

## **A Critical Look at World English Textbook Evaluation and Its Effects on EFL Pre-intermediate Iranian Learners' Speaking Skill**

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### **Abstract**

This research was designed to look at *World English* textbook evaluation and its effects on EFL pre-intermediate Iranian learners' speaking skill. Thirty male students were selected randomly in Eshtehard language school. They took a pre-test as a proficiency test first to determine their proficiency. To gain this aim, a language proficiency test, i.e., Nelson test was given to the total participants. Then they were assigned to an experimental and a control group, fifteen students for experimental group, fifteen students for control group. During twelve sessions of the treatment, experimental group worked on *World English* textbook. The participants in experimental group were encouraged to study and notice meaningfully to the units of the textbook. Along with the experimental group, the participants in the control group also worked on a different textbook (*Top Notch*). At the end, two post tests were performed in one session. Finally T-test was used to analyze the results of the control and the experimental group post- tests, and a significant difference was observed statically in the two experimental and control groups. At last an ESL textbook evaluation checklist was administrated to evaluate *World English*. Ten teachers were asked to present their ideas through the checklist. Most of them were satisfied with the textbook in terms of content, design, and so forth.

**Key words:** *World English textbook*, evaluation, checklist, pre-intermediate learners, speaking skill.

### **1. Introduction**

English language has played a significant role as the vehicle of communication among people from different countries around the world in the past century. In order to attain to the high purpose, many researchers have investigated in various fields, not only speaking, listening, writing, reading improvement but also in teaching and evaluation of materials of teaching. Any person involved within the area of education has encountered the term evaluation in many cases often integrating it with course evaluation or program evaluation and more specifically with teacher evaluation, student evaluation and more recently textbook evaluation.

Thus, at the very beginning it seems essential to know what the term “evaluation” means. Kiely (2009) has expressed that evaluation is a process of inquiry in which data are gathered through different instruments and from different sources. This information is predicted to

make important decisions based on the research results. These decisions might require a change and effect a drastic alteration in the outline and process of a language program instruction. All these efforts are done to the betterment of a course of study and bringing about satisfactory results.

Therefore, "Program evaluation is a form of enquiry which describes the achievements of a given program, provides explanations for these, and sets out ways in which further development might be realized" (p. 53). He argues that evaluation tries to ensure 'quality assurance and enhancement' and creates 'a dialogue within programs for ongoing improvement of learning opportunities.

Evaluation can be defined as a tool that contributes not only to learning process but also to teacher change and improvement. Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) have defined in their study evaluation' as a dynamic process which examines the suitability and appropriateness of an existing practice. It is a useful device for both teachers and material writers as an underlying element in the development of innovations and modifications within learning and teaching field.

### **1.1. What is textbook evaluation?**

#### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is a substantial way to judge and calculate the quality, importance, amounts, or value of something. It is an appraisal of something to determine its worth, fitness, or significance of something (Clarke, 1990).

#### **Textbook evaluation**

Soori (2011) holds the view that despite the reality that textbooks are a prominent element in most of EFL classes, there has been little studies carried out in terms of how and why materials are chosen by teachers. He states the main reason for this may depend on the fact that in the age of communicative teaching, experts who advise on the use of textbooks may be out of field with current language teaching strategy. However, regardless of how great a focus of instructors is situated on the use of authentic materials, teachers frequently cannot concentrate on assessment of materials because of lack of the time and the administrative support to gather and adapt all the essential materials for their classes. As a result, it is disappointing that researchers have not presented more clues and keys to make enable teachers and administrators to make wiser and reasonable decisions. According to Prabhu (1987), textbooks are exclusively defined and pre-constructed materials that prepare a surely amount of uniformity in what happens in many different classes with different teachers and students, which serves the interests and motivations of responsibility.

## 1.2. Types of textbook Evaluation

Sheldon (1988) introduced three basic methods for evaluating textbooks. He called the first method the 'impressionistic method' and it consists of evaluating a textbook according on a 'general impression'. The general impression would be received by reading the commentary and the contents page and then reviewing through the book to perceive a state of organization, topics, design, and visuals. However, this method is not enough in itself, but it could be synthesized with the second method, for example, which is called the 'checklist method'. Sheldon states that "this method is as a systematic schedule in the way that the criteria on the list are checked off in a particular sequence and order"(p.179).

Comparing various materials is also convenient and it is not very time-consuming compared to other methods. Ellis discusses about the third evaluation method which is called 'the in-depth method' which reflects a precise evaluation of representative attributes such as the layout of one particular unit or practice, or the instruction of specific language factors. Sheldon shows an explicit shortcoming in this method which causes that the chosen section might not be index of the book in general (as cited Ellis, 1997).

McGrath (2001) listed a number of learner as well as teacher factors when selecting a textbook. As for learner factors, he concentrate on factors such as age range, proficiency level in the target language, reasons for studying the target language, sex distribution and so on. Following the learner factors is a list of learner needs, for example dialect, language-skill emphasis, language-system emphasis (grammar, vocabulary, phonology) and attention to mechanics (spelling, punctuation). Concerning the teacher factors, the focus was on language competence, methodological competence, awareness, and experience of teaching. Information about the institution and the specific program for which the material is intended is also important to consider. He mentioned for example level within the educational system (kindergarten, primary, secondary), class size, and aims of the program, syllabus and so on.

In much the same way as McGrath (2001), Skierso (1991) listed a number of factors that need to be established before the evaluation process can start. Information is needed on the students, the teacher, the institution and so on. Just like McGrath, she also recommends "a firstglance evaluation, although she refers to the process as survey, in which it is possible to eliminate the most unsuitable textbooks (p 435)."

According to Nunan (1988) instructional materials are concluded the essential parts of the curriculum. A brief review of the literature correlating to materials evaluation shows that, to date, predictive evaluation has attracted more or less exclusively. He has concluded that there are two principal methods in which teachers can carry out this kind of evaluation. One is to rely on evaluations which carried out by 'expert' reviewers. Some Journals have done a widely effort on textbook evaluation, like ELT Journal which to some extent aid teachers in this respect by preparing reviews of produced course-books. In some cases (such as the Survey Reviews this journal provides from time to time), the reviewers recognize special

criteria for materials evaluation. However, in reviews of individual textbooks, the criteria often keep inexact and implicit. Alternatively, teachers can be able to do their own predictive evaluations.

Numerous checklists and guidelines are accessible to help them do so ( as cited in secondary resources, e.g. Chambers, 1997; Cunningsworth, 1984; Breen & Candlin, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Littlejohn, 1996; Mathews, 1985; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Shelden, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Tucker, C. A., 1975; Ur, P. 1996). These instruments are generally organized in a method that shows the decision-making process which it is hypothesized teachers go through them. For example, Breen and Candlin (1987), organize them questions in their checklist into two stages, "the first of which enables teachers to address the overall 'usefulness' of the materials, while the second caters for 'a more searching analysis' based on the teacher's actual teaching situation. The idea behind these guides is to help teachers carry out a predictive evaluation systematically" (p. 136, cited in Ellis, 1997).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have stated in their common study that textbook evaluation is fundamentally an upright, analytical matching process. A 'retrospective evaluation' can be implemented by teachers impressionistically or collecting information in a more systematic manner can be an attempt by teachers (i.e. conduct an empirical evaluation). It is probably appropriate to mention that 'impressionistic evaluations' have been carried out by most teachers through their teaching materials. That is, during the course teachers can assess whether particular activities 'work' effectively. While at the end of the course they conclude summative judgments of the materials. There is another less common evaluation which called 'Empirical evaluations' perhaps, if only because these kinds of evaluations are time-consuming. Hutchinson draws a result that teachers report using students' journals and end-of-course questionnaires to judge and assess the effectiveness of their teaching, including the materials they applied.

According to Ellis (1997) who introduces two types of evaluation namely 'micro-evaluation and macro-evaluation'. He describes a macro evaluation as an overall assessment and analysis of whether an entire collection of materials has worked. To organize and gather the necessary knowledge for such an empirical evaluation is a gentling prospect. He defines "a micro-evaluation in which the teacher chooses one particular teaching affair, he or she has a special interest, and give up this to a detailed empirical evaluation. A series of micro-evaluations can provide the basis for a subsequent macro-evaluation" (p. 54).

Nunan (1987) and Parbhu (1989) have suggested, however, a 'micro-evaluation' can be applied as a functional and truly way of conducting an empirical evaluation of teaching materials, it can also stand by itself. They also mention that a 'micro-evaluation of teaching materials' is maybe best done related to 'task'. This term is just broadly applied language teaching methodology often with very different meanings and names.

Skehan (1996) has described 'micro-evaluation' as "a task that is here considered as an activity in which: meaning is primary; there are some kinds of relationships to the real world; task completion has some preferences; and the measurement of task performance is in terms of task result". Skehan also reflects "thus, the information and opinion and opinion-gap activities are common in communicative language teaching are tasks" (p. 169). As Sheldon (1988) has noted various other factors for 'textbook evaluation'. He offers that the choice of an ELT textbook often can be signals of an important decision of administrative and educational system in which remarkable professional, financial, or even political investment are existed explicitly.

According to Cunnings worth (1995) a thoroughly evaluation, however, would make the managerial and teaching staff of a particular institution or organization enable to discriminate between all of the accessible textbooks on the market. In spite of that, a sense of familiarity with a book's content would be provided by evaluation, thus contributing educators in recognizing the specific strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. This would go a long way in ultimately helping teachers with making idealistic use of a book's prominent notes and identifying the deficiencies of certain exercises, tasks, and whole texts.

Cunnings worth (1995) offers another additional factor for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very beneficial in teacher progression and professional advance. Ellis (1997) has noted that textbook evaluation assists teachers go beyond 'impressionistic assessments' and it is a helpful material to gain practical, appropriate, systematic, and on textual insights into the overall identity of textbook material. Elis holds the view that "textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile instrument of conducting action research as well as a form of professional reinforcement and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can also be a reliable and valuable component of teacher training programs for it applies the ambivalent goal of making aware students and teachers of important traits to seek in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language instruction materials"(p. 251). As was before mentioned, valid checklist is using which is constructed the most common method of executing a textbook evaluation by famous scholars.

Three different types of material evaluation have been offered by Cunnings worth (1995) and Ellis (1997).They argue that the most common form is probably the 'predictive' or 'pre-use' evaluation that is designed to investigate the future or potential performance of a textbook. The other sorts of textbook evaluation are the 'in-use' evaluation which is designed to survey material that is commonly being applied and the 'retrospective' or 'post-use' (reflective) evaluation of a textbook that has been used in any respective institution.

In 2009, an evaluation of the three English textbooks which have been prescribed for use in grade 4 classes has been examined in the Turkish Ministry of National Education in state

primary schools by Yasemin. He has studied teachers and students who responded to a 37-item textbook evaluation scheme (Smiley Questionnaire) to reflect their perceptions concerning several aspects of the textbooks. Both groups of participants were also interviewed to attain further point of views into the use and function of the textbooks. Findings announced the extent of appropriateness of the three textbooks used by young learners of English. Suggestions are offered for the future revision and/or designing the textbooks for young learners of English. Sheldon (1988) has offered several reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of an ELT textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, or even political investment. A thorough evaluation, therefore, would enable the managerial and teaching staff of a specific institution or organization to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market. In Ruben (2010) research, a content analysis of the textbooks was applied in the Dutch early childhood. The teacher education shows clear disagreements with the intended curriculum. But, neither the content standards found in the professional profile for teachers and nor the content standards from the educational profile of their treatment courses are appropriately covered in the books. As mentioned in the research, while they pay remarkable attention to the teacher's educational tasks, other affairs are outside the primary performed process which either dealt with in much less detail or ignored altogether, including the requirement for strategic planning, for reflection and evaluation, for the progression of educational methodology, and for cooperation and relation with colleagues from other disciplines.

Marc and Rees (2009) have examined the content of textbooks in addition to teachers' usage of them. Conclusions reflect writer representation in textbooks broadly signals students' reading priorities at the expense of choices created by literary experts. Teachers have widely agreed textbooks that considered mostly students' preferences, at the same time. These attitudes seem to be the sequence of changes in the student population rather than teachers' professional features.

As was mentioned in Ansary's research (2002), as teachers, many of us have had the responsibility of evaluating textbooks. Often, we have not been confident about what to place our judgments on, how to qualify our decisions, and how to report the results of our evaluation. To date, it seems to us that textbook choice has been created in hurry and with a lack of systematically used criteria. They also note that all consumers of textbooks are mostly included teachers, students, administrators, and designers. Of course, it must not to be ignored that all these groups, may have discordance views about what a suitable standard textbook is. However, the important and citable question is put forward where they can change to for credible advice on how to make an informed decision and choose a suitable textbook.

A considerable view on textbook selection or textbook evaluation process allocates a vast sums of money and time, that is, it is not reasonable that teachers and administrators select a

book without precise study, they must spend a long time on examination of appropriate textbooks. Several researchers and scholars have offered different ways to assist teachers become more systematic and objective in their attitude through textbook evaluation. Mentioned scholars include; Chastain, 1971; Tucker, 1975; Candlin & Breen, 1979; Daoud & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Williams, 1983; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Ur, 1996; Littlejohn, 1996; cited as secondary resources. There are a lot to name but a few. They have often suggested checklists according to supposedly generalizable criteria. These sometimes detailed check-sheets apply a large number of methods to evaluate how well a specific textbook under scrutiny measures up.

### **1.3. How to evaluate textbooks?**

There have been a large number of studies which have been carried out evaluation of textbooks and instructional materials. They analyzed and studied on different field including content, reliability, instructional and so forth. Here, the present paper intends to deal with a few types of evaluation and analysis.

#### **Content Analysis**

According to Kulm, Identifying the learning goals is the first step in evaluating a textbook with which the textbooks should be coherent. The national standards for mathematics and science in spite of the Project 2061 curriculum-materials evaluation procedure was developed applying the learning purposes in its own *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* and, result of the work has shown that state education frameworks also can be applied (1999). He reflects that the process can be used to any K-12 school subject for which well-advised learning purposes have been adapted upon. Two conditions, however, are that the learning purposes must meet: (a) they must express an agreement on what all learners should know and be able to do, and (b) their mean must be clear, particular, and they also must not be vague (Kulm, 1999).

#### **Instructional Analysis**

The process of Project 2061 is according to the supposition that a profound examination of the quality of a material's instruction of a few, precisely chosen, learning purposes is more uncovering than a prominent view at a wide variety learning purposes. Project 2061, in the step of improving its analysis procedure, found indeed out that by investigating a material's instruction of a limited collection of learning purposes the advantages and disadvantages of the material's instructional design and support can be carefully identified. Kulm (1999) holds his point of view with presenting an example. He says, for instance, Project 2061, in order to conduct its evaluation of 'middle grades mathematics and science textbooks', has

been chosen learning purposes representing three prominent mathematical strands. He names them as "number, geometry, and algebra--and ideas that encompass several important concepts in physical, life, and earth science-- the kinetic molecular theory, the flow of matter and energy in ecosystems, and processes that shape the earth" (p. 189).

When the learning purposes are chosen, the evaluation of the content starts with making 'sightings' in the material like specific activities, lessons, exercises, and other learning opportunities in the learner or teacher material in which the specific signals and standards are distinctly identified (Garinger, 2002).

### **Reliability analysis**

Kesidou (1999) indicates in a broad study that the judgment on whether the material reflects these learning purposes is according on two main ideas as 'substance and sophistication'. He believes that "reviewers maintain both ideas in mind as they analyze the material. They consider whether the activities address the specific substance of a learning goal or if there is only a 'topic' match". It is easy for a material to gain agreement at the topic level, the table of contents of most textbooks shows that they are included the common topic heading. However, although a vast amounts of different textbooks are existed which include the common 'topicfractions', 'states of matter', 'graphing', 'weather', and so forth. They also can vary widely in the particular ideas, or substance, that they are involved.

Kesidou (1999) notes the distinction between activities that correspond only to the general topic of the content learning goal and activities that actually address its substance, is based on a careful study of the ideas contained in that learning goal. Reviewers also consider whether the activities are developmentally appropriate.

#### **1.4. A brief explanation of *World English* textbooks**

In the introduction of the three books, in 2005, Melchers and Shaw's *World English* textbooks present the most total coverage of the topic. In the preface, the writers present their goal is "to present and explain universal variation and change in the vocabulary, structure, phonology, and pragmatics of English. We also attempt to present a good deal of context to describe and make clarify the linguistic variation. "Melcher and Shaw introduce the first and second chapters briefly which start with the historical improvement of English language; the writers then go on to a short explanation of the development of English worldwide. The models of language variation have been illustrated and covers a base in third chapter for understanding the linguistic analysis which presented for each of the varieties of English covered in the following chapters.



Melchers and Shaw (2005) believe chapters four and five are the heart of this book. They apply the term 'inner circle' in chapter four to involve the 'mother-tongue English-speaking communities of the United Kingdom', 'the Americas, Australia', 'New Zealand', 'South Africa', and 'Liberia'. They show communities as the 'outer circle', which is explained clearly in chapter five, involve 'the mother-tongue English-speaking communities of 'Africa, South and Southeast Asia', and a few other locations in the 'Mediterranean, South Pacific, and Indian Oceans'.

The spreading effect of English worldwide has been described in chapter six and seven. This effect is argued in terms of the impact on societies and other languages. Writers of the textbook believe that "the social effect passes through education, entertainment and news media, tourism, and economic forces. The influence of English on other languages includes, among other things, the borrowing of English vocabulary, phonology, and pragmatics, and the threat to the use of other languages." Chapter seven, although titled "What's next?" actually focuses on processes that are already in development: the impact of American culture in *World English* textbooks and the role of the Internet in the improvement of English and changes to English (Melchers and Shaw,2005).

### **1.5. A Critical look at *World English* textbook**

As aforementioned in the introduction of this book, world English is an interesting modern four skills general English series which applies National Geographic content, images and video to teach the language so that learners need to succeed in their daily lives. The series is put forward based on explicit and practical learning goals which are exhibited and practiced through suitable and beneficial themes and topics. A "competency-based series", World English applies real people, real places and real language in order to make connected learners of English to the world (Rezvani, 2013).

Shahini (2013) notes the four competency-based 'Goals' clearly. He expresses that in each unit give learners the chance to practice new language through communicative tasks, and learn how English is used in the real world.

Rezvani describes the textbook in terms of outwards. He says National Geographic Video on the Classroom DVD, Student CD-ROM, and online video, Rezvani describes Workbook for each level brings learning to life both in and out of the classroom. Extensive teacher support is available for each level with an Online Lesson Planner, Teacher's Edition, Classroom DVD, Assessment CD-ROM with exam view, and Teacher Web Site. An online lesson Planner for each level is a Web-based tool which allows busy teachers to create and customize lesson plans for the World English series. The English World Teacher's Guides offer suggested warm-up activities for every lesson, clear notes to guide the teacher through the different activities, audio scripts for listening comprehension activities, answers to

Workbook activities, suggestions for questions to ask at different points and links to more help with methodology. The three books share a primary focus on the varieties of English spoken worldwide, but each has a slightly different approach and covers somewhat different information.

Melchers and Shaw (2003), investigated widely on *World Englishes*: they presented a complete and closely description on world English textbooks. An introduction of the three books,

Melchers and Shaw's *World Englishes* expresses the most general coverage of the topic.

Shaw (2003) mentions, in the preface, the writers of the textbook state their goal that is to exhibit and identify global variation and change in the vocabulary, structure, phonology, and pragmatics of English. We also try to give a good deal of context to explain and illuminate the linguistic variation. The first and second chapters start with the historical development of English; the authors then go on to a short description of the spread of English worldwide. The third chapter introduces models of language variation and lays a foundation for understanding the linguistic analysis presented for each of the varieties of English covered in the following chapters.

In Melchers and Shaw's study (2003) mentioned that chapters four and five are the heart and key part of this book. Melchers and Shaw use the term 'inner circle' in chapter four to include the mother-tongue English-speaking communities of the United Kingdom, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Liberia. The communities referred to as the 'outer circle,' explained in chapter five, including the 'mother-tongue English-speaking communities of Africa', 'South and Southeast Asia', and a few other locations in the 'Mediterranean', 'South Pacific', and 'Indian Oceans'.

Shaw and Melcher (2003) explained chapters six and seven as parts in which described the extensive influence of English worldwide. They believe this positive effect is argued in terms of the impact on societies and other languages even cultures. Melcher (2003) states that the social influence derives from education, entertainment and news media, tourism, and economic forces. The influence of English on other languages includes, among other things, the borrowing of English vocabulary, phonology, and pragmatics, and the threat to the use of other languages.

### **1.6. An evaluation of *World English* textbook**

However this book is widely taught throughout the world, but there are a limited investigation and evaluation on this textbook. Here, this present study attempts to present an example. There is a research which has been carried on World English textbook evaluation. A Course Book Evaluation of the *World English* Series from the Perspective of EFL Teachers and Learners' Needs has been done in 2013.

The research that has been investigated by Rezvani, Shahini, and Tahriri in 2013. They have clearly described their study: "A total number of 14 EFL instructors who had been teaching these books and 59 learners of the series participated in the research. Based on the analyses, the mean and percentage of the teachers' views were examined. The results showed that the mean for the necessity was higher than the mean for the present condition. In addition, there were statistically significant differences between the ideal situation and the present condition of the responses" (Rezvani, 2013, p. 67).

Thus, Tahriri (2013) claims that it can be mentioned "that the books were relatively far behind the expectations of the instructors and in terms of the general information, the theoretical considerations, organizational features and practical considerations, content, skills, vocabulary, structure and activities, the World English books were in the average range. Then, the needs analysis questionnaire was analyzed" (p.74).

According to the findings, the students were in agreement with the notions presented in the learners' questionnaire. After that, the obtained outcomes and data were compared with the instructors' opinions.

As a result, there was a statistically significant difference between the approaches of language center students and teachers in their evaluation, but in total, the English textbooks are basically concerned on adequate skill in meeting the learners' wants and interests (as cited Rezvani, Shahini, and Tahriri,2013).

In subsequent chapters the result of the evaluation of World English through checklist will be indicated.

## **2. Method**

In order to evaluate and examine the effectiveness of *World English textbook* on EFL preintermediate Iranian learners, the researcher attempts to know how using different strategies in the textbook can help the students to be aware of real world and help them to be more knowledgeable while speaking. To do this research, the teacher has taught the textbook and also tried to perform objectives of its authors in the class while speaking through new strategies, so that the teacher could see how students make result through this method of learning.

To find out the progress or problems that could happen during the application of the textbook, the teacher (researcher) has applied two classes of English for 2-3 months and to learn how he will succeed to improve their speaking through suitable materials. The researcher has further interviewed the learners to understand the development and progress in their process of language learning specially speaking.

Besides, it is essential to see other teachers' opinions and their feedback on using the textbook as a material to learn English. Therefore, the observation of experienced teachers has helped us working out different ways of effective methods in the classes throughout their lesson plans and helpful advice.

### 2.1. Participants

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30 male subjects, between 13 and 17 in Fater Language Institute in Eshtehard city were recruited using two kinds of proficiency tests which consisted pre-test and post-test. The aim of pre-test is to know about the current level of students' performance and the aim of post-test is to check if the treatment of *World English* book was appropriate and suitable, and had a positive and effective influence on learners' performance. Since the purpose of this study is to show that objectives and strategies in the textbook are effective on learning process of language learners, in particular, their speaking skill or not. In order to achieve to the aim and determine the quality of the textbook, the research has applied a checklist to ask 10 teachers about the features of *World English*.

### 2.2. Procedure

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As mentioned before, 30 students were chosen to be the members of this study as experimental group and control group. In experimental group, 15 students have the opportunity to expose new strategies in World English during twelve sessions a term. But in control group, 15 students practiced and learned English language as usual in those previous materials and method of the current teaching at least twelve sessions in a term. Post-test will be administrated after twelve sessions teaching English language through two different materials and textbooks in order to evaluate World English book and to find out how if it is effective on learners' speaking skill. In order to evaluate and examine the effectiveness of *World English textbook* on EFL pre-intermediate Iranian learners, this paper has performed a checklist on teachers with almost 20 questions about features of World English, whether the writers of the textbook have been successful in their goals. To achieve to the purpose 10 teachers were asked to answer the evaluation checklist.

### 2.3 Material

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The first material is World English textbook. It was applied in the classes and taught regularly by experienced teachers. The textbook was described for language learners completely.

As was mentioned previously, the most popular instruments used for analyzing textbooks are evaluation checklists. A number of such checklists have been constructed in English by different scholars as we can refer to Cunningsworth's (1995), Sheldon's (1988), and Skierso's (1991). A complete list of popular checklists in English was introduced in the literature above.

However, the checklist which has been utilized for the aim of analysis in the present study is the one constructed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979). This checklist which is widely referred to and used in analyzing and evaluating textbooks consists of eight major sections including:

- (a) Physical and utilitarian attributes
- (b) Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials
- (c) Learning-teaching content
- (d) Language Skills
  - (e) Listening quality
- f) Reading quantity
- g) Index
- h) Photographs and pictures

Each section itself is composed of several detailed strategies which can be utilized as the criteria based on which the characteristics of a present textbook can be evaluated.

The Nelson Proficiency Test is selected in order to determine the general English proficiency level of the participants of the study. This test consisted of 50 multiple-choice items which took 45 minutes and was administered on the whole population to choose the control and the experimental group. To collect the data, first, a multiple-choice proficiency test (i.e., Nelson test) was administered on 30 pre-intermediate EFL learners already passed third or fourth level of pre-intermediate in a private language institute in Eshtehard city. Based on the proficiency test scores, 30 students whose score range was one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as to participate in the study. In order to find out the performance of the participants through studying *World English Textbook*, before the treatment, a pretest of proficiency was conducted for both groups. This test included four sections (A-D) namely, sentence comprehension (3 scores), cloze passage (3 scores), paragraphs with headings (4 scores), and reading passage (5 scores), totally 15 scores. A posttest of proficiency level will be administered among the participants after the treatment, the readability of which will be calculated through T-test Data Analysis. Here's a sample checklist:

***Adult ESOL Textbook Evaluation Checklist\****

***Title:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Publisher:*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Publication Date:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Student Level(s):**\_\_\_\_\_ **Cost for per student book:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Observed Questions to Consider YES NO Notes**

*Text and related materials are up-to-date*

*Does the text reflect current thinking about adult education? Are topics of current interest to students?*

Relates to program mission and goals

Do the text and teacher's materials reflect your program's view of who your students are?

Will the content and activities of the book help students make progress toward their goals?

Content relates to adult ESOL standards and standardized assessments

Does the book focus on what learners need know and be able to do in real life?

Contains adult content (topics, issues) relevant to the immigrant learners in your program

Is the book specifically designed for adult English language learners, rather than children, or adult native English speakers?

Are adult topics such as work, family, health, and community presented appropriately?

Learner needs, experiences, and goals acknowledged and incorporated throughout

Are learners asked to share their knowledge and experience?

Does the book encourage learner centered activities?

Is there ample opportunity for students to share their opinions and reflect on their own progress?

Takes into account linguistic and cultural students (and teachers)

Are the directions written simply and clearly?

Do the exercises match the level/s of the learners the book is designed for?

Receptive skills presented before productive activities (listen/read before speak/write) Does the text begin with listening and speaking activities, that help students activate their own knowledge on various topics, before they are asked to read or write?

Balanced and realistic four skills integration

Do speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities work together naturally and reflect real life usage?

Integrates different learning styles: aural, oral, visual, kinesthetic

So that the content will be accessible to all students, do activities address different learning styles?

Incorporates a variety of techniques including cooperative, communicative, and open-ended activities

Are there ample opportunities for learners to work and learn together including opportunities for project-based learning?

Incorporates multiple grouping strategies (whole group, small group, pair, and individual work)

To encourage communicative learning, are all the grouping strategies evident throughout the book?

Language practice represents real-life language and offers learners' opportunities for real-life application

Do the language, topics, and activities reflect real life? Do activities encourage learners to try out new language skills in real life?

Layout, formatting, and graphics are accessible and appropriate for the adult ESOL learners in your program.

Is the overall look of the book open and uncluttered? Is the font size appropriate and are graphics clear and understandable?

TOTAL

**Summary:**

Strengths: -----

## **2.4. Data analysis**

To analyze the data in order to answer the research questions, a paired sample t-test was run on the data obtained from the administration of the pre-tests and post-tests to the participants of both experimental and control groups. Our hypotheses were concerned with the effectiveness and evaluation of strategies of *World English* textbook on learners' improvement, in particular, their speaking.

Then, descriptive analysis will be performed and the results in experimental group will be indicated a significant difference or not. In order to reach this purpose, this research administrated a post t- test data analysis. It compares the results of two experimental and control groups and shows whether applied strategies in the textbook are effective or not.

At last a checklist will be administrated on 10 teachers to ask them about features specially advantages and disadvantages of World English textbook.

### 3. Results

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The main purpose of this research is generally to explore and evaluate *World English* textbook in order to find its advantages and disadvantages, and whether communication skill in the book has effects on learners speaking proficiency, and also if the authors have been successful in representing their purposes. The data collection procedure was carefully performed and the raw data was entered into SPSS (version 17.0) to compute the required statistical analyses in order to address the research question and hypothesis of this study. Every step which was taken in analyzing the obtained data is provided in form of tables and figures in this chapter.

#### 3.1. Investigation of the second research questions

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The following questions are raised in this research: first Question is "if communication skills in World English affect more on the learners' speaking skill". Second question is "if the aims of writers of World English book were implemented on pre-intermediate Iranian learners' improvement".

The purpose<sup>4</sup> of the paper was to investigate the effects of World English textbook on learners' speaking improvement. Therefore, at first the study surveyed their proficiency at a pre-test speaking proficiency in order to find the effect. The results of independent t-test that was used to compare control and experimental groups' speaking proficiency scores on the post-test of speaking are given in Table 3.1 A quick look at Table 4.3 reveals that the assumption of equal of variances is met ( $p = .22$ ,  $p > .05$ ).



**Table 3.1**

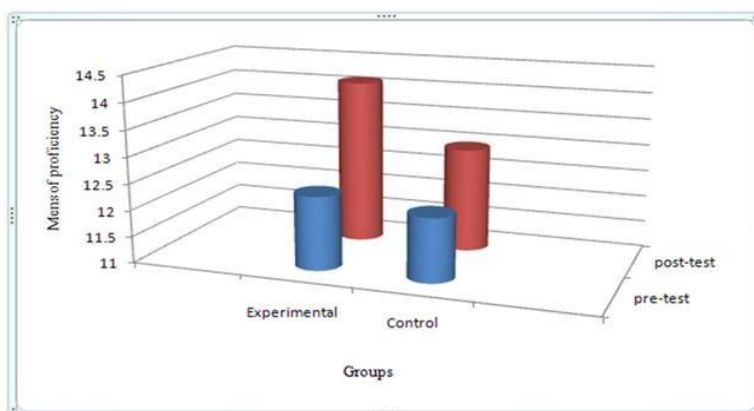
*Independent Samples Test to Compare Groups' Proficiency Scores on Speaking Post-test*

Levene's Test for Variances			<u>T-test for Means</u>			
Factor	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Equal variances assumed	1.539	.225	2.323	28	.028	1.150
Equal variances not assumed			2.323	25.72	.028	1.150

Independent *t*-test (Table 4.3 above) detected a statistically significant difference in proficiency scores for experimental ( $\bar{x} = 14.11$ ) and control ( $\bar{x} = 12.96$ ) groups on post-test of 58.

Speaking ( $t(28) = 2.32, p = .02, p < .05$ ), in which the *t*-observed (2.32) is higher than the *t*-critical (2.04). Therefore the study confirms the first hypothesis and claim that integrated activities in *World English* develop EFL learners' speaking proficiency. In fact, the students in the experimental group have performed better than the control group with the mean difference of 1.15. Figure 3.1 below is a bar graph that graphically illustrates the results. A quick look at Figure 3.1 reveals that the students in the experimental group have acted significantly better than those in the control group considering proficiency in speaking.

Figure 3.1. Speaking proficiency of experimental and control groups (post and pre-test)



Additionally, Table 3.2 represents the results of independent t-test that was used to compare control and experimental groups' speaking scores on the post-test. Table 4.6 reflects that the assumption of equal of variances is met ( $p = .84, p > .05$ ).

Table 3.2

*Independent Samples Test to Compare Two Groups' Fluency Scores on Speaking Post-test*

Factor	Levene's Test for Variances		T-test for			Means
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Equal variances assumed	.040	.843	2.669	28	.013	1.233
Equal variances not assumed			2.669	27.94	.013	1.233

Independent *t*-test (Table 3.2 above) found a statistically significant difference in language skills improvement scores for experimental ( $M = 12.80$ ) and control ( $M = 11.56$ ) groups on posttest of language skills ( $t(28) = 2.66, p = .01, p < .05$ ), in which the *t*-checklist (2.66) is greater than the *t*-observed (2.04). Hence the second hypothesis can be confirmed and it can

be claimed that integrated activities in *World English* improve EFL learners' language skills improvement. Actually, the students in the experimental group have surpassed the control group with the mean difference of 1.23.

We present Figure 3.2 below, which is a bar graph that graphically demonstrates the results. Figure 4.5 clarifies that the students in the experimental group have shown better improvement than those in the control group in view of language skills improvement through *World English* textbook.

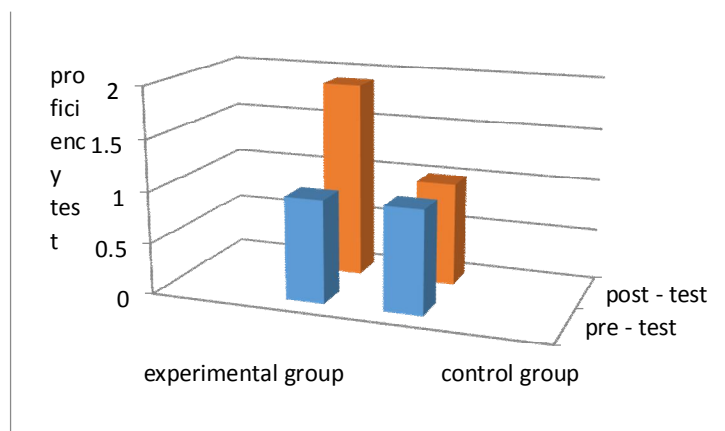


Figure 3.2 Bar graph of two groups' language skills improvement means on speaking pre-test and post-test

### 3.3. The results of evaluation checklist

In order to be sure about the quality of World English textbooks, this study applied an evaluation checklist.

Below table 4.7 reflects the results of evaluation checklist which has been carried out on 10 teachers. In the evaluation, teachers were asked to give their ideas as experts about the domains in World English textbook.

**Table 3.3**

*Alpha Formula of Instrument Reliability*

**Domains Reliability**

Physical and utilitarian attributes

0.76 Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials

0.72 Learning-teaching content

0.75 Language Skills

0.79 Index

0.73 Photographs and pictures

0.82 Total score

0.91

The above table reflects the results of World English textbook evaluation. The evaluation was performed on teachers through an evaluation checklist. As results shows physical and utilitarian attributes of the textbook allocates 0.76 reliability scores to itself. Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials has assigned 0.72reliability score.

Learning-teaching content dedicates 0.75 reliability scores and language skills reserves 0.79 reliability scores. Index achieves 0.73 reliability score and also photographs and pictures has allocated 0.82 to themselves which is the highest reliability score. As a result, the total score is 0.91. Therefore the textbook includes a high quality of all features which a good textbook can be involved.

### 3.4. Summary

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As a whole the study showed that the *World English* textbook is effective in improving EFL learners' development of all skills at the pre-Intermediate level of English. This result can be more approved by this evidence that there were significance differences between the means of pre-tests and post-tests. The means of the post-tests were higher than pre-tests.

One possible explanation of such result is that correct use of materials in classroom may help students to enhance their learning and promoting their language skills.

Based on the finding, creating a meaningful and helpful textbook in which language is taught in real world with real people and cultures may encourage students to speak more subtle. According to the study, *World English* can make students become more motivated to

learn and communicate in the language. Students can acquire new knowledge with real information. The finding of the study conducted that if teachers be enough knowledgeable so they can select the most beneficial material to improve their students.

At last not least evaluation checklist of the textbook indicated that teachers are satisfied with all features of World English textbook.

#### 4. Discussion

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In the past several decades, much evidence has emerged that, in order for learners to attain language competence, teaching needs to apply materials which integrate linguistic and communicative skills. The overarching goal of integrated instruction is to advance learners' language proficiency required for communication in various contexts. In general, the learning of language for communication in all skills in particular speaking entails applying suitable materials specially adequate textbook which is included language strategies, sociocultural and interactional norms, and the communicative culture of the real people who use the language.

However this book is widely taught throughout the world, but there are a limited investigation and evaluation on this textbook. Here, this present study attempts to present an example. There is a research which has been carried on World English textbook evaluation. A Course Book Evaluation of the *World English Series* from the Perspective of EFL Teachers and Learners' Needs has been done in 2013.

The research that has been investigated by Rezvani, Shahini, and Tahriri in 2013. They have clearly described their study: "A total number of 14 EFL instructors who had been teaching these books and 59 learners of the series participated in the research. Based on the analyses, the mean and percentage of the teachers' views were examined. The results showed that the mean for the necessity was higher than the mean for the present condition. In addition, there were statistically significant differences between the ideal situation and the present condition of the responses" (Rezvani, 2013, p. 67).

Thus, Tahriri (2013) claims that it can be mentioned "that the books were relatively far behind the expectations of the instructors and in terms of the general information, the theoretical considerations, organizational features and practical considerations, content, skills, vocabulary, structure and activities, the World English books were in the average range. Then, the needs analysis questionnaire was analyzed" (p.74).

According to the findings, the students were in agreement with the notions presented in the learners' questionnaire. After that, the obtained outcomes and data were compared with the instructors' opinions.

Language learners listen or speak in order to obtain the presented information or to learn about a content which is intellectual rather than factual as a way of developing their own intellectual skills so that ideas can be more effectively manipulated, possibly with the aim of influencing the behavior of others, or of determining the outcome of a series of operations. These reasons for listening and speaking are essentially practical. Thus, it can be said that learning language is helpful if it is through a textbook in which all skills have been illustrated in a frame that real world with real people, geography, culture, and so forth are indicated for many goals.

Recent research have been carried out on English textbooks which their attention were on content more. They did not pay attention to the design of textbooks which is significantly crucial in language learning process. But Schmidt, McKnight, and Raizen (1997) have considered this matter and offered that "textbooks as presenting a key function in creating the leap from purposes and plans to classroom activities, by presenting content available, organizing it, and setting out learning tasks in a form designed to be appealing to students"(p. 75). They believe teachers must decide which textbooks are appropriate for their students' requirement for making the most efficient and effective use of a textbook. They also mentioned in their study that "a teacher needs to determine the extent to which a textbook concentrates on and is aligned with a coherent set of significant, age-appropriate student learning goals that the teacher, school, or district has identified as integral to the understanding of and progress in a particular academic subject. They must also assess how well a textbook's constructional design effectively supports the attainment of those specified learning goals. The only way to gain this information is through careful evaluations of textbooks and other curriculum materials" (Schmidt, McKnight, & Raizen, 1997, p. 82).

According to Cunnings worth (1995) textbooks are serving several additional functions in the ELT curriculum. He also claims that they are an effective resource for self-guided learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of opinions and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus and pattern where they reflect pre-determined learning goals, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to increase self-confidence.

At last, Hutchinson (1994) and Torres have suggested that a radial function may be implemented by textbooks in innovation. They suggest that teachers can be easily supported by textbooks via potentially describing and threatening change processes. New and or untried strategies are demonstrated through textbooks, they also recommend gradually change, and build scaffolding on which teachers can create a more creative and innovative strategy of their own.

Therefore creativeness has a key role in textbooks designing which it can be an effective factor on language learners' motivation, in particular, young learners. Some writers have allocated a lot of attention to this realm. So they have applied an interesting design; like World English textbook writer who were really successful in their purposes.

Therefore, teachers should develop not only promoting their teaching quality but also they must introduce suitable textbooks and apply them in order to develop their learners language proficiency specifically when communicate with others. To do so the study investigated and evaluated World English textbook. To draw with the conclusion, first look at the early models of evaluation on textbooks.

In addition of above description, researcher knows it necessary to describe about the advantages and disadvantages of the book according his evaluation.

World English 1 introduces foods and their target countries and also geographical reasons which each food is used. The textbook reflects widely people's jobs and their behavioral features across the world which are necessary to show to learners in order to better and more efficient learning.

The textbook also illustrates body and its physical systems more touchable compared with other textbooks. Talking about climate change and dangers which threaten environment is another strength of the book that is a critical problem for all walks of the world even kids. The textbook expresses the risk of extinction of mammal and aquatic animals and also nature specially plants. In spite of the mentioned strengths, the textbook introduces places such as restaurants, libraries, universities, even historical places throughout the world.

The audio material of the textbook is complete and clear in 1-2 minutes, that is, learners are not confused when searching an audio part. Meanwhile, the book presents video CDs related to units topics which are extremely clear and effective.

Furthermore, each topic, for example in unit 1 of World English 1, has been more explained in unit 1 of World English 2. In addition to reminding the topics, it causes to record the topic and its structure and vocabularies in learners' minds even in their long memory.

Nevertheless, teacher's book is carefully designed so that teachers can be directed in correct ways and find the answers of their vague questions.

#### *4.1. Conclusion*

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In the study, a sample of course books has been evaluated. This section concludes the study by answering the research questions. The questions are once again posed and answers are provided based on the analysis.

First question was the study of effects of communication skills on Iranian pre-intermediate learners speaking proficiency speaking. It was found that communication skills applied in *World English* textbook were significantly effective on learners' speaking skill.

Second question was the investigation of aims of writers of *World English* textbook which are applied in the book through interesting ways. In order to find that

Within the framework of this study, it was realized that the students were willing to participate in the tasks as the two skills were presented in *World English* through different activities, which created real life situations in the classroom.

To draw with conclusion, in compared with another evaluation, the study showed that the *World English* textbook is effective in improving EFL learners' development of all skills at the pre-Intermediate level of English. This result can be more approved by this evidence that there were significance differences between the means of pre-tests and post-tests. The means of the post-tests were higher than pre-tests.

One possible explanation of such result is that correct use of materials in classroom may help students to enhance their learning and promoting their language skills.

Based on the finding, creating a meaningful and helpful textbook in which language is taught in real world with real people and cultures and also interesting images may encourage students to speak more skillful. According to the study, *World English* can make students become more motivated to learn and communicate in the language because learners can acquire new knowledge with real information.

The finding of the study conducted that if teachers be enough knowledgeable so they can select the most beneficial material to improve their students.

In conclusion, it is seen that the results of the test show that students' success increases when the *World English* is taught in language classes compared with control group. Moreover, practicing the skills through different activities carry up student involvement and motivation mainly because these kinds of tasks are related to real life and thus leads to communication.

At last not least evaluation checklist of the textbook indicated that teachers are satisfied with all features of *World English* textbook.

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