

Assessments on the Writing of Senior English for China Students' Book 1 Based on Target Needs Analysis

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ABSTRACT. *Teaching material is a vital resource of language input, while the evaluation of teaching material is of great importance for both teachers and students. This paper aims at evaluating of the New Senior English for China Students' Book 1. Due to personal limited effort this paper just focuses on the writing part. The author will use the target needs analysis of Hutchinson & Waters to serve as analysis base, and will take the characteristics of New Senior English for China Students' Book 1 as the subjective analysis and the requirements of teaching syllabus as objective analysis. At last, the paper tries to present some personal opinions based on the results of evaluation.*

KEYWORDS: *Material evaluation, Target needs analysis, Teaching syllabus, Teaching content*

1. Introduction

In English teaching, textbook evaluation plays an important role in the whole process. Generally speaking, material evaluation can benefit us, and we evaluate existing course books so that we can use and choose the most suitable ones for language for language programs. Thus material evaluation helps to improve the quality of textbooks, and indirectly influence the learning proficiency of language learners.

2. Literature Review of Material Evaluation

2.1 Three Stages of Material Evaluation

The material evaluation is developed in three stages, the initial stage was from 1950s to 1970s, during this stage, materials evaluation theories are simple and easy. There is seldom systematic and integrated evaluation criterion established. The representative in this is Tucker, who proposed an ingenious method whereby the materials were assigned numerical scores, which were then plotted on a Value Merit Product Graph ^[5]. Also, MessihDaoud gave his perspectives, he divided the system

of evaluation into two phases: recording the data and evaluating them.

The growing stage covers almost ten years from late 1970s to 1980s. The second stage was actually a fruitful period since there was much literature, and these works make great contribution to the development of evaluation theories. In this stage, Seaton designed a checklist for materials evaluation including 20 aspects, Grant regarded materials evaluation as initial evaluation, detailed evaluation and in-use evaluation. Hutchison and Waters' evaluation model has been an outstanding one in the development of materials evaluation. They proposed the target needs, it included four major steps: defining criteria, subjective analysis, objective analysis, and matching^[2].

The develop stage is from 1990s till now. Learned from earlier ones, studies during this period are more detailed and attaches great importance to thorough check of the materials themselves. McDonough & Shaw defined the evaluation into three processes: the external evaluation, the internal evaluation and the overall evaluation^[3].

2.2 Current Textbook Evaluation of Domestic Researches

Textbook evaluation in China actually began to be a focus of study was much lately, it probably began from 1990s. In the very beginning, Chinese researchers focused on the leading-in of foreign material evaluation, for example, the professor Wangqiang's introduction about Tomlin-son's material evaluation criteria and specific evaluating items in Wangqiang's book *Course of English Teaching Method*. Professor Cheng Xiaotang in his book *Analysis and Evaluation of English Teaching Materials* specially introduced Grant's three questionnaires to choose teaching materials^[1].

Also some domestic researchers begin to combine the foreign evaluation thesis with the domestic circumstance, for instance, Yu Shulin & Huang Jianbing evaluated primary and secondary school students' textbook^[4]. Zhang Weinian studied and constructed his new theoretical framework of English textbook evaluation, he believed that one should consider genre types, subcategory types, genre relations and cultural patterns when evaluate teaching material^[6].

More and more domestic researchers begin to focus on the evaluation of materials, like introduction of foreign material evaluation theories, combination of the foreign theories with domestic situations, also material evaluation of universities English teaching books (Wang Muqun; XuJinfen; He Qixin et al.). However, there is no research investigating the writing of new senior English book, thus the next chapter will introduce the evaluation of the book from the perspective of the subjective analysis and objective analysis of Hutchinson & Waters.

3. Research Method

3.1 Criteria of Hutchinson & Waters on Textbooks Evaluation

The criteria on textbooks evaluation of Hutchinson & Waters (1987: 99) contain following eight aspects:

- (1)Description of the basic theory of language;
- (2)The covering language points;
- (3)The proportion of every language skill, and whether there is the training of comprehensive skill;
- (4)The micro-skills that needed to train;
- (5)Types or forms of literature;
- (6)Themes;
- (7)The arrangement and the sequence of teaching material;
- (8)The arrangement and the sequence of every unit of teaching material.

3.2 Writing Aims of Teaching Syllabus

The goal of senior school has classified into two levels: the primary goal and the secondary goal. The primary goal is a relatively low level, while the secondary goal is a relatively high level. For these two levels, contents are the same, while their requirements for language are different. Due to the limited effort, this paper just focuses on the primary goal and the secondary goal of senior English textbooks' writing.

The first level for senior students:

- (1)Having a good writing habit. Students can be skillful in writing with their handwriting, and they can express themselves clearly in a correct writing form.
- (2)Writing down the simple answers of questions of passages that students have learned.
- (3)Writing down sentences with no new word or sentences with simple contents. Students would be able to speak the phrase in a space of 100-110 words in every minute, and they could write down 12 words every minute.
- (4)Applying the words, idioms and sentence structures to form sentence; conveying the meaning basically correctly; there is no serious spelling and grammar mistakes.
- (5)Writing a short passage of 60-80 words according to the writing theme and writing form.

4. Results and Conclusion

4.1 Results

The analysis in this chapter aims at comparing the characteristics of senior English teaching book and the requirements of teaching syllabus, in order to make some modulation of the evaluation on the senior English teaching book, the author makes some adjustments to the material evaluation of Hutchinson & Waters according to the requirements of teaching syllabus, to better reflect the material evaluation on writing of book 1. The modulations are listed as followings:

- (1)Description of the basic theory of language.
- (2)The covering language points: writing categories, writing forms, sentence structures.
- (3)The micro-skills that needed to train, which containing writing skills.
- (4)Types or forms of literature, which concluding persuasive writing, descriptive writing, factual writing, and so on.
- (5)Themes that students are familiar with.
- (6)The arrangement and the sequence of teaching material;
- (7)The arrangement and the sequence of every unit of teaching material.
- (8)The learning theories that the teaching material embodies.

New Senior English for China Students' Book 1 is evaluated from following aspects:

- (1)The writing of the book 1 focuses on the writing structures and the sentence expressions, and at the same time pays more attention to the cooperation between students.
- (2)writing categories, writing forms, sentence structures.
- (3)Sentence structure contains statements, questions, exclamatory sentences, subjunctive mood sentences, etc.
- (4)The book 1 contains writing themes are letter of advice, poster, description of a scenic spot, retelling a story, description of a famous person, and all these five writings have offer useful expressions, and give some suggestions for students to analyze the topic. While only the writing of unit 1 offers some hints on the writing structure, no conjunction given in these five chapters.
- (5)There are suggestion, poster, description in the book investigated. Considering that we just studying the *New Senior English for China Students' Book 1*, the three topics, to some extent, have covered the topic that the requirements of teaching syllabus.
- (6)The writing themes are letter of advice, poster, retelling a story, description of a famous person, which covering the friendship, learning, traveling. And students are familiar with those writings covering a variety of themes, which conforming to the requirements of teaching syllabus.
- (7)The first part is finding out the problems existing, the second part is learning

some sentence structures, the second part lists the useful sentences and words. The learning principle that the teaching material embodies. The arrangement of writing content conforms to the principle that to go from the easy to the most difficult and complicated.

4.2 Conclusion

Teaching material is an important resource for students in language classrooms, also the vital teaching resource of teachers, thus material evaluation is an indispensable step in English teaching. Since material evaluation is important that many researchers put their attentions on this field and manage to make some contribution to improve the teaching quality. Therefore, this paper at the very beginning generally overviews the previous literature about the material evaluation, then tries to use the target needs analysis of Hutchinson & Waters to make a comparison between the characteristics of senior English teaching book and the requirements of teaching syllabus, by taking the characteristics of *New Senior English for China Students' Book 1* as the subjective analysis and the requirements of teaching syllabus as objective analysis. And the results show that the book 1 generally covers the requirements of teaching syllabus, however, it may neglect the teaching of coherence of writing. Due to the personal limited experience, this paper still has its shortcomings.

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