A CHECKLIST-BASED STUDY OF EFL TEXTBOOKS IN COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION (CSE)

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ABSTRACT
In the context of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), it is pivotal to raise teachers’ awareness on the importance of evaluating textbooks to select them adequately. There are confronted opinions about the use of textbooks and the criteria chosen for their evaluation. This issue has gained relevance because of the increasingly growing publications over the last decades and the need to fulfil students’ needs. Following the experts’ contributions and the Spanish legal framework, a specific checklist was created involving relevant aspects of TEFL in Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE), and it was applied to two different textbooks as representative samples of today’s materials. Results reveal that the most communicative textbook is more adequate for the context studied; however, both lack a student-centered approach. In short, textbooks are auxiliary tools serving teachers to attain the learning objectives meaningfully, and for their evaluation there is not a common checklist which may be adjusted to every situation, thus further research is required.

RESUMEN
En el contexto de la enseñanza del inglés es esencial la evaluación de los libros de texto, debido principalmente al creciente número de publicaciones en los últimos años y a la necesidad de atender los intereses del alumnado. Para realizar un análisis exhaustivo, se ha creado una plantilla que tiene en cuenta los aspectos más importantes de la enseñanza del inglés en la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) conforme al marco legal y a la opinión de expertos. Se han analizado dos libros de texto, representativos del material actual, y los resultados muestran que ninguno de los dos se basa en un enfoque centrado en el alumno. A pesar de eso, el manual más comunicativo es más adecuado para el contexto seleccionado. En definitiva, los libros son herramientas auxiliares que sirven para conseguir los objetivos académicos propuestos. Por otra parte, no existe un modelo universal de plantilla por lo que es necesario realizar una investigación más amplia y profunda del tema.
1. INTRODUCTION

Any research project aims at providing a better understanding of a topic in order to improve a situation or obtain a solution to a controversy. Thus, the present M.A. Thesis is envisaging delving into the situation which involves the evaluation of teaching in an attempt to throw some light on this field and offer both a theoretical and practical framework within the study of English a foreign language. From a legal perspective, Spain is committed to the concept of the Common European Framework, which is clearly reflected on the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality, LOMCE 8/2013 which modifies the previous Organic Law of Education, LOE 2/2006. The study of English takes a relevant role in the curriculum with the aim of enhancing communication and making cultural, economic, technical and scientific cooperation easier in Europe but also around the world.

In an attempt to explain the complex process of learning and teaching languages from different perspectives, specifically English as a Foreign Language (EFL), a lot of methodologies and approaches have been emerging throughout the history. These theories were created in a specific period of time and then they evolved or disappeared according to the society’s requests. That explains the challenging and dynamic character conferred to the process of learning languages since there is not one single right answer, approach or method. Indeed, this complexity is tackled by different disciplines of knowledge such as psychology, neurology, linguistics, sociology, among many other fields and subfields.

It is paramount to consider one of the most influential factors in EFL: the need to adapt ourselves to a more and more demanding and challenging society, the New Media Age in which the way of transmitting knowledge and communication has completely changed. Today, all of us live somehow connected and new technologies move forwards very fast to improve communication, the main protagonist being the social networks where any type of knowledge or information can reach masses with rapid expansion. Within this scope, the education field in general, and the teaching and learning of languages in particular have certainly been affected by this phenomenon which has influenced the ideas underlying the current practices. This social situation explains why today’s methodologies are focused on a communicative approach which entails the development of linguistic and extralinguistic skills and the completion of tasks. Hence, needless to say that teaching and learning methodologies get adapted to any social fluctuation as it already happened with the grammar-translation approach which meant a solution in a period when translating Latin into other languages after the expansion of the Roman Empire was a priority.
Nonetheless, finding the right methodology to be used is not the only preoccupation in Education. There are a lot of issues which concern experts and theorists in the field of the teaching of foreign languages: how to promote motivation, dealing with new technologies and communication, bilingualism or the use of materials. The last one, on which this paper is based, has created division among experts when elucidating whether teachers must create their own materials or use textbooks as the only source. As Byrd (2001) states it is necessary to find a middle position in which textbooks are useful and enriching but not the core, and flexible enough to allow teachers to carry out adaptations and gradations. It is true that a failure when selecting inadequate materials could imply serious consequences in the progress of learning, possibly affecting the students’ and teachers’ motivation, and could lead to frustration and negative results. Most of the times, the core materials are textbooks which teachers use within their own styles, when possible, and adapting them to students’ needs, since the creation of in-house materials can be too time-consuming for a teacher.

Therefore, this controversial situation around the use of materials, and specifically textbooks, has made textbook evaluation gain importance and relevance among linguists in a more theoretical scope, and teachers from a more practical framework over the last few decades. As will be explained later on, experts set different criteria of the elements to be evaluated and use diverse tools for evaluation among which checklists will receive special attention in this research study.

The present dissertation is composed of eight main sections. First, the literature review deals with the informed vision of experts who show different and confronted opinions in certain aspects concerning the textbook evaluation. The research design in the third section comprises the objectives pursued in this research. The data collection section develops in detail the origin, composition and purposes of the checklist and the list of descriptors accompanying it. Then, two textbooks are analysed and this analysis is fleshed out in the data analysis section. Results and further conclusions are discussed in sections 6 and 7. Finally, section 8 is devoted for references and section 9 includes the appendices to better illustrate and support some of the ideas and arguments taking part in this project.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The role of textbooks in EFL

The process of learning and teaching entails an enormous complexity which is continuously changing because of educational tendencies derived from the social needs and fluctuations. Making an adequate choice of materials has become pivotal since it will influence the whole learning process, from teachers’ methodology to learning outcomes, hence the importance of analysing and evaluating materials, which usually refer to textbooks. With the increasingly growing number of textbook publications, research has taken special relevance in the past few years. Within this wide scope, it is easier to get lost and select textbooks according to their popularity instead of their adequacy. As Dougill (1987:32) states, there is no one right way regarding the selection of language teaching materials since it is full of choices and alternatives and he adds that every teacher does so according to their knowledge, training and experience. The key element here is to have an informed opinion.

There is a saying Zen Buddhism to the effect that insights are gained by asking the right question not through answers. In the same way the reviewer has to ask him/herself questions of the sort in the list above if he/she elucidates the good and bad aspects of the book. (Dougill, 1987:32)

Especial attention must be paid to the use of textbooks, a controversial issue which divides opinions among experts for several reasons. First, according to Swales (1980:11), textbooks sometimes represent a problem and may lead to education failure if they are used inadequately. Secondly, another concern is the role and aspirations of publishers and editors who not always satisfy the educational needs. Indeed, the gap between the pedagogical objectives and the editors’ commercial purposes is remarkable and some authors such as Allwright (1981:9) highlight this idea and state that the language learning business is too complex to meet satisfactorily the requirements in a course package. However, the most common theoretical and practical problems are related to practical uses of textbooks and effects on the teaching and learning process. Ur (1996) underlines the homogeneity and over-easiness, and the limitation found concerning initiative and creativity when using textbooks. O’Neil (1990:149), who shows an optimistic vision on textbooks, analyses the reasons why textbooks are not an appropriate option for those teachers who support the idea of creating in-house materials. Some of the problems found are the following.

- Unawareness of the pedagogical implications and theory research by publishers.
Focus on bottom up processing.
Lack of creativity.
Surprise element: students would know what was going to happen next day.

Despite these opposing points of view provided by experts such as Allwright (1980), O’Neil (1990) caters for the advantages of using the textbook. In fact, in one of his teaching experiences, he reminds he was the only one using textbook since their partners refused this option and preferred to create their own materials. On this occasion, O’Neil (1990) found that textbooks let students look ahead or back at what they had done and provided a solid framework to work in addition to examples that could be transferred and adapted.

Textbooks can at best provide only a base or a core of materials. They are the jumping-off points for teacher and class […] the most important work in a class may start with the textbook and end outside it, an improvisation and adaptation, in spontaneous interaction in the class. (O’Neil, 1990:155)

In the same line, Brown (1995) pointed out that textbooks should not determine the objectives, but be at the service of the teachers and learners. For Cunnisgworth (1995), textbooks are an effective source for self-directed learning and presentation of materials, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, and a syllabus with learning objectives. Nowadays, irrespective of the use that every teacher makes of them (more or less focused on), textbooks are crucial in the learning and teaching process and that is the reason why the best choice of a textbook must be ensured from the “ever-increasing range available” (Matthews, 1985:202).

2.2. Textbook evaluation and analysis
Textbook evaluation can be defined as “a procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential values) of a set of learning materials” (Tomilson, 2009:15). When it comes to textbook selection, Els (1984:298) suggests differentiating two terms which have gained importance in the last few years which are textbook description (data description) and textbook evaluation (effects on their users). Likewise, in Developing Materials for Language Teaching, Tomilson (2009:16) makes that distinction between evaluation and analysis and claims that “evaluation focuses on the users of materials”, whereas, “the analysis focuses on the materials”. That categorization also implies applying the notions of objectivity and subjectivity. Regarding this issue, Tomilson (2009:15) highlights that even in the attempt to be as objective as possible, evaluation “involves making judgements about the effect of the
materials on the people using them”, i.e. there is always a subjective component. Interesting and useful information can be extracted both from a description (analysis) and from an evaluation. Amongst the most frequent and enriching sources or tools to extract data are the following:

- **Authors’ and publishers’ information.** In this respect, the data provided is biased and rather commercial, likely to be interpreted rather as a kind of advertisement, hence they would not represent an item for description (Neuner, 1979). Swallon (1981) and Ewer and Boys (1981) carried out a research on author’s recommendations and they used some textbooks for their analysis in relation to the CSE examination requirements; great differences were found, proving that this source is a too subjective indicator for textbook evaluation.

- **Reviews.** They are the most widely form of textbook description; however, it presents several limitations such as providing too general information and vague details. It is also rather subjective since authors use different criteria and it is difficult to differentiate among guidance, criticism and description. Sheldon (1988) finds that reviews in large-circulation periodicals use descriptive information and subjective commentary in contrast to grid-style tables. An example can be found in *ELT Journal*, which uses evaluative tables allowing similar textbooks to be compared.

- **Checklists** can be used for description and textbook evaluation. There is a wide range of types. Despite this fact, all these checklists must meet a series of requirements: be unequivocal, allow differentiation, yield only descriptions, immediately usable and they should not invite value judgements. An example of a checklist is that one of *Mannheimer Gutachten* (Engel et al. 1979). It represents an attempt to create a checklist as complete as possible covering all relevant aspects despite the fact that some limitations were also found.

The literature on the issue of textbook selection is not very extensive and limited to checklists and, what is more, most teachers do not even know the existence of such tools for textbooks evaluation, so finally they make their choice on the basis of “popularity”: if a book is well sold that would mean that it works somewhere and somehow (Sheldon, 1988). Moreover, the attempts to objectify what is essentially subjective is a hard issue for some categories, such as the “competence of the author” and whether a book is based on a contrastive analysis of English and L1 sound system” (Williams, 1983). It is also important to
bear in mind that there are fluctuations in textbook evaluation depending on the swings of linguistic fashion apart from the requirements of every specific context.

No two evaluations can be the same, as the needs, objectives backgrounds and preferred styles of participants differ from context to context [...] material evaluation serves the purpose of evaluating the needs of a particular learning situation. The process of material evaluation is stimulated by the need to select relevant as well as appropriate material for a particular group. (Tomilson, 2009:15)

In fact, this author comes to the conclusion, after reflecting on his professional career as a teacher in several countries, that even his checklist cannot serve to every situation and it is not likely the correct one as every expert has his or her own approach to learning and teaching foreign languages.

2.3. Checklists: a tool for textbook evaluation

A checklist in terms of TEFL can be defined as “an instrument that helps practitioners in English Language Teaching evaluate language teaching materials, like textbooks. It allows a more sophisticated evaluation of the textbook in reference to a set of evaluative criteria” (Mukundan et al, 2011:100). There are two types of checklists: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative are rather objective since the data are obtained through a Linkert scale and, hence, more reliable and convenient for evaluation, while qualitative checklist provides the researcher with a more in-depth information about the textbook with open questions which makes the instrument more subjective (Mukundan, 2011).

2.3.1. Evaluation criteria to create checklists

Checklists are systematic since the research has to follow an order to evaluate each item. They are also useful to compare different materials because they are not time-consuming in comparison to other methods. McDonough and Shaw (2003) created a three-tiered model of textbook evaluation: external evaluation (organization of materials stated by the author or publisher); internal evaluation (presentation of the skills, grading, sequence, authenticity, appropriateness of the materials), and an overall evaluation (usability, generalizability, adaptability, flexibility factors). Based on criteria designed by McDonough and Shaw, White (2009) suggests a two-fold structure which includes external analysis, “what the text says about themselves” (Cunningsworth, 1984:67 cited in White 2009:7) comprising the blurb, the author’s view, and internal analysis. Some of the elements included are the following:
- Examining the blurb (external analysis)
  o Intended audience
  o Proficiency level
  o The context
  o Describing the units
  o The author’s view
  o Availability
  o Vocabulary presentation
  o Visual materials
  o Layout
  o Culturally biased

- Presentation of skills (internal)
  o Grading and sequencing
  o Suitable for different learning styles?
  o Reading beyond the sentence
  o Type of listening: recording, authentic or artificial
  o Transparent to motivate

Bueno González (unpublished material) offers a questionnaire to analyse textbooks which covers aspects such as the layout, topics or how the skills are integrate and he does so by means of questions such as “is the textbook attractive at first sight?”, “is there a balance of the four skills?” or “are the topics of interest for our students?” (See appendix 9.1). The author also describes some of the most important factors when it comes to the selection of materials for the English lessons: description of the teaching situation, description of students’ needs and description of the type of materials appropriate for students.

- **Description of the teaching situation.** It comprises the high school context, the teacher, the students, the school itself and the objectives, in short, every aspect acting in the teaching process. Hence, what can be useful in a context could be inadequate in another different. Bueno González (unpublished material) also claims that the choice should be learner-centred, bearing in mind our students’ opinions. Mathews (1985:203) includes other specific aspects such as the syllabus, the time available, age, interests, background, level and needs, as well as class size. All these aspects must be in connection with the regulations and norms of the school.
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- **Description of students’ needs.** Concerning this issue, Harmer (1991:276) states “armed with a knowledge about the students, the teacher can now evaluate materials that seem to be more or less appropriate for the students”. The very first step would be then to be aware of students’ needs, information which can be extracted through questionnaires, interviews and observation. This will lead the teacher to “conclusions about the type of material suitable for them” (Bueno González, unpublished material).

- **Type of material appropriate for students.** They should present an attractive layout and be challenging enough so students get motivated. Special attention must be paid to density, since there should be time to do other activities such as games, contests, etc.

On his part, Cunningsworth (1995:10) suggests four criteria for textbooks evaluation: (1) Learners’ needs, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the language learning program; (2) uses learners will make of the languages; (3) facilitation of their learning process without dogma, (4) clear role as a support for teachers and learners.

Most of the authors agree in many aspects or areas which should be covered when evaluating materials regardless of the instrument to be used. Nonetheless, checklists are preferred, together with questionnaires. Their designs and structures vary significantly in terms of the number of items and the aspects considered for evaluation. In this way, the checklist designed by Cunningworth (1995:10) includes 45 questions classified into 8 categories: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, study skills, topic methodology, teacher’s book, and practical considerations (cost and obtainability). Similarly, Sheldon (1988:241) provides an expansive checklist of 53 questions classified under 17 major criteria, which appraises content factors such as accessibility, content, layout and authenticity.

More samples of tools for evaluating textbooks are provided by McLaren and Madrid (2004). McLaren provides a very detailed questionnaire composed of 22 items covering aspects from methodology (the language teaching behind the book), design and organization, distribution of the linguistic skills, cultural aspects or revision. Madrid proposes an analysis through taxonomies, in which the weight of each part categorised (linguistic elements, communicative activities…) is determined (see appendices 9.2, 9.3).

Miekley (2005) elaborates two different checklists for the teaching textbook pack which comprises the textbook and the teacher’s manual. For the textbook, he includes items to analyse content, vocabulary and grammar, exercises and activities, and finally, the attractiveness of the text and physical make up (see appendix 9.4). As the teacher’s manual is
intended for different purposes, the items to be analysed vary considerably including general features (e.g. easy-to-use and whether correct answers are included), background information (use of cues, list of true and false cognates), methodological guidance, supplementary exercises and materials, and context. It is focused on how to help teachers use the textbook; anyway, it contains interesting information to take into consideration when choosing a textbook such as the context and the methodology guidance. This checklist can be rated from 4 excellent to 1 poor.

Stradling (2001) sets four categories with a total of 40 probing questions: category one dealing with the evaluation of textbook content, category two for identifying the textbooks’ pedagogical value, the third category devoted to the identification of intrinsic qualities in history textbooks. The last category deals with extrinsic factors such as prices, robustness or impact. Finally, Littlejohn (1998) suggests a general framework for analyzing materials which draws on both the Breen and Candlin (1987) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) models. It comprises two main sections with nine items: publication and design. The first section is focused on the physical aspects such as the relationship regarding a wider set of materials, subdivisions in sections, accessibility, and other issues. Meanwhile, the second section comprises aims, sequencing, types of activities, participation (who does what with whom) and teachers’ and learners’ roles. The author recognizes that this list is limited in use since it is not possible to make an analysis in depth and it has a subjective component.

Byrd (2001:416), along with other experts, highlights that “making a comprehensive yet reasonable checklist becomes an enormous challenge” since it is necessary to consider the different courses and settings and adapt them to fit the particular situations”. When trying to make a checklist, Byrd (2001:419-421) points out three relevant issues to be taken into consideration: fit between the materials and the curriculum, the students and the teachers. Within these issues, some of the most relevant items to be evaluated are the following:

- Initial reading of a textbook: a general overview on organization elements
  - Presentation/format
  - Content/information
  - Practice
  - Evaluation
  - Support for the teachers
- Content: EFL textbooks are usually composed of linguistic content (grammar, vocabulary, skill area) and the thematic content.
- Analysis of activities.

After the selection of a textbook, teachers have to exploit the resources offered in a planned way which suits students’ needs and learning goals in the most efficient and effective way. Byrd (2001) concludes by stating that between the two extreme positions regarding the use of textbooks: the creation of the teachers’ own materials and the ideal textbook, there is an educational reality in the middle which can take the advantages offered by these two extremes in order to make the most of the TEFL process.

2.4. Andalusian legal framework about the acquisition of textbooks in CSE

For a lot of experts such as Strandling (2001), the price of textbooks is another criterion included in their checklists since depending on the social context the learning is taking place, there could be learners who cannot afford to buy such expensive textbooks.

In Andalusia, the law is in charge of regulating this issue and in order to guarantee the right to access the Education, the region of Andalusia through Decree 66/2005, 8th March 2005 and Order 27th April 2005 determined that the textbooks would be publicly funded and they will belong to the Administration, but students will enjoy them during each academic year and then give them back once the year has concluded. This is established for all levels of Compulsory Secondary Education. Registration and supervision are also established, as well as the selection procedure. The textbooks will be in force for a minimum of 4 years, which may vary according to the circumstances of each school. This regulation comprises just textbooks which can be reused in the next years so excluding workbooks or any type of materials which cannot be reused.
3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. General objectives
The main objective of every research project is to answer any question or resolve a controversial issue. In this case, this project aims at creating a tool to carry out an evaluation and an analysis of textbooks in the field of English as a foreign language in the Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) context. Hence, the general objectives are fourfold:

- To evaluate and compare two different EFL textbooks belonging to the same level by using a checklist.
- To analyse each item of the proposed checklist so as to provide detailed information of different aspects of the textbook (physical, internal and pedagogical aspects).
- To draw pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of EFL in this regard.
- To raise teachers’ awareness on textbook evaluation and textbook adaptation issues.

3.2. Specific objectives
Within the general scope defined above, it is necessary to narrow the field of research and set a series of specific objectives which will provide a deeper insight and will guarantee the level of concretion. The specific objectives are enlisted as follows:

a) To verify if the textbooks are suitable for a given context, i.e. if they fulfil the students’ needs.
b) To determine the methodology underlying the textbooks.
c) To find out whether the information in the textbook coincides with the author’s and publisher’s point of view.
d) To determine to what extent they promote the achievement of the communicative competence.
e) To verify the presence or absence of the student-centred approach.
f) To analyse the presence of learning skills which enhance the students’ autonomy.
g) To extract the strongest and the weakest features of each textbook.

3.3. Research questions
When it comes to materials evaluation there are two noteworthy factors to bear in mind when carrying out a project research: on the one hand, textbooks as a main source of information and, on the other hand, the results obtained after a process of teaching and learning in a specific period of time and place. Given the remarkable failure of the Spanish students in the subject of English and the important role played by the materials and textbooks in the process of teaching and learning, it is possible to take the use of textbooks as a factor which impinges
on the results among learners. Thus, the procedure of evaluating and selecting teaching materials gains relevance.

The questions to be elucidated, after comparing two different textbooks for a specific context, would state as follows:

1. To what extent do the textbooks fulfil the learning expectations according to the Spanish curriculum and other methodological and pedagogical features underlined and reflected in the checklist?

2. Is this checklist adjustable to our learners’ needs?

In order to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions, the tool created to collect data, a checklist, has been deeply described and then applied to two EFL textbooks, as developed in the following chapters of this study.
4. DATA COLLECTION

4.1. Instruments

There are two main instruments in order to carry out the collection of data in this study: a checklist and a list of descriptors to complement this checklist. Together with these two instruments, it is worth describing the textbooks used for the analysis and evaluation. As stated above, it is important to point out the policy carried out in the region of Andalusia about the use of textbooks in CSE. According to Decree 66/2005, 8\textsuperscript{th} March 2005 and Order 27\textsuperscript{th} April 2005, students of state schools are provided with their textbooks free of charge and the textbooks will be given back after use. These books belong to the administration which will change them every four years. It is not allowed to ask students for the workbook or reading books, just as recommendations.

4.1.1. The checklist

According to the characteristics of this research project and the objectives to be pursued, the most suitable option to collect data on the evaluation of textbooks is the checklist. As seen in the literature review section, checklists are one of the most common tools used for material evaluation for several reasons: they are not so time-consuming as other tools, they are rather objective (that would rely on the type of checklist and the purposes of it) and quite convenient for teachers and experts in the field.

A checklist was created for this research based on the idea that each checklist must fit in the school context where it is to be applied and to fulfil these students’ needs and interests as well. This checklist took elements from the checklist by Sheldon (1988), Brown (1995), Cunningsworth (1995), Littlejohn (1998), Madrid (2004), Miekley (2005) and White (2009). It is also important to highlight that the checklist was designed and oriented towards the evaluation of EFL textbooks in Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) and Upper Secondary Education (USE).

This checklist encompasses two main sections: analysis of the external context and textbook evaluation items. The first one is analytical and it serves the purpose of analysing the context in which the textbook is intended to be used by providing a brief description of the following items: school context, students’ profile and the authors’ or publishers’ information. The second section “textbook evaluation items” is composed of several aspects tackling both tangible aspects of the textbook and internal aspects related to the type of methodology or the reflection of the Key Competences or values. There is a total of 49 items included into 7 categories: physical features, contents, methodology, key competences, attention to diversity,
values and supplementary materials and resources. In order to determine the quality and the presence of each of the above-mentioned items, the responses in the checklist are rated by using a scale ranged from “excellent”, “good”, “adequate”, “poor” to “totally lacking”.

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D. KEY COMPETENCES
   D.1. Communicative Competence
   D.2. Mathematical competence and Competence in Science and Technology
   D.3. Digital Competence
   D.4. Learning to Learn
   D.5. Social and Civic Competence
   D.6. Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship
   D.7. Cultural Awareness and Expression
E. ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY
   E.1. Low-level learners
   E.2. High-level learners
   E.3. Slow learners
   E.4. Fast learners
F. VALUES
   F.1. Gender equality
   F.2. Education for peace
   F.3. Social integration
   F.4. Health Education
   F.5. Appreciation of one’s own culture
G. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
   G.1. Teacher’s book
   G.2. Teacher’s all in-one-pack
   G.3. Digital book
   G.4. Web resources
   G.5. Exam builder
   G.6. CDs
   G.7. Workbook
   G.8. Formative evaluation
   G.9. Appendices in the students’ book

Table 1. Checklist for EFL textbooks evaluation.

4.1.2. List of descriptors for the textbook evaluation

In order to guarantee a deep understanding of every item included in the checklist and guide the user around the implications of each section or category, it has been necessary to create a list of descriptors accompanying the process of textbook evaluation so as to make it meaningful. It is intended to specify the features which are necessary to bear in mind when carrying out the analysis and evaluation, thus rendering the checklist more effective and objective to work with. This list of descriptors is based on several instruments taking elements from questionnaires by Bueno González (unpublished material), Madrid’s taxonomy (unpublished material), Sheldon’s classification (1988), Byrd (2001) and White (2009). As the checklist, it is intended to evaluate EFL textbooks in CSE and USE.

This list of descriptors falls into the same categories as the checklist, a total of 7, and the same number of items, which adds up to 49. Most of these items are then broken down
through a series of questions or standards which are supposed to guide the user (teacher or researcher) when completing the checklist. Depending on the item complexity there will be more or fewer questions in relation to this item, i.e. the “layout” would be a too ample term so it is specified by considering 5 questions, whereas the section of “supplementary materials” would not need such extension of questions since the items are specific enough (e.g. CDs, Digital Book, Workbook, among others).

### ANALYSIS OF CONTEXT

#### SCHOOL CONTEXT
- What type of school is it? What type of level of studies does it offer?
- What is the socio-cultural situation?
- Is it a bilingual or TIC school?

#### STUDENTS
- What year are they?
- How many students are there in the group?
- What is their academic background?
- What is their socio-cultural background?

#### AUTHOR’S and PUBLISHERS’ INFORMATION
- What do the author and publisher say about the textbook?
- What do they offer which makes the book worthy?

### TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

#### A. GENERAL FEATURES

**A.1. Layout**
- Is there consistency in the use of headings, icons, labels, italics…?
- Is the load of images and other elements of design appropriate?
- Is the textbook free of mistakes?
- Are the visuals compatible with students’ own culture?
- Does the textbook raise students’ interest in further English language study?

**A.2. Cover**
- Is it appealing and informative?

**A.3. Table of contents**
- Is the ordering of materials done by topics or themes that are arranged in a logical fashion?
- Is the material accurate and up-to-date?
- Is it detailed and complete?

**A.4. Proficiency level**
- Is it adequate for Spanish students learning English as a foreign language?
- Does it allow adaptation?

**A.5. Organization**
- Is it handy and easy to follow?
- Is it teachable?
- Can it be used with large classes?
o Is it possible and easy to adapt or supplement materials?

B. CONTENT

B.1. Units of work
o Is there a balance of the four skills?
o Are the four skills integrated?
o Are the topics of interest for our students?
o Is the material up-to-date?

B.1.1. Linguistic knowledge
o Grammar
  - Are the number of grammatical points as well as their sequence appropriate?
  - Is grammar introduced explicitly?
  - Is there a balance between form and use?
  - Are the grammar points presented with brief and easy examples and explanations?

o Vocabulary
  - Is the load appropriate?
  - Is it contextualised?
  - Is the topic meaningful?

o Phonetics
  - Is there enough practice?
  - Is it built through other types of activities, such as listening, dialogue, etc.?

o Functions
  - Is there a section devoted to them?
  - Is there enough practice?
  - Are they based on the grammar studied in the same unit?

B.1.2. Oral communication
  o Listening comprehension
    - Do the listening passages help students develop their listening comprehension skills?
    - Is listening material as authentic as possible?
    - Is the listening material accompanied by background information, questions and activities?

  o Speaking and interaction
    - Are activities developed to encourage student-student and student-teacher oral communication?
    - Are activities balanced between individual response, pair work and group work?
    - Does the situation in dialogues sound natural?

B.1.3. Written communication
  o Reading
    - Is there a range of varied and interested reading texts?
    - Are many of the reading passages up-to-date, interesting and meaningful?
    - Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language?

  o Writing
    - Do the writing tasks enhance free writing opportunities?
    - Are they easy for students to deal with?
    - Are they guided and controlled?
    - Are writing activities suitable in terms of length, accuracy and guidance?
    - Does the coursebook deal with any aspects of discourse?
If so, which aspects are covered: conjunctives, other features of cohesion (reference pronouns, substitution, etc), paragraphing and organization of written discourse, structure and conventions of spoken discourse?

- **Interaction: writing – reading**
  - Is there any practice for written interaction?
  - Does this practice serve a real purpose?

### B.2. Cultural content
- Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture?
- Is the content of the textbook free from stereotypical images and information?
- Does the content present different cultures?
- Does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview?

### B.3. Cross-curricular content
- Are contents interrelated to other subjects (Maths, Sciences…)?
- Are these contents well-integrated and distributed throughout the whole book?

### C. METHODOLOGY
- Is the coursebook flexible? Does it allow different teaching and learning styles?
- What is the attitude towards learner error?
- What is the attitude towards the use of students' mother tongue?

#### C.1. Student-centred
- Do students have an active and participative role?
- Do students have the possibility of taking responsibilities?
- Are they guided to be able to choose what they will learn?
- Do the activities promote critical thinking?

#### C.2. Teacher-centred
- Do teachers have an active role in contrast to students’ passivity?
- Do teachers have to guide the whole process?
- Do teachers have to take the whole responsibility?

#### C.3. Communicative
- Does the textbook promote communication through diverse activities and tasks?
- Does it promote both written and oral communication?
- It is not too focused on repetition and drilling?
- Is the language used in different and real-case contexts?
- Do the activities allow the learners to use English outside the classroom?

#### C.4. Promotes students’ autonomy
- Are students encouraged to take some degree of responsibility for their learning?
- Does the textbook promote the development of problem-solving strategies?
- Does it promote lifelong learning?

### D. KEY COMPETENCES
- Does the textbook include any task or activity which develops any of the following competences apart from the linguistic competence?
- Does the textbook promote the development of the key competences in any way?

#### D.1. Linguistic competence

#### D.2. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

#### D.3. Digital competence

#### D.4. Learning to learn

#### D.5. Social and civic competencies

#### D.6. Initiative and entrepreneurship

#### D.7. Cultural awareness and expression
E. ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY
   E.1. Are there activities for slow learners included?
   E.2. Are there activities for fast learners included?
   E.3. Are there any extra materials for high-level learners?
   E.4. Are there any extra materials for low-level learners?

F. VALUES
   - Does the textbook include any task or activity which promotes any of the following values?
   - Does the textbook reflect somehow the development of these values? (Observe the treatment of images or reading contents.)
   F.1. Gender equality
   F.2. Education for peace
   F.3. Social integration
   F.4. Health education
   F.5. Appreciation of our own culture

G. MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
   G.1. Teacher’s book
      o Are correct or suggested answers given for the exercises in the textbook?
      o Are the teachers given some hints or cues from morphology, cognates rhetorical relationships, and context to assist them in lexical inference?
      o Are teachers given techniques to activate students’ prior knowledge?
      o Are teachers given adequate examples for teaching to preview, skim, scan, summarize and to find the main idea?
      o Does the textbook suggest a clear, concise method for teaching each lesson?
   G.2. Teachers’ All-in-one pack
      o Does the textbook provide teachers with exercises to practice, test and review vocabulary words?
      o Does the textbook provide additional exercises for reinforcing grammar points in the text?
   G.3. Digital book
   G.4. CDs
   G.5. Web resources
   G.6. Examination builder
   G.7. Digital book (for teachers)
   G.8. CDs
   G.9. Web resources
   G.10. Examination builder
   G.11. Workbook
   G.12. Formative evaluation (self-assessment)
   G.13. Appendices in the student’s book (wordlists, grammar reference, irregular verbs…?)

Table 2. List of descriptors which define the checklist for EFL textbook evaluation.
5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Analysis of the external context

5.1.1. The school context
The school setting is considered a decisive aspect to contextualize our work properly. The school is located in La Línea de la Concepción, Cádiz, a city in the south of Spain. This city borders Gibraltar (UK) and this fact confers the place some distinct cultural, political and social characteristics. Gibraltar may be seen as an open door in the search of employment and the development of a professional career since at least 20,000 companies are set up there. It is also noteworthy to refer to the great possibilities that its inhabitants have in terms of learning English and getting to know this culture closely, which at the end its has its peculiarities because of its demographic situation.

In this school students can attend Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE), Upper Secondary Education (Bachillerato) and Vocational Training Studies with a major in Tourism. It is subscribed to the bilingual and ICT regional programs. The school has nearly 900 students, out of which 235 are in their first year distributed in 8 groups. In reference to the facilities, the centre, made up of two floors, is provided with a lift for students with reduced mobility, a car park, a coffee bar, two playgrounds, a covered sports area, two computer rooms (with 25 computers), a library, an assembly hall, a language laboratory and an audiovisual room with a television set, a video, a DVD player, a slide projector and an overhead projector. Every classroom has a digital board and a computer. In addition, there are laptops at the students’ disposal with previous notification to the head teacher.

5.1.2. The students’ profile
The groups whose books are being studied are in their 1st year of CSE and every one is made up of 30 students on average. As regards the students’ economic and socio-cultural context, it can be said that in general terms students who attend lessons at this School belong to middle class families who work in different sectors (education, health, industries), while others live with a lower economic level, whose main source of income is derived from the primary sector like fishers and the service sector such as the small shops or bars in the neighbourhood. As for their academic situation, they are divided into bilingual and non-bilingual groups and according to their modality they are using a textbook or another. The great difference between them is that the bilingual groups must study certain subjects in English as part of a CLIL program. Besides, they are offered certain complementary activities such as linguistic exchanges, trips abroad and many others, and they have the duty of completing certain tasks, such as a Bilingual Project each term.
Within each modality, both bilingual and non bilingual, there is a noticeable diversity among our students as far as their learning style and their predisposition are concerned, but actually, students in the first year of Secondary Education seem interested in the subject and some of them are willing to participate in the suggested activities; only a few students lack motivation. The groups are quite diverse regarding their English level: it is possible to find advanced, middle and slow learners in both groups. They have four hours of English every week. Finally, it is foremost to bear in mind that many of them attend English lessons out of the high school in private academies and this fact makes the level gap even greater.

5.1.3. Authors’ and publishers’ information

*New English in Use* 1 is said to introduce a well-structured and easy-friendly method which provides students with the capacities to achieve authentic communicative competence and acquire the key competences set in the Organic Law for Improvement of Educational Quality, *LOMCE*. It is focused on the development of skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading and communication strategies and it promotes the knowledge about sociocultural and interdisciplinary topics. According to Marks and Addison (2016), the textbook includes additional activities for fast students, advanced students and with any type of attention to diversity. It is compatible with the A1+ level of the CEFRL.

*High Score* is a book intended for Spanish students who have really made progress in Primary assuming that learners have a good command of vocabulary, are used to extension Reading, and have a good understanding of basic grammar structures, as stated by Kelly (2006). It is defined as a fast-paced syllabus which goes beyond the minimum requirements with “lots of challenging grammar and vocabulary work”. Each unit includes two extensive readings and writing is also well catered for. The topics around cultural and educational themes are said to appeal to teenage learners.

5.2. Textbook evaluation items

In the following checklist, the grades for each textbook are marked with the initials of each textbook written in the correspondent square, so for *New English in Use* it will be NEU (in orange), and for *High Score* textbook, HS (dark blue). Then, each item will be further explained.
# Textbook evaluation items

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<td>F.3. Social integration</td>
<td>HS/NEU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.4. Health Education</td>
<td>HS/NEU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Checklist with the evaluation of both High Score and New English in Use textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>New English in Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.5. Appreciation of one’s own culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS AND RESOURCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.1. Teacher’s book</td>
<td>NEU</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.2. Teacher’s all in-one-pack</td>
<td>NEU</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.3. Digital book</td>
<td>NEU</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.4. Web resources</td>
<td>NEU</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.5. Exam builder</td>
<td>HS/NEU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.6. CDs</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>NEU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.7. Workbook</td>
<td>HS/NEU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.8. Formative evaluation</td>
<td>HS/NEU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.9. Appendices in the students’ book</td>
<td>NEU</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1. Physical features

When evaluating the physical features, several aspects must be borne in mind, among which the cover, the layout, the table of contents or the overall organisation. At first sight, the design of New English in Use (hereafter NEU) is very colourful, made of bright and vivid colours, especially the cover and sections devoted to the review and other special sections. There are plenty of images overprinted in collages. The quality of graphics and images is apparently high since the contrast, brightness and resolution make the pictures clear. The use of different fonts for headings and subheadings helps to guide the user to localise information quite fast. Sections are well structured and are repeated throughout each unit of work. In its cover we can see several teenagers, all of them smiling, and some bubbles, which might be a symbol of oral communication and at the background, fantasy graphics about London. In the title the word “New” is highlighted with a different colour. In general, it is appealing but the layout could be a little overcharged with images and colours (see appendix 9.5).

Regarding High Score (hereafter HS) the general structure is more simplistic since it does not use so many images and pictures, and colours are more neutral (not so bright) and they seem to be displayed in a more structured way. The use of headings and subheadings is appropriate since it lets the users know exactly the section in which they are. Its simple structure gives a sense of organisation. As for the cover, it is simple: just two students in the picture, one of them studying while the other one is smiling and carrying a book. In the right corner there is an image of Oxford, as the publisher’s name (appendix 9.6).

Concerning the table of contents, both include the number of each unit together with the title and the columns are devoted to the four skills, vocabulary, grammar and culture. Differences are found in the exclusion or inclusion of the following sections: NEU adds a section for Everyday English and a column to describe which Key Competences are worked
Tania Arjona Gámiz

(see appendix 9.7), whereas in HS, listening and speaking appear in the same column and pronunciation is devoted another column (in NEU pronunciation is within the section of speaking) (see appendix 9.8). Their organisation is similar: 9 units of work, an overall review every each three units and sections for grammar reference; vocabulary and list of irregular verbs are located at the back of the books. However, NEU also adds a “pairwork appendix”, “pronunciation appendix” and “extra readings”, and it does not include a final list of vocabulary, opting for a list of vocabulary, grammar and functional language at the end of each unit.

5.2.2. Contents

5.2.2.1. Units of work

The unit structure varies from one textbook to the other regarding their organisation and the treatment of all the skills, and the linguistic and cultural aspects. The following chart shows the different sections included in a unit of work in each textbook, so at a glance the sequence and distribution of contents can be easily identified and this will give some cues about the methodology and pedagogical approaches underlying the textbooks. In addition to this, differences and similarities can be noticed without any difficulty. Each section is completed with some notes to better define the characteristics of every part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITS OF WORK</th>
<th>NEW ENGLISH IN USE (NEU)</th>
<th>HIGH SCORE (HS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Reading: pre-reading and while reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Grammar</td>
<td>(deductive approach, gap filling)</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Talk about it” (oral interaction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3Listening</td>
<td>(while listening)</td>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong> (two sessions, inductive approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Speaking (related to the listening and the vocabulary section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5Writing</td>
<td>(post-listening and speaking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6Reading</td>
<td>(while reading, vocabulary, “word power”)</td>
<td><strong>Communication: vocabulary, listening</strong> (while listening), <strong>speaking</strong> (drilling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7Grammar</td>
<td><strong>Culture focus: reading text</strong> (pre-reading, while reading and post-reading).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8Speaking: role play</td>
<td>“Talk about it”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9Skills in Use: vocabulary, listening | Writing (each unit focuses on a different
On the basis of the information provided in this comparative chart, it is prominent that the reading skill is differently placed in each textbook: in NEU it appears after vocabulary and grammar whereas in HS it is at the very beginning of the unit, but in both cases the possibility of listening to the text is included.

Vocabulary in NEU is the starting point of its units. There are two sections devoted to vocabulary. It is usually given in context by using examples with the key words highlighted. It usually includes activities such as “what other adjectives do you know…?” so students can add more vocabulary. In HS, the vocabulary is presented isolated at first and through exercises they fit in context (see appendix 9.9).

The grammar in HC is a step more advanced than in NEU. The getting started unit includes contents such as “to be”, “to have got”, “there is/are”, while these contents are part of unit 1 and unit 2 in NEU. HC studies the past simple, the past continuous, “going to”, “will” and the first conditional, and NEU arrives just up to the future with “will”. How is grammar presented? In NEU, a deductive approach is followed: students are given a brief explanation and a pair of activities and then they are directed to the Grammar Charts in the appendices for practice. In contrast, HC uses an inductive approach, according to which students are given a text to extract the rules, and then practise through gap filling and drilling. HC has a “quick check” section at the end of each unit of work in which there are a couple of activities to
review previous units as far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned. NEU has a “check your progress” in the workbook but students will not have this material. Grammar and vocabulary are explained through animated videos in NEU by using examples in context so students have to deduce the rules in contrast to the technique used in the textbook (see appendix 9.10).

In NEU the oral skills are further developed than in HS (see appendix 9.11). **Speaking** is promoted throughout the whole unit as post-activities for each skill and then 4 specific sections are devoted to this skill and further practice in the workbook and in the appendices of the textbook. **Pronunciation** is also given a space with two drilling activities and further practice at the back of the book. For **listening** as such, there are two recordings connected with the previous and following content. In addition, there are many activities which can be checked through listening as well as the reading text and a pair of dialogues which are also recorded. Students do not have the transcripts but they can be displayed on the whiteboard. In HS, there is a short section devoted to speaking and a pair of post-activities while pronunciation is not included in the units but in the appendices. Similarly, listening has just a short section and apart from it, some activities can be checked through listening as well as the reading text.

As for **writing**, in NEU learners are given some notes about the content and language used in the type of text they are working on. The activities are focused on extracting information on the model text and language, but no discursive aspects are presented. Students are directed to the “writing guide” in their workbook. In HS, students work with compositions paying attention to linking and sequencing words, punctuation and other cohesive elements. It is noteworthy that both focus on guided writing and in neither case is there creative writing.

As mentioned above, every three units there is section for content-review: NEU offers activities to revise vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, and an individual project while HS emphasizes vocabulary and grammar consolidation.

### 5.2.2.2. Cultural contents

It is interesting to differentiate between the section devoted to culture specifically, and how culture is presented throughout each unit. First, the following chart shows a comparison of the culture section of each textbook, highlighting the topic and the culture/country being introduced. Topics are diverse, from sports or the school system to television or literature. NEU has more references to the British and European culture while HS includes a more ample variety of countries such as Australia, Canada or Namibia.
A Checklist-based Study of EFL Textbooks in CSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITS</th>
<th>NEW ENGLISH IN USE (NEU)</th>
<th>HIGH SCORE (HS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CLIL: Technology</td>
<td>British literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Markets in London (UK)</td>
<td>Show: “Cirque du Soleil” - Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Schools (UK)</td>
<td>American – Spanish TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature: King Midas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sport (cycling): Europe</td>
<td>People in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Olympics: UK</td>
<td>Western - America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CLIL: nature – Europe</td>
<td>Weather (Tornado) in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature: Poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CLIL: History – World</td>
<td>Celebrations in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nobel Prize: Europe</td>
<td>Safari – Namibia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Disney</td>
<td>School in USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature: Tales of the Alhambra</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Comparative chart of the cultural section in High Score and New English in Use.

Secondly, leaving aside the section itself, culture is also reflected through other elements such as the content of reading or listening texts, images or pictures. For example, pictures of celebrities of different nationalities can be found throughout the textbooks. There are also allusions to TV programmes, series, monuments, and historical moments such as the image of the first step into the moon. This is a common feature for both textbooks, although the British culture is slightly more present than the other ones. NEU adds a section called “Did you know?” which introduces curious cultural data in relation to the activities they are working on.

5.2.2.3. Cross-curricular content

Since English is an instrumental subject, it is possible to integrate contents of other disciplines with the purpose of acquiring new knowledge through the use of a foreign language. In this respect, NEU has explicitly devoted a section entitled “CLIL and Culture” in which students read texts in connection to specific subjects, in this case, history, literature, technology, nature and social history. For example, in unit 1 students will read about how to make a video game fostering on the technology field. Another example would be unit 2 where the CLIL text is about wild animals as pets which is in relation to nature and fosters on the value of respecting animals and the importance of not abandoning them.
HS does not have a specific section for CLIL but many of the contents included could be related to any other disciplines, for example unit 6 entitled “The power of nature” includes geographical as well as climatology aspects, thus in relation to sciences.

5.2.3. Methodology

Talking about methodology is always an intricate issue since most of the times it hinges more upon the teacher’s philosophy although, of course, the type of textbook may invite to develop one methodology rather than another one. Nowadays, the tendency is to promote and develop communicative competence in EFL by using a student-centred approach, i.e. giving students a gradual autonomy to enhance lifelong learning on languages. However, this is what theory establishes, but practice is different.

The authors of the HS textbook define their methodology as fast-paced, with interesting and educational topics, challenging, consolidating, substantial and flexible. Within these adjectives, they always refer to early finishers, but there is no mention to slow learners. Definitely, it has a clear inclination towards a grammar-centred approach as defined by the publishers: “Students who complete the course will have a strong foundation in grammar and vocabulary from which to tackle their Bachillerato studies or move on to Cambridge or Trinity exams”. It is also obvious because of the great amount of grammar and vocabulary activities, which are mostly gap filling and drilling; all of them are guided, leaving no space for critical thinking. Apparently, there is not any possibility for students to control their learning either since they do not make decisions about objectives, contents or materials and they do not complete tasks or projects (they work mainly individually and once in a while in pairs); thus, their role is to follow the instructions given in a guided and controlled way.

NEU, albeit, bases its methodology on the communicative approach defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) and it stresses the achievement of the key competences. Grammar and vocabulary are presented in the context of actual use through mostly gap filling as well, and the textbook offers extra activities set for “weaker students” in contrast to the HS textbook which sets activities for early finishers. NEU includes plenty of communicative activities through speaking, interaction and listening. There are some for writing but usually in a guided way. Therefore, certainly NEU attempts to promote communication and the key competences, and it offers the possibility of carrying out tasks or projects but not as a core of its methodology. Regardless of its linguistic approach, according to the types of activities and its organisation, it may be said that it fosters a teacher-centred approach since it is not based on task completion or collaborative work so students can take responsibilities and control their learning process.
5.2.4. Key competences

The key competences can be defined as set of skills, knowledge, practices, values and attitudes which enable us to tackle tasks successfully in the academic, professional and personal life. NEU bases its methodology on the CEFRL so it also deals with the development of the key competences. This fact is reflected on the table of contents where each unit is linked to the key competences worked in it. Thus, unit 4, for example, develops all the competences except for the Maths, Science and Technology competence or unit 7 fosters all of them except for digital competence. Although HS is not based on key competences since it is a relatively recent aspect, it could contribute to their development as well. They are presented as follows:

- Linguistic competence. The core competence for both textbooks. It develops linguistic knowledge and enhances communication.

- Maths, Science and Technology. It is probably the least developed competence, although it is linked when studying the numbers or talking about money and currencies in both textbooks although more explicitly in NEU.

- Digital competence. In HS there is no reference to the use of the new technologies, websearch or data analysis. In contrast, NEU has included links to certain webpages in relation to the unit topic, some activities to do websearch and even mobile phone applications for students who wish to review what they have learnt. In addition, NEU includes an individual project every three units consisting in doing a little research, thus promoting the use of ICTs and digital competence.

- Learning to learn. The most obvious representation is the use of self-assessment sheets through which students and teachers can reflect on their learning and work and settle the tools to improve their level, get more involved, and become more linguistically aware.

- Social and civic competence. It is enhanced when interacting and working collaboratively, especially through the speaking skill and the execution of tasks or projects.

- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. This competence is one of the least developed in both textbooks since the whole process is intended to be quite controlled by teachers, so there is no space for students to develop this competence. It requires working beyond gap-filling activities.
Cultural awareness and expression. This competence is developed when getting to know other cultures from a critical and respectful perspective. This is another main aim when studying a language since they are inherent to each other.

5.2.5. Attention to diversity
Diversity is an inherent condition in a human being; each student has their own individual characteristics and differences affecting the learning process (different aptitudes, interests, cognitive styles, personality, etc.) We are all different. Some diversity factors refer to learning styles, motivation, previous experiences or a slower or faster learning rhythm. Other cases of attention to diversity will require more than an ordinary educational support.

The HS textbook offers extra materials for early finishers or fast learners, as it is mentioned in its syllabus. However, nothing is said about slow learners. The extra materials are not included in the textbook but in the workbook which students are not obliged to buy. On the other hand, NEU does refer to slow learners and it offers extra activities, especially grammar exercises, at the back of the book within the Grammar Charts and Basics. Leaving aside that, students have the possibility to access the official webpage of Burlington and revise or take further practice. Another option for extra practice is found in the workbook but students will not have access to it unless they buy it on their own.

5.2.6. Educational values
Education in values is established in the curriculum because the education field also has to ensure the holistic development of students and their integration into society and, where appropriate, in the world of work. For this reason it is necessary to include contents that can enable the development of the socio-emotional field of personality in the curriculum.

- Gender equality. Both textbooks show unbiased images and topics as for the issue of gender equality since both women and men are displayed doing similar tasks, activities and jobs. There is no discrimination or stereotypes on this issue in any of the textbooks.
- Education for peace is not promoted directly but when carrying out discussions in class, showing different opinions, ideas, customs, always in a democratic way; the sense of respect towards the achievement of peace is being developed.
- Social integration. Similarly, for example when working in groups they have to be tolerant and accept differences with a respectful attitude. Throughout the textbooks, the option of team-working is not very extensive so social integration is reflected through images.
- Appreciation of their own culture. At the same time that students are learning about other cultures, they are asked to reflect on their own one, for example, when describing,
talking about routines, school, food or typical celebrations. This value is present in that sense in both textbooks.

5.2.7. Supplementary material and resources

Accompanying the textbooks, there is usually a series of supplementary materials which serve to complete, guide and provide further activities both for students and teachers. However, the type of materials included may vary from one to the other one.

5.2.7.1. Teacher’s book and exam builder

HS offers a teacher’s book which is oriented to guide the teacher in the use of the textbook and include extra materials, structured as follows:

- Teaching notes. It has an introduction about the methodology and the main sections which compose the textbook. Then, there is a guide for each unit and it includes background information on the topic of each unit, suggestions on how to approach the Student’s book, language notes and keys to all the exercises, extra suggestions for vocabulary and grammar extension and the transcripts of the listening recordings.
- Vocabulary extension. Nine photocopiables, one per unit accompanied by full answer keys.
- Pairwork activities. There are nine, one per unit, and they provide controlled speaking practice which reflects the themes and grammar points of each unit. Each activity is an information-gap exercise.
- Tests. There are nine End-of-unit tests, one for use after each unit. They revise and consolidate grammar and vocabulary, but there is no skills testing. Moreover, there are two End-of term tests and they do include skills testing. Finally, two End-of-year tests are provided.

Regarding NEU, the teacher’s book makes an introduction to the course and its components as well as the following remarkable aspects:

- CEF and Language Portfolio guidelines.
- Teachers’ notes: clear and concise interleaved with the Students’ book, with highlighted cross-referencing to other components to help with lesson planning.
- Students’ book answers.
- Reinforcement and extension activities.
- Listening scripts.

Apart from the teachers’ book, there is another manual called “teacher’s All-in-one Pack” which includes a test section (diagnostic tests, units tests in three levels, three term tests
at two levels and two final exams). The “mixed-ability” section includes two photocopiable extra practice worksheets per unit for additional practice for grammar and vocabulary and extra pairwork speaking activities.

5.2.7.2. Digital book, web resources and CDs
The Digital Book is intended to be used on the whiteboard in order to display contents in a more interactive and dynamic way. This option is just available in the NEU pack since it is a more recent publication. It is especially helpful when checking students’ answers to activities. The newest features, such as communication videos, culture videos, slideshows and grammar and vocabulary animation, games and extra practice, are remarkable. Similarly, NEU offers web resources both for students and teachers. Students can access the “Student’s zone” and make use of the MP3 recordings of the Student’s Book and Extra Reading texts, the workbook listening tasks and dictations, plus Workbook listening scripts. Teachers can find a “test factory and other editable resources” with all the material from the Teacher’s All-in-One Pack and further materials for cultural contents.

In contrast to the introduction of new technologies features, CDs are components included up to now in most of the textbooks. The HS textbook includes 2 class CDs with all the listening recordings in the text and workbook. However, NEU has already suppressed this option, which has been replaced by web resources.

5.2.7.3. Workbooks
The workbook usually contains parallel units of work to the textbooks following the same themes and contents. NEU makes some differences regarding the textbooks including some features such as bilingual glossaries, bilingual speaking glossaries, grammar appendix and self-evaluation charts among others. The part of self-assessment is usually included in the workbook and not in the textbook, so in this case students would not have self-assessment tools.

5.2.7.4. Formative evaluation
With the aim of promoting self-awareness, learning engagement and, in short, students’ autonomy, both textbooks include self-evaluation sheets and continuous assessment sheets. In the case of HS, the self-evaluation sheet is included in the teacher’s book to be photocopied as well as the students’ continuous evaluation sheet. In the case of NEU the self-assessment sheets are within the workbook to check students’ progress. There is also a formative sheet and a summative sheet for teachers to evaluate students’ progress. In any case, there are options for evaluating the teacher’s work.
6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Results

The process of comparing two different textbooks for their analysis and evaluation has shed some light on the adequacy of use of this type of material in the process of learning and teaching for a specific context and a target group of students. Both textbooks are intended for the same academic year but with a span of nearly 10 years, which enables to notice the influence of the new tendencies on recent textbooks in comparison to old ones, and draw the strongest and weakest aspects of each one. Following the items in the checklist and descriptors used for the evaluation the foremost outcomes are enlisted and developed in the next sections.

6.1.1. Analysis of the external context

The characteristics of the city and the area in the surroundings, in the border with Gibraltar, makes English an even more helpful and indispensable tool in terms of professional aims. However, despite the awareness on this issue, there are no linguistic programmes to enhance the learning of foreign languages.

Within the groups of the first year, there are different levels of academic background and one of the main reasons might be students attending private English lessons, thus in the same group there are more advanced students, those who find problems in basics, and those who are in the middle. With such a disparity of levels, the learning process must be guaranteed with resources for every type of student so they can build meaningful learning based on their prior knowledge. No textbook nowadays is ready to cover so many levels, so it is the teacher’s duty to fulfil their students’ needs with extra materials from other sources or their own.

6.1.2. High Score: strengths and weaknesses

*High Score* is a publication of 2006, and according to the publishers, it is intended for advanced learners. These two features will play an important role to describe this textbook.

On the one hand, the period of time when textbooks are published is important and determining since they are created to supply a series of needs according to the resources available at that moment. The growing and quick development of new technologies has made this textbook be old-fashioned in that sense, but in 2006 it offered what was in use then, which mainly was the CD. During this time, not only the new technologies have evolved and revolutionised the creation of teaching materials, but a modification in the Law on Education has influenced the way in which textbooks are now tailored. Therefore, these two reasons are
solid enough not to implement the textbook nowadays. Nonetheless, it is interesting to continue the analysis from a methodological and linguistic point of view.

On the other hand, the fact of being intended for advanced learners so they can progress and have a strong foundation in grammar and vocabulary is noticeable in two main aspects: the amount of grammatical and vocabulary activities and the grammatical contents included. For grammar, students are offered almost the double amount of activities than in other standard textbooks per unit without counting the extension activities and the workbook activities. Furthermore, when having a look at the grammar contents, it goes beyond the minimum requirements; in fact, in the starter unit it includes items such as the verb “to be” and “have got” which other textbooks devote to their study in different units, and it encompasses grammatical items such as the first conditional which is not usually within the first year syllabus.

Regarding the methodology, it is crystal clear that it subscribes a grammatical approach, based on gap filling and drilling activities worked individually, mixed with some communicative activities carried out in pairs. There is no chance for collaborative work or for promoting skills such as decision-making, responsibilities or team work which foster students’ autonomy. The textbook is designed so that the teacher is in control of every aspect of the learning process since all the curriculum elements are already arranged. There are two highlighting features meant to deep into the students’centredness: the self-assessment sheets and formative evaluation activities at the end of each unit. The former appear as complementary materials and the textbook does not enhance their use. The latter are in relation to formative evaluation, as students not only have the opportunity to revise at the end of each unit, but this “Quick Check” section also includes activities to review previous units. Regarding the way of introducing information and new knowledge, the textbook follows an inductive approach, for example, when presenting grammar students have to guess the rule by analysing some examples previously read in the text. The whole unit is a good representation of it, since first the reading text with vocabulary and grammar structures is presented so that students can deduce their meaning in context.

As for the use of new technologies, as mentioned above this is a characteristic which has been evolving so quickly over the last few years, thus it is not an updated version. It includes just some CDs.

One of its strongest aspects is its solid and well-structured organisation, which allows learners to foresee what they are going to study and go back to review. Indeed, its simple
layout makes this process easier, since there are no so many distracting elements such as colourful drawing, appealing images or striking fonts.

6.1.3. **New English in Use: strengths and weaknesses**

*New English in Use* is a very recent publication and, indeed, the textbook in force in bilingual groups for every year in CSE in the High School studied for this research. Its attractiveness and its digital resources could have been the main reasons for teachers to choose this book.

From its cover to the interior design, it is very colourful, full of shapes, drawings and overprinted images. Although this is the current tendency followed by editors now, it could be seen as a bit overcharged and distracting.

Undoubtedly, the most outstanding feature is the connection and update to new technologies. The digital book allows teachers and learners to make activities, corrections and other tasks much more interactive, less boring, and for those students who are more visual, this means an advantage. Moreover, each unit contains around three cultural videos and animated presentations which make the content more attractive. In addition to this, both students and teachers are provided with plenty of resources in the publisher’s web: activities for extension, audio recordings, wordlists, techno help for projects (for students), and test builder (for teachers). Even the workbook can be found online by teachers who can get it displayed on the whiteboard. In this way, students are more connected to real life through videos, images and cross curricular contents. It is noteworthy to mention that students can download an app for their mobile phones to review vocabulary. Although it is limited in use, it is a good starting point for students to get engaged through new technologies.

The textbook is intended for a medium-level student and its contents cover the minimum requirements for this year according to the Organic Law on Education, *LOMCE*. Nonetheless, it offers extra activities at the back of the book which can be used either for slow learners or simply to review certain grammatical items.

As far as methodology is concerned, it is described by authors as a means of achieving communicative competence. In fact, it is true that it provides highly communicative activities in each session, as well as a section entitled “Everyday English” focused on functional English in real-life communication, but especially remarkable are some projects suggested to be carried out at the end of each term. There are three projects: one individual, one in groups and the third one in pairs, all of them about different topics. In addition to this, another outstanding feature is the three literature sessions, one of them linked to poetry. However, this is not a task-based approach in which students can work collaboratively and autonomy can be
promoted as aimed by the CEFRL. It is still too teacher-oriented and most of the activities are gap filling and drilling. Regarding the way of introducing information and new knowledge, this follows a deductive approach, for example when presenting grammar or the whole unit is also an example of it, since vocabulary and grammar (the theory) are introduced before the reading or listening texts.

Finally, the inclusion of the key competences must be highlighted, as mentioned in the law and in the recommendations by the CEFRL. There are some more developed than others and they are present through topics, activities or texts (both written and oral).

6.1.4. **Comparison of both textbooks: High Score and New English in Use.**

In general, there are more differences than similarities and this fact is mostly due to the long span of time between both, which affects the methodology as new techniques and approaches emerge, along with new topics, this is also due to the use of resources as new technologies which change very fast. NEU is more communicative and it is reflected in its layout: the latest versions of textbooks are much more colourful and images are displayed in collage, a disposition probably intended to give an impression of energy, active implication and dynamism. Another great difference caused by time is the use of new technologies and, thus, the resources and the way to operate may change as well.

Length would be another disparity since it has been found that each unit in NEU is much denser than one in HS, which is more precise. This can be seen as an advantage because the teacher has more material to select, but a disadvantage not to get lost but well-organised.

Regarding the topics, they are rather similar and they are within the expectations about students’ interest according to their age and motivations, such as talking about people, their cities, sport, holidays and similar issues.

A feature shared by both textbooks is the inclusion of a review section at the end of each unit of work. Although it revises grammar and vocabulary contents, it is useful for learners to consolidate what they have learnt in linguistic terms. Furthermore, this option let them be aware of their weaknesses in this unit so they can improve and learn from errors and mistakes. It would be interesting to include any activity which enables students to review previous units as HS does.

The following table serves as a brief summary after contrasting both textbooks and analysing the main differences and similarities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HIGH SCORE</th>
<th>NEW ENGLISH IN USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIFFERENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication:</td>
<td>Publication: 2006</td>
<td>Publication: 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length:</td>
<td>11 sessions</td>
<td>8 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>More communicative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout:</td>
<td>simplistic. It gives the impression of structure and organization, more serious.</td>
<td>Layout: vivid, colourful (a little overcharged). It gives the impression of dynamism, communicative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit structure:</td>
<td>inductive</td>
<td>deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on fast learners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused on slow learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary materials:</td>
<td>grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, list of irregular verbs</td>
<td>Supplementary materials: grammar, extra reading, pairwork, pronunciation appendix, list of irregular verbs. Web resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPICS:</td>
<td>television, travelling, nature, holidays, environment,</td>
<td>TOPICS: celebrities, routines, sport, animals, jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key competences</td>
<td>are developed indirectly</td>
<td>Key competences are all developed explicitly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SIMILARITIES**
- Textbook organisation: 9 units + appendices
- Teacher-centred approach
- Review at the end of each unit of work
- Further practice on grammar and vocabulary
- Topics: people, clothing, towns, food, school and home

Table 6. Main similarities and differences between *High Score* and *New English in Use*. 

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7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. The most relevant aspects after evaluating textbooks

The task of selecting a concrete textbook is not such a simple issue and because of the important repercussions it may have in the learning and teaching process, it is pivotal to draw specific lines which lead the experts to choose appropriate materials. The most significant criterion is the suitability to students’ needs and interests. They have to progress on the basis of their prior knowledge and they must address their learning in the pursuit of their objectives. That is why it is not the same to teach children, teenagers or adults, to teach in a big city or a small school in a mountain village. What do they want English for? What do they need to keep learning? Which strategies and methods are to be used? All the elements in a curriculum are necessary and all of them are more or less reflected in the way materials, and specifically textbooks, are designed.

For this study a specific group of students has been chosen: 1st year of CSE, diverse levels (rather medium and low), studying the bilingual option in a high school which offers both bilingual and no bilingual alternatives. After the analysis of both textbooks, New English in Use and High Score, in this case, taking into consideration firstly the students’ needs and their level, which is diverse, the most appropriate textbook would be New English in Use since it is an adequate starting point in case adaptation is needed for fast and slow learners. Providing a more advanced grammar textbook could be inadequate since it is necessary to review the most basic aspects as well in the target group to carry out meaningful learning. NEU also provides more opportunities for communication although it still lacks a clearer student-centred approach. This is essential to get students engaged in their learning. If they do not get motivated by feeling responsible of their work and progress, making their own decisions or working in different modalities (individually, in pairs and in teams), the achievement of objectives would be negatively affected.

The methodologies in both textbooks mostly coincide with their publishers’ descriptions: NEU was described as a means to achieve communicative competence, and although it is more communicative than the previous versions, new textbooks are still too grammar-oriented and teacher-centred, while HS is fairer with the description since it is intended to improve students’ grammar and vocabulary competence. Nonetheless, though the authors’ and publishers’ information is biased and likely commercial aims prevail, this might serve to have a first impression and then it is our duty to evaluate from a critical point of view to what extent the information is trustworthy.
As for the development of the strategies skills to promote autonomy, in any case textbooks are intended for this purpose and this is an option to be submitted by the teacher. Normally, students are not used to working autonomously in the classroom since traditional teaching is too deeply rooted; thus, the question of fostering autonomy must be carried out in a gradual way from totally controlled to less controlled teaching. Although textbooks are not oriented in this sense, it is a teacher’s decision to use the textbook in one direction or another.

Finally, despite the advantages and drawbacks of any of the textbooks, the role of textbooks in the learning and teaching process must be highlighted as a very helpful tool for teachers to guide their syllabus and for students to have a solid and consistent reference. Textbooks are not the only source of knowledge and information, and on some occasions they might not be adequate for certain aspects in the classroom. That is the reason why they must be seen as a flexible, adaptable and complementary tool instead of the core and the only source for learning, especially in today’s society where finding information and authentic materials is as easy as accessing the Internet and the social networks.

7.2. The use of a checklist for textbook analysis and evaluation

This research project has been intended to carry out a deep insight into the field of textbook analysis by using checklists and a list of descriptors as tools to collect data. When using them, several advantages are found but always bearing in mind their limitations.

In practical terms, checklists are barely time-consuming and user-friendly. It is just a question of analysing specific aspects in the textbooks and checking the best grade which will be ranged in a given scale. They generally contain a lot of information in a very concise way structured in a grid and this information can be adapted to any circumstances, groups or objectives. It is even useful to make comparisons since at a glance, after doing the analysis, it is possible to carry out a general evaluation of several books at the same time and remark the main differences and similarities among them quickly. Highly helpful is the use of a list of descriptors which makes more specific the meaning of each item included in the checklist.

Nonetheless, when using a checklist it is important to bear in mind the limitations it may present. First, there is not a universal checklist which can serve to any purpose. Throughout decades, experts have introduced several models with different structures, items or categories. Many of them have turned out to be quite complete and helpful and have been adapted by other authors, but still adaptation will be a process to carry out when using any tool for evaluation since the characteristics of the context will vary. Secondly, one of the main reasons why checklists are the most frequent tool to evaluate materials is that they are quite
objective in comparison to other tools such as the publishers’ descriptions or experts reviews. However, they have a subjective component since the teacher’s or the expert’s philosophy on the field of TEFL will exert a strong influence when it comes to assess the characteristics of a textbook, i.e. depending on the teachers’ preferences and ideas of teaching, the characteristics of a textbook will be valued differently and, in this way, if teachers are more grammar-oriented, teachers will appreciate an extensive grammar and vocabulary section rather than communicative activities as a communicatively-functionally teacher will do.

7.3. Teaching implications
Textbook evaluation is a fruitful and enriching process which goes even beyond the analysis of textbooks, bringing to light diverse issues around the process of learning and teaching. It leads to think over pedagogy, methodology, the students’ characteristics and behaviours, and the teachers’ practices, which are apparently external to the textbook.

Bearing in mind their possible limitations, textbooks must be seen as helpful and auxiliary tools. They are a source for information, a bank of activities and they serve as a reference at the service of teachers and learners. It would be highly advisable to carry out an analysis for several reasons, among which the following can be mentioned: to construct a appropriate teaching plan to exploit the resources it may include, as well as to innovate and deem new horizons, since we become more aware of the whole learning process and thus, more open-minded.

Under no circumstances should some pedagogical principles be left behind when it comes to textbooks. The methodology must attain the development of the students’ full creativity as well as encourage higher levels of thinking and reflection. With the purpose of acquiring the skills for the ongoing society’s demands, there is a clear need to encourage collaborative learning, learner autonomy and a learner-centred approach to ensure lifelong learning, as well.

In this regard, new technologies must be mentioned as they play an essential role, and a good example of it is the use of digital books, which are becoming more and more popular. Every publisher provides the school with the printed version of textbooks and the digital one, too. In general, the introduction of new technologies in the learning process is a great challenge nowadays, and due to its importance, teachers should be provided with more training in this field to make the most of them and enjoy the numerous advantages it offers. This issue is relatively recent and, what it is more important, it is continuously changing and adding new features which also deserve evaluation.
In this research project, textbook evaluation has been the focus, but it is necessary to bear in mind that evaluation should be submitted to every aspect of the learning process, including teaching practices. Teachers must also evaluate their own work through reflection and self-assessment to get aware of progress or aspects to be improved since the process of learning and teaching, including materials, must be reviewed and recycled when necessary.

Last but not least, every issue that emerges in a classroom should be analysed and resolved for the purpose of attaining more effective learning and promoting each student’s English language performance. Ultimately, the conclusion is the same: an increase in students’ intrinsic motivation, since this is the key that opens the doors of possibility, engagement and involvement; and materials play an important role here. Evaluating and analysing textbooks can help teachers to better understand not only about learning and teaching but also about themselves since a process of reflection is needed. It is undoubtedly a demanding but satisfying process.

7.4. Limitations of the study

This M.A. Thesis presents some limitations, drafted in this section, which deal mainly with time, space and tool validity and reliability.

Concerning the aspect of time, the present study has been undertaken over a period of some months within an academic year. An extension in time would allow completing the evaluation by collecting data from the pre-stage in which this study is focused on, and adding two more stages to oversee the whole process: a while-stage (during its use) and a post-evaluation stage to dip into final outcomes. Some other instruments could be added to this process such as questionnaires and observation.

On the other hand, analysing the same textbooks in different educational settings, i.e. carrying out the research in high schools located in diverse kind of socio-cultural contexts would shed light on to what extent the context is a variable in the study of textbooks and how both aspects are affected by each other.

Finally, in relation to the nature of the tools used, despite being informed, the information obtained from them is self-reported, so rather subjective, since it relies on one’s own vision of ESL because of the instrument used, although intended to be as objective as possible, the result is an evaluation with an inevitable subjective factor.

Increasing the number of participants, in this case teachers and experts, and thus the magnitude of this study would make this kind of research more complete, representative and yielding. Certainly, being aware of others’ points of view would have enriched this study far
more, but this condition requires a more ample framework of time as well. All those issues would contribute to increase validity and reliability in this research project.

### 7.5. Further lines of research

The present dissertation deals with the issue of textbook evaluation by means of a checklist intended to be valid and practical for this purpose. Within this matter, there are plenty of possible lines of research. Future work may include a deeper insight from the teachers’ perspective, the improvement and update of the tools used for evaluation and the analysis of specific features within learning methodology. For example, one research study could encompass a group of teachers carrying out textbook evaluation with the same checklist and the same books. Then, a questionnaire to gather information about their impressions and reflections on the process would provide the study with an appealing discussion and, more importantly, with data triangulation.

Undoubtedly, another possible line of research would tackle the construction of better and updated tools for evaluation (checklists, descriptors and rubrics) according to the latest teaching methodological theories and possible changes in the legal framework.

A fascinating line for future deals with the evaluation of digital resources which are tendency nowadays by means of checklists. It might include the evaluation of digital books, webpages or teaching blogs and this would raise awareness on the quality of these resources and their adequacy in a specific learning environment.

From a more methodological perspective, it would be interesting to focus just on an aspect or a specific approach, for instance, to analyse in detail the implementation of communicative competence in EFL textbooks through an exhaustive analysis of the activity-type, the connection among the different linguistic skills and the inclusion of socio-cultural aspects. Indispensable is as well to address more lines of research on the issue of the learner-centred approach, since is hardly addressed on textbooks.

Despite the constraints found, further research in this field is needed in theoretical terms, and when it comes to practical issues, it is crucial to raise teachers’ awareness on the importance of evaluating and analysing materials as an essential part in the learning process always keeping in mind the students needs’ and interests. In short, “you cannot judge a book (just) by its cover”.
8. REFERENCES


Tania Arjona Gámiz


ORDEN de 27 de abril de 2005, por la que se regula el programa de gratuidad de los libros de texto dirigido al alumnado que curse enseñanzas obligatorias en los centros docentes sostenidos con fondos públicos. Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía (BOJA), nº 92, 2005, 13 mayo.

A Checklist-based Study of EFL Textbooks in CSE


9. APPENDICES

9.1. Questionnaire to analyse textbooks (Bueno González, unpublished material)

ANTONIO BUENO. Questionnaire to analyse textbooks

1. Is the textbook attractive at first sight? Size, type of print, illustrations...
2. Does it provide means of motivating our students?
3. Is it handy and easy to follow?
4. Is it teachable? Can you teach it?
5. Can it be used with large classes?
6. Is it suitable for Spanish students learning English as a foreign language?
7. Is it adequate for the level of our students?
8. Is it part of a series?. Advantages of the series.
9. Accompanying material (if any):
   - Teacher's book
   - Workbook
   - Scripts
   - Tapes (audio and video)
   - Text packs
   - Grammar summary
   - Vocabulary list with phonetic transcription
   - Appendixes (irregular verbs, word-formation...).
10. Can it be taught throughout one academic year?
11. Speed and quantity of material. Is the language logically graded?
12. Do the units match with the objectives proposed?
13. Do these objectives coincide with yours?
14. Is it possible (and easy) to adapt or supplement materials?
15. Do all units follow the same layout or not?. Advantages and disadvantages.
16. Is there a balance of the four skills?
17. Are the four skills integrated?
18. Do the units contain grammar, phonetics, vocabulary?
19. Are activities isolated or do they have warm-up and follow-up stages?
20. Are exercises and vocabulary contextualized?
21. Is there a variety of tasks and exercises?
22. Does it provide homework?
23. Are the topics of interest for our students?
24. Does it include any cultural background?
25. Is any method of teaching particularly evident?. Do you share it?
9.2. The textbook: a few very basic questions (McLaren, 2004)

1. What is the general idea of language and language teaching behind the book?
2. What is the overall plan of Contents? Is it logical? Is it complete?
3. What are the proportions of the book, and of each chapter? Is the length and density of each lesson fairly 'even' throughout the book, or do you suddenly find that 'Lesson 10' is twice as difficult as the previous ones?
4. Is there a 'story-line' in the book? If so, is it interesting, boring?
5. Does the book correspond to the interest of your students? To what extent?
7. Are the illustrations clear, attractive, exploitable?
8. Is there a variety of exercises and activities? (make a list)
9. What proportions of the book are devoted to: listening, reading, speaking, writing? In what combinations? Are the skills developed progressively? Make a list of the activity types used.
10. Are the structures presented progressively? Are they developed/practised in different situations, or only presented once and then 'left'? Are the possible grammatical problems adequately treated, or will you have to prepare a lot of explanations?
11. Can the lessons be presented orally?
12. If there are dialogues, how long and how dense are they? Are they realistic? Can they be memorized (if you want to do this)?
13. What is the (approximate) proportion in each lesson of: presentation of new material; controlled practice (exercises, drills); freer practice; revision.
14. Are phonetic problems treated or not? Adequately? Stress/intonation as well as sounds?
15. Is there supplementary audio-visual material with the course? (e.g. slides, cassettes, film-strips, etc.). If so, are these useful or not?
16. Does the book include revision lessons or not?
17. Does the book have adequate tests, or will you have to prepare your own?
18. Is there a Teacher's Book? If so, exactly what information does it give you and how much does it really help you?
19. Are cultural elements treated in the book or not? In what way? Does it simply present 'clichés' ('All English buses are red', etc.)
20. What time-scheme is the book designed for? (i.e. how many hours per lesson -approximately-, how many lessons per week, how many weeks per course, etc.? Are the estimates realistic in your situation?
21. Is the book suitable for a good class, a weak class, a mixed class?
22. Will the student/learner have the sense that he/she is progressing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. ACTIVITIES INTERVENING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Oral comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Oral expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Written expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oral compr. &amp; oral exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reading and oral expr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reading and written expr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL COMPONENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Grammar &amp; Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Phonetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Grammar and Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Phonetics and Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Communicative Functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Writing Mechanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Game Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook Evaluation Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Textbook</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner? (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, etc.)? (2,18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language? (5,10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview? (1,2,3,7,21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures? (1,13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Vocabulary and Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty? (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)? (2,3,12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Are the new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so that the text is understandable and so that students are able to retain new vocabulary? (1,2,3,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use? (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words? (7,8,9,11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Exercises and Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate? (1,2,3,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Do instructions in the textbook tell students to read for comprehension? (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used? (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension? (7,8,9,10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Do the activities facilitate students’ use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed? (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts? (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text? (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Is the cover of the book appealing? (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality? (1,2,3,14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it? (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it? (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.5. *New English in Use*: cover page.
9.7. **High Score**: table of contents

![Table of Contents Image]
9.8. *New English in Use: table of contents*
9.9. *High Score* (left) and *New English in Use* (right) vocabulary sections
9.10. *High Score* (above) and *New English in Use* (below) grammar sections
9.11. *New English in Use* (above) and *High Score* (below) sections for communication.