An evaluation of Sunrise Series Teaching Program

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on evaluation of Sunrise 10 and it was conducted in northern Iraq officially known Kurdistan region. The study is mainly qualitative and it attempts to illustrate and explain sunrise 10 books which includes (students book, teachers book and activity book) in terms of how reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are presented in the book, which one is given more attention to by both students and teachers. Participants consisted of the English language teachers includes 25 teachers and the sample of the students includes 2000 students divided into 1000 male and 1000 female students, the students“ ages are between 16-17. The tool of the study had design to cover 6 properties: Sunrise 10, Phonology, Social and cultural values, Syllabus Design,
grammar and vocabulary. The results exposed that English foreign language textbook and evaluation for Kurdish secondary schools demands more progress to be effective in learning and teaching English foreign language. For analyzing the data of this research paper SPSS had been used. In this evaluation current textbook and contents is not helpful especially female disagreed and content of the textbook has not mattered exams and/or dealings to evaluate gain for the learners effectively.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Course books are an essential part underlying any curriculum around which the whole learning phenomenon goes. Normally, they are the practically most-adopted materials in delivering insights, information and linguistic skills to a specific group of learners. Tomlinson (2003:39) assumes that a course book portrays a pre-planned pathology aiding teachers as well as learners to visualize the upcoming performances in a lesson and review the bygone activities. They provide a comprehensive educational framework enlightening the way for the instructors to work accordingly. They also display an organized collection of diverse examples and practices with respect to the subject matter.

Likewise, Abdelwahab (2013) states that the utilization of a course book can “guarantee that students in different classes will receive a similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way” (p. 55). In this sense, the course book provides an analogous standard for a chosen group of students in a certain area. Furthermore, Richards (2001) sheds light on the
significance of the course books and shows that any learning program is likely to fail to meet the presupposed educational aims if it does not have, at least, course books since they indicate contents arranged on structured bases.

2.0. STUDY QUESTIONS
1- To what extent the textbook book sunrise 10 is effective according to its grammar, discourse, phonology and learning vocabulary?
2- To what extent the textbook sunrise 10 is effective according to its activities and teaching methods?

AIMS OF THE STUDY
Aims of “Sunrise 10 textbook”
The application of the programme in Kurdistan is geared to:
1. To meet the needs of the Kurdish learners to be able to communicate in English and develop their communicative competence;
2. Developing the educational system of this region to cope with the recent developments in foreign language teaching and learning;
3. To teach English from the first basic grade or even from kindergarten;
4. To enable the learners to express themselves adequately with regard to their country’s politics, culture, values and aspirations.

2.0. COURSEBOOK EVALUATION
Sheldon (1988) indicates two major reasons for course book evaluation. Firstly, the evaluation will inform the responsible teachers and/or material developers to make decisions on choosing the apt course book for a specific purpose. Secondly, the assessment will familiarize the teachers with the potential weak as well as strong points regarding the course book. Likewise, Tomlinson (1996) deems material evaluation as a different way of action research to help us internalize how the material works.
A number of modules and approaches has appeared with respect to course book evaluation. Grant (1987) produced a concise evaluative method
known as CATALYST test: an abbreviation that its letters represent Communicative, Aims, Teachability, Availability, Level, Your impression, Students’ interest and Trying and Testing. In the same way, Tanner and Green (1998) propose a practical evaluation form grounded upon Method, Appearance, Teacher-friendliness, Extras, Realism, Interestingness, Affordability, Level and Skills. Initials of these features collectively form the word MATERIALS. Although these very-easy and useful evaluation methods work quite well in determining intended evaluative goals, they may not be perfectly impeccable in measuring the targeted course books. A more comprehensive model was that of McDonough and Shaw (1993) which was a double-cycle model to thoroughly assess course books. They recommend that a short external evaluation must be done to find a general overview of the coursework learning foundation. After that, a minutely detailed internal evaluation should follow to observe the extent the materials in question go in line with the objectives of the author.

3.0. COURSEBOOK EVALUATION METHODS

As there is a great deal of coursebooks out there claiming to present ‘real English’ opportunities for learners, there is a need for a systematic choice of procedures to evaluate the appropriateness and suitability of the embodying materials. In this regard, Nunan (1991:209) assures the necessity for a coursebook which embodies a harmonious nature having a consistency of learner needs and institutional policies of language learning.

An extensive checklist of around 53 questions is provided by Sheldon (1988). The checklist has these questions divided under seventeen major criteria appraising content elements such as content, authenticity, layout and accessibility. He advocates the use of evaluative measures since, as he claims, majority of checklists present uneven quality.

The aforementioned checklist and many more the like imply that designers have been trying to create a comprehensive evaluative procedure. However, there has been objections to this inclination. Swales (1980, cited in Wharton, web site) proclaims that teachers have to seek for a more subjective view of evaluation.
4.0. Evaluated Materials

The course book selected for the study is *Sunrise 10* which is the 10th of a series of books ranging from 1 to 12 books. The new system of Sunrise was introduced as a substitute to a very old and classically made system. Sunrise is based on Communicative Approach specifically designed for Iraqi learners living in northern Iraq reflecting a blended nature of the setting it is sketched for.

5. Results of Evaluation

5.1. The general package or make–up

*Sunrise 10* makes use of a set of materials including Student’s book, activity book, teacher’s book and audio track CD. The aforementioned elements are the main and only references public schools utilize in their classrooms. The resources have recently been published into the internet for learners and are free to download.

Concerning the organization of the course book, *Sunrise 10* has been planned in a very plausibly organized manner that new target language in each section is presented and recycled in diverse contexts and each section is supported by a paragraph of the literary reader which narrates a story recycling the intended language and structures. There are, in addition, revision units supplying extra practice for the previous chapters for further reinforcement. The coursebook consists of ten units in total. There are reference sections for which pointers are used in the context as well as index for language items. It has also a vocabulary list with their meanings in the learners’ native language at the end of each unit; the words are usually highlighted in blue if they are the target vocabularies. There are keys to activities in the activity book once a piece of language is presented. However, it may not be thoroughly fitted for self-study.

5.2. The language content

Course books are normally designed around language bits ordered into a logical sequence to meet the intended learners’ needs. The language dialect is British. The language contents normally consist of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology.

5.2.1. Grammar
Sunrise 10 presents grammar units in small amounts based on their meanings, i.e. the grammar forms are presented according to their communicative goal which is their usage. The grammar sections have been divided into 10 units of which three are revision units. Each unit contains considerably few items of grammar showing a sense of regulatory presentation to provide a slow pace learning setting. The grammar units in Sunrise 10 make use of basic English tenses- present and past- with their concepts – continuous, perfect and simple, pronouns, determiners, comparison, conditionals, reported speech forms as well as some functional forms, like warning and suggestion. Each unit is followed by a language focus section giving supplementary explanation to grammar units with learners’ native language explanation.

5.2.2 Vocabulary

Sunrise 10 presents new target vocabularies through topic- based sections and the words have been highlighted in blue to notify learners of their novelty. The course book is a part of a series that builds up a long range of language presentation. Therefore, it makes use of the formerly presented vocabularies, but are held peripheral not central, as well as gives new vocabularies within contexts they belong to that suit to learners needs and age level. Additional vocabulary techniques have been also offered to further help learners internalize them into their long term memory. Some techniques used to fortify target word acquisition are activities on opposites, collocations, networks, umbrella words, puzzles, situational dialogues ...etc. what counts Sunrise 10 as a distinctive book is the final extensive reading task in which a literary work has been shaped using the vocabulary, grammar and relative components within its body

5.2.3. Phonology

The pronunciation reflection in Sunrise 10 ranges from individual sounds to intonation- where the rising or falling of words have been focused- and in very few spots some letter clusters have been shown. Majority of phonology aspects only cover individual word pronunciations, like the sounds
the suffix (-ed) can have. Generally speaking, the whole course book has been scheduled upon a number of CD tracks in which much listening chance is given to learners to polish their connected speech. Aspects like word stress and weak forms and strong forms have not been mentioned in this series.

5.2.4. Discourse

Most of the language discourses in Sunrise 10 have been presented in the form of dialogues, reading texts and listening passages. The reading texts have been based on ‘authentic’ English that the texts are chosen from authentic sources after being modified to suit the level of students. The dialogues have been made of the modern language style that are up-to-date and sound very natural when compared to daily life conversations. As for the writing aspect of discourse, each unit ends with a writing task termed as, ‘unit tasks’ which provide a chance for learners to formulate the intended language load in the unit into a paragraph, like writing emails, narratives, food, descriptive writing and so on. Aspects like punctuation have also been stressed in each section giving a rather good chance for learners to improve their cohesion and coherence.

5.2.5. Style and Appropriacy

The style and appropriacy in Sunrise 10 have been selected very sensitively to avoid causing stereotypes among the learners in the actual setting. Diverse styles of formal and informal language have been used depending on the situation they tend to suit. For example, in the first unit a task of writing an informal letter is presented and the informal phrases like, ‘hi, best wishes, bye….etc’ have been used. The choice of language units has been taken into consideration by means of language suitability and the characters chosen to function as role-takers have also been shaped to sound like the people of the target setting of the coursebook.

5.2.6. Varieties of English

The language demonstration and design have been based on British English. No reference to other language varieties has been mentioned throughout the course book.

5.3 Selection and Grading
5.3.1. Syllabus Design.

Sunrise 10, like all other books of Sunrise, has a communicative approach integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing skills with clear focus on grammar. The course book consolidates and extends in earlier grades and increases the emphasis on skills development and learner autonomy.

5.3.2. Grading: Sequencing and Staging

In terms of sequencing, Sunrise 10 follows the typical sequencing of all skill-based courses. Each unit goes from integrating grammar unit – chosen for the unit- with reading task as well as listening task. The next item is speaking activities within the unit. Finally, the unit ends with writing tasks. so that new items be linguistically internalized, they have been recycled through the step by step tasks of all the aforementioned tasks.

Concerning the staging, Sunrise 10 has its units made of several components following a cycling of ‘Do and Speak, Grammar, Listen and Read, Grammar, Read, Read and Speak, Listening and Do, Pronunciation, Speak, write ‘. Although the above staging may differ depending on the need of the language use, but it is relatively the typical flow-of-stages throughout the course book.

5.4. Skills

Sunrise 10 can be regarded as the best textbook portraying an integrated four skills course book. It has been designed on a step-by-step presentation of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Listening is inserted to convey general oral work including dialogues and role-plays, on the one hand. On the other hand, listening tasks are provided to function as listening for comprehension or specific information where listening is primary. In theme-based activities where listening is primary, there is often pre-listening activities to act as lead in tasks. In terms of the track quality, the audio track voice velocity is quite average and the sound quality is very intelligible, not choppy at all. However, no video listening tracks are given.

Speaking tasks occur where oral presentation of new language input is done in dialogues or roleplays. In speaking activities chunks of new items are
formed into diverse activities and are tailored to let students speak to solve the given tasks, such as matching, information gap... etc.

As for reading skill, many authentic texts have been posed in *Sunrise 10* to consolidate grammar and vocabulary in real contexts. Some reading tasks have been recorded on audio tracks to better their listening as well as reading skills together, especially some dialogues. Each unit contains, at least, a text referring to a topic within which grammar, vocabulary and a string of sentences are logically sequenced. Subject matter of almost all the texts go in line with the interests and expectation of the intended learners such as healthy living, emailing a friend, a hero teenager, Solar system and so on. Mainly the questions on the passages are inference questions to let learners make assumptions.

Finally, writing skill is given importance equally like other skills by dedicating fairly enough place at the end of each unit. The writing tasks usually follow a similar format or a guided paragraph to help students build their writing performances on.

5.5. Social and cultural values

The social setting and cultural values in *Sunrise 10* are fairly similar to that of learners’ dwelling setting. Women and men are equally represented in giving functional tasks in various intervals in the course book to pervade gender bias. For example, in a text on page 20, a girl is presented as the character who saved the whole house including her little brother from burning. Hence, contrary to general view, woman figure has been shown as an equal character in life. In a different dialogue a girl is depicted as a doctor to clear the clouds over the objectivity of a gender.

As for the characters acting like real persons, many characters portrayed in the book have been given role throughout the book to set a natural like setting for the course. The age of the characters seem to be similar of learners so that the characters can show the equal feelings with that of learners. People of different ethnicities have been involved in the roles throughout the book. What lacks in *Sunrise 10* is the depiction of disabled people. There is no place where any disability is mentioned. Many characters are from a larger family in the course book to provide a social life-like production for learners.
5.6. **Methodology**

Like all other books, Sunrise 10 is based on a communicative approach language and is presented to reinforce and develop communicative competence. Learners needs have fairly been integrated into the language content because grade 10 students are teen agers and their interest domains normally cover fashion, he samples are selected randomly and derived from 16 schools in Erbil. The study was done with (25) English foreign Language teachers of the samples the students includes 2000 students divided into 1000 male and 1000 female students, the students’ ages are between 16-17 at secondary schools in Erbil capital city. Sports, picnic, games and the like, and these themes have relatively been presented throughout the book. As for its approach, the book has been designed inductively and the main goal is fluency over accuracy due to its communicative ground. Errors are seen as normal outcomes and part of the learning process as no learning takes places without stumbling some times.

Table 1/Results of written test according Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t-test Independent</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUM-Q-ALL</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>38.55</td>
<td>17.612</td>
<td>0.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>38.55</td>
<td>15.408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7. **Conclusion**

This research has finally come to conclude the following aims: first, it aims at motivating and arising the range of vocabulary throughout the learner's needs and perceptions. The approach in which vocabularies are arranged and organized in Sunrise 10 is how some different from the old version of Iraqi curriculum system. In sunrise 10 vocabularies aren’t arranged in an alphabetical orders but rather to say that they are organized by
underlining or highlighting the word with a blue color and students have to figure the meaning out through the context they are dealing with, so this helps learners to use vocabularies in a long term memory. A number of methods and/or techniques have been taken to aid learners which are related to the use of opposites, collocations, networks ... etc. Secondly, phonology plays a vital role in sunrise 10 and sounds are ranged in an individual ordering so that it can cooperate learners to learn the rising and falling intonation of each word. Third, however grammar in sunrise 10 makes uses of English tenses mainly present, past, perfect, continuous and determiners so far each unit gives a summary about the reading unit itself and illustrates how teachers will have to use tenses in English because sunrise series program follows the communicative task-based approaches. In terms of discourse the language of the book has been formed through dialogues and reading passages. Such as all other materials sunrise 10 focuses on the use of communicative approach since the language is presented to enhance the ability of competence in learners mind. The sunrise series teaching program basically measures the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in addition to the use of language as a whole. Listening skills in student book are presented through having dialogues and role plays although there is an audio CD which contains all the necessary tracks devoted to readings and dialogues, the sound is quite clear however, now video tracks are given. Reading is usually evaluated by giving unseen passages to students. However, speaking production is evaluated due to giving dialogues and role plays.

References


A tool for applying the Fifth Installment of the CIPP Model to assess long term enterprises intended for use by evaluators and evaluation clients/stakeholders” NYLC Resource Center at www.nylc.org.