

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING



INSTITUTE OF POST GRADUATE EDUCATION

THESIS PROPOSAL

Master of Arts in English Language

***EVALUATING THE COURSEBOOK “ENGLISH FOR
THE FASHION INDUSTRY” AT LY TU TRONG
COLLEGE OF HO CHI MINH CITY***

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HO CHI MINH CITY, 12 /2017

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

LTTC: Ly Tu Trong College of Ho Chi Minh City

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

English language is taught at almost all of the colleges and universities in Vietnam. Even in the same institution English language teaching has different settings which depend on whether coursebooks meet the needs and characteristics of learners. A Coursebook is a setting which is considered one of the most important elements in the process of education (Harmer, 2007). McDonough and Shaw (1998) showed the importance of coursebooks in materials design, and emphasizes the choice and evaluation of coursebooks .

English has been taught in Ly Tu Trong College of Ho Chi Minh City (LTTC) since 1980s. To fit in with the training objectives along with the needs of students, English course books for non-English major students have been changed from time to time. Before 2015, the materials which were used to teach for non-English major students at LTTC was an edited collection from various sources. The textbook titled *English for the Fashion Industry* written by Mary E. Ward (2012) has been used as an official textbook for the second-year students of the garment and fashion department since the school year 2016. To join the course of using the course book *English for the Fashion Industry*, students have to take part in two courses English 1 and English 2 or called English basic.

1.2. Problem statement

Each institution has its own characteristics and requirements. By different measures, it is trying to make its educational programs progress. In order to achieve this purpose, education specialists constantly update, introduce and evaluate their coursebooks.

In every teaching context, coursebooks play an important role in transmitting knowledge to learners and supporting teachers in their teaching responsibility. Every material need to have authenticity; however, “authentic material is language where no concessions are made for foreign speakers” (Harmer, 2007).

The course book *English for the Fashion Industry* for the second-year students at LTTC which has been using for 2 years is not effective because of not assuring its authenticity. It will be evaluated to find out its authenticity and looking for how well it fit to learners' requirements and the course's goals.

1.3. Review of related literature

1.3.1 Definitions of coursebooks

Cunningsworth (1998)(p.7) shows that in English language teaching coursebooks are considered as: a resource for spoken and written presentation material, activity supplies for learner practice and communicative interaction, a reference of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation. Coursebooks act as a syllabus, provide classroom activity sources, and suggest self-access work or self-directed learning (Cunningsworth, 1998).

There are four reasons for the use of coursebooks (O'Neill, 1982). Firstly, learners' needs can be provided in most parts of course books, although sometimes they are not specially designed for the only learners. Secondly, learners can have their own future learning as well as review the lessons before. Thirdly, high quality materials can be supplied to learners with a reasonable price. Last but not least, appropriate coursebooks can enable teachers to adapt and revise them to meet the learners' requirements and also encourage among teachers and students' natural interactions.

Coursebooks are used as the basis for courses because of its advantages. A coursebook provides a clear framework. The teachers can use a coursebook as a syllabus. A coursebook works as a ready-made texts and tasks. To save time, teachers use texts and learning tasks which are likely to be an suitable level for most of the class. A coursebook usually provides helpful guidance and support. And a coursebook can allow students to learn new knowledge and review and show their own progress autonomously (Ur, 2012, p. 198).

1.3.1.1 Textbooks

Textbooks are things such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar textbooks. They have many advantages, they: provide structure and a syllabus for a program; help standardize instruction; maintain quality; provide a variety of learning resources; provide effective language models and input. Besides, textbooks are efficient, visually appealing, and can train teachers (Richards, 2006). Riazi (2003) (cited in Razmjoo, 2010) says that textbooks has a very important role in teaching and learning process in classroom of foreign and second language after the teacher. In order to make the textbook turn into an effective teaching tool, teachers must know how to use a textbook well as well as how useful it is (Razmjoo, 2010).

According to Nunan (1988), textbooks help teachers to save time of designing their own supplementary materials. Teaching materials also help both inexperienced and experienced teachers with available designs by doing teaching process as in the textbook's instructions.

1.3.1.2 Materials

Tomlinson (1998) defines: "Materials are anything which is used to help to teach language learners. Materials can be in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-Rom, a video, a photocopied, a handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language being learned" (p.xi).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) (cited in Baleghizadeh & Rahimi, 2011), there are six objectives for materials: Firstly, a stimulus for learning is provided. Secondly, the materials enable teachers to organize teaching and learning process. Thirdly, the materials represent natural language learning views. Next it reflects the learning task naturally. After that the materials have a very useful function in enriching the basis of teacher training. At last, models of correct and suitable language use are provided through the materials.

Richard (2006)(p.251) has shown the role of materials that the teaching materials can be considered as learners' major language input and as the language practice source which happens in the classroom. In Richard's research, the author also explains the benefits of a course book providing to the teachers such as the teachers' instructions, a form of teacher training. Textbooks may supply learners with a main source of communication which have the target language.

Agreement with the linguists above, Tomlinson (1998) presents that the materials should help learners: to feel ease and develop confidence. Teaching points should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful.

1.3.2 Coursebook for non-English major students

1.3.2.1 Non-English major students' needs

According to Chairat (2015), non-English major students are highly interested in learning English. They understand the importance of understanding of English language in university program, and have positive attitudes towards learning the English language. And they also hope that English skills can support them in both pursuits of future education and occupation successfully.

1.3.2.2 Coursebooks for non-English major students

Cunningsworth (1998)(p.132) indicates that materials for non-English major students should meet learners' specific needs, the language which students learn will be used by them in the future. The material should meet learner expectations and learning styles and provide apparent roles in learning and teaching processes.

Richards (2006) points out that the content of non-English major student course includes restriction, selection, themes and topics and communicative needs. Namely, restriction is only "basic skills" such as understanding speech, speaking, reading, and writing. Selection is concerned with items of vocabulary, grammar points and language functions which relate to the learners' purposes. Themes and topics, communicative needs are all things which are necessary for learner's intentions (p.33).

1.3.3 Designing materials based on non-English major students' needs

1.3.3.1 Writing materials

A clear framework in any useful textbook may provide teachers and learners with knowing where they are going and what is coming next, and it also builds up a sense of structure and progress (Ur, 2012).

Due to the instructions of Cunningsworth (1998)(p.134), people designing materials based on non-English major students' requirements know about design and methodology. In design, firstly, the materials may concentrate on very specific skills such as note-taking from a talk, presentation or lecture. Secondly, the materials are flexible for learners to use. That means learners can study each unit in the self-contained ways, and it permits learners to keep on learning successfully even when they have missed some units. Thirdly, the materials can be self-learning materials. Learners can revise or master by themselves the view of any lessons missed. Last but not least, the materials are particular relevant to non-English major students' needs. In methodology, the textbooks for non-English major students may focus on the development of specific skills and strategies for controlling the specific contexts such as skill-based and task-based activities. They may use project work to replicate real-life situations in order to help learners develop the skills and strategies.

A framework for materials writing includes 7 steps: identification of need, exploration of language, contextual realization, pedagogical realization, physical production, use, and evaluation (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998). The authors have stated that the valuable materials are those which lay the foundations of comprehensive understanding of learners' needs. And evaluation is a way to gain the success of any materials or not.

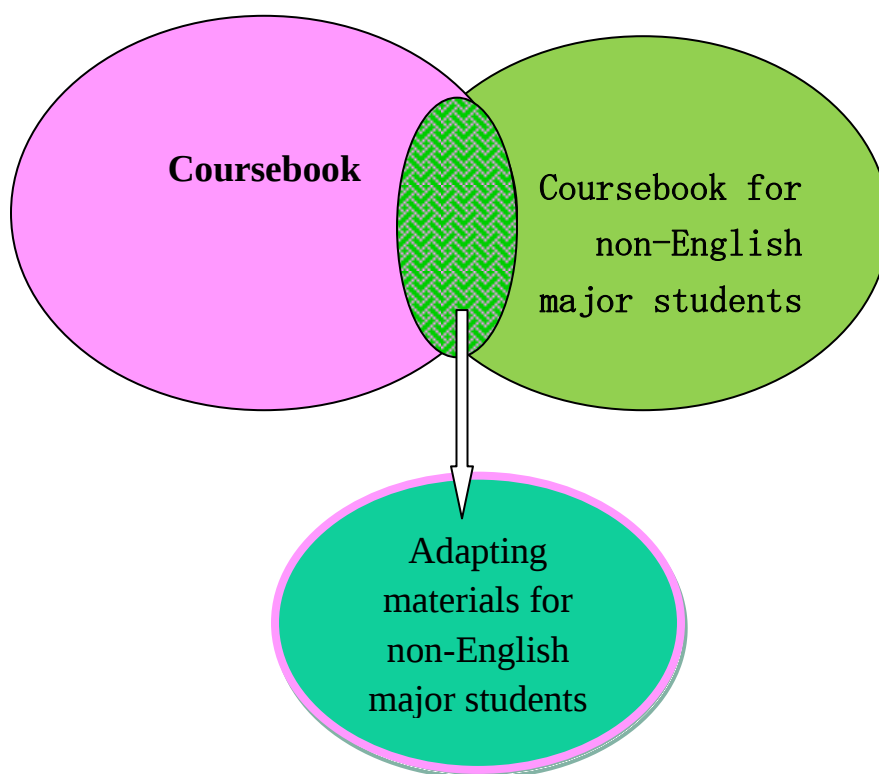
1.3.3.2 Textbook evaluation

According to Richards (2006), textbook evaluation can be done by teachers in order to find out something in relation to learners' purpose. In a situation, a book can be good

for its students because it provide the benefits for that situation perfectly. However, in a different situation, the same book cannot be suitable because of its limited contents, inadequately challenging for teachers and students, little matching the needs of students. Therefore, textbook evaluation contain some information such as the role of textbook in the program; the teachers in the program, and the learners in the program (Richards, 2006, p. 256).

Evaluators can use various kinds of textbook evaluation in order to find out the textbooks' strengths and weaknesses. Then they can choose suitable textbooks for their learners or adapt them to make them more perfect. Ellis (1997) divides into two ways of evaluation: a predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation. A predictive evaluation of the materials can be carried out in order to decide which are best suited to learners' needs. Evaluators can use checklists and guidelines available to help them to conduct their evaluation. While a retrospective evaluation provides the evaluators with information that can be used to decide if the textbook is useful to use again or not. Furthermore, a retrospective evaluation can be used to confirm the validity of a predictive evaluation (p.37)

Conceptual Framework



1.4. Research questions: to gain the purpose of the study, the researcher addresses the following questions.

1. How important are coursebooks?
2. How important are coursebooks for non-English major students?
3. How is the coursebook for non-English major students “*English for the Fashion Industry*” adapted to meet students’ needs?

1.5. Purpose of the study

1. To evaluate the coursebook specifically: its input, instructions, and learning activities in order to have necessary improvements.
2. To help the teachers to adapt the material exploitation.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study which intends to evaluate the course book *English for the Fashion Industry* is a micro-evaluation focusing on the aspects of input, instructions, and learning activities. The study disregards physical appearance and administrative issues.

1.7. Significance of the study

- The study will contribute to the literature review on evaluating coursebook and materials development.
- The study will have contribution of pedagogical implications.

APPROACH/METHOD

2.1 Research site

Ly Tu Trong college of Ho Chi Minh is located about 5 kilometers downtown. Its address is at 390 Hoang Van Thu Street, ward 4, Tan Binh district. To meet the society’s needs and the requirements of enterprises, Ly Tu Trong College train human resources with prestige and high quality.

The college has contributed a number of skilled workers to the process of industrialization and modernization of Ho Chi Minh City and the whole country. In addition, its major process of development is to combine training with the research

and transfer of results of scientific research in the field of vocational training and technology for society. It is also well-equipped with many kinds of teaching and learning facilities such as CD, DVD players and projectors in each class.

At present, this college has owned 72 theory rooms and 7 laboratories, 55 workshops, 1 library, 22 working rooms, 2 conference rooms, 1 memorial room, 3 parking lots, 2 canteens, 1 football yard, 2 basketball yards, 4 badminton yards and 1 medical room, and especially it always enables 225 well-qualified teachers and over 200 employees to work well. There are 8 training sectors such as heat-refrigeration engineering technology, information technology, fashion technology, automobile engineering technology, mechanical engineering technology, electrical and electronic engineering and technology, economics and English linguistics in this college.

In the thesis, the “materials” refers to a set of texts and lessons from the textbook *English for the Fashion Industry* written by Mary E. Ward which is used as the coursebook for the second-year students at LTTC.

2.2. Sample and sampling procedures

To save time and gain effective cost, I use the sample including 94 students in 2 classes I am teaching in the third semester and 2 teachers (consisting of the researcher) who have just taught the textbook *English for the Fashion Industry* for two years.

2.3. Research instruments

To answer the research questions, survey questionnaires will be conducted. Questionnaires are used as the major tool. Survey questionnaire is a popular instrument in social scientific researches because it is useful in collecting opinions and may be favorable to indicate aims and analyzing the teaching and learning location (Litz, 2016).

One questionnaire will be used for the students including 3 parts: input, instructions, and learning activities. These questions will be made up both closed and open ended items. To keep away from students' confusions, I will translate the

questionnaire into Vietnamese. Additionally, semi-structured interviews will be used to confirm or collect more data for the questionnaires.

2.4. Data collection procedures

Data collection will be conducted via questionnaire for both the teachers and the students. Firstly, the questionnaires basing on the criteria will be chosen with regard to the aspects: input, instructions, and learning activities. Then the survey of students will be carried out in the classroom at the end of the course. Moreover, through using additional interviews with 2 teachers and about 10 random student interviewees, the evaluator will investigate their further evaluative statements. While asking the interviewers a series of questions prepared beforehand, the evaluator will note their responses.

2.5 Data analysis procedures

The evaluator will use descriptive statistics for data analysis by using SPSS tools. Next, an explanation of the descriptive statistics by SPSS will be written or reported in the thesis.

2.6. Work plan

Date (month)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tasks						
Reading again all materials and journal articles with regard to the evaluation of coursebooks and writing the literature review.	X	X				
Developing the questionnaires basing on the criteria with regard to four aspects: input, instructions, and learning			X			

activities.						
Conducting the survey of students' need and teachers' opinions by using questionnaires and informal interviews and collecting data				X		
Collecting and analyzing data					X	
Completing the evaluation of the coursebook						X

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