

**AN EVALUATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE
ENGLISH (COMPULSORY) TEXTBOOK- II (PROSE)
PUBLISHED BY SINDH TEXTBOOK BOARD, JAMSHORO**

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the Intermediate English (Prose) Textbook published by Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan. A textbook is a well-prepared source that guides the guide (teacher) what to teach. If the textbooks are misused, the scope of the education can be harmful. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the content of the English (Prose) textbook-II for the Intermediate level published by the Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro Sindh. The study also aims to find out either the purpose of the book are well served or not. If we have an eagle eye on the contents, we find that it does not fulfill the requirement presented in the National Curriculum. And the other problem that we find is that the course content are outdated and have the vocabulary that is not easy to understand for the students of the intermediate level. Textbook serves both the purposes, good and bad. Either a good teacher uses an unsound textbook or and unsound teacher uses the well-produced textbook, in both the cases the process of education is affected. The literature review assures that textbook evaluation is an integral part of study. If good methods are involved in it, this is the way to improve the quality of the textbook for the future generation. Moreover, it gives the idea of strength and weaknesses of the material being taught.

This study aims to evaluate the intermediate English Textbook-II. It can be a valuable approach because it is for the first time that the research is made on such topic. One cannot find

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any known research about it. The research is unique because it evaluates the book that is being taught for more than thirty years.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to evaluate the Textbook. A research questionnaire was also design for the purpose. It was found that the textbook was not attractive due to lack of the features recommended in the guideline.

The first hypothesis of the research says, “The course contents of the Intermediate English Textbook - II published by Sindh textbook Board meet with the set objectives”. The findings contradict the hypothesis. It is observed that the course contents of the textbook do not meet with the set objectives.

The other hypothesis states “The intermediate English Textbook – II draws the attention of young learners to learn English as a secondary language”. The findings opposed the hypothesis. We do not find any attractive features in the Textbook that can get attention of young learners.

The research is concluded with suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of Intermediate English (Prose) Textbook-II published by Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan.

Background

Education is the process of enlightening the dark minds. It is the theory and practice of teaching; information about something or training in a particular subject. Of course, education in all advanced society is based on Curriculum, that is, the subject comprising a course of study in a school or college. Syllabus, the major part of the curriculum, contains principles, concepts and facts. These are the things used by the trainer or teacher to perform his/her academic activities to achieve educational goals. In this process of education, the vital part is played by the textbooks. A textbook is a well prepared source that guides the guide (teacher) what to teach. If the textbooks are misused, the scope of the education can be harmful. Gopang (2012). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the content of the English (Prose) textbook-II for the Intermediate level published by the Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro Sindh. The study also aims to find out

either the purpose of the book are well served or not. If we have an eagle eye on the contents, we find that it does not fulfill the requirement presented in the National Curriculum. In addition, the other problem is that the course contents are outdated and have the vocabulary that is not easy to understand for the students of the intermediate level. "The Textbook serves both the purposes, good and bad", claimed Kenneth (1986). Either a good teacher uses an unsound textbook or and unsound teacher uses the well-produced textbook, in both the cases the process of education is affected. Gopang(2012).

This study aims to evaluate the intermediate English Textbook-II. It can be a valuable approach because it is for the first time that the research is made on such topic. One cannot find any known research about it. The research is unique because it evaluates the book that is being taught for more than thirty years.

Statement of the Problem

For more than ten years, when the researcher studied the intermediate English Textbook-II, it has been criticized by both teachers and students for several different reasons. Some think that Textbook contains vocabulary that is outdated and very difficult. The others are of the opinion that the contents are very difficult, particularly for the students of the public sector. Some other teachers and students claimed that the Textbook does not represent their society or the problem of the society they live in. These all comments were observed from different sources, such as personal communication with colleagues and students, and online messages of several other teachers and students of Karachi city.

Significance of the Study

The study aims to investigate the above mentioned asserts made by the teachers and the students. The research is unique since the Intermediate English (Prose) Textbook-II has never been evaluated formally. The research is worthwhile for the teachers, supervisors and students alike. Because evaluation of the textbook is an important element of syllabus design. "Predictive evaluation precedes the implementation of a CB (course book), a retrospective evaluation examines material that has actually been used." (Suleman Dawood, 2006). Al-Saif (2005) presents textbook as "central to how EFL teaching is done." The basic purpose of material evaluation is to investigate to what extent the set curriculum objectives are achieved. In the

progress of curriculum, trialing and evaluation plays vital role. William and Burden's (1994) remarked, "The process of evaluation is a vital innovation." (p.18). Al-Ahaydeb (1986) thinks that there is an urgent need of material evaluation of English programme at both Intermediate and Secondary levels. The following study must have greater significance because it could reveal the strength and weaknesses of the textbook, and examine whether the textbook is justified or not. The result of this research may help the curriculum planners to make appropriate recommendation; to identify the language error and the factual mistakes. The course designing committee in the Ministry of Education may get idea for further improvement in the textbook quality.

Hypotheses:

The purpose of the research is to test the following Null Hypotheses.

Hypothesis One A: The course content of the textbook meet with the set objectives.

Null Hypothesis One B: There are no set principles to teach the textbook of English as a secondary language.

Hypothesis Two A: The intermediate English Textbook – II draws the attention of young learners to learn English as a secondary language.

Null Hypothesis Two B: The textbook is not attractive due to lack of the features recommended in the guideline.

Delimitations:

The study involves one of the possible sets of the criteria that are used in the textbook evaluation. Therefore, the results and conclusion depend on the used criteria. The interviews are informal and do not have any protocol and manuscripts. The other book such as: Poetry, Drama and Novel may be included in the future research studies of textbook evaluation. There will be fruitful advantages of these studies. The following research was concerned only with the evaluation of the Intermediate English (Prose) Textbook-II published by the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro Sindh, Pakistan.

Research Design:

In this research, the researcher evaluated the intermediate English Textbook –II in the light of National Curriculum for English compulsory – 2006.

Procedure:

In the investigation, the researcher critically analyzed the lessons of the Intermediate English Textbook – II in the light of the guidelines given in the National Curriculum of Pakistan for English (Compulsory). The curriculum booklet tells the design and pattern on which the effective textbook can be set. These principles are no doubt very comprehensive and can be applied to get desired results. These rules are set after long and keen observation of the experts and educationalists. The researcher has also examined the exercises given after every lesson. The exercises consist of translations composition, précis writing, phrasal verbs etc.

Observation and Analysis of the Results:

The booklet of National Curriculum of Pakistan for English (Compulsory) discusses a guideline for textbook designers and authors. It also provides the principles on which theme of textbook can be set.

When the researcher matched these guidelines with the intermediate English Textbook – II, it was found that the textbook does not fulfill the required features (except some places).

The guideline says, the student must be able to write variety of interpersonal and transactional text e.g. business letters/applications for job, résumé, advertisement etc.

Student must be able to analyze various business letters and compare various aspects of these. They must be able to write effective business writing in extend social environment for various purposes:

- Student must identify the rules of business letter and its parts.
- Understand the purpose.
- Understand the demand of the audience and address them appropriately.
- Give clear details and information that is meaningful.
- Appropriate use of language and style. Simple and selected vocabulary and tone according to the knowledge and the interest of the audience (recipient).
- Give special importance or value to the main idea (s).
- Students must understand the format fonts and spacing in order to improve their efficiency in letter writing. These things are not explained clearly in the lessons or exercises.
- Understand various job advertisements and write in response, an application, resume and a covering letter.

Unfortunately, intermediate English Textbook – II does not offer any such writing. There are the following questions regarding the topic.

“Write a letter to a friend or relative on the following topic.

- a. A request for a favour of some kind.
- b. Thanks for a favour received.
- c. Road safety.
- d. A plea for reader’s support of some good cause.
- e. A plea for the improvement of some public service.

(Reading – Text eight, exercise A & B, Pg: 95 intermediate English Textbook –II)

On the other place, we see the following letters.

Write a letter to a friend or relative:

- a. A suggestion for an excursion to some place of historical interest or science beauty.
- b. An account of a visit to the home of a close acquaintance of you both.
- c. An account of an unexpected meeting with an old acquaintance of you both.

(Reading – Text Nine, Exercise A pg: 124 intermediate English Textbook – II)

There are only two letters to be written on the above-mentioned topic.

Write a letter on any one topic.

- a. Inquiry to the head of an organization whether there is likely to be a post in the organization for a person with your qualification, which should be briefly stated.
- b. An inquiry to a friend of your father whom you have never met about the qualifications needed to enter his profession and the prospects it offers. (Reading – Text Nine, Ex: B pg: 124, intermediate English Text book – II).

We have got no business letter or application, resume or covering letter in the Textbook. We also do not find any question that requires response to an advertisement.

In the same way, there is no such letter writing in intermediate English Textbook I. Even if, the book has got a lesson named “Letters” (pg: 90). It provides only two questions, i.e,

1. Write a letter to a shop or office, complaining that some good you have ordered have not arrived by the promise date.
2. Write a letter from a shop or office, in answer to a complaint like the one above.

(Reading – Text seven, Exercise A, Pg: 90 intermediate English Textbook – I)

This is the only exercise concerning the topic. Even then, we cannot call letters as a professional one.

The guideline says, “All the students will be able to communicate with individuals and in groups”. If we critically analyze the book, we do not seek such tasks that can flourish or even develop speaking skills in the learners. There must be some speaking exercises that can provide a chance to the young learners to express their thought ideas and feelings. A student must be able to inquire pursue, argue compare and evaluate the topics of general interest.

The Benchmark II of guidelines says, “Demonstrate through formal talks, presentations and interviews, communication, information and ideas”.

But there are no topics for presentation, no interviews for job or of any kind. No other oral exercises such as dialogues etc. Appropriate oral exercises must be included that can develop communication skills in the students. The students must be able to:

- Pay greetings; respond to compliments invitation, farewell etc.
- Express anger, gratitude, and apology.
- Express and explain his point of view clearly.
- Challenge, modify or support people’s opinion with reasons.
- Understand other’s point of interest.
- Present his ideas and information.
- Use appropriate diction.
- Sum up the main ideas.
- Communicate in a group of different social background.
- Choose polite and beautiful words to agree or disagree the ideas.
- Understand the question and respond.
- Create class presentations on different topics.
- Express the support of topic and prove it with factual information”

All these qualities can be developed through only proper speaking exercises that can groom the communicative skills concerning the listening skills the guideline suggest, “Appropriate selection and use of audio – visual aids play vital role in learning a foreign language. It helps learner to understand:

- Basic directions for going somewhere
- Casual conversations
- Greetings and short messages
- Radio or TV announcement
- The central idea of any topic

It is regrettable fact that none of the intermediate English Textbook for class XI and XII offers any exercise or activity that enhances the learner's important language learning skills. There must be some exercises to develop good listening skills. Without listening practice, learners cannot have idea of correct pronunciation of the words.

English for us is a foreign language and in our province the language is not spoken everywhere even in the big cities. It is just a language of particular educational class that can afford private sector education. Most of the people go to public sector for higher secondary education where English becomes necessary. On the other hand, the subject is taught by local teachers. In this scenario, correct pronunciation can only be obtained from audio – visual aids. However, the guideline speaks of it. It says, “Students will know widely known Pronunciation”. Nevertheless, the fact is that they know the pronunciation only spoken in the province. There must be addition of some listening exercises. Audio – video –CDs must be attached to them to avoid errors. The exercises must contain pronunciation key to speak words accurately. There must be some tasks to recognize the silent letters and to understand primary and secondary stress in words.

Various Themes in Curriculum Guidelines:

The National Curriculum for English language also provides various themes for the textbook writers to get effective results. There are certain themes, which are excluded from the intermediate English Textbook – II. Such as “Patriotism (Rise of nations through national Pride)”.

We have a lesson regarding the theme named “Pakistan and the Modern World”, a speech by Liaquat Ali Khan, that is no doubt a wonderful work but this is the only work concerning patriotism. We do not find any poem or drama about our national pride.

Another theme is “Environmental education”. Environment and its effect on health is a particular topic. We do not find any lesson concerning this theme. In the same way, the other themes, which are not, included in the intermediate English textbook are “Role models, “Population education, travel and transport, Tourism, Technology, Education and Choosing career”. “Respect for all professions”, “Media and communication” “Crises awareness and role of youth”, “Public behavior”, and “Health and Safety drug education”. Prevention from crime. Among them, there are certain themes that can play vital role if taught in the intermediate level. For example, crises awareness and the role of youth. In the present condition, the topic is valuable. If young learners get the basic awareness, they may work for it in future. “Drug education” is something that is necessary at all levels but at intermediate level, it is necessary. Since, teenagers mostly do not understand good or bad effects of drugs in this age. An

appropriate work of common interest must be included in the textbook. Its effect provides a chance to learners to understand the effect of drugs on human life.

There is certain criteria to publish a textbook, that textbook development guideline suggest. It says, “A textbook should have attractive title”. When we have a look at the title pages of all five intermediate English Textbooks for class XI and XII, we do not find any distinctive features. These title pages are normal or usual as compared to the other books used in other than public sector. The paper of the title page is normal rather than of cardboard. We do not find any attractive multimedia presentation that can make students curious about the book. When we have attractive title page, one is curious to go through the book at least once. Another criterion suggests, “Pictures or illustration be in four colours”. However, there is not a single picture in all the five Textbooks. There is only a handmade map in intermediate English Textbook – I, but in Textbook – II there is nothing. We have such lessons where beautiful pictures can be useful. The picture not only attracts the reader but also urges him/her to read it. On the other place, guideline itself says, “To make more comprehensible some difficult concepts real pictures be used”. However, we think that textbook authors avoided the points. Textbook designers and authors may take help from the modern well – known textbooks published by national or international publishers.

Regarding exercises guideline says, “The exercises be given related to different skills”. On the contrary, there are exercises related to only one skill, i-e writing. We do not have any comprehension passages, listening and speaking exercises. The only exercise present in the textbook in bulk is translation from English to Urdu or Sindhi”. There are compositions such as essay and letter writings, précis writing and use of phrasal verbs. Moreover, these all exercises consume more than enough time. That is why; students are unable to do all the exercises in time. The teacher had to skip them to complete the course. Some good exercises related to all language skills i-e Reading, writing, listening and speaking must be added as guideline suggests. Nevertheless, the students must be able to finish the exercise in the time allowed.

There are a number of new and difficult words, in the textbook. Unfortunately, we do not find a glossary at the end of the book as per guideline guided. It says, “At the end of the book, there must be a glossary”. There are the meanings of difficult words at the end of every lesson but those are few. However, the number of difficult words are much more one has to use dictionary now and again.

Another important thing regarding textbook is teacher’s guidebook that is not published. It is believed to be same in importance as the textbook itself is. Without teacher’s guidebook teacher may not have an idea of underlying objectives of the lessons. Hence, a teacher will not be able to achieve teaching objectives. In the absence of teacher guidebook, the adapted approach by a teacher may contradict the main objective.

Explanation of the Results:

The national curriculum for English (compulsory) provides a guideline for the textbook designers and authors. While evaluating the intermediate English Textbook – I published by Sindh Textbook board Jamshoro Sindh, it was found that the textbook is not attractive due to lack of the features recommended in the guideline. There are no set principles to teach the textbook of English at higher secondary level. The Textbook's usual and unpleasant style is contrast with the modern English language teaching method.

The first hypothesis of the research says, "The course content of the Intermediate English Textbook - II published by Sindh text book Board meet with the set objectives". The findings contradict the hypothesis. It is observed that the course contents of the textbook do not meet with the set objectives.

The second hypothesis states "The intermediate English Textbook – II draws the attention of young learners to learn English as a second language". The findings opposed the hypothesis. We do not find any attractive features in the Textbook that can get attention of young learners.

Suggestions

Following suggestion may help to improve language teaching / learning process.

- Students must be encouraged to use power point presentation to develop their skills. Colleges must provide the facility.
- Students must be urged to use simplified dictionaries. Dictionaries provide pronunciation and correct use of word that is beneficial for young learners.

Suggestions for Research ahead

- For this research, findings are conclusive. The researcher finds a number of things that can be discussed in further research. Two major factors tell the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook, i-e, one is learner's motivation and the other is what teachers believe about the methodology and nature of language teaching. The influence of these factors on language teaching/learning process may be analyzed in future research.
- Categories (other than 13 that were evaluated in this research) include in ESL/EFL textbook analysis may also be investigated.
- As the research was limited to intermediate English (prose) Textbook- II, the remaining four (4) books may be evaluated.

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