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Evaluating the Suitability and Effectiveness of Sunrise (11): An ELT Textbook for Kurdistan, Iraq

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Abstract

This paper aims to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the appropriateness and quality of Sunrise (11). The study critically examines various aspects of the coursebook, including its aims and objectives, design and organization, language content, topics, methodology, supplementary aids, and alignment with learner needs based on the perspectives of the assessors in Kurdistan. To facilitate this evaluation, the evaluative scheme proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) has been adapted as the primary instrument for this linguistic study. The use of an evaluative checklist is justified due to its effectiveness, precision, efficiency, systematic approach and convenience. The research adopts a mixed methodology to delve into the nuances of this linguistic study. Initial findings suggest that the aims and objectives of Sunrise (11) seem well-suited to the unique teaching context in Kurdistan. The design and organization of the coursebook show promising attributes, with visual appeal, logical grading and sequencing, contextualized grammar, and a range of supplementary aids. In terms of language content, Sunrise (11) displays strengths in fostering both formal and lexical competence. However, it may benefit from further attention to vocabulary aspects, such as multiple word meanings and word formation. Regarding language skills, the textbook appears to strike a potent balance, effectively covering both receptive and productive skills, and demonstrating integration across language domains. The pedagogical approach adopted, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), seems well-suited to the language learning objectives. While the topics covered in Sunrise (11) encompass many beneficial themes, a potential area for improvement lies in the inclusion of topics related to Kurdish culture, considering the specific target audience of Kurdish learners. In conclusion, periodic updates to Sunrise (11) are recommended to align the coursebook with evolving theories of Language Learning (LL) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). By addressing these suggestions, the coursebook's suitability and effectiveness can be further enhanced. In short, the degree of coursebook effectiveness can be approximately 86%

Keywords: coursebook evaluation, textbook analysis, appropriateness, quality, ELT, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Kurdish culture, Language Learning (LL), Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Introduction

Selecting effective and efficient English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks for a pedagogical context has become increasingly challenging due to the vast array of EFL/ESL teaching coursebooks flooding the market. With many of these materials claiming to embody the key principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Crewe, 2011), educators are faced with the daunting task of identifying suitable resources to support language learning. However, improper utilization of coursebooks can lead to issues, potentially hindering the educational process if they

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are not adequately employed (Swales, 1980: 11). Additionally, there often exists a disconnect between the objectives of ELT materials writers and the actual needs of learners (Allwright, 1981: 9), creating a significant gap between commercial purposes and educational objectives.

Given the critical role that teaching materials play in the language learning journey, the evaluation of coursebooks has become an essential aspect of curriculum development and language education. Proper appraisal enables policymakers, instructors, and educational institutions to distinguish among the multitude of commercial coursebooks available by identifying their potentials and limitations. By moving beyond impressionistic assessments, educators can gain valuable insights into the nature of coursebooks, leading to informed decisions in the selection and utilization of teaching materials (Ellis, 1997).

In the context of ELT, textbooks refer to educational materials formally used during language courses and typically accompanied by student books, workbooks (activity books), and teacher guides. Some coursebooks may even include supplementary materials like tests, visual aids (videos), CDs, and mini-reference books, among others (Tomlinson, 2008). These supplementary aids enrich the learning experience and cater to diverse learning preferences. ELT coursebooks typically cover core language skills, such as receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills, as well as subskills like vocabulary, functions, grammar, and pronunciation, which are essential components of language acquisition.

This paper aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the potentials and limitations of Sunrise Coursebook 11 (McIever, Prowse, and Sprenger, 2010) based on the perspectives of the Kurdish evaluators (ELT teachers in Kurdistan). This linguistic study will employ the evaluative method proposed by Cunningsworth (1995), which serves as a comprehensive framework is responded by the appraisers for assessing coursebook quality and suitability in language education contexts. By conducting a detailed evaluation, this study seeks to shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of Sunrise 11, thus aiding educators and curriculum designers in their coursebook selection process.

Definition of Evaluation

In the realm of educational materials, evaluation can be defined as a systematic process that investigates the appropriateness and suitability of an existing practice, particularly in the context of coursebooks for English Language Teaching (ELT). This evaluative endeavor serves as a beneficial tool for both coursebook writers and educators, fostering innovation and modifications within the teaching and learning context (Rea-Dickens & Germaine, 1992). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), evaluation entails a matching process that aligns available solutions with the specific needs and requirements of students. It is important to note that evaluation is not a purely mechanical procedure; rather, it requires professional judgment at all stages of the investigation. This professional judgment plays a pivotal role in assessing ELT materials, relying on a deep understanding of the principles of teaching and learning, bolstered by extensive practical experience (Cunningsworth, 1984).

The Definition of Evaluative Checklist

An evaluative checklist can be conceptualized as a practical instrument that assists practitioners, assessors, curriculum designers, experts, coursebook writers, and ELT researchers in meticulously scrutinizing pedagogical materials to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Such

appraisal, based on an evaluative checklist, offers a more objective, straightforward, and valid approach to coursebook assessment (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012). The development of effective evaluative checklists has been undertaken by prominent theorists, offering evaluators valuable guidelines to determine the suitability of coursebooks and the extent to which they align with the principles and concepts of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), English language learning, and teaching.

Evaluative checklists can be categorized into general and specific guidelines to cater to various aspects of coursebook evaluation (Al-Zeebaree, 2022). Notably, Cunningsworth (1995) devised a checklist that assesses the degree of communicativeness, formal competence, physical appearance and organization, language paradigms, language functions, and other subskills within coursebooks. McDonough and Shaw (1993) proposed a comprehensive checklist that entails two stages of evaluation, namely external and internal investigations. Moreover, Skiers (1991) put forward a framework to analyze teaching and learning contexts, course syllabi, activities, exercises, and student backgrounds. This checklist encompasses an analysis of bibliographical data, goals and aims, subject matter, physical appearance, layout, visuals, and more. Furthermore, Sheldon (1998) introduced a method comprising 53 sub-criteria under 17 main criteria to evaluate ELT coursebooks.

Incorporating these evaluative checklists into the coursebook evaluation process empowers educators and researchers to gain deeper insights into the strengths and weaknesses of these materials, leading to informed decisions in the selection and enhancement of ELT coursebooks. The systematic application of these checklists fosters a more rigorous approach to coursebook evaluation, ensuring that the selected materials align effectively with language learning and teaching principles and cater to the specific needs of learners.

Definition and Significance of Evaluation in English Language Teaching Coursebooks In the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT), the evaluation of coursebooks holds considerable importance as it allows for a systematic and in-depth examination of the effectiveness and suitability of these pedagogical materials. With the proliferation of EFL/ESL teaching coursebooks in the market, the task of selecting appropriate and efficient ones for a specific pedagogical context has become formidable. Moreover, the claim of many ELT materials to adhere to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) further accentuates the need for critical evaluation to ensure their alignment with teaching objectives (Crewe, 2011).

Inadequate employment of coursebooks can potentially lead to suboptimal educational outcomes (Swales, 1980: 11). The complex nature of the ELT business, where commercial considerations of materials writers may not always align with the specific needs and requirements of learners, further underscores the importance of scrutinizing teaching materials. As emphasized by Allwright (1981:9), the process of matching ELT materials to educational requirements is intricate. This discrepancy between commercial interests and pedagogical objectives necessitates a rigorous appraisal of coursebooks to safeguard the integrity of the teaching and learning process.

Evaluation serves as a valuable tool for policymakers, instructors, and pedagogical institutions, enabling them to discern the potentials and limitations of different commercial coursebooks available in the market. By adopting evaluative methods, educators can transcend mere impressionistic assessments and gain insightful, precise, and systematic understanding of the nature of coursebooks (Ellis, 1997). This approach ensures that the selected materials align cohesively with the desired language learning outcomes, thus optimizing the teaching and learning experience.

Defining ELT Coursebooks and their Components ELT coursebooks can be defined as educational materials specifically designed for formal English Language Teaching courses, utilized by both students and educators in the instructional process (Ur, 1996). Typically, these coursebooks consist of a student's book, workbooks (activity book), and a teacher guide, forming a comprehensive package to facilitate language learning. Additionally, some coursebooks may incorporate supplementary aids such as tests, visual materials (videos), CDs (in the past), mini-reference books, and additional resources (Tomlinson, 2008). These supplementary aids enhance the learning experience by providing varied and engaging learning opportunities.

An effective ELT coursebook comprehensively covers main language skills, including receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Furthermore, sub-skills such as vocabulary, functions, grammar, and pronunciation are skillfully integrated to create a holistic language learning experience for students.

Methodology

Questions of the Research

The main focus of this evaluative research to discover the following:

- 1- Does the textbook (Sunrise 11) correspond to the aims and objective of ELT program for the state schools in Kurdistan?
- 2- Does the coursebook has an effective and efficient design and organisation?
- 3- Does Sunrise (11) encompasses effective language content for the Kurdish leaners?
- 4- Does the textbook contain a balance and integration of the four main skills?
- 5- Does the coursebook include interesting and diverse topics?
- 6- Is the pedagogical methodology of the coursebook effective?
- 7- Is the teacher book of this coursebook efficient?

The Pedagogical Materials Under Evaluation

This research project endeavoured to investigate the ELT coursebook Sunrise 11 (McLever, Prowse and Sprenger 2010) to find out the appropriateness and suitability depending on the perspectives of Kurdish teachers since they taught it. The textbook was scrutinized to ascertain the coursebook quality by adapting the evaluative checklist of Cunningsworth (1995), who is one the finest theorist in the field of textbook analysis. This coursebook is taught for the 11th graders in high schools in Kurdistan region in northern Iraq. The coursebook level tend to be intermediate or B2 according the CEFER (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The Instrument (Checklist)

It was crucial to use an effectual and efficacious checklist to collect and analyse the data of this evaluative research project. The descriptive checklist of Cunningsworth (1995) was adapted to assess the quality of Sunrise 11 (McLever, Prowse and Sprenger 2010). This checklist was responded by the evaluators in Kurdistan. Pursuant to Sheldon (1988: 240), the analytical checklists influence the appraisal and have many advantages. Firstly, the evaluative checklists are efficient to record a lot of data in short period during evaluative process. Secondly, it is regarded systematic method, namely, the checklist covers all the critical criteria for assessing. Thirdly, the framework is obvious and supplies evident categories. Fourthly, this method is comfortable to report data effectively, which can allow making comparison among various

ELT textbooks. Moreover, Textbook analysis by checklist can be more, accurate, more reliable, more valid and more scientific. Evaluators could modify the evaluative checklist to suit their appraisal by addition or drop of some criteria (Harmer 2007). The checklist of Cunningsworth (1995) is considered one the most well- established one in the realm of coursebooks evaluation (Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, Nimehchisalem 2011). That is why it was decided to adapt this scheme for screening.

Data Collection

The data was collected for this exploratory research from Sunrise 11 (McLever, Prowse and Sprenger 2010) in order to assess the appropriateness. The needful data, which was required for analytical investigation, was collected from filled checklist by the assessors. It is evident that the main purpose of this analytical study is just to investigate the coursebook and that does not imply any recommendation or criticism of it. Next, teachers were interviewed to give their general impressions about the coursebook. The evaluators were interviewed after filling the checklists to give their suggestions about other weaknesses and strengths of the textbook.

Methodological Approach

Basically, there are methods to carry out pedagogical researches, which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed ones. The qualitative method requires the procedure of data collection which essentially leads to non-numerical or open-ended questions and then analysed by qualitatively. Whereas, the quantitative method involves the procedure of data collection which fundamentally leads to numerical data that they analysed by statistics (Dornyei 2007). In short, quantitative research involves numbers for analysing and collecting data while qualitative method deals with words for data collection and analysis (Frenkel, Wallen and Hyun 2011). In this linguistic research project, mixed method was used for carrying out this study.

Data Analysis

In this linguistic study, the method of Cunningsworth (1995) had been used to collect the data and then it was analysed hinging on the principle, concepts and theories of languages learning and pedagogy and the acquisition principles of FL or L 2. These checklists were responded by the teachers in Kurdistan. Additionally, the researcher analysed the collected data basing on the criteria of effectual and efficacious teaching materials from a vast array of evaluative paradigms of the magnificent theorist in arena of coursebook evaluations.

Participants

Analysis of ELT coursebooks confirm the significance of participation of tutors (the primary users). Therefore, the thirty teachers of Sunrise 11 were involved to value the textbook. The assessors who were professional and expert, they taught the textbook many years in the state schools in Kurdistan. They were from the three major cities in Kurdistan which are Slemani, Duhok and Erbil and they were both male female equally.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the evaluation results of the research project, aiming to identify the limitations and potentials of the ELT coursebook "Sunrise 11"

(McIever, Prowse, and Sprenger, 2010). The evaluative method of Cunningsworth (1995) was employed to collect the perspectives of the evaluators. The table below summarizes the assessment of "Sunrise 11" based on these criteria which answered by the assessors:

Table (1) The Appropriateness of Sunrise 11.

No	The Criteria	Yes	No
1	Does the textbook (Sunrise 11) correspond to the aims and objective of ELT program for the state schools in Kurdistan?	(28) 93.3%	(2) 6.6 %
2	Does the coursebook has an effective and efficient design and organisation?	(23) 76.6 %	(7) 23.3%
3	Does Sunrise (11) encompasses effective language content for the Kurdish leaners?	(24) 80%	(6) 20%
4	Does the textbook contain a balance and integration of the four main skills?	(21) 70%	(9) 30%
5	Does the coursebook include interesting and diverse topics?	(15) 50%	(15) 50%
6	Is the pedagogical methodology of the coursebook effective?	(24) 80%	(6) 20%
7	Is the teacher book of this coursebook effective?	(26) 86 %	(4) 14%
	Total	Effectiveness	Ineffectiveness

Initially, there are two types of ELT coursebooks which are EGP and ESP (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). It looks that Sunrise 11 suitable for aims and objectives of English teaching program for the ministry of education in Kurdistan. It seems that the coursebook compatible with the context of English teaching and learning according to the assessors (93%). It is deemed as EGP as it enhances the general skills of English language such as the main skills listening, reading, speaking and reading. It also develop other subskills like formal, lexical, phonetic, punctuation competences and so forth.

In terms of design and organisation, its effectiveness may reach roughly (77%) This refers to coursebooks components that create the whole the package of English course such as teacher guide, student book, activity book (work book), CDs, websites, tests visual materials and so on. It also refers sequencing and grading, revision and recycling. This coursebook is accompanied with workbook, teacher book, CDs for audio tracks, and few sample of tests. On one hand, it tends to be well designed and visually attractive. On the other hand, it lacks to visual materials such videos which can be considered the important means of language input and intriguing. In accordance to Tomlinson (2008), ELT coursebooks should use multimedia to provide language input. The coursebook has not any computer software, it might useful to have a website or computer software to give students chance to practice TL. CALL affects positively on the language learning and teaching since it rise learners' motivation, self- confidence and interest, it can allow individualization, provide space for autonomy from single-source of time, place and information. It will offer error analysis, the input of native speakers and feedback for students (Uzturk 2013). With regard to gradation, it seems that the coursebook starts with easy and simple to intricate and challenging topics. The textbook may be well designed as there is too much white space, colourful and attractive. Inter alia, the coursebook has just two chapters for recycling and revision (units 4 and 9). It will probably be better to have separate sections of review at the back of each unit. It consists of 9 units including revision units withal. In short, the design and organisation can be suitable.

In connection with language content, the coursebook might be effective. Initially, one of the advantages of this textbook is that the grammatical content is contextualized and not taught in separate sentences. The forms are presented firstly, unconsciously in contexts and then are taught consciously. Apparently, the grammatical items of the coursebook are suitable for this level such as preposition, relative clauses, advices, abilities tenses and so forth. Concerning vocabulary, it seems that the coursebook have a great quantity and wide range to make the coursebook effective to develop the lexical competence. The coursebook may do not cover some crucial aspects concerning the knowledge of vocabulary like multiple meanings of words and formation of words which can be considered essential in coursebooks (Carter 1987).

In respect with skills, the coursebook is presumably vigorous in this regard and efficacy could reach 70%. The coursebooks includes the paramount skills for input and output. Obviously, each unit starts with receptive skills which are usually listening and reading and afterwards begins with productive skills which are speaking and writing. It appears that Sunrise 11 (McLever, Prowse and Sprenger 2010) encompass integrated skills in all lessons and units. As claimed by Littlewood (1981), the integration of skills realise the fundamental characteristics of communicative approach and that result primarily in enhancement of communicative competence. Sunrise (11) predominately contains communicative tasks as they concentrate on engaging students to use stimulating and authentic TL for real and meaningful communications in the ELT classrooms. They focus on meaningful competence more than formal competence (Brown 2001). The evaluators mentioned that it must contain phonetic topics more and has to focus more on the formal competence in the work book.

With reference to topics, the coursebook is probably to be partially suitable for Kurdish learners by 50 %. On one hand, the coursebooks includes likely a wide range of useful topics like geographical descriptions, urban directions, industry names, types of transport, weather conditions, climate change, pollution, civil engineering structures and dimensions and so on. On the contrary, it looks that coursebook does not encompasses plenty of topics that are related to Kurdish culture. Assessors said it needs to include real life topics which may students face in their daily lives such as phones, computers, internet, shopping and so forth.

In the matter of methodology, it seems that thi textbooks to be communicative (80%) since the task of the textbook concentrate on engaging the students to TL meaningfully rather than formally. According to Brown (2001), the communicative tasks focuses on meaningful interaction more than formal competence. Similarly, this coursebook can embody the key characteristics of CLT paradigm. The communicative textbooks usually may follow the four principles. First, the language is deemed a system for expressing meanings; the grammatical content reflects the communicative interactions. Secondly, the textbooks language focus on communications and interaction that mean they concentrate on fluency more than accuracy. Thirdly, language units of the textbooks are not grammatical but categorised depending on communicative meaning and functions (Richards Rodgers 2000: 71)

All in all, in spite of that this ELT coursebooks has a large number of potentials, it appears that the textbook outdated since it has been written long time ago. It might be better to update this coursebook as some theories of LL and SLA may be changed and to make it more attractive and intriguing. In Brief, the coursebook efficiency may reach roughly 86%.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evaluation of "Sunrise 11" reveals several strengths and areas for improvement. The coursebook aligns well with the aims and objectives of the English teaching program in Kurdistan, catering to the general skills required for language proficiency. Its design and organization are generally suitable, but it could benefit from incorporating multimedia elements, such as videos and computer software, to enhance language input and practice.

The contextualized presentation of language content and the integration of skills contribute positively to the coursebook's effectiveness. However, it could further improve by addressing multiple meanings of words and word formation in vocabulary instruction.

While "Sunrise 11" covers a diverse range of useful topics, it should also include more topics related to Kurdish culture to resonate better with learners' experiences. The communicative methodology employed by the coursebook is commendable, focusing on meaningful interactions and fluency in language use.

Overall, "Sunrise 11" exhibits considerable potential, but its outdated nature warrants an update to align with evolving theories of language learning and Second Language Acquisition. By doing so, the coursebook can become more attractive, intriguing, and effective in meeting the needs of Kurdish learners in their English language journey. The findings of this evaluation can serve as a valuable reference for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in the ongoing improvement of ELT materials in Kurdistan. In short, the textbook effectiveness may reach roughly 86%.

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