

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes the basic concepts of materials evaluation and their use as well as related studies based on materials use in language teaching. The first part presents basic concepts of material evaluation which includes pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation, supplementation together with adaptation which is relevant for the actual use of coursebook in classroom settings. The second part reviews evaluations of coursebooks, discussing the instruments used and the results gained from the studies.

#### Coursebook Evaluation

Materials evaluation is a procedure that is concerned primarily with the value of a set of learning materials. It involves making judgments about the effect of materials on the people using them and it attempts to measure for example the flexibility of the materials, whether it is easy for a teacher to adapt the materials to fit a particular setting (Tomlinson, 2003). The most common form of materials evaluation is known as pre-use evaluation which refers to the evaluation of materials prior to use to establish potential suitability. To establish whether materials really are appropriate and in what ways and to what extent, two more stages of evaluation are

vital, which are in-use and post-use evaluation. These stages are cyclical and are illustrated in figure 1.

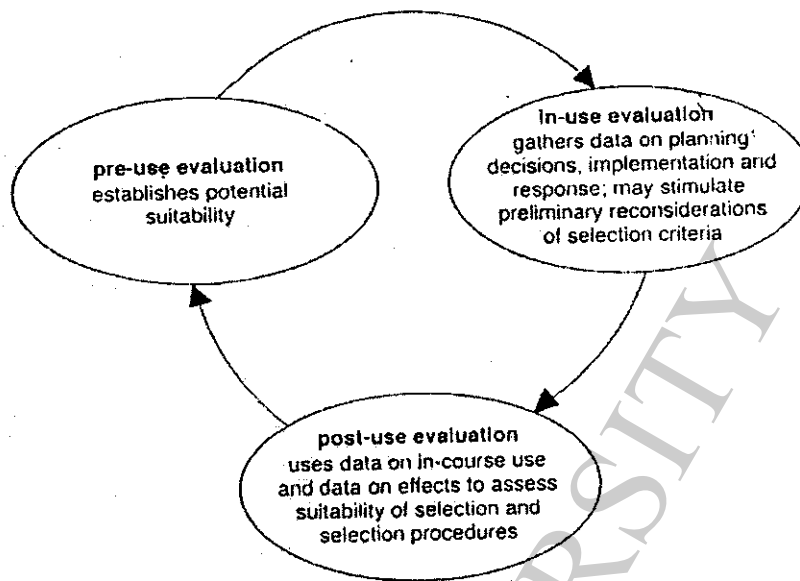


Figure1: Stages and processes of materials evaluation (McGrath, 2002 p. 180)

### Pre-use Evaluation

Pre-use evaluation involves making predictions about the potential value and suitability of materials for their users (Tomlinson, 2003). Its aim is to establish the suitability of the coursebook for particular teaching contexts, teachers and learners (McGrath, 2002). Two basic methods of pre-use evaluation are illustrated here, referred to as the impressionistic method and the checklist method.

The impressionistic method, the most common form of pre-use evaluation (McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003), involves obtaining a general impression of the material. This method is relatively superficial as this can be done by glancing at the description of the book on the back cover and the contents page, then skimming

though the book for the topics, lay-outs and visuals. Tomlinson (2003) claimed that publishers are well aware of this and usually place attractive illustrations in the right hand page in order to impress the teacher who decides which coursebook should be used in this way.

Another form of pre-use evaluation is the checklist method, items being ticked once their presence has been confirmed (McGrath, 2002). The kinds of features that are considered in pre-use evaluation are such features as some basic linguistic, psychological and pedagogical principles underlying modern methods of language learning (Tucker, cited in McGrath, 2002). Other features include user definition, cultural bias, selection and grading. Examples of the checklist method can be seen in the work of Sheldon (1989), Skierso (1991) and Littlejohn (1998) in the form of evaluative questions. Some features of Sheldon and Skierso's suggested criteria are similar, for example user definition which is referred to in the work of Skierso (1991) as aims and goals. For this feature, the evaluative questions are for example:

1.) Is there a clear specification of the target age range, culture, assumed backgrounds, probable learning preferences and educational expectation?

(Sheldon, 1988 p. 243).

2.) For whom is the text intended? Who are the learners? Who are the teachers?

(Skierso, 1991 p. 435)

Another point which is shared is sufficiency, but referred to as supplementary exercises for each language skill in the work of Skierso (1991). Here are some examples:

1.) What type and amount of supplementary exercises are presented for listening comprehension, speaking (pronunciation, intonation, and communication),

reading and writing? Are they authentic and accurate? Are they appropriate to age etc.? (Skierso, 1991 p. 439).

However, what cannot be seen in the work of Sheldon (1989) but can be seen in Skierso (1991 p.436-437) are items based on language study like vocabulary and grammatical structures, for example:

- 1.) What and how many teaching points are selected and emphasized?
- 2.) How are grammar rules presented? Are they stated or unstated? Is an inductive or deductive approach used, or do the authors use an approach which interrelates both the inductive and deductive approaches?
- 3.) How is the vocabulary introduced? In what context?
- 4.) Is attention paid on roots, inflectional endings (e.g., plurals possessives, past tenses), cognates, synonyms, antonyms, thematic groupings?

The features of methodological and pedagogical guidance can be seen in the evaluative questions of Skierso (1991 p.439-440), for example:

- 1.) Does the manual provide the teacher with guidance on the teaching of language items and the four skills? What type and amount?
- 2.) Is the teacher expected to be experienced in language teaching or does the text offer clear and detailed advice for the novice to follow?
- 3.) Do the authors hold a particular bias in language teaching and methodology? What is it?

While the checklists of Sheldon and Skierso focus on general methodological and pedagogical guidance as well as basic linguistics; in other words

they give some ideas of what a good coursebook look like, the checklist of Littlejohn (1998) focuses on the characteristics of coursebooks portrayed via the activities or tasks (as work plans) in each section within the coursebook. According to Littlejohn (1998 p.192), checklists generally contain implicit assumptions about what desirable materials should look like. However to him what is required is a framework which separates assumptions about what is desirable from an analysis of the materials. In other words, what is needed is a general framework which allows materials to “speak for themselves” and which can help teacher-analysts to look closely at materials before coming to their own conclusions about desirability. His checklist focuses on task characteristics, or aspects of tasks and is comprised of such features as turn-take, focus, operation, participation, input to learners, output, source and nature. An adaptation of his checklist is given in Appendix A.

However, to McGrath (2002 p. 26-27), the checklist method is like the impressionistic method, in that it is not watertight and also has potential constraints. For example, some features referred to above are only strengths if the categories of which the checklist is composed are relevant to the specific context to be used. To him, an “off the shelf” checklist is likely to need tailoring to suit a particular context, and this can involve a good deal more than simply deleting checklist items which are inapplicable.

Moreover, it was concluded in the work of Skierso (1991 p. 441) that there is no such thing as a perfect text so it is vital to adopt a text whose perceived flaws are correctable. She also suggested that a re-evaluation of the selected text should come with the evaluation of the text in the actual classroom use or what is called in-use evaluation.

## In-use Evaluation

This kind of evaluation involves measuring the value of materials while using them or observing them being used (Tomlinson, 2003 p.24). Tomlinson added that this can be more objective and reliable than pre-use evaluation because it makes use of measurement rather than prediction; however it has received very little attention in the literature. According to McGrath (2002 p. 180), the advantage of in-use evaluation of published materials is that the teacher is in the position to make assessment of whether the materials are appropriate for use. The attention is on learning outcomes and the interest in the materials. In-use evaluation can rely heavily on conscientious collecting of data by using systematic record-keeping and evidence-based reflection. It aims to investigate what the teachers do with materials. To McGrath, it focuses on what the teachers do with materials rather than the materials alone, where the emphasis is on illuminative description (understanding the process of teaching and learning) rather than formative evaluation (developing the program) or summative evaluation (determining whether stated goals are reached).

In in-use evaluation, the evaluators could be the teachers themselves, as they are the people working closely with the learners and the materials and can deeply understand their learners' needs, lacks and wants as well as the policy of the institution. When having enough information of how the materials were used, it may be possible to develop or change something within the program or even be able to determine whether the stated goals were reached. Thus, it can be said that in-use evaluation can lead to formative and summative evaluation and the evaluators can be the teachers using the materials.

To McGrath (2002), in-use evaluation covers such questions as what worked well? What difficulties did the learners have? What form of additional help might be needed? For Tomlinson (2003), the points such as potential for localization, achievability of tasks, practicality, teachability, flexibility and appeal of materials can be measured. The questions and points offered by these two writers indicates that in-use evaluation should not limit itself to only illuminative purposes but also summative and formative purposes.

In-use evaluation provides information on the roles and functions of the coursebook in teaching and learning. According to Hutchinson and Torres (1994) and Ur, (cited by McGrath, 2002 p. 10), coursebooks can benefit both teacher and learners in several ways. For learners and teachers, the coursebook gives samples and offers variety. For learners, it defines what is to be learned and may be tested. For teachers, it could provide a structure and saves times as well as offering linguistic, cultural and methodological support. Coursebooks and other commercial materials in many situations represent the hidden curriculum of the language course. Moreover, to Hutchinson and Torres (1994), coursebook can act as agents of change, allowing innovative ideas to be introduced within structured frameworks in a way that supports teachers and learners.

#### Post-use Evaluation

Another form of evaluation is post-use evaluation which necessitates the consideration of effects (McGrath 2002). McGrath stated that if the in-use evaluation has been conducted seriously and systematically, it can provide rich and valuable data as input to post-use evaluation, as the information that comes from in-use evaluation

can be related to such questions as interest, linguistic level, cognitive level and sufficiency of practice materials. In other words post-use evaluation measures the actual outcomes of the use of materials and can give reliable information about the use, adaptation or replacement of the materials. To Tomlinson (2003 p. 25), post use evaluation can answer such important questions as

- 1.) What do the learners know which they did not know before starting to use the materials?
- 2.) What do the learners still not know despite using the materials?
- 3.) Did the teachers find the materials easy to use?
- 4.) Did the materials help the teachers to cover the syllabus?

However, the evaluation of outcomes may be difficult as Tomlinson (cited in McGrath 2002), comments that a student's ability to produce an item that has been taught may be affected by many variables. This can be seen when the students can produce some grammar point taught in a controlled situation such as an oral drill or grammar exercises but fail to use it correctly and appropriately in real communication. Ellis (1998) suggests that a measure of outcomes such as the learner's ability to transfer knowledge and skills acquired to an equivalent situation without continuing support would be one way to solve such a problem. The teacher should set a situation similar to what is taught to the students in class when measuring the actual outcome. For example after teaching them how to write a check and or to follow an instruction of making something, the measure of outcome should require the students to write a check or make something based on similar instructions used in the classroom tasks. McGrath (2002) also offers some ways of controlling this problem by involving the learners' participation such as using self report, questionnaires, interviews and diaries before or after the measurement of outcomes.



## Supplementation and Adaptation

Supplementation and adaptation are common when coursebooks are used in classrooms. It is also implied by Tomlinson (2003) that these two processes are evident in in-use and post-use evaluation. Therefore, this section presents basic ideas about supplementation and adaptation as it is hoped this can be useful when discussing how the teachers in the current study supplemented and adapted the coursebook.

### Supplementation

According to McGrath (2002; p. 80), supplementation is “adding something new”, which primarily stems from the recognition of a deficit or an attempt to bridge the gap between the coursebook and an official syllabus, or a coursebook and an exam, or a coursebook and students’ needs. This is sometimes known as adaptation as addition (McGrath, 2002 p. 64). Although it is claimed that most modern coursebooks offer everything their target users need and tasks that offer opportunities to practice integrating important skills, it has been suggested that the needs of learners can never be perfectly met by using only one coursebook; therefore most teachers give additional materials or tasks because they feel that their learners need more exposure to a great range of textual materials that cater for different levels of proficiency or different needs (Maddalena, 2003 p. 163). There are two main forms of supplementation: supplementation using published materials, and devising one’s own materials which are likely to be more up to date and relevant to learners’ needs and interests than equivalent coursebook materials (McGrath 2002). However, teachers

may have their own different reasons for supplementing or adapting the existing coursebook. Teachers' own materials may be more up to date and relevant, but alternatively they may not be. This is something worth exploring in the current study.

### Adaptation

The definition of this term is quite broad and problematic. According to McGrath (2002), it is a process where teachers, in the great majority of cases, decide consciously or instinctively how much of the materials they will use and what to modify. It covers such techniques as supplementing, editing, expanding, personalizing, simplifying, modernizing, localizing or modifying cultural/situational content (Madsen and Bowen, cited in McGrath, 2002). For Tomlinson (1998) it refers to reducing, adding, omitting, modifying, and supplementing. For Gabrielatos (2000), adaptation is inevitable as there is often not enough time to use everything in the coursebook. These techniques seem to be widely accepted practice in teaching (Saraceni, 2003).

As no coursebook will be perfect and match the needs of all teachers and learners in a particular pedagogical situation, it is possible to adapt or modify the coursebook by adding and changing it to match the needs of all parties. Actually, there are different descriptions of adaptation found in the literature; but what will be presented is limited to adaptation as change as it is believed that this covers such techniques as editing, expanding, personalizing, simplifying and modernizing.

### *Adaptation as Change*

Islam and Mares (2003) summarize McDonough and Shaw's earlier list of objectives that a teacher may hope to achieve through adapting classroom materials as follows:

- 1.) Personalize: drawing on learners' lives and interests by exploiting their knowledge and interests to devise examples and activities which are about them.
- 2.) Localize: recognizing the need for local relevance – what works well in Mexico city may not work well in Edinburgh.
- 3.) Individualize: addressing the learning styles both of individuals and the members of the class working closely together.
- 4.) Modernize: altering any examples of language use that seem out of date.

Tomlinson (1998) contributes an objective for adaptation which is "simplification" referring to procedures created to make things easier and more accessible to learners such as editing the text in order to reduce linguistic or conceptual difficulty. Some teachers may edit authentic texts in order to simplify them to fit the learners' proficiency. This can be done by reducing a long text to something usable within a limited time frame. However, too much editing especially of paragraphs or sentences can eliminate some of the links that make text cohesive

To those techniques and objectives above, Islam and Mares (2003 p. 89) have come up with their own list of recommendations for adaptation recommended for teachers:

- 1.) Add real choice
- 2.) Cater for all sensory learner styles

- 3.) Provide for more learner autonomy
- 4.) Encourage higher level cognitive skills
- 5.) Make the language input more accessible
- 6.) Make the language input more engaging

### Review of Related Studies

Most of writing on coursebook evaluation deals with how to select a coursebook by relying on guidelines and principles in the belief that a good coursebook should reflect the principles of learning and teaching. However, as this study is concerned primarily with in-use evaluation rather than pre-use and post-use evaluation, this section reviews related studies of how the coursebook was used from three perspectives: in-use evaluation focusing on the coursebook itself, in-use evaluation focusing on the teachers, and metaphor use towards coursebook. It was hoped that some of the instruments used and results found in these related studies would inform the current study as this study focuses on the teachers as one of the end users of the coursebook.

#### In-use evaluation: Coursebook Focus

The studies mentioned below have a focus on aspects of pedagogical value such as pronunciation teaching, grammar teaching, communicativeness of pronunciation activities and the suitability of the coursebook towards the program found in different commercial coursebooks when they are being used. In other words, the focus of these studies is on the coursebook itself and the purpose is formative.

Gabrielatos (1994a) attempted to evaluate the pronunciation section in the *New Cambridge English Course* (NCEC). The suggestion was made that pronunciation sections should be adapted to raise learners' awareness that Greek, the L1 used in this setting, is syllable timed. This is by far the main reason for learners' problems in the comprehension of connected speech. To remedy this, high priority should be given to familiarize learners with English rhythm and the weakening of unstressed vowels. In addition, he suggested that pronunciation teaching is not an end in itself but a means of facilitating communication. It seems logical, then, to give learners the chance to incorporate the elements practiced in their own productive/receptive use of the language.

Gabrielatos (1994b) evaluated another coursebook but this time a grammar lesson in *WOW* book 1. He was concerned with how to teach grammar more effectively. It was found that the student book of *WOW* does not offer any awareness raising tasks. The author suggested that awareness tasks should be inserted as they are essential in order to direct the learners to notice the new form.

Banville (2003) sought to investigate the communicativeness of pronunciation activities in fourteen elementary level courses and suggest how the intonation discourse approach can promote communicative pronunciation. It was found that pronunciation activities in the coursebook failed to meet the standard of the kind of materials and learners need to develop communicative competence as they lacked opportunity to practice pronunciation in use which means students may fail to progress beyond a superficial understanding of what pronunciation entails.

Litz (2005) evaluated a coursebook, *English Firsthand 2* (EF2), in a university setting in South Korea to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the book towards the program. He found that this book received positive

feedback from its users as it was judged to contain many worthwhile characteristics for example being logical and well-organized as well as containing some supplementary activities. Furthermore, EF2 uses a PPP approach which is perceived as appropriate by the teachers and head of department in this setting.

#### In-use evaluation: Teacher Focus

The studies below focus on the teachers using the coursebook in the classroom setting done in illuminative manner.

Nunan, cited in McGrath (2002), reported on a study to investigate whether experienced and inexperienced teachers used materials in distinctive ways. Twenty-six teachers, classified according to their length of teaching experience, were supplied with an authentic listening text and a set of worksheets and asked to plan and teach a unit of work using the distributed authentic listening materials. The most interesting findings from this study were that the more experienced teachers (more than eight years teaching experience) spent more time teaching the materials than the less experienced (less than four years' experience); yet, the less experienced group exploited a greater variety of learner configurations than their more experienced counterparts. It was suggested by Nunan that maybe the materials were so long (containing a lot of information) that the experienced teachers judged that they needed more teacher mediation, explanation and support or that the less experienced teachers had been influenced by an emphasis in their teacher training program on group work and pair work. While no details of learner response or learning results were reported, this study revealed the relationship between the teachers as the end product users of materials and the materials themselves very well.

Chathep (2006) conducted a study on the use of *American Headway 2* in a university context. The purpose of her study was to explore how the teachers used the coursebook. Her study observed six teachers (four Thai teachers, one native English speaking teacher and one Burmese teacher) using the same coursebook unit, followed up by retrospective interviews. The task analysis checklist of Littlejohn (1998) was used for analyzing the characteristics of the modified and the supplemented tasks. She found *American Headway 2* does not control the teachers. Even though the coursebook unit was written as a lesson plan, the teachers did not follow it but freely adapted and supplemented the coursebook according to their teaching styles and their perceptions of students' needs. Next she found that there are many constraints shaped the exploitation of *American Headway 2*, for example class size, and negative backwash from the achievement test. To illustrate, the participants in her study used the grammar and reading sections as priorities because the students have to take an achievement test, whereas oral practice and pronunciation sections were rarely used as the examination does not cover these two sections. Moreover, pair work and group work were frequently replaced by teacher fronted instruction because it was thought there were too many students, making it quite difficult to implement pair and group work, and the teachers perceived that the students were unwilling to speak in class. Finally she suggested there should be teacher training of how to use the coursebook effectively in the language program, teacher meeting for discussing and sharing the use of the coursebook, clearer instructions offered by the publisher and a change in assessment to focus more in speaking and listening skills.

## Metaphor Use for the Coursebook

Since the focus of the current study is on in-use evaluation of a coursebook, it is relevant to include a study of metaphor use regarding coursebooks. McGrath (2002 p. 7-8) citing Lakoff and Johnson, mentioned that metaphors can offer a useful insight into the way teachers perceive coursebooks. From various metaphors used by teachers mentioned by McGrath, two opposing themes were apparent in the metaphors: that of control and that of choice, with support included to some degree. When an individual sees coursebooks as control rather than choice, this can influence the way they use coursebook. Teachers seeing coursebooks as a holy book, for example, have transferred responsibility and have undue veneration for the authority of the printed word. McGrath (2002 p. 8), citing Richards, writes that teachers in some parts of the world tend to believe what is included in the coursebook is necessary for learning, and that explanations such as grammar rules and vocabulary should not be questioned. They assume that they do not have authority or knowledge to adapt the coursebooks.

McGrath (2006 p. 171), repeated that the attitudes and beliefs can be reflected in the language we use, therefore it is worth gaining some insight into teachers' views about English language coursebooks through the metaphors they use to describe them. A collection of metaphors from approximately 75 teachers of English mainly from secondary schools in Hong Kong was categorized and compared with metaphors and similes given by the secondary school learners. When the images of the coursebooks from teachers and learners were compared, it was found out that whereas the teacher images for coursebooks were predominantly positive, with only one negative category (constraint), learner disaffection and dissatisfaction spanned



four categories which were constraint, boredom, worthlessness and anxiety/fear. The implication of this study is that the evident differences of teachers and learners' images towards the coursebook sound a warning bell that it is necessary for teachers to research the feelings and attitudes towards coursebooks that exist within their own language classrooms. The resulting awareness may urge the kind of awareness-shift and self-questioning that directs attitude change and finally self-directed professional development. Although this study focuses on teachers and learners rather than the coursebook itself, the idea of metaphor and simile use may be valuable in investigating the coursebook as teachers' images of the coursebook can reflect the way the coursebook is exploited by the teachers.

### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented the basic concepts of coursebook evaluation which include pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluation, supplementation and adaptation of coursebook and some studies based on coursebook use. From the section on coursebook evaluation, in-use evaluation which tries to understand better how the coursebook is used has been identified as the main focus for the current study. This kind of evaluation can have additional benefits as it can lead to the identification of the factors influencing the coursebook use and therefore lead to some suggestions for coursebook use. Additionally, Tomlinson (1998 p. 340-341), writes there is a need for in-use and post use evaluation as these two areas of study have proved to be scarce in the literature. However, post-use evaluation is not the main focus of this study because it is difficult to control variables and needs long term observation (Tomlinson,

1998 p. 341) and therefore is inappropriate here given the limit of this research project.

When considering supplementation and adaptation used by the teachers, it was found that empirical data was lacking. It was found that the literature contained claims about supplementary and adapted tasks, and the characteristics of supplementary and adapted tasks. However these claims were not based on classroom research. It is believed that gaining an insight into the characteristics of supplementary and modified tasks as well as the teachers' why they supplement, modify, use or do not use the particular sections will help give some suggestions for coursebook use. The review of related studies also revealed that research in coursebook use in the actual classrooms is quite limited, as this can be seen only in the work of Chathep (2006). This study complements her work in a setting which is free of achievement tests and has small class sizes, as will be described in the following chapter.