

Chapter 21

Language Pedagogy: An Evaluation of Oral Communication Skill Materials in Secondary School ELT Books in Pakistan



Saima Nomaan

Abstract This chapter evaluates the Oral Communication Skills (OCS) materials presented in two prominent English language coursebooks that are used in grade 10 classes of state and private schools in Pakistan, respectively. A *first glance* and *in-depth* evaluation (McGrath, in *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching*, Edinburgh University Press, 2002) of the two coursebooks was carried out in this study to investigate the presence or absence of a balance among the four language skills materials; the suitability and effectiveness of the coursebooks; and the similarities or differences among the two textbooks. It emerges that the coursebook used in private schools is superior in terms of defining and specifying its aims and objectives, content, and the inclusion and presentation of OCS materials. The chapter concludes with suggestions aimed at improving the English OCS pedagogy in secondary schools in Pakistan.

Keywords Coursebook · Materials evaluation · Oral communication skills (OCS)

Background

Proficiency in oral communication skills (OCS) such as listening, and speaking is crucial in language pedagogy not only for communicative purposes but also for several general and discipline-specific pedagogical functions. Similarly, the importance of quality and appropriately authentic and effective OCS materials in textbooks cannot be denied. Keeping this in mind, the study analyses two English language textbooks, one of which is used in grade 10 classes in state schools and the other in private schools in Pakistan. The OCS materials and activities presented in the two coursebooks are evaluated for the balance of the four language skills and their usefulness, effectiveness, and appropriacy against the standards specified in the National Curriculum. The chapter also proposes some measures to improve the situation of English Language Teaching (ELT) in secondary schools in Pakistan.

S. Nomaan (✉)
University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

English as a Global Language

English as the *lingua-franca* of the world is the mother tongue of over 375 million people worldwide and has 1.5 billion speakers. It is the most widely taught foreign language and is also the official language of the United Nations, numerous international organizations, and aerial as well as maritime communications. Because of its growth and absorption of aspects of cultures worldwide, English is no longer exclusive to native English speakers. Instead, it is now the ‘primary vehicle of international communication’ (Haque, 2000: 15).

Importance of English Language in Pakistan

Pakistan is a multilingual country with six major and over 59 regional languages. Along with the national language *Urdu* (the *lingua-franca* in Pakistan), English is the co-official language and is taught as a compulsory subject at all educational levels. It is widely used in the government, judiciary, and legislature. Pakistan’s constitution and laws are codified in English. Hence, as the language of major policy documents, English is widely used in business, industry, and economy, for information technology and sociological/statistical purposes.

However, its usage is both highly important and controversial in Pakistan. On one hand, the use of English has rendered it of vital importance for Pakistan in international communication, business, technological advancement, research and development, and in the Islamic world where Pakistan holds a prominent place. On the other hand, it remains debatable because of its association with the imperialist ruling elite in the past, its cultural influence, the linguistic and ethnic diversity in Pakistan, and the sentimentalism associated with the linguistic identities of individual groups (Rahman, 2005).

English Language in Education in Pakistan

English was introduced in the sub-continent in the eighteenth century with the establishment of the British rule. To preserve, enhance and sustain their power, the British regime created the need to acquire English language in domains such as education, politics, business, the forces, judiciary, and the media. The Anglicist lobby created a two-stream language education policy for Indians:

- one for the feudal elite who were educated through the medium of English in private schools
- another for the masses who were taught through the vernaculars in public schools.

This made English the language of power, a marker of the elite status, and a marker of the urban and middle-class identity, which created English and vernacular-medium (i.e. Urdu medium) schools, which remain to date in Pakistan (Mahboob, 2002).

English language as the *gatekeeper to positions of prestige in society* (Pennycook, 1995) is now considered as the vehicle for achieving modernization, scientific, technological, and economic advancement. It is seen to promote success and upward mobility (Shamim, 2011), national progress and is also perceived to be a symbol of upper class sophistication (Mansoor, 1993; Rahman, 2002). With the rise of global electronic media and globalization, English language serves as the ‘gateway to success, to further education and to white-collar jobs’ (Ghani, 2003: 105).

Following these influences and as a result of the two-stream education policy in pre-partition British India, an apartheid educational system based on social stratification came into existence. Ironically, after 73 years of independence, the system with English/Urdu-medium divide still exists with essentially four types of schools that provide education to upper, middle, and lower classes of society in Pakistan:

- i. State or public schools offering education from grade 1 to 10—They follow the national curriculum, textbooks prescribed by the provincial textbook boards, and an annual examination system. These schools are administered by either the federal or provincial governments
- ii. Semi-government schools offering education from kindergarten to grade 12—They follow the same curriculum and examinations as the state schools while also offering the IGCSE O and A-level examinations. These schools are also considered public schools but with some degree of autonomy and are under the administration of the Armed Forces
- iii. Private sector schools including both local and international private schools do not necessarily follow the national curriculum. Instead, they use internationally published textbooks and follow international examination systems such as the GCE, GCSE, O, and A-Levels and/or Cambridge examination systems
- iv. ‘Madrassah’ schools mainly provide religious education, especially in Islamic law and other subjects associated with it.

The medium of education in state schools and Madrassah schools is generally Urdu, whereas all semi-government and private schools use English as the medium of instruction. Except for ‘Madrassah’ schools, all other schools teach English as a compulsory subject from classes 1 to 12.

ELT and English Language Competence in Secondary Schools in Pakistan

ELT in Pakistan has always been text-based with English being taught through the grammar-translation method in state schools, and through immersion in private schools. Students in all schools are multilingual often speaking more than two languages, i.e., their regional language as L1, Urdu as L2 (the national language),

and English as L3 (EFL/ESL). Secondary schools in both streams of education are a mix of co-educational institutions as well as segregated due to ethnocultural and religious reasons. The age group of students is between 14 and 16 years of age. Passing the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or Matriculation examination is mandatory before pursuing further education, such as the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) or bachelors' education.

Private schools are representative of affluent students from the higher strata of society who can afford quality and expensive education. State schools, on the other hand, represent middle or lower-class students who acquire free education and textbooks until secondary school after which they pay nominal fee. Semi-government schools and those run by the armed forces offer affordable education (O-levels, SSC, and Matric Examination). 'Madrasah' schools cater to lower or lower middle-class students who are provided with free of cost food, clothing, and religious education. Because of better financial resources, the condition of private schools is much better as compared with the state or public schools. That is why the term *English medium* has become synonymous with quality education in well-resourced schools.

State Schools

Despite the fact that English is taught from classes 1 to 12 in state schools and in the 4-year bachelor's education in Pakistan, the level of competence attained is relatively low (GOP, 2006). General practice involves encouraging students to engage in rote-learning and memorization of grammatical rules without any real understanding. Strategies such as translation of passages from English to Urdu and vice-versa, and memorizing exam focused content from guidebooks help learners pass the exam without acquiring any actual knowledge or any real competence in English. OCS activities are hardly practiced or incorporated into writing and reading skills. Moreover, varying levels of code-switching are found in classroom discourse especially since a combination of English, Urdu, and local languages is used for ELT in the non-elite private schools. Therefore, the percentage of students that pass English courses remains relatively low in public schools as compared to Urdu and other subjects.

Informal conversations and observations reveal that students of Urdu-medium schools still struggle with translating sentences from English to Urdu and get along in conversations using the few basic sentences that they have learnt. Even though the English medium schools administered by the armed forces provide students with some oral practice in the English language, their medium of private conversation remains Urdu and neither students nor teachers use English for communicative purposes (Alam & Bashir Uddin, 2013). However, students of these institutions gain much more competence in English than those in Urdu-medium schools.

Researchers highlight several issues engulfing ELT in state schools in Pakistan that involve pedagogy, infrastructure, and policies (Asghar & Butt, 2018; Hussain, 2017; Mansoor, 2002; Nasreen et al., 2009; Nawab, 2012; and Shamim & Allen, 2000). These include:

- teaching English as a subject, generally through literature, with little focus on communication and hence students' incapability in developing OCS
- uninteresting teacher-centered classroom environments that involve one-way teaching through monotonous lectures
- non-differentiated and collective teaching with minimal student participation
- more emphasis on language usage, emphasizing accuracy over fluency
- minimum practice and classroom discourse using L2 which results in limited use and limited proficiency
- L1 influence and lack of English phonetics pedagogy resulting in diverse pronunciation variations between students and teachers
- the difference between L1 and L2 culture, context, vocabulary, and grammatical structures hindering fluency and accuracy
- non-conformant syllabus and textbooks with repeated, faulty and uninteresting content
- large classes and unsuitable infrastructure for severe weather conditions
- unavailability of appropriate audio-visual teaching aids or educational technology
- inadequate teacher-training programs
- annual examination systems that focus on testing students' memory, not knowledge and hence encourage students to engage in exam-focused rote-learning (focus on information, not knowledge or its application)
- inadequate check-and-balance in the teaching and learning process and general oversight of organizational rules
- continually changing curriculum and language policies
- poor financial condition of state schools and ill-implementation of education policies with small fund allocations in the national budget.

Private Schools

In comparison to state schools, students of private elitist English-medium schools produce varying degrees of satisfactory competence and proficiency in English. Students generally belong to the elite class where English is spoken either as a necessity or as a status symbol both at home and at school. They also have greater exposure to English language at school through peer groups, media, and attractively designed reading materials written by native speakers of English. As a result, students also have ample opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities that encourage the spontaneous use of OCS in English language along with ongoing testing and refining of these skills. Classroom communication is in English as immersion is the general ELT practice. As a result of this, their oral fluency and proficiency is relatively higher than learners in non-elite private and state schools, thus, providing them with better career prospects as well.

Students in private schools are thus exposed to better infrastructure, small class sizes, and trained teachers who incorporate differentiated learning. They have access to modern audio-visual teaching aids and up-to-date international textbooks. Private schools engage in contemporary assessment systems and provide students with L2

immersion through maximum opportunities to practice English both inside and outside the classroom. As a result, students develop better language fluency and accuracy in comparison to their counterparts in state schools. With the evident discrepancy between the learning environments of students in private and state schools, there is a desperate need for reform in the existing principles and practices of language pedagogy in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Oral Communication Skills (OCS): Role and Importance in Language Pedagogy

Oral Communication Skills (OCS) as the amalgamation of ‘listening’ and ‘speaking’ involve the integration of *communicative fluency* (the ability to express concepts and meanings successfully); *grammatical accuracy* (the ability to pronounce and construct correctly); and *effective listening comprehension* (Jones et al., 1988).

Effective OCS are imperative for successful academic and professional functioning. Hence, the central role of OCS in L2 pedagogy, both as a learning tool and its outcome, cannot be emphasized enough because for L2 learners the ability to understand what is heard and to generate an adequate response is of prime importance. The main goal of these skills is to enable students to communicate and interact with each other for *linguistic survival* in technical disciplines at higher educational levels and eventually in business and commerce (Howe, 2003).

Coursebook Evaluation: Theoretical Perspectives and Principles

Coursebooks are textbooks owned and used by the teacher and learner ‘in principle to be followed systematically as the basis for a language course’ (Ur, 1996: 183). Coursebooks, having a syllabus-related framework, ready-made texts, and tasks, are a convenient resource to help learners become autonomous. While some consider coursebooks as, ‘skilfully marketed masses of rubbish’ (Stern, 1992: 352) that promote a culture of dependency, others emphasize the choice and suitability of coursebooks acknowledging them as ‘valid, labor-saving tools’ (Sheldon, 1988: 237), which provide sources of comprehensible input (Saidi & Mokhtarpour, 2019) and useful frameworks for language teachers and learners.

Carter and Nunan (2001) propose that coursebooks and teaching materials should include a selection of interesting, challenging, varied and authentic materials with well-structured and creative tasks, which provide learners with opportunities to use listening and speaking strategies thereby allowing the integration of OCS with other

skills. Hence, making informed and appropriate coursebook choices based on careful analysis and evaluation of materials is crucial.

The term *evaluation* in language pedagogy refers to the feedback, examination, or appraisal of various elements either in a syllabus or a coursebook and their suitability for the particular group of learners. *Materials evaluation* refers to the appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives for learners using them (Tomlinson, 2011: xiv) and involves judgments about their effectiveness. Likewise, *coursebook evaluation* refers to an ‘analytical matching process of needs to available solutions’ (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 97), based on *analysis* and *evaluation*, where the former refers to a process, which leads to an objective and the latter refers to making judgments (Littlejohn, 1998). The process of evaluation helps to identify the weaknesses and strengths of a coursebook and consequently improve upon the materials included, as well as the length and content of language courses. It also benefits students by providing them with improved learning materials that enable them to enhance their language skills. Hence, the importance of evaluating materials for the selection of appropriate coursebooks is essential.

Littlejohn (1998) proposes a *three-level analysis* of coursebooks based on *what the materials say about themselves* by looking at what is there; what is required of users; and what is implied. Similarly, Cunningsworth (1995) presents three methods of course book evaluation:

- the *Impressionistic method*, which is a general overview of the aims and content of the materials
- the *Checklist method*, which involves preparation of checklists for the identification, comparison, and verification of materials, and,
- the *In-depth method*, which involves linguistic, social, and topical dimensions of evaluation. This method evaluates the important components of lessons; the quality of strength, lightness, and transparency of materials; and focuses on specific features and procedures to see if the materials ‘live up to the claims made for them’ (McGrath, 2002: 28).

Cunningsworth (1995) proposes the checklists for evaluating speaking and listening materials that feature as a research tool in this study. Sheldon (1988) suggests *coursebook criteria* for purpose and McDonough and Shaw (2003) propose *external* and *internal* evaluation of coursebooks based on the obvious features mentioned in the blurb of the respective coursebook and in the table of contents. Ellis (1997) favors *predictive and retrospective* evaluation, involving evaluation before selecting a coursebook; the *in-use* evaluation (keeping in view learner involvement, background, objectives, and the resources available); and the *post-use* evaluation, involving decisions to continue the use of the coursebook or to abandon it based on the assessment of its continual use over a specific period.

McGrath (2002) favors the integration of both the *impressionistic* and *checklist* methods and proposes a two-phase *armchair evaluation* that includes:

- a preliminary armchair or *first-glance evaluation* which is synonymous with *external* and *impressionistic* evaluation

- a second-stage armchair evaluation or *in-depth evaluation* for deeper analysis and to discover the authors' beliefs and assumptions; the 'hidden agenda' (Nunan, 1989) about learning; the coverage of linguistic items and language skills, and to test the claims made for materials.

McGrath's (2002) acronym CATALYST identifies evaluation criteria as follows:

C Communicative
 A Aims
 T Teachability
 A Available add-ons
 L Level
 Y Your impression
 S Student interest
 T Tried and tested.

In this sense, the similarity between *micro-evaluation* for a specific aspect of the curriculum becomes evident and provides a sound basis to investigate and evaluate OCS materials. This study utilizes Cunningsworth's (1995) *checklists for listening and speaking*, a customized researcher *criteria checklist* that suggests rejecting the coursebook if materials do not meet the criteria, and McGrath's (2002) *first-glance* and *in-depth* evaluation processes that include four criteria: (a) practical considerations, (b) support for teaching and learning, (c) context relevance, and (d) learner appeal.

The Study

The National Education Policy (NEP) of Pakistan (GOP, 1998, 2009: para. 21) has declared English as a medium of instruction and a compulsory subject to be taught from classes 1 to 12. The National Curriculum of Pakistan (GOP, 2006) also requires five competencies in the subject of English language in secondary classes. These include *Oral Communication Skills* as competency three with one standard and two benchmarks (BM) (GOP, 2006):

Competency 3: Oral Communication Skills

Standard 1: All students will use appropriate social and academic conventions of spoken discourse for effective oral communication with individuals and in groups, in both informal and formal settings.

BM1: Use extended linguistic exponents to communicate appropriately for various functions and co-functions of advice, hopes, fears, queries, in the extended social environment.

BM2: Demonstrate through formal talks, group oral presentations, informal interviews, the social and academic conventions, and dynamics to communicate information/ideas.

Keeping this in mind, two ELT coursebooks that claim to enhance learner linguistic competence in English (grammar accuracy and communicative fluency) were evaluated. The details of these coursebooks are:

- (a) Afzal, et al. (2010), *English Book 2. (EB2)*. Published by Punjab Textbook Board.

This coursebook is used in state schools along with two supplementary grammar books for Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) and Matric (grade 10) Examination. No teacher's guidebook is available to accompany the coursebook

- (b) Redford, R. (2007). *Oxford Progressive English: 9. (OPE9)*. Published by Oxford University Press. This coursebook is used in private schools along with two supplementary books that are exclusive to writing skills development for GCSE, GCE, or O' level examinations. It comes with a teacher's guide.

Following a review of the literature on coursebook evaluation, the two coursebooks were evaluated for OCS materials and their suitability and efficacy in developing OCS among grade 10 students in the respective state and private schools where the coursebooks are in use. More specifically, the study evaluates:

- the extent to which these coursebooks conform to the requirements of the National Curriculum for the development of learners' communicative competence.
- the effectiveness and balance of OCS materials as compared with reading and writing activities and whether these materials live up to the standards of the National Curriculum.
- the suitability of the two coursebooks for use in secondary classes (grade 10) over an extended period, as illustrated by Cunningsworth's (1995) *post-use* evaluation.

This study thus implements an *integrated method*, which combines McGrath's (2002) *first-glance evaluation* and *in-depth evaluation, general criteria* that evaluate the general features of good teaching materials, and *specific criteria* to engage in context-based and individual circumstance-based evaluation of coursebooks.

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated in this study:

- What is the balance of listening and speaking materials with the other two skills (i.e., reading/writing) in the coursebooks under investigation?
- What kind of listening and speaking materials are presented in these textbooks?
- How do these materials promote learners' oral communication skills?

Data Analysis and Discussion

The two coursebooks are evaluated in depth in this section.

***Redford, R. (2007). Oxford Progressive English: 9. (OPE9).
Published by Oxford University Press.***

First-Glance Evaluation

McGrath's *first-glance evaluation* (Fig. 21.1) affirms OPE9's date of publication, colorful layout, and good quality durable paper. Being part of a multi-series coursebook, the publisher's blurbs and foreword in OPE9 state their aims of enhancing learners' proficiency in reading and writing and other specific examination-related areas. The introductory note asserts making the learning experience 'enjoyable' for learners of English by developing reading, writing, and speaking skills through student-friendly, attractive and clearly illustrated coursebook materials.

Moreover, the content is *context-relevant* and is suitable for the course aims, for the learners' age, level, their social and cultural backgrounds, and for use over the length of the course. Topics and visuals seem interesting which affirms the publisher's claims about the inclusion and presentation of up-to-date and varied materials that hold appeal for learners. Hence, OPE9 fulfills the required criteria of *practical considerations* except that as Shah et al. (2014) observe, the pedagogical content in OPE9 does not entirely identify with Pakistani culture.

The introductory blurb also claims to prepare learners for 'every aspect' of the O' level English language syllabus, and that the speaking and listening tasks that are included enable learners to consolidate language skills. However, no specific listening lessons are found in the syllabus, which focus on reading and writing skills for GCSE, GCE, and O levels examinations. Contrary to the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) syllabus (2009), specifications that include oral communicative competence are overlooked in OPE9, and this competence is intended to be developed through writing only. Even though OPE9 comes with a teacher's guidebook, no audio support resources or photocopiable material is provided for learner self-study or as teaching resources.

Another aspect is that affording this expensive textbook (Rs. 1,150) in Pakistan, where 29.5% of the population is living below the poverty line (GOP, 2006), is difficult for working-class people. This is one of the reasons this textbook is being used in elitist private English-medium schools only. Overall, OPE9 meets 81% of the *first-glance evaluation* criteria in McGrath's checklist and gives a sound basis for its selection as an ELT coursebook.

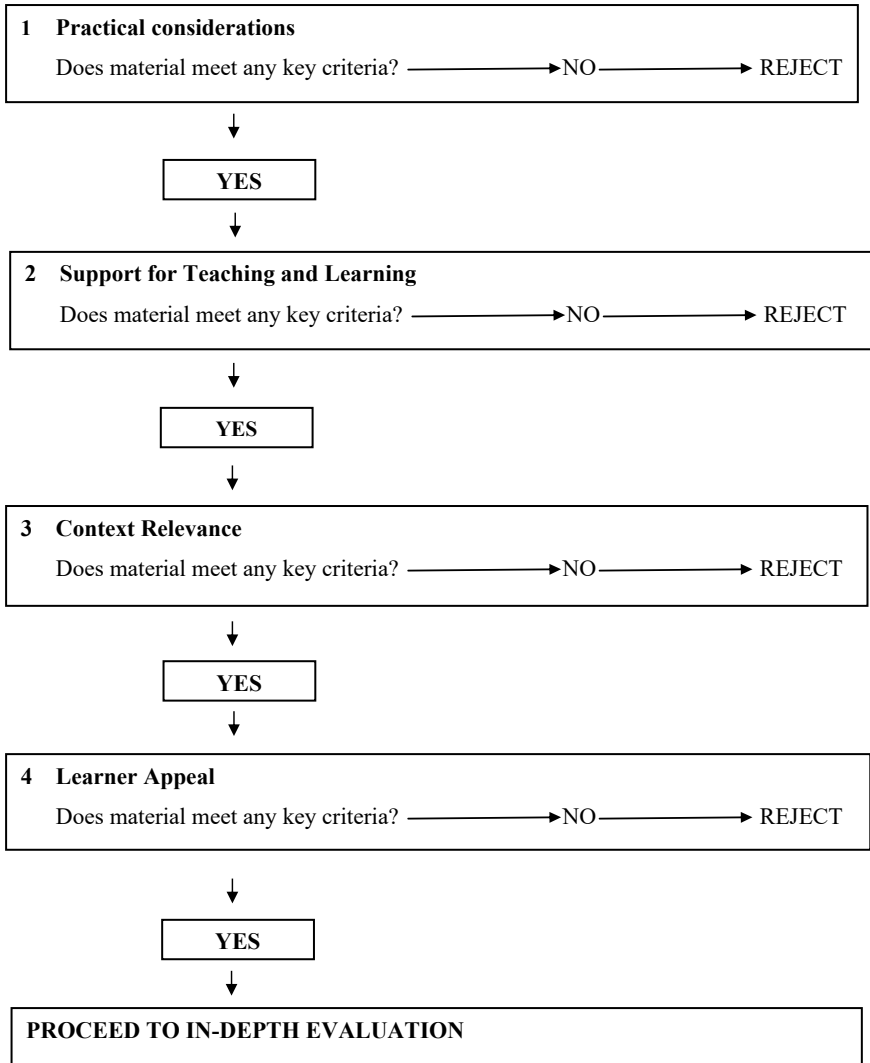


Fig. 21.1 First-Glance Evaluation Procedure (Adapted from McGrath, 2002: 37)

In-Depth Evaluation of OCSs Materials in OEP9

The *first-glance evaluation* of OPE9 indicated an integrated approach to teaching language skills in the syllabus. However, the in-depth evaluation using the custom criteria checklist and Cunningsworth’s (1995) *checklist for speaking* demonstrated only one listening activity in OPE9. Hence, Cunningsworth’s *checklist for listening* was not used.

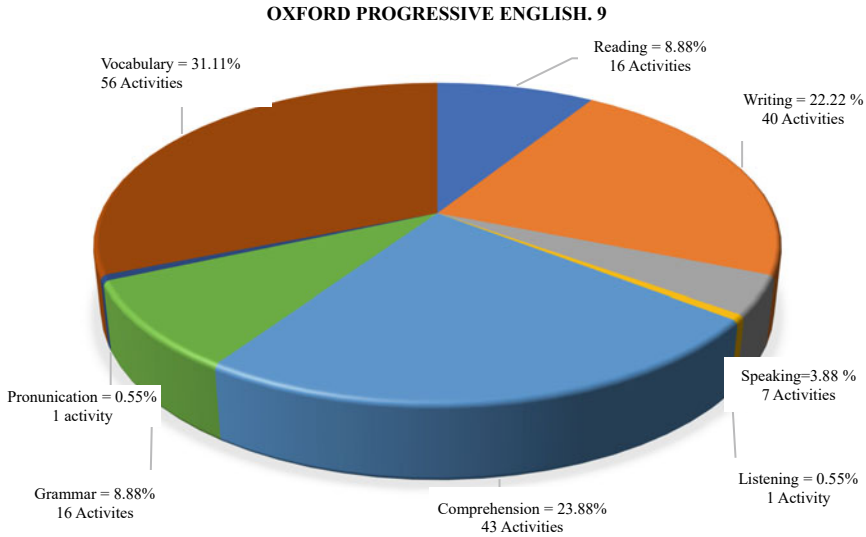


Fig. 21.2 Distribution of activities associated with skills in OPE9

The Balance of OCS with Other Language Skills

The syllabus of OPE9 includes 10 units comprising 180 activities for all language skills. It includes:

- 59 (33.8%) activities on reading/reading comprehension
- 40 (22.2%) writing activities
- 7 (3.8%) speaking activities
- 1 (0.5%) listening activity
- 73 (40.56%) other grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation activities.

An evaluation of these activities revealed that only 8 or 4.44% of the activities were allocated to developing OCS as compared with 98 or 55% reading/writing activities and 73 or 40.56% for other skills enhancement activities (Figs. 21.2 and 21.3).

Evaluation of Activities

A total of seven speaking activities and only one listening activity were found in OPE9. Speaking activities are intended exclusively for speaking purposes with no listening skills development involved and the single extensive listening activity required students to listen to others' comments related to another required task. However, this purposeful listening input helps develop students' consciousness of language items and also develops their speaking proficiency.

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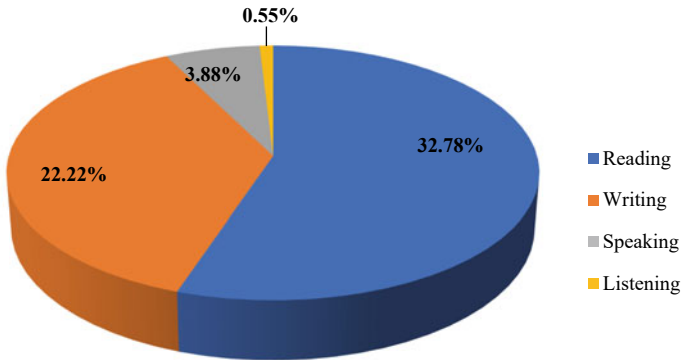


Fig. 21.3 Distributions of the four language skills activities in OPE9

The speaking activities involve discussions, task completion, and opportunities for maximum student talk to develop fluency and boost confidence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

These also include language use for interactional and transactional purposes. Activities in this coursebook demonstrate:

- integration of language skills, such as role-play, building vocabulary, and managing tasks
- developing the use of communication strategies, interaction skills, and interpersonal relationships through pair or group work.

An analysis of the discussion and writing tasks reveals that the coursebook includes interesting, motivating and engaging topics to activate schemata and cultural awareness among learners and prompts even the most resilient learners to speak up and share their ideas. Additionally, the activities allow teachers to adapt materials and manage the classroom in several ways.

Based on this information and following the *first-glance*, *in-depth*, and *criteria* evaluation, OPE9 is found to be suitable for ELT in grade 10 classes in Pakistan. It meets 67% of the evaluative criteria as it includes materials and activities, which are suitable to the needs of students. Second, its materials are in tandem with the syllabus aims and the exams for which it is intended.

Since the percentage of unfulfilled criteria is relatively low (33%) and the activities included help achieve the competency, standards, and benchmarks set by the Pakistan national curriculum for English language in secondary school (GOP, 2006), the selection of OPE9 as an ELT book seems advisable.

Afzal et al. (2010), English Book 2. (EB2). Published by Punjab Textbook Board

First-Glance Evaluation

Interestingly, the locally published *EB2* includes no publishers' blurb or introduction stating syllabus aims and objectives. By not providing any details of the aims and objectives of the course or syllabus, it ignores the Punjab Textbook Board's guidelines for textbook authors and publishers (Durrani & Shahid, 2010), and its suitability in terms of the aims of syllabus and course cannot be determined.

A first glance at the front cover of *EB2* reveals six pictures and a bland, colorless, and uninteresting layout. Hence, in terms of its *likely appeal to learners*, *EB2* proves unfit for grabbing learners' attention. Considering the *practical aspect*, *EB2* is affordable, its supplementary grammar books are readily available all over Pakistan and the publisher is reliable enough for its continued availability. However, the quality of paper and printing is low, and the textbook cannot be used for more than one academic year. No teacher's book or other accompanying teaching and learning support resources are provided, rendering it unsuitable for self-study. In terms of *context relevance*, a large number of culturally and religiously identifiable lessons can be found in *EB2*. However, the suitability of *EB2* seems doubtful for students' age and level, although it includes a range of vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension exercises.

Since differentiated learning and individual assessment for lower ability learners is not a common practice in ELT in Pakistan, determining the suitability and effectiveness of *EB2* in this regard is difficult. Furthermore, there is no evidence of the coursebook having been piloted for suitability in the local context. However, *EB2* seems suitable for the length of the course and the exam requirements (Matric and SSC). Since no listening materials and activities are presented in *EB2*, no audio equipment is required.

Findings reveal that only 38% of *first-glance* analysis evaluative criteria are met, while 68% of the criteria are not met. Hence, *EB2* does not allow for an in-depth evaluation and should be principally rejected for teaching purposes precisely at this stage without proceeding to an *in-depth* evaluation as identified by McGrath (2002). It provides less than comprehensive support for learning even if teachers have no problems in teaching without the teacher's book and other resources. As such, this provides a sound basis for the rejection of *EB2* as an ELT coursebook.

In-Depth Analysis of OCS Materials in EB2

For the *in-depth* analysis of *EB2*, the activity types were identified, the evidence of students' OCS development was explored, and its suitability and effectiveness were determined on the basis of the *criteria* evaluation checklist that I developed along with Cunningsworth's (1995) checklist for listening and speaking.

The Balance of OCS with Other Language Skills

The 21 lessons in EB2 include 120 activities for reading, writing, speaking, reading comprehension, grammar points, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Figure 21.4 shows the breakdown of different activity types in EB2.

Overall, EB2 consists of:

- 03 (2.5%) OCS activities
- 40 (33.34%) reading and writing activities
- 77 (41.57%) other language learning activities.

This indicates a considerable imbalance in the materials of the four language skills. EB2 does not meet students’ requirements for developing OCS and fails to fulfill the aims and objectives of the Pakistan National Curriculum for the following reasons:

- Listening, one of the most important components of OCS, is absent.
- There is an imbalance of speaking activities in comparison with other language skills.
- It lacks a well-defined syllabus with clear learning aims and objectives.

Therefore, the evaluation of EB2 based on the balance and presentation of language skills materials calls for rejection of the coursebook.

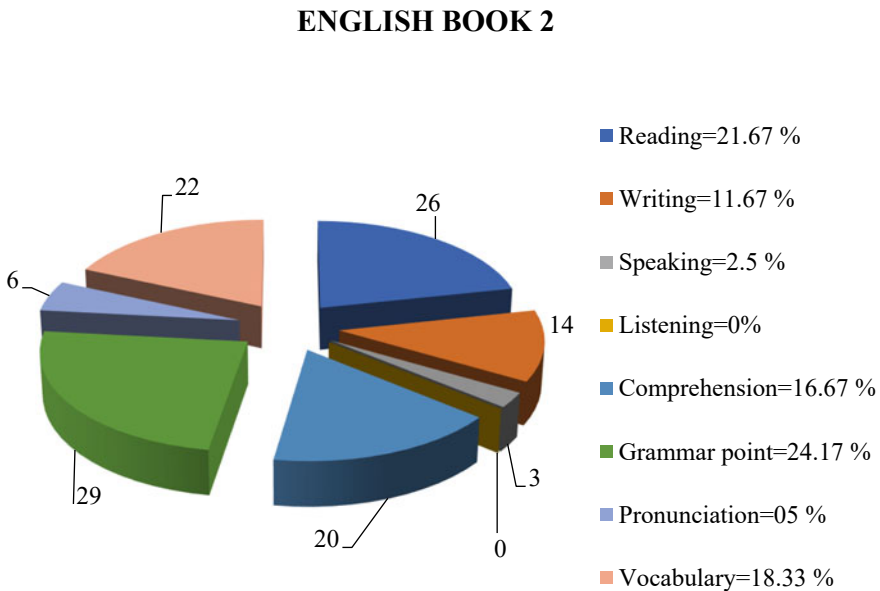


Fig. 21.4 Distribution of various skills activities in EB2

Evaluation of Activities

Of the three speaking activities in EB2 (see Table 21.1), only two emerged as discussion activities. The third activity involved speaking only in the verbal production of answers. The former activities are intended to supplement writing and reading, to provide oral practice in vocabulary and grammar and to promote ideas for writing activities. Since no teacher or group/pair work is mentioned, it is assumed that the whole-class discussions are implied by *ask your class fellows*. The activities in EB2 include engaging topics of mutual interest and everyday life, prompting learners to use authentic language. This complies with social constructivist emphasis on students' prior experience and social interaction as the most useful tool in developing fluency and confidence through discussions. Such activities can help develop students' speaking skills by using critical thinking, planning what to say to others, building working vocabulary, using longer and more accurate sentences with increased confidence, sharing and communicating their ideas and real-life experiences.

However, the in-depth evaluation demonstrates that EB2 does not meet 56% of the evaluative criteria. Thus, EB2 is found to be unsuitable for the development of OCS among grade 10 learners. The few speaking activities in EB2 prove ineffective compared with the demand for OCS proficiency in Pakistan. Moreover, EB2 does not adhere to the standards, benchmarks, and OCS competency set for grade 10 as identified in the National Curriculum (GOP, 2006). As a result, EB2 is rejected as a textbook for learners' OCS development in grade 10 ELT in Pakistan.

Table 21.1 A comparison of skill-based activities in Oxford Progressive English 9 and English Book 2

| Skills | Activities in OPE9 | Percentage of activities (%) | Activities in EB2 | Percentage of activities (%) |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Total number of lessons in the book | 10 | | 21 | |
| Reading | 16 | 9 | 26 | 22 |
| Writing | 40 | 22 | 14 | 12 |
| Speaking | 07 | 4 | 03 | 3 |
| Listening | 01 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Comprehension | 43 | 24 | 20 | 17 |
| Grammar point | 16 | 9 | 29 | 23 |
| Pronunciation | 01 | 0.5 | 06 | 5 |
| Vocabulary | 56 | 31 | 22 | 18 |
| Total | 180 | 100 | 120 | 100 |

Table 21.2 Balance of OCS with other skills

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Total number of activities | |
| Total number of activities in OPE9 and EB2 | 300 |
| Total number of listening and speaking activities in OPE9 and EB2 | 10 |
| Percentage of OCS activities | 3.33% |

Table 21.3 Comparison of OPE9 and EB2 based on evaluative criteria

| Criteria of Evaluation | OPE9 Criteria Met (%) | OPE9 Unmet Criteria (%) | EB2 Criteria Met (%) | EB2 Unmet Criteria (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| First-glance evaluation | 81 | 19 | 38 | 62 |
| In-depth analysis criteria | 66.7 | 38 | 44.4 | 55.6 |

Comparison of OPE9 and EB2: Selection or Rejection

Table 21.2 presents the balance of four language skills materials as they appear in both textbooks demonstrating a low coverage of 3.33% OCS activities out of a total of 300. Table 21.3 demonstrates the comparison of OPE9 and EB2 on the basis of fulfilled and unmet evaluative criteria.

A comparative analysis based on Cunningsworth's (1995) checklist for speaking reveals that 8 out of the 10 units (lessons) in OPE9 contain speaking activities along with ample OCS activities (i.e., discussions, dialogues, debates, role-plays, communicative/information-gap activities) and supplementary materials like a teacher's guidebook. Only 3 of the 21 units in EB2, on the other hand, contain speaking activities and provide discussion activities in authentic situations. Moreover, no additional vocabulary or supplementary teacher materials are provided. Therefore, EB2 appears unsuitable for developing grade 10 students' OCS in Pakistan. OPE9, however, is found suitable to some extent as it includes adequate speaking materials (Tables 21.4 and 21.5).

Conclusion

Findings indicate differences in EB2 and OPE9 in terms of appearance, definition, and specifications of syllabus aims and objectives and, the inclusion, presentation, and balance of OCS materials with other language skills. Firstly, the *first-glance* evaluation demonstrates the inadequacy of EB2 in terms of what is there (Littlejohn, 1998), i.e., layout, contents, aims of the syllabus, suitability for learners and teachers and its use over an extended period of time, etc.

Table 21.4 First-glance evaluation of OPE9 and EB2

| Aspects investigated | OPE9 | EB2 |
|---|-------|-----|
| <i>Practical considerations</i> | | |
| All components available | Y | N |
| Affordable | N | Y |
| Multi-level (i.e., series) | Y | Y |
| <i>Support for teaching and learning (additional components)</i> | | |
| Teacher's book | Y | N |
| Tests | N | N |
| Cassettes | N | N |
| Suitable for self-study | Y | N |
| <i>Context relevance</i> | | |
| <i>(a) Suitable for course</i> | | |
| Length of course | Y | Y |
| Aim of course | Y | N |
| Syllabus | Y | N |
| Exam | Y | Y |
| <i>(b) Suitable for learners</i> | | |
| Age | Y | Y |
| Level | Y | Y |
| Cultural background | Y | Y |
| <i>(c) Suitable for teachers</i> | | |
| Required resources (e.g., cassette recorder) available | N | N |
| Evidence of suitability (e.g., piloted in local context) | Y | N |
| <i>Likely to appeal to learners</i> | | |
| Layout | Y | N |
| Visuals | Y | N |
| Topics | Y | Y |
| Suitable over medium term (i.e., unlikely to date) | Y | Y |
| Aspects investigated | OPE 9 | EB2 |
| Total number of criteria | 21 | 21 |
| Number of YESs | 17 | 08 |
| Number of NOs | 04 | 13 |
| Percentage of YESs | 81% | 38% |
| Percentage of NOs | 19% | 62% |

Table 21.5 In-depth evaluation and comparison of OPE9 and EB2 based on researcher's criteria checklist

| Aspects Investigated | OPE 9 | EB2 |
|---|--------|--------|
| 1.Enough communicative activities | Y | N |
| 2.Enough roughly tuned input for listening (Harmer, 2001) | N | N |
| 3.Authenticity of language (Ur, 1996) | Y | Y |
| 4.Enough opportunities for real communication | Y | N |
| 5.Enough opportunities for oral skills development | N | N |
| 6.Opportunities for learner use of listening strategies | N | N |
| 7.Opportunities for learner use of speaking strategies | Y | Y |
| 8.Suitability for teachers/learners in terms of context and culture | Y | Y |
| 9.Opportunities for critical thinking and discussions | Y | Y |
| Total number of criteria | 09 | 09 |
| No. of YESs | 06 | 04 |
| No. of NOs | 03 | 06 |
| Percentage of YESs | 66.67% | 44.44% |
| Percentage of NOs | 33.33% | 55.55% |

Conversely, OPE9 with its colorful layout, well-defined aims, varied and interesting activities, the inclusion of speaking practice materials, and accompanying teacher's book attracts the eye and calls for its long-term selection even though it is expensive. However, OPE2 also lacks in the inclusion and presentation of listening practice and activities.

Second, contrary to Sahu's (2004) proposition that coursebooks should cover the whole range of language skills and specifications of the National Curriculum, listening is the least covered skill in both coursebooks which abound in reading and writing activities and materials. Furthermore, concurring with Ahmed et al.'s (2015) views about the inadequacy of listening materials and the imbalance of OCS practice in comparison with other language skills in Pakistani ELT textbooks, the low percentage of OCS (3.33%) indicates low priority given to listening and speaking skills in EB2. The slightly higher percentage of OCS activities in OPE9 (4.43% compared with 2.5% in EB2) indicates that the communicative aspect of the language is covered to some extent and modern approaches to language learning have been utilized.

Prioritizing reading and writing activities indicates that both coursebooks aim to produce good readers and writers rather than proficient speakers and good listeners of English. Moreover, both coursebooks need refinement and revision by course designers and authors for the inclusion and balance of OCS materials. On these bases, EB2 should be principally rejected. OPE9, on the other hand, may be selected for ELT because it contains adequate speaking materials and conforms to its specified

objectives. However, based on the low percentage of speaking and listening materials, it should also be rejected if the development of students' OCS is the sole desired goal.

Despite the everyday use of English in the Pakistani academic and commercial context, a serious lack of learner proficiency in the English language in both public and private sectors is noticed. With modest teaching conditions in Pakistan, English is and will continue to be a necessity for Pakistanis. Therefore, ELT in Pakistan must be approached from the perspective of applied linguistics and listening, speaking and pronunciation must be placed within the broader context of oral communication in language pedagogy. As Tomlinson (2019) recommends, in-house development courses on materials' development for publishers must be arranged; decisions concerning the adoption and choice of textbooks must include experts on language acquisition; principle and research-driven criteria must be developed for materials development based on the combination of theory, classroom experience, and observation; and coursebook materials must be adapted to make them more relevant, meaningful and engaging for learners.

Curriculum designers and textbook authors should embrace the concept of total language learning and materials must be continuously updated in the form of challenging and exciting topics which attract and motivate learners. Coursebook evaluative criteria and guidelines must be carefully applied before coursebook selection. Modern teaching approaches that combine efficient and committed teaching, quality textbooks covering all language skills, effective language policy and its strategic implementation, improved exam system, and the provision of teacher-training that allow for the integration of all skills areas should be adopted to meet students' individual needs and abilities. This only will ensure pupils' optimum linguistic competency and communicative fluency.

It is to be acknowledged that no perfect coursebook exists and that the selection and choice of coursebooks are of critical importance as it is the primary source of knowledge that shapes the concepts of young minds aspiring to learn a new language. Hence, the utmost care is imperative in the selection of coursebooks having more meaningful and more cognitively and affectively engaging materials for the learners (Tomlinson, 2016), if desired outcomes are to be achieved in language development.

Appendix

Cunningsworth's Checklists for Listening and Speaking (1995: 67, 68)

| Evaluation Checklists for Listening | Evaluation Checklist for Speaking |
|--|--|
| (a) What kind of listening material is contained in the course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does listening form part of dialogue/conversation work? • Are there specific listening passages? (b) If there are listening passages, what kind of listening activities are based on the—comprehension questions, extracting specific information, etc.? (c) Is the listening material set in a meaningful context? (d) Are there pre-listening tasks or questions? (e) What are the recorded materials on audiocassette like in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound quality • speed of delivery • accent • authenticity? (f) Is there any video material for listening? If so, is good use made of the visual medium to provide a meaningful context and show facial expression, gesture, etc.? | (a) How much emphasis is there on spoken English in the coursebook? (b) What kind of materials for speaking are contained in the course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral presentation and practice of language items • dialogue • role-play • communication activities (information gap) (c) Are there any specific strategies for conversation or other spoken activities? (e.g., debating, giving talks) (d) Is any specific material included to help the learner cope with unpredictability in spoken discourse? |

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Saima Nomaan is a doctoral candidate and a postgraduate researcher who has worked as a Lecturer (General Studies-English) at the Higher Colleges of Technology (UAE). She graduated with a bachelor's degree in English Literature and holds double master's degrees in English Language and Literature, and TESOL Studies. She also earned two postgraduate diplomas (TEFL and College-Management), a UK TEFL certification, and is Harvard Higher Education Teaching certified. Being a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK, her professional career spans over 16 years, involving teaching and research. As a Microsoft Faculty-Fellow, she is well versed in the use of instructional technology. Her primary interests include educational research, Educational Technology and the practical application of technological tools to facilitate active learning, develop interactive curriculum, and teacher professional development.