Evaluation of EFL Textbook 'Traveller Elementary' from the Perspective of Instructors and University Students

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, foreign language teaching intends to make students obtain the required competence so as to get the linguistic knowledge needed in a foreign language. With this respect, a textbook should supply to the users as much as possible, be satisfactory to fit into the syllabus, and meet all the needs and expectations of the students during the learning process in order to achieve required targets in foreign language learning. Particularly in English Language Teaching, textbooks as the basic instructional materials are expected to build learners' four skills that are speaking, listening, reading and writing. Depending on this basic assumption, this study attempts to get in-depth evaluation of the textbook in terms of methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, topic, social and cultural values by taking into consideration university first year students and their instructors' evaluations, observations, beliefs, and suggestions on the textbook. From the students' perspectives, results reveal that the textbook is moderately efficient in terms of methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, topic, social and cultural values; however, instructors find some parts of the textbook weak; especially some aspects of language skills, practicality, social and cultural values. As a result, the textbook is neither completely insufficient nor perfectly adequate. At the end of the study some suggestions for instructors and material writers are provided.

1. INTRODUCTION

A prominent component in schooling of English as a foreign language is the textbook, and it is usually discussed that the textbook is an almost global instrument of English language teaching (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Thus, teachers are directly or indirectly in charge of realizing learners' language skills which are transmitted to the use of English as a Foreign Language (Harmer, 1991). That is to say, if instructors focus on skills, this aids students in approaching foreign language with more success together with more self-assurance and more motivation. Besides, teachers are expected to take into consideration learners' requirements and a syllabus that is planned and organized according to the content of the textbook used in foreign

language learning and teaching. To sum up, foreign language teachers and textbooks are both substantial elements that influence the attainment of main language skills.

When the literature is reviewed, several types of material evaluation can be found. For instance, Cunningsworth (1995) maintains three types of material evaluation as pre-use evaluation which offers predictions about potential values, in-use evaluation which measures materials during the usage process, post-evaluation which aims at achieving actual assessment results of materials after using it. Ellis (1997) develops this method by defining predictive and retrospective evaluations. Predictive evaluation mainly represents the choice of material. Teachers decide available materials for them, and then they determine materials which best fit to their aims. In this respect, teachers make their evaluations either depending on experienced experts or relying on their own observations and assessments. Nunan (1991) also suggests that there are two steps; the first is matching the materials with the aims and goals of the teaching program, and the second refers to ensuring the consistency with teachers' perceptions about the nature of language and learning, and with learners' attitudes, beliefs and preferences. McDonough and Shaw (1993) suggest an external examination of textbooks in order to measure general cover of the book such as intended audience, proficiency level, context of use, organization of teaching material, and the views of the author on language and methodology, and relationship between language and the learner. Later, they continue in-depth evaluation by going beyond external characteristic of textbooks. This internal evaluation requires more detailed investigation; and they emphasize the effective internal analysis basing on the usability, the generalizability, the adaptability and the flexibility factors. Graves (2000) offers two types of material evaluation, formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation intends to reveal effective aspects of textbooks in order to make essential changes during teaching process. In other words, it aims at fulfilling students' language learning needs as well as meeting language program necessities. Besides, summative evaluation measures how much the curriculum works, and it is an assessment to get information about the purposes of the course, the efficiency of the course on students, the achievement of materials, etc. Briefly, it is a detailed analysis that tries to find out whether the course, with its all components and variables, develops and implements in a straightforward way (Richards, 2001).

Fundamentally, textbook evaluation is conducted through checklists. Cunningsworth (1995) suggests an expansive evaluative checklist that involves criteria for aims and objectives, design and organization, language content, skills, topics, methodology, practical consideration. His checklist proposes to gather information about grading and recycling, presentation and practice of new instructions. It deals with *aims and approaches* which questions the match between teaching programs' aims and students' needs and considers the suitability to different contexts. *Design and organization* contains concerns on learners, the section focuses on whether the material makes the learning easier or not. The concerns such as the organization and sequence of content, the rate of recycling and revision, the possibility of individual study are related to the design and organization. *Language and content* involves the appropriateness of grammar and vocabulary items, the organization of language and the suitable use of language according to context, skills, topic, methodology, teachers' manuals, practical considerations. The part, *Skills,* is about the balance of four skills according to course aims and syllabus requirements. The section asks whether the materials fit students' needs and levels, tries to find out the sufficiency of integrated skills and the authenticity of the materials. *Topic* involves their quality in terms of suitability to students' interests, their ability to raise

awareness of students, the representation of other groups and minorities. *Methodology* means the approaches and techniques, the involvement of communicative abilities and the sufficiency to develop learning strategies and autonomy of students. *Teachers' books* deals with the adequacy of the guidance of teachers' book, whether the teachers' book is supportive enough or not. *Practical considerations* ask whether the cost of materials are reasonable and also involve concerns about durability, availability, attractiveness and use of the course book.

Taking the students and instructors' perceptions in to consideration in a detailed way, this study is carried out in order to evaluate the book by trying to examine the following research questions:

RQ1: Is the textbook 'Traveller Elementary' appropriate from the perspectives of students and their instructors in terms of methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, topic, social and cultural values?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of the students on the textbook considering their success in the English course?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this descriptive study, quantitative and qualitative research methodology was used. In the quantitative part, a survey method was used as a sub-category. The required data were collected through a questionnaire that was designed by researchers. The questionnaire was conducted in Çanakkale at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University to the first year students who took compulsory English language course at the Faculty of Education. In the light of the piloting and expert opinions, each part of the questionnaire was organized. In the qualitative part, instructors wrote their evaluations about the textbook on a semi-structured interview form that was designed by the researchers and two experts in the field. Their answers were discussed after they wrote their ideas to check for any misunderstandings.

2.1 Pilot Study

The ambiguous items in the questionnaire were changed after consulting the experts in the field. Then, students' questionnaire was piloted to 105 students who took Compulsory English Language Course at the Faculty of Education. During piloting process, students' questionnaires which were constructed and designed after reviewing literature and taking experts' opinion were administered. The student's questionnaire consisted of 43 items categorized under four headings. The results of the pilot study demonstrate that the reliability coefficiency of the students' questionnaire is .95 which is expected as high value. This value is acceptable according to Büyüköztürk (2006) who recommends levels of *.70* or greater for scales like these.

3. MAIN STUDY

3.1 Setting and Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 380 first year students who were taking Compulsory English Language Course and three instructors who were giving Compulsory English Language Course at Faculty of Education at that time. They all used the textbook 'Traveller'.

When the success score of the students is examined, 169 of them have 3 and above success score, 164 of them have success scores between 2.00 and 2.99 and, 47 of them have under 2.00 success score. Most of the participants can be accepted successful in English course since %87.7 of students has the GPA of more than 2.00.

The participants were from different departments such as Information and Communication Technologies Teaching, Geography Teaching, Primary Science Teaching, Music Education, Preschool Teaching, Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Primary Teaching, Social Studies Education, Art and Painting Education.

3.2 Materials

Two instruments were used in order to gather data from the students and instructors. They were the student questionnaire and the instructor interview form, both of which were prepared by the researchers. Before constructing the questionnaire, item pool was formed after reviewing the relevant literature (Ansary and Babaii, 2002; Byrd, 2001; Cunningsworth 1984; Littlejohn, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Ur, 1996).

In order to answer the research questions, a questionnaire for students was constructed by the researchers. The students' questionnaire had two parts; the first part asked each participant's success score in the English course and their department, and another part for the checklist which asked students' evaluation about textbook's methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, social and cultural values. 5-point Likert-type Scale (5=Strongly Agree; 1=Strongly Disagree) is used in order to find out the students' evaluations of English textbook.

On the other hand, the interview form was prepared in the light of literature and experts' opinions for instructors in order to evaluate their perceptions in terms of methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, and social and cultural values of the textbook Also, instructors' interview forms were divided into four headings like students' questionnaire, and at the end of this form, there was extra part for instructors so as to express their further opinions and suggestions for their textbook.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

After getting permission for administering the students' questionnaire, 380 participants filled out the questionnaire. The administering process took nearly two weeks. While the students were doing questionnaire, instructors were asked to fill out the table which showed positive and negative sides of the textbook in terms of methodology and the language content, practicality, language skills, social and cultural values.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. To analyze the results of the questionnaire descriptive statistics like mean scores were calculated. The researchers also calculated the reliability of the main study and its analysis on 43 items demonstrated that the questionnaire had a high degree of reliability coefficiency with a value .95 which again indicates a high reliability for the survey.

On the other hand, for analyzing the data gathered from the instructors' interview, qualitative techniques were utilized. Instructors' interview papers were examined and

interpreted according to the checklist to get instructors' evaluations, observations, beliefs and suggestions on the textbook. Content analysis using Microsoft Excel (Meyer & Avery, 2009) was done to determine the common and different perceptions of the instructors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To investigate the evaluation of the textbook from the perspectives of university students and their instructors and to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook, the findings of the study are presented under each research question.

RQ1: Is the textbook 'Traveller Elementary' appropriate from the perspectives of students and their instructors in terms of methodology and language content, language skills, practicality, social and cultural values?

Table 1. *Students' Evaluations of the Methodology and Language Content of the Textbook*

Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- The content of the course book identifies areas of my needs, interests and purposes.	380	**3.39**	1.035
2- There is a balance between subject-specific language items and skills in language use.	380	**3.27**	1.002
3- Learning activities have outcomes or products which will help me to evaluate my performance.	380	3.10	1.040
4- There is an active learner involvement.	380	3.15	1.109
5- The course book is sensitive to different learning styles.	380	3.07	1.060
6- There is a clear guidance on how to use the material.	380	3.11	1.014
7- The materials make a positive contribution to sustaining my motivation.	380	2.98	1.072
8- The course book encourages me to use language creatively.	380	**2.68**	1.059
9- Approaches to language learning are appropriate to the learning/teaching situation.	380	3.16	1.001
10- Approaches are satisfactory for learning of skills and communication.	380	2.99	1.043
11- There is an explicit and conscious focus on rules and explanations.	380	3.25	1.084
12- There are opportunities for me to discover the patterns in the first place.	380	3.01	1.074
13- There are enough materials for independent work.	380	**2.75**	1.129
14- The communicative activities and language work are carefully integrated.	380	3.10	.987
15- The language items are dealt with through a clear presentation stage.	380	3.16	1.048
16- The tasks and activities are creative.	380	3.04	1.072
17- Real spoken and written materials are exposed adequately.	380	3.03	1.065
TOTAL	380	**3.07**	1.052
Valid N (listwise)	380		

Table 1 indicates that the total mean value of the participants' answers about the methodology and language content of the textbook is 3.07 (SD=1.05). Taking this mean value into consideration, it can be accepted that students find the methodology and language content of their textbook moderate. Based on the results obtained from item 1 which is the highest preferred one, it can be concluded that the content of the textbook moderately identifies areas of students' needs, interests and purposes (M = 3.39, SD = 1.03). According the item 2 with the second highest value, most of the students consider that there is a balance between subject-specific language items (grammar, vocabulary, discourse structure) and skills in language use (M = 3.27, SD = 1.00). On the other hand, it can be indicated that the textbook doesn't satisfactorily encourage students to use language creatively as it can be seen in item 8 which has the lowest mean value (M = 2.68, SD = 1.05). When item 13 is taken into consideration, the participants do not find the textbook satisfying in terms of the materials for independent work. (M = 2.75, SD = 1.12). All in all, it may be assumed that students in general have neutral perceptions in terms of methodology and language content of the textbook.

Table 2. *Students' Evaluations of the Language Skills of the Textbook*

Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- Practice in all four skills is included and it is balanced.	380	**3.38**	1.104
2- The material progresses in terms of complexity and difficulty.	380	3.24	1.052
3- The activities include the integration of skills in realistic contexts.	380	3.12	1.035
4- The course book uses authentic materials for all skills at an appropriate level.	380	**2.94**	1.025
5- There are both controlled and communicative exercises of speaking and writing in terms of accuracy and fluency.	380	3.15	1.011
6- Listening material is well recorded, as authentic as possible, accompanied by background information, questions and activities in a meaningful context.	380	**2.95**	1.136
7- There is enough emphasis on spoken English in the course book.	380	2.97	1.145
8- Reading passages and associated activities are suitable for my levels, interests, etc.	380	3.21	1.150
9- There is a focus on the development of reading skills and strategies.	380	3.19	.982
10- The reading material is linked to other skills work.	380	3.25	1.024
11- There is an appropriate progression and variety of task in writing.	380	3.18	1.062
12- There is emphasis on accuracy in writing tasks.	380	**3.34**	1.069
TOTAL	380	**3.16**	1.066
Valid N (listwise)	380		

As Table 2 demonstrates, the overall value regarding the responses given to the language skills of the textbook indicates that the textbook is moderately efficient in terms of reading, listening, writing and speaking (M = 3.16, SD = 1.06). The item 18 (M = 3.38, SD = 1.10) and the item 29 (M = 3.34, SD =1.06) have the highest mean values respectively. The mean value of the item 18 indicates that the students are satisfied with practice in all four skills and their balance in tasks. Additionally, as the mean score of item 29 shows, participants consider that there is enough emphasis on accuracy in writing tasks. On the other hand, the item 21 (M = 2.94, SD = 1.02) and the item 24 (M = 2.95, SD = 1.13) have the lowest mean values respectively. Namely, students consider that the textbook is not satisfying in terms of authentic materials for all skills at an appropriate level, and the students need better recorded listening materials which are as authentic as possible, accompanied by background information, questions and activities in a meaningful context.

Briefly, the mean scores of participants' evaluations indicate that most of the students find the presentation of the language skills moderate, and they need more support and variety in writing, reading, listening and speaking activities and tasks in the textbook.

Table 3. *Students' Evaluations of the Practical Considerations of the Textbook*

Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- All components are published and available.	380	**2.84**	1.217
2- There is a list of new vocabulary, and it shows where each word is first introduced.	380	3.61	1.142
3- It is easy to find my way around the course book, and the layout is clear.	380	3.23	1.100
4- The artwork and typefaces are functional, colourful and appealing.	380	**3.84**	1.038
5- The style of the visuals (photographs, line drawings, cartoons) is acceptable to me.	380	**3.77**	1.095
6- The course book uses authentic material at an appropriate level.	380	3.40	1.054
7- There are computer-based and web-based support materials.	380	3.21	1.123
8- The material is clearly organized and easy to access.	380	3.24	1.081
TOTAL	380	**3.39**	1.106
Valid N (listwise)	380		

Table 3 presents that the total mean value is 3.39 (M = 3.39, SD = 1.10). In other words, the practicality of the textbook is a somehow satisfying aspect for the participants. What is more, it can be inferred from the item 33 (M = 3.84, SD = 1.03) and the item 34 (M = 3.77, SD = 1.09) that the students find the artwork and typefaces highly functional, colourful and appealing in the textbook. Furthermore, they state that the style of the visuals such as photographs, line drawings, cartoons is acceptable to them and appropriate for their learning styles. However, the students reflect low appreciation to the availability, item 30 "All components are published and available" has the lowest means value in this part (M = 2.84, SD = 1.21).

Table 4. *Students' Evaluations of the Topic, Social and Cultural Values*

Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- The content is realistic, reflecting topics and events and texts from real world situations.	380	**3.27**	1.060
2- The topics are sophisticated enough in content, yet within my language level.	380	3.19	1.101
3- The social and cultural contexts in the course book are comprehensible.	380	**3.37**	1.031
4- Other groups are represented, with reference to ethnic origin, occupation, disability, etc.	380	**3.27**	1.084
5- The materials are relevant/ suitable/ appropriate to my cultural context and sensitive to my values and beliefs.	380	3.21	1.130
6- The activities relate to my interests and real-life tasks.	380	3.07	1.155
TOTAL	380	3.23	1.093
Valid N (listwise)	380		

According to Table 4, the most preferred item is item 40 in this part (M = 3.37, SD = 1.03). That means students think that the social and cultural contexts in the textbook are comprehensible. Additionally, the item 38 (M = 3.27, SD = 1.06) and the item 41 (M = 3.27, SD = 1.08) also have high mean values when compared to the other items. It can be confirmed that the textbook provides realistic content, topics, events and texts from real world situations. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the textbook is adequately sensitive to the representation of other groups, ethnic origin, occupation, disability, etc. Additionally, the mean score of the item 42 has the high value (M = 3.21, SD = 1.13). It can be inferred that students find the materials relevant and appropriate to their cultural context and sensitive to their values and beliefs. On the other hand, the mean value of item 43 is not low however, it is the lowest mean value in this part (M = 3.07, SD = 1.15). It can be assumed that the students need more activities which arouse their interests and include real-life tasks.

In order to find out the instructors' perceptions on the course book, they were asked to write their positive and negative thoughts about the presentation of the textbook's methodology, language content, language skills, practicality, social and cultural values. Additionally, there was extra part for instructors so as to express their own opinions and suggestions for their textbook at the end.

Instructor 1:

Instructor 1 considers that the language content and methodology of the textbook are not interesting for the students but the workbook contains more active and interesting exercises when compared to the textbook. Also, reading and listening activities are efficient but they cannot be carried out due to the lack of technological equipment in the classroom. Besides, writing subjects do not attract students' attention and they are far from the authenticity. It is also pointed out that speaking activities are passive, incompatible with the teaching periods and not efficient due to this inadequacy.

In terms of visual design and practicality, it is posited that the textbook's sequence of the topic is very clear and fluent, and does not confuse students' minds. Nevertheless, the visual design of the book and the writing quality are not clear. However, the pictures and colors used are found complex; thus, the motivation of the students decreases. Besides, it is emphasized that the images in the book are far from students' perception of the reality and their world knowledge.

Regarding social and cultural values, it is posited that the book focuses on British culture in a dominant way and contains unnecessary information about culture. Therefore, the students are unable to have clear information about social and cultural values, and this creates a gap between the book and the perception of the students' reality. At the same time, a somewhat male-dominated view is felt in some parts of the book.

As a conclusion, it is indicated that the price is too much for the students and they usually purchase at second-hand. In this case, students have trouble in participating in the class tasks and activities since the books are scribbled and its exercises are done. It is also emphasized that students cannot attend language skills activities efficiently, and they cannot complete tasks satisfactorily due to the lack of textbook's visual and audio supporters.

Instructor 2:

Instructor 2 points out that the guidance of the grammar bank and the teacher's book is effective and the combination of the student's book and the workbook is a positive feature. Another positive feature is that it has a simple list of vocabulary items and irregular verbs are adequately presented. It is especially expressed that the round-up chapters are very useful in terms of reinforcement. However, students have difficulty in keeping the interest and motivation alive because language skills are not balanced. Some information and data have become out-of-date, and the self-evaluation sections are not sufficient.

Additionally, the exercises are reinforced by the workbook at an optimum level in terms of grammar and vocabulary learning / teaching; however, reading texts do not systematically increase in length; the required pre-writing activities are inadequate. The listening activities are so discordant that students cannot capture the topic. Moreover, the speaking exercises are far from content, and this causes the students to be reluctant to speak.

The visual design has colors that are not confusing and the use of soft colors in the cover design has a positive effect on the students. Yet, the transitions of activities and exercises are harsh and / or fragile, and this obstructs the integration of communication and language activities; for instance, the reading text is on one page and the exercises are on another page, and this is what weakens the design and practicality.

Consequently, it is emphasized that it is difficult to present all the activities in the textbook within 3 hours and the class periods are insufficient. Besides, the physical conditions and technological equipment of all classrooms are not suitable for teaching and learning effectively. On the other hand, the proficiency level of the students is not sufficient for the course so the desired success for language learning could not be achieved. In short, the lack of the class hours, the inadequacy of language levels of students, and the inability of the physical environment of the classrooms prevent them from attaining the goals of the course. In this

context, the course book should be compatible with the student in terms of content and curriculum, and the physical environment should support them.

Instructor 3:

Instructor 3 points out that the student's book and workbook are sufficient in terms of grammar and the topics are easily completed; however, the exercises on vocabulary items are inadequate. In addition, reading and listening activities and exercises are useful; but writing and speaking activities are not appropriate for the learners.

It is stated the book is adequate and appropriate in terms of visual design and practicality. Nevertheless, socio-cultural perspectives are not suitable for students' culture of life and experience in Turkey.

As a last word, it is pointed out that a course book should be chosen which makes it easier for students to understand, and which is easier to access and implement.

Consequently, instructors share the common points while evaluating the textbook; however, they have different perceptions on some aspects of the textbook as listed below.

Table 5. *The Common and Different Perceptions of the Instructors*

The Common Points of the Instructors	*The Different Perceptions of the Instructors*
Workbook is more useful and efficient.	Vocabulary exercises in the workbook are inadequate.
Visual design and practicality are appropriate.	The writing quality is not clear in some parts of the textbook.
It is expensive and not easy to access.	Reading activities are not integrated to the other skills.
Class hours are insufficient to implement the textbook completely.	Pre-writing activities are inadequate.
Students' proficiency level is not adequate to attain the textbook's language skills.	Speaking tasks are not related to the content.
Listening activities are efficient but the technological equipment is not suitable to fulfill these tasks.	Listening activities are not linear to capture the topic.
Social and cultural values are not related to the students' cultural values.	Male-dominated view is felt in some parts of the book.
The textbook is far from students' perception of the reality and their world knowledge.	Reading and listening activities are useful while writing and speaking tasks are insufficient.

Though they have common points especially regarding the textbook's practicality and social and cultural values, they have different perceptions regarding language content of the textbook and representation of language skills.

RQ2: Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of the students on the textbook considering their success in the English course?

According to non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test, item 1 *'The content of the course book identifies areas of my needs, interests and purposes.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 6.042, p<.05], item 6 *'There is a clear guidance on how to use the material.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 6.448, p<.05], item 25 *'Reading passages and associated activities are suitable for my levels, interests, etc.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 18.654, p<.05], item 40 *'The social and cultural contexts in the course book are comprehensible.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 11.527, p<.05], item 42 *'The materials are relevant/ suitable/ appropriate to my cultural context and sensitive to my values and beliefs.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 7.175, p<.05], item 43 *'The activities relate to my interests and real-life tasks.'* [$X^2_{(2)}$ = 6.306, p<.05] indicate that there are significant differences between students' perceptions of the textbook and their academic success. That is to say; in contrast to the students who have lower success score, the students who have higher success score reflect positive perceptions about the textbook related with the suitability of the textbook to their aims, needs, interests, levels, values, beliefs, as well as social and cultural context.

In terms of the methodology and language content, students find their textbook moderately sufficient. In this respect, Tomlinson (2011) emphasizes that efficient materials require novelty, variety, appealing content and attractive presentation to provoke learners' curiosity, interest and attention. Basing on this statement, findings indicate that the content of the textbook identifies areas of students' needs, interests and purposes. Additionally, most of the students consider that there is a balance between subject-specific language items such as grammar, vocabulary, discourse structure and skills in language use. On the other hand, it seems that the textbook does not satisfactorily encourage students to use language creatively and the participants do not often find the textbook satisfying in terms of the materials for independent work. Also, students believe that the textbook sufficiently provides active learner involvement together with the sensitivity of different learning styles. It can be concluded that a textbook should provide more autonomy and self-studying mode to the students in order to stimulate their motivation and interests.

According to instructors, the language content and methodology of the textbook cannot capture students' attention although workbook contains more active tasks. They find some information and data out-of-date; thus, it is difficult to keep students' motivation alive. On the other hand, they agree that the textbook is sufficient in terms of grammar exercises since grammar topics are easily completed by students. Briefly, the textbook is found insufficient in terms of some aspects of language content, physical make-up and practical considerations. Therefore, instructors suggest that the textbook should be improved to achieve course goals effectively, and it should be revised and then adapted for the target group.

Language skills of the textbook are moderately efficient in terms of reading, listening, writing and speaking. Findings indicate that the students are highly satisfied with practice in all four skills and their balance in tasks and they consider that there is enough emphasis on accuracy in writing tasks. On the other hand, students moderately agree that the textbook is not satisfying in terms of authentic materials for all skills at an appropriate level, and the students need better recorded listening material which is as authentic as possible, accompanied by

background information, questions and activities in a meaningful context. In this respect, Stevick (1972) expresses the vital effect of relevant and utilitarian materials which provoke learner's world knowledge. In other words, real-world tasks create a feeling of relevance and utility together with the interest and motivation (Wright & Bolitho, 1993). Instructors also agree that writing and speaking exercises are sometimes far from content, and reading and listening tasks generally make students' mind confused. Therefore, the students are reluctant to attend language skills activities. Briefly, most of the students and instructors find the presentation of the language skills moderate; however, more support and variety in writing, reading, listening and speaking activities and tasks in the textbook are needed to develop their language skills.

Ur (1996) emphasizes the general criteria which is essential feature for good teaching and learning. This criterion refers to **the practicality** of the textbook which is a somehow satisfying aspect for the participants, and which is the highest mean value category in this study. Students and instructors usually consider that the artwork and typefaces highly functional, colourful and appealing in the textbook. Furthermore, the style of the visuals is efficient and appropriate for their learning styles as Erdem's (2008) study which finds the textbook is strong in terms of readability, type font and number of visuals. However, the students reflect low appreciation to the availability since components are difficult to find. In this respect, instructors also express that the price is too much for the students and they have difficulty in getting the textbook and its supplementary materials.

Wenden and Rubin (1987) underline the importance of being aware of cultural sensitivities in language learning environment. In this context, students think that the social and cultural contexts in the textbook are comprehensible. It seems that the textbook provides realistic content, topics, events and texts from real world situations. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the textbook is adequately sensitive to the representation of other groups, ethnic origin, occupation, disability, etc. Additionally, students find the materials highly relevant and appropriate to their cultural context and sensitive to their values and beliefs. Also, it can be assumed that the students need more activities which arouse their interests and include real-life tasks. On the other hand, instructors claim that social and cultural values are not appropriately represented, and the representation of the culture in the textbook is not close to the culture of students. At the same time, a somewhat male-dominated view is felt in some parts of the book. Like the findings of this study, Enomoto's (1999) survey indicates that cultural stereotypes are presented dominantly, and Otlowski's (2003) study reveals the misrepresentation of woman and minority groups. In this respect, a useful textbook should not carry cultural stereotypes and misrepresentation of woman and minority groups. If it does, it should be corrected or completely removed in order to make students improve positive attitudes towards the book.

In terms of students' success, their perceptions of the textbook are significantly different. This study reveals that the students who have higher success score reflect positive perceptions about the textbook related with the suitability of the textbook to their aims, needs, interests, levels, values, beliefs, as well as social and cultural context. In this respect, it can be indicated that students' level affects their attitudes towards the book positively or negatively. In other words, features of the book should be chosen according to their language level, success score and expectations.

This study reveals that the textbook is moderately adequate regarding to students' needs, interests and purposes while it is not comprehensible to use language creatively. Also, it lacks

enough materials for independent work. That is to say, students need autonomous language learning as well as a clear guidance on how to use the material.

Another important point of language learning is to sustain motivation. In this respect, the textbook is moderately sufficient since communicative activities and language tasks are somehow carefully integrated. Students need to be exposed adequately to the real spoken and written materials. In addition to this, activities and tasks require integration of skills in a realistic and meaningful context by using authentic materials at an appropriate level. Briefly, students need more support regarding authenticity and autonomy in writing, reading, listening and communicative activities and tasks in the textbook.

From the findings, it seems that the textbook is moderately effective in practicality such as design, organization, layout, visuals and availability. According to students, practicality is the strongest side of the textbook since students find it clearly organized and easily accessible. Besides this, social and cultural contexts seem comprehensible and relevant to students' cultural context and sensitive to their values and beliefs. Thus, based on the findings, students seem moderately satisfied with the representation of the textbook's topic, social and cultural values.

As a conclusion, there is not a perfect textbook to meet all requirements of teaching situations but it should be the best possibility to create the most efficient teaching/learning procedure as Cunningsworth (1984) mentions. This study also reveals that there are sufficient sides of the textbook in many respects, but at the same time it has several features that require improvement. In this context, textbooks should be evaluated externally and internally so as to determine the usability and adaptability of the textbook for better teaching/learning environment.

4. CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the evaluation of the textbook basing on these questions in general: what is there, what is required of users, and what is implied (Littlejohn, 1998). It is an attempt to be able to open the door so as to evaluate a number of features of the textbook. Because no assessment can be so comprehensive in order to evaluate a textbook completely; thus, another study is always needed. In this respect, another study can be conducted by using different checklists which are focused on different points of view, methods and approaches in the textbook evaluation. The priorities can vary according to researchers who utilize different criterion, and it causes them to achieve different results which may give a more detailed and comparable information about the textbook.

4.1 Implications for ELT

Basing on the results of the study, some implications can be drawn as in the following.

The textbook can be supported by supplementary materials for independent work so as to provide students' autonomous learning while fostering their motivation. Authenticity is also another important concern to raise motivation; therefore, the textbook can be supplemented by authentic materials at an appropriate level in order to be closer to students' world knowledge, and this can stimulate students to use language communicatively.

All components of the textbook can be available and cheap to increase students' participation in class tasks and activities effectively. Especially, visual and audio supplementary materials can be easily accessible to raise students' interest and motivation. The physical conditions and technological equipment of all classrooms can be improved to attain the goals of the course. It is not only important for the course aims but also crucial to keep students' attention alive inside the classroom.

The course hours and students' language proficiency are found inadequate by instructors. In this respect, a suitable textbook which is simplified in terms of the language skills can be selected according to students' language level.

Success score may determine students' attitudes towards the course. Therefore, it is important to take into account the success of students while choosing the textbook.

4.2 Suggestions for Material Writers

All students come from different educational backgrounds with different language proficiency levels. Furthermore, students from different departments can need different language learning procedures. Therefore, to fulfill all types of learners' needs and expectations, materials writers can provide variety of exercises and activities as extra materials for instructors so that the teachers can utilize the best one to meet the needs of their students.

Keeping the individual learning differences in mind, extra activities and exercises can be prepared in various forms to capture all students' attention on the topic so that instructors do not waste time in adapting learning tasks.

Both students and instructors find the price of the textbook expensive. For this reason, students' financial conditions should be taken into consideration by the material writers and by the publishers.

At last, material writers can periodically get thoughts of universities, instructors and students to determine what they need, what is required for their teaching/learning objectives and what satisfies their expectations.

4.3 Suggestions for Instructors

Cunningsworth (1995) demonstrates that textbooks affect what teachers teach and how they do it. As the main determiners of teaching process, there are some suggestions for instructors as follows:

Instructors can conduct action research about the evaluation of the textbook from consulting literature in order to recognize what their students need, which features of the textbook makes learning/teaching process easier, what kind of features help them balance individual differences, learning style differences, different educational backgrounds, language learning objectives. This can be accepted as the first step to know their students.

Most of the students think that textbooks do not help them to develop their spoken language. Therefore, teachers can teach them methods and strategies of using grammar topics in spoken language in order to increase productivity in foreign language. From some students' point of view, there are not enough grammatical and vocabulary instructions in the textbook; therefore, instructors can increase the amount of grammar presentation and vocabulary exercises. Additionally, instructors can provide students with creating effective language

teaching materials since they know their students better than material writers and they know how to motivate and stimulate them.

For students whose proficiency level of English is low, the textbook in which all of the explanations are presented in English creates a distance between the course and students. Regarding this distance, instructors can teach them specific strategies to understand explanations in the book. Additionally, instructors can clarify for the students what is going to be learnt and students can be clearly informed about learning objectives. Besides, they can help students to be ready before teaching instructions by making detailed explanations, giving extra tasks for independent work and giving wide range of examples.

4.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study is conducted only with the first year students and their course instructors at the Faculty of Education. The same study can be carried out with a larger sample with more diverse backgrounds in order to find more generalizable results. Similarly, the instructors' perceptions can be expanded in order to achieve wider comparative perspectives. For further research, different participants from different universities can be examined to get more conclusive findings. Additionally, the effects of gender differences on the textbook evaluation can be searched; thus, materials writers can choose various topics and activities in the book by taking students' genders into consideration.

Consequently, for further research, the teacher's book, workbook, audio and computer-based materials and supplementary book can be evaluated with specific checklists in a detailed way. For the efficiency of language teaching material, all the supplementary tools of the book should be analyzed one by one in detail.

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