulary taught? Explain…	• drills and in context • giving the students short definition, remind them to situations and pictures relate to vocabulary. • Eliciting and inference. • through word-family and structure • Through giving sentences in different context • In a table of words, text, guessing meanings etc • to understand the meaning from the context/ using English-English dictionary. • By explanation in context, miming, pictures • in text and in listening, by playing the audio and giving exercise which answers are the main words in a unit.	--

Analysis: The responses reveal that all respondents (100%) commented the ways, as evident from the comments, in which the meaning of new vocabulary taught.

xiii) Is there any distinction between active and passive vocabulary? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• unit 5, page 59, ex2 • yes, ch#7 page 69 • "yes, chapter 1 page 11"	• "not all verbs used in active can be used with the passive u.7 p 69 grammar " • not aware of that

Analysis: The above remarks are very critical and revealed that only a very limited number of respondents (35%) viewed any distinction between active and passive vocabulary. However, this claim struggles when we look at the respondents who contribute as majority (65%) and adversely commented as evident from the responses .

xiv) Is vocabulary presented in a structured, purposeful way? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• page 59 say and tell ex 1a /unit 5 • yes, ch# 8 work book ,page 49 • yes/ unit-3/ page 28/ ex. 1.a (features and sights) • "yes chapter 1 page 11" • "yes chapter 1 , page number 11 • "yes unit 5 vocabulary unit 4 vocabulary	• not much • sometimes

Analysis: Most of the respondents (85%) referenced the instances where the vocabulary presented in a structured, purposeful way. However, 3 responses (15%), as evident from the responses, commented adversely.

xv) Are learners sensitized to the structure of the lexicon through vocabulary-learning exercises based on semantic relationships, formal relationships, collocations or situation-based word groups? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• chapter, 3, work, 17 • unit 5/word group ex1 page 28 • yes, ch# 5 page 49 • yes . eg pages - 8 , 21 , 40 , 47 etc	• no (6 times) • not much

Analysis: Most of the respondents (65%) agreed that the learners sensitized to the structure of the lexicon through vocabulary-learning exercises. However, 7 responses (35%), as evident from the comments, countered negatively.

xvi) Does the material enable students to expand their own vocabulary independently by helping them to develop their own learning strategies? If yes, explain the process....	• yes u5 p 49 vocab.2a • "yes chapter 1 page 11" • yes , chapter four page 40. •	• no. they don't use the new vocabulary in speaking or writing. they use limited and easier vocabulary. • not so often

Analysis: Most of the respondents (70%) agreed that the materials enable students to expand their own vocabulary independently. However, some responses (30%), as evident from the comments, do not support the former claim.

Additional comments: Table 10 categorizes grammar & vocabulary domain's questions as high-mixed responses. The responses witness a range i.e. 100%-60% for positive comments and 5%-65% as adverse ones.

Style & Appropriacy (Open ended Qs 1-5)

TABLE 11

Questions	Responses	
	positive	**adverse**
i) Are style and appropriacy dealt with? If so, is language style matched to social situation? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• u5 p32 ,11a • yes, chapter 3, 30 • unit 2, page 22 ex 2,3 • ch# 4 page 40	• no (5 times) • not much (2 times)
Analysis: Most of the respondents (65%) agreed the question's framework and cited the references where they felt that style and appropriacy go hand-in-hand. However, 7 responses (35%), as evident from the comments, countered negatively.		
ii) Is appropriacy taught with reference to choice of grammar, vocabulary, discourse structure or pronunciation? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• u6 p 56 a twist of fate:2 • unit 2 page 19,20 • yes, ch# 2 page 19 • "yes, chapter 2 , page 22 and 23"	• no (3 times) • sometimes
Analysis: Most of the respondents (80%) cited the references where they felt that appropriacy taught with reference to grammar, vocabulary, discourse structure or pronunciation. However, some comments (20%), as evident from the responses, countered negatively.		
iii) Does the textbook identify situations or areas of language use where learners should be particularly sensitive to using appropriate styles, e.g. when requesting/complaining? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• u5 p53 useful language • unit 3, task page 34 ,ex 2,3,4 • yes, ch#4 page 39 • "yes, chapter 4 page 41"	• not much • no, not at all.
Analysis: Most of the respondents (60%) agreed the question's idea and cited the references where learners should be particularly sensitive to using appropriate styles. However, 8 responses (40%), as evident from the comments, countered the former group with a straight "no".		
iv) Are learners led towards an understanding of why some forms in English are more formal than others? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• "u5 p53 useful language u5 p33 writing 12a" • yes, chapter 2, 21 • yes (2 times) • ex 2 b /page 54 /unit 5 • yes ch#5 work book pages 32,33 • yes, for example we teach them how to write a cv in unit 5, and which is why there is a need to teach formal and informal language forms.	• to some extent. • not much • no, not at all. •
Analysis: The comments for the first the second time in this study reveal that the opinion is equally divided. Half of the claims (50%) cited the references and commented to make their claim evident while a similar percentage (50%) countered their peers with adverse responses.		
v) Are any other aspects of style other than formal/informal included (e.g. register – the language used within a particular activity or occupation)? write examples: chapter/s and page numbers	• blogs u3 p 35 • unit 1,page 10 ,ex 2a • yes, ch#7 page 68 • yes. there are various ESP specific segments in the text which caters to activity or occupation.	• no (11 times) • not much
Analysis: The remarks are very critical and revealed that only 6 respondents (30%) viewed other aspects of style other than formal/informal included in the textbook. However, this claim battles when we glance the respondents who contribute as majority (70%) and commented in negatives as evident from the responses.		

Additional comments: Table 11 categorizes style & appropriacy domain's questions as mixed responses. All comments were ranged between 80%-30% for the positive end and swinged between 20%-70% to the adverse end.

V. CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the contents of Cutting Edge. It looked at the textbook's positive and adverse attributes and discovered that the positive aspects vastly exceeded the negative ones. Despite some flaws in the textbook like lack of video material, lack of specific strategies for conversation, and almost no distinction between active and passive vocabulary, the teachers (for the most parts) thought that the textbook contents were appropriate. However, the researcher, based on the adverse comments, suggests that a latest EFL commercial textbook or series be reviewed which, potentially, will cover the space. It is hoped that EFL teachers will discover more on how to examine a textbook in terms of language development skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar & vocabulary, and style & appropriacy.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

This study recommends developing authentic materials that are tailored to the needs and interests of the learners. To meet the learning outcomes, the social and cultural context must be considered when developing materials. The materials should be tested for at least one semester to get input from teachers and students, then reviewed by the professionals in the field of syllabus design and materials development. Before the execution, incorporate the feedback and expert comments.

REFERENCES

[1] Abbasian, R., & Khajavi, Y. (2011). English Language Teaching, National Identity and Globalization in Iran: the Case of Public Schools. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 1*(10), 181-186.

[2] Ahour, T., Towhidiyan, B., & Saedi, M. (2014). The evaluation of "English textbook 2" taught in Iranian high schools from teachers' perspectives. *English Language Teaching, 7*(3), 150-158. doi:10.5539/elt.v7n3p150

[3] Birjandi, P. & Alizadeh, I. (2012). Manifestation of critical thinking skills in the English textbooks employed by language institutes in Iran. *International Journal of Research studies in Language Learning, 3*(1), 11-23.

[4] Byrd, P. (2001). Textbooks: Evaluation and selection and analysis for implementation. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language, 3rd ed*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

[5] Byrd, P., & Schuemann, C. (2014). English as a second/foreign language textbooks: How to choose them—how to use them. In M. Celce-Murica, D. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 380–393). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning.

[6] Crawford, J. (2002). The Role of Materials in the Language Classroom: Finding the Balance. In J. Richards & W. Renandya. *Methodology in Language Teaching*: An Anthology of Current Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[7] Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

[8] Daoud, A.M. & Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). Selecting and evaluating textbooks. In Celce-Murcia, M. & McIntosh, L. (Eds.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. New York: Newbury House.

[9] Fredriksson, C. and Olsson R. (2006). *English Textbook Evaluation*: *An Investigation into Criteria for Selecting English Textbooks*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Malmo University.

[10] Garinger, D. (2002). *Textbook selection for the ESL classroom. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics*. Washington, DC. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.507.8175&rep=rep1&type=pdf

[11] Ghorbani, M. R. (2011). Quantification and Graphic Representation of EFL Textbook Evaluation Results. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1* (5), p.511-520.

[12] Hussin, N. I. S. M., Nimehchisalem, V., & Kalajahi, S. A. R. (2016). Evaluating the presentation of new vocabulary items in Malaysian form three English language textbook. *Malaysian Journal of Language and Linguistics, 5* (1), 60-78

[13] Littlejohn, A. (1998) The analysis of language teaching materials. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (pp. 190–216). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[14] Mann, S. & Copland, F. (2015). *Materials Development*. Washington D.C.: TESOL Press.

[15] McDonough, J. and Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and Methods in ELT*: A Teacher's Guide. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

[16] Mukundan, J., & Ahour, T. (2010). A review of textbook evaluation checklists across four decades (1970–2008) (pp. 336–352). In B. Tomlinson & Masuhara, H. (eds.) *Research for Materials Development in Language Learning*: Evidence for Best Practice. London: Continuum

[17] Nunan, David. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology A textbook for teachers*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

[18] Rashidi, N., & Kehtarfard, R. (2014). *A need analysis approach to the evaluation of Iranian third-grade high school English textbook*. SAGE, 1-9. doi:10.1177/2158244014551709

[19] Riasati, M. J. and Zare, P. (2010). „Textbook evaluation: EFL teacher's perspectives on new Interchange". *Studies in Literature and Language, 1*(8): 54-60.

[20] Richards, J. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[21] Sarem, S. N., Hamidi, H., & Mahmoudie, R. (2013). A critical look at textbook evaluation: a case study of evaluating an ESP course-book: English for international tourism. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Science (IRJABS), 4*(2), 372-380

[22] Sheldon, L. (1988). Evaluating ELT Textbooks and Material. *ELT Journal, Volume 42*, Issue 4, 237-246.

[23] Tomlinson, B. (1998). *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[24] Yasemin, K. (2009). Evaluating the English textbooks for young learners of English at Turkish primary education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 1*(1), 79-83

Mohd Nazim earned his Ph.D. in English (Literary Stylistics) from Aligarh Muslim University, India in 2008. He earned his master's degree in English Language Teaching, also from AMU, in 2002. A post graduate diploma in Linguistics enriches his academic qualifications further. He has been teaching a variety of English language and literature courses for more than 13 years.

He is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Najran University, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include (but not limited to) developing writing skills, assessment literacy, teacher training, and ethical interpretation of literature.

Dr. Nazim has rich experience in journal editorial services, and currently sits on the editorial board of English Language Teaching journal, published by Canadian Center of Science and Education.