

## EVALUATING INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH TEXT BOOK ONE (PROSE) PUBLISHED BY SINDH TEXTBOOK BOARD JAMSHORO, THROUGH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

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**ABSTRACT:** The role of textbook is self-evident in both teaching and learning English. It provides authentic material and also furnishes a roadmap to achieve set goals. Evaluating English textbooks through Teachers' perceptions would help to highlight strengths and weaknesses of a textbook being used at a particular educational level. This paper presents an analysis and evaluation of Intermediate English textbook-1(prose) published by Sindh textbook board Jamshoro, from the perspective of teachers. A questionnaire adapted from the checklists by Litz (2005) and Mc Donough and Shaw (2003) were used to collect data from 50 lecturers, teaching English at different government and private colleges of district Sanghar & Hyderabad city, (Pakistan). The English textbook was evaluated from 5 different perspectives i.e. physical layouts, outlay of objectives, pedagogic analysis, language skills and appropriacy. The results suggest many problematic areas where the textbook needs drastic changes regarding its unattractive appearance, imbalance of four language skills and outdated material. The findings accentuate the need to totally change the material by the authors that would greatly contribute to introduce a highly productive textbook at intermediate level.

**KEYWORDS:** textbook evaluation, teachers' perceptions, outdated material, productive textbook.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a compulsory subject has become inevitable in those countries where English is spoken as a second language. In Pakistan, English language is equated with quality education, Mustafa (2018) and being taught at every level of education through different textbooks.

The role of textbook is self evident in every English program, as it provides authentic material, (Wari, 2006) and furnishes a frame work of instructions and orientation (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994).

The revised (National Curriculum 2006) has laid much emphasis on developing language competencies. At intermediate level, students are supposed to develop higher thinking order and much efficiency in creative writings and oral skills (National Curriculum, 2006).

In spite of all these clear cut instructions, students remain unsuccessful in developing such language competencies. One of the main reasons regarding this issue is providing inefficient or outdated material for teaching (Shah,2012).

The college level is considered to be a critical stage in academic career of Pakistani learners, for it stands as a gate way to the higher studies and that opportunity can easily be availed by those students who are already proficient in English language (Kausar, 2016).

At this junction, the present research aims to evaluate Intermediate English Textbook-I (Prose), published by Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro. The selection of this book is based on, two rationales. First, it is the first book, exposed to grade eleven students. Second, it is an old book which hasn't been revised until lately. The study has been conducted to evaluate the

physical layouts, contents and the language exercises in the textbook to analyze the fact that if they cater to the needs of the learners, following current methodologies of second language learning.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lasa (2006:1) textbooks are taken as learning tool that are commonly used by schools and colleges to support teaching program. A good English textbook provides an opportunity to deal with four language skills simultaneously (Kausar, 2016).

The quality of a good textbook can provide in depth knowledge and learning skills that are easily understood by students. (Sheldon, 1988) commented that "A textbook represents visible heart of ELT Program". The textbooks are taken as the most pivotal source of language input apart from contact with the teacher. They would be helping for scaffolding teaching and learning by imparting guidance and negotiating points (Crawford 1995:31). Tomlinson (2010) expressed his ideas about the role of the textbook by calling it a guide for learners to prepare for exams, a time saving entity for the teachers in preparing lessons, a guide for the administration to design the course contents.

Accepting the fact that the English textbooks are main source of informative material for English language learners, Ahour and Ahmedi (2012) asserted on their evaluation for socio-culturally appropriate contents. According to Cunnings Worth (2004), the best participants for a textbook evaluation are its user's i-e teachers and the students.

### 2.1 PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ABOUT THE TEXTBOOK

According to Cunningsworth (2004), the best way to evaluate an English textbook is to know the opinions of its users and they are teachers and the students. It is to enumerate the weak and strong points in relation to their own teaching situation. Grant (1997:8) believes that the perfect book doesn't exist, yet the purpose is to find out the most appropriate one that will fit and be suitable to a particular student group. Barcelos (2003:15) tells that language teachers' perceptions have an effect what the teachers do in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions are the basis for teachers to form judgment and make decision.

### 2.2 EVALUATIONS OF DIFFERENT TEXTBOOKS

A variety of checklists have been provided by different language experts or researchers for the evaluation of different textbooks. Donough and Shaw have given a checklist to cover almost all the aspects of the textbook including physical layouts, contents analysis and overall usability of the book. Lifz (2006) evaluated the English textbook being taught at Suvy Kyun Kwan University in South Korea. Tok (2010) evaluated the "Spot-on" English textbook designed to teach in Turkey and highlighted its strength and weaknesses. Akef (n.d) have also explored that students and teachers of Baghdad seem to be facing a lot of problems in the English classroom. He pointed out many short comings in the book regarding, physical layouts, cover page, exercises and writing skills.

In Pakistan, Mehmood (2011) asserted that the textbook material should be produced by the competent subject teachers. Zafar & Mehmood (2016) highlighted that international culture should be included in the English textbooks, so that student will be aware of both national and international culture. Aftab (2011) evaluated many of English textbooks in the light of National Curriculum and concluded that textbooks don't fulfill the objective set by the national curriculum.

The present study aims to evaluate potential value of the selected English textbook through teachers' perception that how far they are agreed with the usefulness and productiveness of the textbook and how far it follows the instructions of national curriculum.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The selected participants of the present study are 50 college lecturers, teaching English at various colleges of district Sanghar and Hyderabad city, (Pakistan). Their responses were analyzed by using different statistical tools.

### 3.2 MATERIAL

The data for the present study was Intermediate English textbook-I published by Sindh textbook board Jamshoro.

### 3.3 INSTRUMENT

For the present study, a questionnaire was adapted from the checklists by Donough and Shaw (2003), and Litz (2205). It comprised of 50 questions, easy to comprehend for the participants, the researcher has made few changes regarding placing synonyms for difficult words.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

For the present study, quantitative data was obtained through the questionnaires. Data collection procedure was performed in District Sanghar and Hyderabad City, (Pakistan) through randomly selected English college teachers at intermediate level. First of all, they were briefed about the present study. They were given also a free choice to withdraw at any point. The collected data was tabulated through SPSS25.0 Descriptive statistics, especially percentages, were used for analyzing the data. For qualitative data, content analysis of English textbook for first year (i.e Book-I) was carried out.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study describe teachers' perception about the effectiveness and appropriateness of Intermediate English Textbook-I being used in the province of Sindh. Data gathered from the questionnaires have been categorized into 5 main subscales & factors used to evaluate efficiency of the book. These were physical layouts, content, appropriateness.

### 4.1 PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE OF THE TEXT BOOK

OUTLINE AND PLANNING	STONGLY AGREED	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STONGLY DISAGREE
The textbook is locally available	54%	46%	0%	0%	0%
It is cost effective	16%	40%	32%	16%	0%
The physical appearance is attractive	4%	16%	30%	42%	8%
The layout is clear	8%	30%	32%	30%	0%
The font size and type used in the book is appropriate	2%	38%	26%	30%	4%
Printing quality of the textbook is good	2%	26%	26%	36%	10%
The textbook has sufficient number of pictures to make the situation life like	0%	2%	26%	42%	30%
In the textbook there is enough white space available to create clarity	0%	16%	30%	36%	18%
The present edition of the textbook has been regularly revised	2%	2%	14%	42%	40%
The textbook is colorful	0%	0%	14%	42%	44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	9%	22%	23%	31%	15%

Physical attributes refer to the physical appearance, layout, font size, printing quality, appropriate. Number of pictures and colorful appearance of the textbook. Results in percentages about the responses are presented in the following tables:

As far as its physical attributes are concerned most of the participants are agreed on its market availability and cost effectiveness. But more than half of the teachers have disagreed with the statements stating that the physical appearance of the textbook is attractive and the printing quality of the book is good as well as it contains appropriate pictures that make the situation life like. Though 38% of the participants are agreed on the appropriateness of the font size of the textbook but a more than half of the teachers aren't looked satisfied on attractive appearance and colorful nature of the textbook. 42% of the teachers also complained that the textbook is devoid of the pictures, that depicts life like situation. 47% teachers fond the book unattractive so over all physical impact of the textbook isn't appealing in the eyes of the teachers.

#### 4.2 EFFICIENT OUTLAY OF OBJECTIVES

OUTLINE AND PLANNING	STONGLY AGREED	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STONGLY DISAGREE
The content of the textbook covers the objectives given in the national curriculum	0%	0%	28%	52%	20%
The teaching objective are explicitly specified in the textbook	0%	2%	22%	60%	16%
The objectives specified in the textbook are implanted in the textbook	0%	6%	30%	52%	12%
The approach and objective recommend dint eh textbook are socially accepted to the target community.	0%	12%	26%	50%	12%
The approach and objectives recommended in the textbook are educationally accepted to the targeted community.	0%	20%	18%	60%	2%
The textbook raises students interest in learning English more	4%	10%	16%	52%	18%
The teaching objectives are in textbook are achievable	0%	16%	10%	60%	14%
The teaching objectives are in the textbook are measurable	2%	16%	30%	40%	12%
The objective make a balance between the four main skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.	0%	16%	30%	42%	12%
Developing students language competence is one of the objectives of the textbook.	0%	8%	26%	54%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>13%</b>

As shown by the above results, the content of the textbook did not cover the set objectives, recommended by National Curriculum (Revised, 2006). Consequently, they are not in planted in the textbook throughout.. 70% of teaching community doesn't think that the book raises students interest in learning English more. 54% of the teachers didn't see any balance of four language skills in the textbook i.e listening, speaking reading and writing. Only reading comprehension is most emphasized with little writing activities.

#### 4.3 PEDAGOGIC ANALYSIS

OUTLINE AND PLANNING	STRONGLY AGREED	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The textbook for grade eleven is methodologically in line with current world wide theories and practices of language learning	0%	6%	20%	54%	20%
The material of English textbook for grade eleven can be used to teach English language effectively	0%	6%	16%	62%	16%
The book contain adequate formal learner achievements	2%	8%	32%	46%	12%
The text book enable the students to use English outside the classroom	0%	8%	22%	56%	14%
The activities given in the textbook can be carried out in the class through different English language teaching methodologies.	0%	8%	22%	56%	14%
The exercises and activities have clear instructions	0%	32%	34%	26%	8%
The exercises and activities have clear instructions the activities given in the book are student centered	8%	34%	26%	28%	4%
The student are encourage to take some responsibility of language learning	2%	20%	22%	48%	8%
The textbook is user (teacher) friendly	0%	40%	16%	36%	8%
There is a variety of topics in the textbook	4%	36%	20%	32%	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>11 %</b>

The third subscale of the questionnaire is related to teaching analysis. For the first statement that the textbook is methodologically in line with current world wise theories and practices of language learning is entirely negated by almost 74% of the teachers as the book has been designed to be taught by old grammar and translation method. It doesn't cater with current language learning methods like, direct method, audio-lingual method, CLL etc. Almost three fourth percent of the participants didn't find this book useful for teaching English language effectively. For majority of the teachers this book is also didn't enable the students to speak English outside the classroom. More than 50% of teachers agreed on clear cut instructions

regarding exercises and activities in the book. They are also agreed that exercises and activities are students centered. 48% of the teachers positively think that through doing the textbook activities to some extent students can develop language learning ability within. As far as varieties of the topics are concerned 20% teachers seem to be agreed with the statement, otherwise 44.2% of the teachers found the chapters boring & outdated.

#### 4.4 LANGUAGE SKILLS & SUB SKILLS

OUTLINE AND PLANNING	STRONGLY AGREED	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
There is sufficient reading material. (there is a range of varied and interesting reading text that can engage students cognitively and effectively)	2%	22%	24%	44%	10%
The contents helps students develop reading comprehensions skills	2%	36%	20%	34%	8%
The length of the reading text is appropriate	0%	34%	20%	40%	6%
Writing activities are helpful for improving for students writing skills	8%	30%	18%	38%	6%
The writing task enhance free writing opportunities for all the students	6%	14%	30%	44%	6%
New vocabulary items appear in each unit	2%	40%	18%	20%	20%
There is a list of vocabulary items tagged at the end of the textbook	2%	12%	20%	44%	24%
The exercise items are relevant to the unit or chapter of the textbook	0%	22%	40%	22%	14%
Exercise item are valid from examination point of view	8%	32%	22%	26%	18%
The textbook includes adequate material for pronunciation practice	0%	12%	20%	36%	32%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>34.8%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>

The fourth important sub-scale was language skills. Two-third of the teachers did not find a balance of four language skills in the textbook. The textbook rather focused on only one skill, and that is continuous reading of the chapters. There was no listening and speaking material that foster communicative skills in the student. A close analysis of the exercises and units highlighted the fact that the book mainly focused on controlled writings like “answer the given questions” and “fill in the blanks”. This practice didn’t encourage the students to write freely and use imaginative faculty to produce something creative. This book wasn’t designed to follow any language model like communicative language teaching or community language learning, (CLL), which actually is the stressing need of modern language teaching methods. A language expert, Catch cart (1989), opined that textbooks should follow a certain language model for cooperating realism in materials that motivates learners towards developing language efficiency.

#### 4.5 APPROPRIACY

OUTLINE AND PLANNING	STRONGLY AGREED	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The content of the textbook is compatible to back ground knowledge of the student	8%	14%	16%	46%	16%
The content is compatible to the needs of the students	0%	20%	32%	30%	18%
The content is appropriate to the students interest	0%	18%	12%	54%	16%
The material of textbook is age appropriate for the student (understanding level)	2%	22%	20%	36%	20%
The content of the textbook is free from gender biasness	0%	44%	20%	24%	12%
Tasks and activities are efficiently graded according to complexity	6%	14%	24%	52%	4%
The language of the textbook is easily understood by student	0%	20%	22%	54%	4%
The language of the textbook is highly authentic (related to life example)	2%	12%	24%	52%	10%
The students can easily improve English language with the help of this textbook	0%	18%	22%	44%	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>

The fifth sub-scale was appropriacy of the content. More than half of the teachers disagreed with the compatibility of the content with the background knowledge of the students. The chapters like “The Wolves of Cernogratz” and by “Car across

Europe” are not culturally native to the Pakistani learners. 60% of the teachers found the book boring. There is nothing to attract students towards its themes & topics. Though some percentage of the teachers are agreed to find the language of the book is easy to understand but for many of the teachers the chapter, like “Silence” is rather philosophical and is beyond students understanding. Majority of the teachers accepted the unbiased nature of the textbook. More than half of the teachers didn’t find the exercises in sequence i.e. easily to complex. It remained unchallenging to the students. For some teachers, the language of the book is easy to understand like the chapter “Pakistan Zindabad” and “My Bank Account”. But some chapters contain scientific terms like “Scientific evidence & Logical order seem to be unfamiliar to most of the students.

As far as authenticity of the language of the book is concerned, more than half of the teachers showed disagreement as the contents of the book didn’t create life like situation. The chapters are either ideological like “Pakistan Zindabad” or informative like “United Nation”. There was no life like situation or role play that foster the interest of students to learn the language through fun.

## 5 FINDINGS

On the basis of above results, the major findings regarding the selected English textbook show some major shortfalls, that it does not cater to the needs of the students at intermediate level. The book has many flaws regarding its physical layouts, content, outlay of objectives, activities and language skills. One major finding was that the book is physically or apparently doesn’t unattractive to the readers. There are no colorful pictures that are analogous to the themes or create life like situation. As far as its contents is concerned, almost all the teachers found it outdated and boring. The unit like “Miracle of Radio” has nothing to do with this present internet oriented world. Some units are very lengthy or, some are very short like “Air Travel” and “Science & Scientist” respectively. Another major finding is that there is no room for developing listening and oral skills in the textbook. Only reading comprehension is much emphasized throughout the book. As far as exercises are concerned. They are also confined to the specific writings like answering the questions. The grammar portion also offers only the right form of verbs in blanks. Another negative impression of the textbook is lack of cultural contents. The unit i.e. “Wolves of Cernogratz” and “By car across Europe” has nothing to do with developing cultural background of the native learners. The book is also lack of everyday conversation which is the basic need of Pakistani ESL learners. Another basic flaw in the textbook is that it can’t be properly taught by current language learning methods like communication language teaching and community language learning. It also doesn’t follow the clear cut instructions of national curriculum, 2006, which is based on competencies.

The major flaw of the textbook is that, it has not been revised or updated since its publication. Another main deficiency of the textbook lies in its lack of set objectives, as they are always mentioned in the beginning of every English textbook like “Oxford Progressive English” by Rachel Redford.

## 6 CONCLUSION

In the light of above findings of the study, a conclusion could be drawn out regarding the Intermediate English Textbook-I (Prose) published by Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro, is that it provides, inadequate and outdated material to English language learners at intermediate level. The textbook has many shortfalls in its physical appearance, contents, outlay of objectives, activities and language skills. Through using the textbook the learners can’t develop language skills, specially oral and writing skills. Naturally teachers don’t recommend it for future learners. The themes and topics are not culturally attractive to the native learners. The out dated chapters like “Miracle of Radio” & “My bank account” seem to be unproductive in present internet oriented world. Some units are over simplified like “Science & Society” & “Science & Scientists”. One unit is much philosophical i.e. “Salience” that is beyond the comprehension of grade Eleventh Students. Teaching objectives are also not planted in the textbook. Consequently, the book is considered to be outdated as the textbook has been designed to be taught by “old grammar & translation method” The physical impact of the textbook is not also appealing as the textbook is devoid of colorful Pictures which create life like situation.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The book needs to be changed completely that it could be aligned with the current methodologies of English language learning.
- New edition of the textbook must contain some new interesting scientific and cultural oriented units. There should be some colorful pictures that will provide life like situation.
- The activities and exercises should encourage pair or group work. There should be balance of four language skills that learners would practice all the skills simultaneously.

There should be some units regarding scenic beauty of Northern areas of Pakistan instead of depicting European countries. Some ethical-based units should be introduced presenting moral virtues for uplifting the ethical level of the students. There should be major role of the college teachers in designing the future syllabus for intermediate learners. As recommended by Mahmood (2011). In the next addition of the textbook at intermediate level, a practical implementation of national curriculum revised (2006) should be observed.

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