COMING TO GRIPS WITH MATERIALS EVALUATION: LESSONS LEARNED FROM INTERVIEWING LOCAL COURSEBOOK USERS

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Abstract

Course books form the basis of foreign language instruction in most of the Turkish state schools, and the selection process of local course books depends on the outcome of panel sessions. Although the panellists' criticisms are welcomed, the voices of course book users tend to go unheard. Now that they have first-hand experience of the materials in the foreign language class, teachers and learners can provide useful information on their performance. For this reason, five English teachers and 19 seventh-graders from different secondary schools in Mersin were interviewed in order to extract their opinions on MoNE's selection process of local course books. With the purpose of offering an alternative model of course book selection on the basis of all-party evaluations, one course book author, besides the course book users, was inquired about his views on the process of course book design and selection through three open-ended questions. When the qualitative data from their responses were subjected to content analysis, the majority of the course book users focused on their inactive role in the selection process, the function of the course book and evaluative criteria in use, and tended to dislike the idea of choosing textbooks without consulting users. The course book writer, on the other hand, was disturbed by the constraints of the design process, and reported difficulty in revising the materials due to the misleading evaluations of the panellists. Finally, the proposed model for course book selection, adapted from Roberts (1996), consisted of the pre-production and post-production phases, and involved the use of needs analysis, piloting, continuous user evaluation and course book revision for obtaining more effective local course books.

Keywords: course book selection, content analysis, local course books, user evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

Between the two co-referring terms, "textbook" and "course book", it is the latter that best describes the centrality of the materials in any teaching-learning situation because the "course book *is* the course" for both most teachers and learners that continue to follow the book and be tested on their knowledge of the book in the ELT field (McGrath, 2006: 307). The position of the course book is no different in the Turkish context, where most of the class time is invested in the tedious study of the content presented by the governmentally-approved and freely distributed local textbooks. Even when the teachers are not supposed to choose their course books as in Turkey, course book evaluation does not lose its meaning, for teachers need to be alert to course book deficiencies in order to manipulate them to their students' own advantage.

According to Byrd (2001), course book evaluation and selection is not a simple process but can be performed in different ways; for instance, the individual teacher may choose his textbook on the basis of the information from publishers and colleagues, or administrators and committees of teachers can select the materials for them, while the ministry of education or boards of education may take a more centralized approach and produce or determine a common set of course books for all the language classes in the country. In each case, course book evaluation is not a one-shot activity, but can only be complete after observing its success or failure during and after actual use in the classroom context (Sheldon, 1988).

Therefore, course book evaluation, being realized in three stages, is a cyclical process that starts with estimating the suitability of the material for the specific context (pre-use evaluation), proceeds to assess the performance of the implemented material in the real-time classroom (in-use evaluation), and ends in revising the specific selection and selection procedures (post-use evaluation) (McGrath, 2002). Apart from watching what teachers do with the materials, learners should also be engaged in both in-use and post-use evaluation, so that not only "the suitability of the materials but also the suitability of the criteria used in their selection" can be enlightened (McGrath, 2002: 203).

Involving both groups of users in materials evaluation can provide more insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate course book, and result in a more desirable choice on the basis of experiential data and teacher-student consensus. With this aim in mind, Roberts (1996: 378) formulated materials evaluation as a "total process", and identified two main phases: pre-publication and post-publication. In Roberts' (1996) model, three decisions are reached before adopting or rejecting a given set of materials. Although evaluation exists even in the materials designer's modifications to the first plan of his project and the publisher's assessment of the final draft against certain variables, the first decision in the total process model concerns the "piloting of the materials on a sample of the target population"; that is, the reactions of the "real learners" determine whether the project has been successful, unsuccessful or can become successful with change (Roberts, 1996: 377). Secondly, the materials that have passed the pencil and paper evaluation (used for identifying the appropriate and better choice for a specific group of learners) are trialled on the teacher's own learners, and the results of the teachers' and learners' experiences were used to make the final decision about the course book: using or dropping the textbook (Roberts, 1996).

As for the Turkish system of materials evaluation, the post-publication phase in Roberts' (1996) model is totally missing because panellists, chosen and trained by the Board of Education and Training among the educator applicants, review the drafts page-by-page with respect to these four criteria: i. the appropriateness of the content for the constitutional law, ii. the scientific sufficiency of the content, iii. the competence of the content to fulfil curricular attainments, iv. the supportive quality and developmental suitability of the visual and content design for the students' learning (E-müfredat Projesi, 2015). The panellists, then, give feedback to the course book writers on any course book deficiency like spelling mistakes etc. they encounter by using the information system of the board (E-müfredat Projesi, 2015). The drafts evaluated with the help of the scale in Table 1, are approved by the commission if they get at least 2 points from each of the abovementioned four criteria and eight points in total, and then they remain for five years as the adopted course book of every English classroom in Turkey (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2012; Talim Terbiye Kurulu [TTK], 2013: 6). And once the decision for publication is reached, no efforts are made to test the functioning of the material in a typical class or to take the views of the teachers and students as future consumers. The absence of the user feedback in the current system is a great neglect of (if not disrespect for) the teachers' and students' feelings, and dismisses valuable information as to the effectiveness of the new material, which might otherwise be acquired from staff meetings, teacher reports, learner comments etc.

Table 1. Scale for evaluating course book drafts

Scoring*	Evaluative Criteria
A.	Appropriateness of the content for the constitutional law
0	There are content and elements that clearly stand against the constitutional law. There are expressions that are against the human rights and carry elements of discrimination and prejudice.
2	Although there is no evident opposition to the constitutional law and regulations, it can be improved in terms of equality, human rights and representation of social segments.
3	The approach is in line with the principle of equality, supportive of human rights and liberty, and has a fair and unbiased representation of social segments.
B.	Scientific sufficiency of the content
0	There is scientifically incorrect information. The content is not based on widely-

	accepted resources. No distinction is made between opinions and scientific knowledge.
2	Although there is no scientifically incorrect information, the scientific content can be improved, and some important resources can be used for forming the content.
3	There is no scientifically incorrect or incomplete information. The content is based on important resources.
C.	**Competence of the content to fulfil curricular attainments**
0	At least one attainment is not fulfilled completely and/or in multiple attainments, incomplete/wrong/false content irreversibly exists.
2	Although all attainments are fulfilled, there is a need for improvement in some to a compensatory extent.
3	All the attainments are fully realised.
D.	**Supportive quality and developmental suitability of the visual and content design for the students' learning**
0	The visual and content design is not supportive of and developmentally suitable for the students' learning. The design is inauthentic. For example, visuals are taken from the internet or other resources by copying and pasting.
2	Although the visual and content design is supportive of and developmentally suitable for the students' learning, some features of the design should be improved.
3	The visual and content design is supportive of and developmentally suitable for the students' learning, and also organized without any deficiencies.

*0 = not good, 2= well, 3= very well

It is clear that the most immediate evaluators of the course books – teachers and students – are excluded from MoNE's selection process in Turkey. Yet, these real consumers can provide a valid knowledge base for the effectiveness and suitability of the course book for their classrooms, which may help the course book writers to improve their final products. For this reason, this study aimed to explore the views of the course book users on their own roles and procedures in the process of course book selection, and also to gain more insight into the writer's critical perspective about the present panel system in Turkey. The research questions are as follows: 1. What did the teachers and students think about the selection process of course books in Turkey?, 2. How did the course book writer evaluate the design and panel processes during course book selection? On the basis of their responses, an alternative model for materials evaluations was suggested in the current study.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

The study group consisted of five English teachers (all female), whose years of experience ranged between 6 and 11, 19 seventh-graders (11 female, eight male) studying at four middle schools from high-, middle- and low-income parts of Mersin, and one course book writer, who has been working as an English instructor for 17 years and become a member of the course book department in the Head Council of Education and Morality. The teachers and students in this study had been working with the newly-published, local course book, entitled "Sunshine 7" for almost a year, when the semi-structured interviews were conducted. The governmentally-approved, A2-level course book was first introduced at the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year in Turkey, and aimed to develop seventh-graders' communicative skills after the study of the ten topical units (TTK, 2013b). The names of the volunteer interviewees and the course book writer were kept secret by assigning numbers to each user as in T1 (Teacher 1) and S1 (Student 1), and all were ensured that no personal details except for some demographic features (like age, sex, years of experience) would be revealed in order to increase the subjects' consent and the quality of their data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

2.2. Data collection and analysis

In order to investigate the user views about the process of course book selection in Turkey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both seventh-grade teachers and students. Karasar (2012) distinguished interviews as one of the most practical techniques for data collection through oral communication, and emphasized that interviews enable the researcher to elicit detailed information about the individuals' underlying reasons for specific behaviours and there is also a lower risk of being misunderstood as further questions can be asked on the spot. After being informed about the research purpose, the teacher- and

student- participants were given time to think about the interview questions. Then, they gave recording permission and asked to respond in Turkish due to the limited proficiency of the students along with the potential stress the teachers might experience while expressing themselves in the target language. The participants were interviewed within two days, and their recordings lasted 73 minutes in total. Also, a survey of three open-ended questions was e-mailed to one of the writers of the new textbook for seventh-graders (Sunshine 7) thanks to the support of the publishing house, and the author's opinions on materials writing and evaluation in Turkey were returned by the representative of the publishing house through the same medium. The interview and survey questions were presented in the appendix. As for the analysis of the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and the e-mail survey, the content-analysis method was adopted. After the recordings were transcribed, the responses were all thematically categorized, and the statements under each category were rigorously reviewed. While direct quotations were used for supporting the interpretation of the qualitative data, deviant answers were closely examined for identifying additional information.

3. FINDINGS

During the semi-structured interviews, the users were firstly asked if their views of the course book was ever surveyed before adopting the new material, and the analysis of the teacher responses revealed that their course book opinions were either not consulted before adoption or totally disregarded, even if they had written reports or expressed their reservations during staff meetings. It is clear from the following extracts that the teachers were displeased with the current state of course book selection, and wanted the educational authorities to take their feedback into consideration before distributing the materials across the country.

Our opinions have never been taken about the course book. It is just sent to our schools and we use it as always (T1).

At the beginning of the semester, we talked about the general features of the coursebook and wrote down the strengths and weaknesses of it in our reports. Unfortunately, it seems no one even read those reports as they sent the same kind of coursebook. Our evaluations are not important for them. They just send us the coursebook in accordance with the number of our students but they should remember that we are the one who use this coursebook in the class. We can tell from experience whether it can appeal our students. It would be much better if they had asked me whether the coursebook was practical in our classroom environment (T3).

We told our opinions about the coursebook during the group meetings but no one cares what we say. We have the same troubles over and over again about the coursebook. Nothing changes (T4).

When the students were asked if they would like to take part in selecting their own textbooks, they were divided on this issue. Nine of the 19 participants were unwilling because of their low level of English and lack of professional knowledge, whereas ten students wanted to get involved in the selection process, and even expressed their concerns over some coursebook deficiencies as can be understood from their responses below:

As I don't know English well, how can I make a decision about the grammar structures in the course book? Without the explanation of my teacher, I can't understand the course book. It would be really hard for me to choose the right one (S13).

Nobody asks for our opinions about the course book before the selection and I think this is something good. As a student, I would choose the course book with more pictures and fewer writing activities but I can't learn English with a course book like that. They should ask our teachers, as they know the best for us (S14).

Selection of the course book is the mission of people working in MoNE. They send the course books to our teachers and our teachers decide how to use the course book. They give homework from it; we sometimes skip some pages. Our teachers decide for us. It would be better if our teachers select the course book (S19).

It is apparent that these students felt incompetent and were afraid of making the right choice, so they preferred that their teachers as the authority in the classroom should decide on the course book to be used. However, the rest believed they also had a say in determining the course book because they were aware of the weaknesses of their current materials, and the teacher's compensatory acts of adaptation like omitting the irrelevant or unsuitable material for their level:

Not just my ideas! I want them to ask every student about their opinions because we are the one who try to learn English by using this course book. We can find a better course book for us (S2).

Of course, I would like to tell my opinions. Sometimes our teacher passes some pages or activities; I think they are above our levels. I don't want this. I would talk about this during the selection. I want to do all the activities in my course book (S3).

I really want them to ask for my opinion before selection. I can choose a different course book with more interesting subjects and more activities. The activities are not enough in the course book. I want to change that (S4).

Secondly, the interviewees were questioned about their own criteria for course book selection. By looking at the teacher responses presented here, it can be argued that the teachers focused on the suitability of the coursebook for their students' proficiency level and interests, practice opportunities for listening and speaking skills, the sequencing of the grammar items, and topical relevance:

… whether the course book is suitable for the level of my students or it is possible to teach grammar structures by using this course book or are there too many unknown words?. Most importantly... whether my students can speak with the help of this course book. Speaking is really important for me (T1).

Generally I pay attention to the unity of grammar structures and their harmony with other activities. In a unit covering simple past tense, students see past perfect tense and they get confused. All units should be designed carefully according to the grammar structure it covers and there must be a relation between activities (T2).

Visuals and listening texts are really important for me. We can teach grammar structures but listening is hard to teach without providing a variety of listening texts and activities. Visuals are sometimes the only way to attract our students, so they must be appropriate enough (T3).

There must be enjoyable warm-up sections and topics must be taken from real life situations. Irrelevant subjects can't appeal to the interests of the students. Their age should also be considered (T5).

Similarly, the students cited the structural variety, quality of the visuals, topic choice along with the clarity of the instructions among their evaluative criteria as in the below extracts:

The first thing I'd look at in a course book is the instructions. Every time we have to wait until our teacher explains what they want us to do. At home it is really hard for me to do my homework as I do not understand the instructions. … the number of listening texts… I really like listening and I want to see more listening parts (S8).

I really like looking at visuals… the topics covered in the course book. I don't want to get bored during English lessons (S1).

I'd evaluate grammar structures. I don't want to see the same structures every year (S2).

… As I don't understand the instructions, I can't do my homework. It is important that the instructions are suitable for my level (S7).

… the topics in the units. It would be better if they covered the things I like. If nobody asks me what I want and choose uninteresting topics for me, I get bored, and I don't want it. I also look at the cover. It should catch my attention (S9).

One can conclude from the students' responses that the teachers were quite right at predicting their learners' needs and wants, and paid particular attention to the presence of the appealing elements in the given course book. Yet such common sense was non-existent in the centralized evaluation of course book drafts, which merely depended on the reports of the panellists. At the end of the interview, the teacher and student participants were finally asked to evaluate their available English course book, Sunshine 7. According to the teachers, the course book in use was problematic in terms of the vocabulary load, the nature and focus of the activities, and support for the novice teacher:

I must always explain the unknown words for the students or they have to use the dictionary all the time… very tiring for them… fill-in-the-blanks, pair work or some dialogues… and nothing more. Grammar structures are fewer this year, but sometimes I get confused about what to teach… no vocabulary list… no relation between the units (T2).

Although there seems to be activities for four skills in every unit, they are just standing there as a title. … not appealing to the students. As our students do not see any alternative, they are not aware but the only thing they do is filling in the blanks and memorizing new words (T3).

… We have to teach everything, every word in the course book for our students to pass the TEOG exam. But the course book makes it really difficult for us… not enough examples; some of the structures are covered in a really simple way. It can be so hard for a teacher trainee to follow this course book (T4).

As in the case of the self-determined evaluative criteria, the teachers' and students' criticisms were again overlapping. Like their teachers, their complaints concentrated on the amount of new words, the difficulty of grammar structures, the choice of uninteresting topics, and the inappropriateness of the instructions for their level of English, and recommended some revisions in the design of the visuals and addition of mother-tongue explanations as in their answers presented below:

Too many pictures… I feel like a kid who doesn't know how to read, and the course book tries hard to teach English with pictures… I like the topics but it'd be better if there were more topics to my liking like sports – football. I wish there were more speaking activities (S10).

The units are not boring but the things I like are not included and this sometimes makes it difficult to follow the lesson (S2).

I understand nothing from the course book until my teacher explains the structures in Turkish. I don't understand the instructions and grammar structures are really hard. Our teacher reads the listening parts from her book and I just can't get them, either (S7).

There are too many unknown words. We always have to wait for our teacher's explanation to do the activities. I think it'd be better if there were explanations in Turkish (S18).

In addition to the user responses, one of the writers of the new local textbook (Sunshine 7) was also consulted about his views on the process of course book design and selection in Turkey. First of all, the author listed the problems she encountered while composing the material: i. the constraints of the curriculum imposed upon them as both writers and teachers *("The biggest problem is the restrictive structure of the curriculum for the writer and the teacher as the operator. If the writer or operator is free to choose the topics or define the educational attainments, the product can be much more pleasant"),* ii. curriculum overload ("*For this curriculum, functions and skills must be given at the same time and this affects the presentation… there are so many pages and activities that teachers can't do all and cover speaking/listening skills. During the design of the seventh-grade book, we first tried to plan this"),* and iii. conventional teachers that resist change *("Some teachers believe that there is no need for "jigsaw" reading texts, games or listening. This situation can be clearly seen in the blogs of the English teachers").* Apart from her obligation to follow the framework provided by the authorities, the writer was also sensitive about the physical appearance (layout and page design), as this would determine how attractive the learners would find the textbook: "*The book must attract learners and arouse curiosity. During the selection of topics and visuals, we pay a lot of attention to this. But at the end of the printing process, the colours of the final product are never as bright as they were in the first draft".*

When the writer commented on MoNE's criteria for course book evaluation, she pointed out that the panellists can criticize not on the basis of scientific evidence but rather by their instinctive beliefs: "*For instance, "the colours are so bright" is not a right criticism as these course book are published more than one million; the colours do not stay the same".* She also noted that the adopted approach of the course book and the panellists' view of language teaching may conflict*: "It is really important not to interfere in the writer's personal choice, when the panellists' approach to language teaching is not in line with the philosophy of the curriculum".* The writer expressed her discontent with the modifications she had to make due to the unfair criticisms of the panellists: *"One of the panellists argued that there was no grammar in the course book. As a result, we had to add grammar structures at the end of the course book. However, we think that this criticism is not supported by the curriculum".*

Also, the writer believed that further revisions can be undertaken with the help of the user criticisms, and corrections can be made during those five years the new course book would be valid for the English classes. Ultimately, she was questioned about the piloting process, and stated that the approved course book was not tested with real learners before coming into widespread use, but there were some topics and activity types designed after conducting interviews with the peers of the targeted audience: "*Language can be taught by covering any topic. For example, we focused on learning how to read labels and tried to raise students' awareness of what to eat and drink. The age group we interviewed found our topic choices interesting".* The writer's final words were on her disappointment with the selection of the panellists among "people" without any experience in writing course books or materials development: "*… This may help us to design more qualified course books… they can provide more appropriate criticisms for us".*

It appears that the process of course book selection is not without problems even for the writer, whose

reservations were more concerned with the composition stage, though. Admitting that the draft of the local course book was not piloted at all, the writer was in a way drawing attention to their overdependence on the panellists' criticisms, which may not always be fair and to the point. One major challenge of her job probably relates to the obligation to modify (in a sense distort) the content and overall design in line with the reviewers' uninformed judgments. When the users' and writer's comments were considered altogether, there was a palpable sense of reciprocal displeasure due to a lack of interaction between the audience (teachers and students as readers) and the composer (the writer).

4. DISCUSSION

As a result of the interviews, it was understood that the voices of course book users were to a great extent silenced, as neither the teachers nor the students were given the opportunity to express their critical views of the draft and share their classroom experiences with the newly-published course book. Also, it seems to have become the mainstream practice that the users were required to follow the governmentally-approved course book due to the state examinations (namely, the TEOG exam) and had to avoid any divergence through supplementation despite their dissatisfaction with the deficiencies of the material. In view of the course book writer, the hardships of course book writing can be summarized as: lack of freedom in the choice of topics, the burden of pacing with the overloaded curriculum, and inappropriate modifications (to the original work) enforced by unskilled panellists. For this reason, a two-phase model, adapted from Roberts (1996), was proposed for producing more effective local course books of English and increasing the quality of the learning experience and user satisfaction:

- *Pre-production:*
- Needs analysis via e-okul/MEBBIS: exploring users' needs, interests, expectations in the local context
- Specification of the local criteria for course book composition: determining the evaluative criteria on the basis of users' wants and needs
- Statement of the criteria for course book writers: informing authors of the local criteria and preparing course book drafts accordingly
- Panellists' evaluation of course book drafts: checking the appropriateness of drafts against the local criteria and eliminating ineligible drafts with the help of course book experts (that are chosen among educationists for the panel session)
- Launch of the three best drafts via EBA: introducing the approved drafts to the teachers online
- Users' evaluation of the three best drafts: trialling the three candidate materials with a representative sample of the target group and eliciting the teachers' and students' reactions through checklists and interviews
- Revision of the most popular draft: modifying the highest-scoring draft with respect to user feedback

- *Post-production:*
- Piloting of the final draft: implementing the final draft in pilot schools/regions
- User evaluations of the final draft through localized checklists via e-okul/MEBBIS: conducting large-scale surveys with the target population
- Revision of the final draft in line with user views: making adjustments to the final draft in line with the demands of the pilot groups
- Adoption of the course book for five years: continuing user surveys and revisions for later editions of the approved material

It is evident that MoNE's current system of course book selection lacks the crucial elements of needs analysis, criteria specification, piloting and user evaluation. A major problem the educational authorities are confronted with relates to commercial concerns that usually influence publishers and writers during the design process of textbooks, and against which teachers and students need to be protected (Roberts, 1996). In this situation, it is advisable to handle materials evaluation from the perspectives of both parties: designers (publishers and writers) and users (teachers and students) (Roberts, 1996). This might involve making informed decisions and negotiating compromises if a better fit is sought for instructional materials. Tomlinson (2008) also recommends that if local course books can be designed without commercial concerns, such problems can be avoided and materials reflecting the needs and wishes of the specific group of learners can be obtained.

Consequently, it has become a must that needs analysis is undertaken, and appropriate local criteria are defined on the basis of both teachers and students, so that course book writers can be guided into the compositional process with more confidence and reliance on situational needs. In the absence of needs analysis, the final outcome reflects instinctive decisions and practical choices of other parties than the real

users, and may not serve their most immediate educational demands and preferences. Işık (2013) points out that in order to choose the most suitable course book and create a meaningful and enjoyable environment of language learning, users' needs and interests need to be discovered through needs analysis. Designing course book drafts according to the local criteria (from the needs analysis) can also prove economical, as this may prevent the publication and distribution of an undesirable course book from coming into use before it is too late.

After providing candidate course books (prepared according to local criteria from needs analysis), it is time to test how each course book draft functions in the real classroom atmosphere, as it is unsound to forecast their performance without trialling them with a representative sample of the target population. According to McGrath (2002), course book evaluation cannot be complete unless the performance of the material is observed in the context of a real classroom and evaluation of materials before use cannot tell if the materials can/does actually fulfil the curricular goals. Selecting a course book without assessing its classroom practicality can only offer information on the potential suitability of the materials and further evaluative actions must therefore be taken for choosing the right course book (McGrath, 2002).

For this reason, it is essential that not only the teachers but also the students should be consulted after their use of the materials. Even though the inclusion of the students in the evaluation process is controversial due to factors related to their age, freedom of choice in the specific context etc., they are the ones that get involved in the course book and as users/readers of the course book, their experiences and opinions of the materials had better be taken into consideration (Roberts, 1996). Since they are not passive receivers of the knowledge stored in their course books, their reactions should be voiced during the course book experience (Roberts, 1996). Consequently, user evaluations after use need to be performed on a large scale with the help of local checklists and interviews in order to develop insights into their opinions of the potential course book and future revisions can also be undertaken on the basis of the qualitative and quantitative data from continuous user evaluations even after the course book is approved for five years of instruction.

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings from the teacher- and student- interviews as well as the author's survey, one can conclude that composing and implementing course books without the users' approval may do more harm than good for all the parties involved, as too much dependence on the one-sided views of the panellists robs the course book writer of valuable feedback from the real audience, and deprives the users of their main asset in the foreign language classroom. According to Cunningsworth (1995: 7), the course book should be seen as "a resource" for "achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of *learner needs*", and the relationship between the teacher and the course book is one of a "partnership" "…seek[ing] to meet *the needs of the learners* to the highest degree". Seeing that the learners are at the very heart of the course book design and use, disregarding their opinions of the course book they (will) use does not sound very rational. Roberts (1996: 386), too, maintained that dismissing learners from course book evaluation is wrong, and learners should be given the right to voice their opinions as "materials are *used on* learners". Therefore, the partnership had better be extended to include the course book writer, if effective materials are to be developed for a better language learning experience in our local context. For this reason, in the proposed model of course book selection, needs analysis, determination of local criteria, initial trialling of the candidate drafts along with expert and user evaluations constituted the first phase of pre-production, while piloting of the highest-scoring draft, continuous user evaluations and course book revisions formed the second phase of post-production. In the same way, Timmis (2014: 241) recommended that the materials writer should build a framework of his own out of some key methodological principles but need to lend an ear to the publishers, education authorities, as principled and constructive compromise can only be possible when the writer is aware of the "traditions, expectations, wishes, and constraints of a particular educational context". It is considered that with the help of the proposed model, the interaction between course book writers and real users can be increased, and the flow of evaluative information can be shifted into a more dialogic mode than the current, non-contact panel system.

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APPENDIX

A. Interview questions for the teachers

1. Did you take part in the selection of your English course book for seventh-graders?

2. What kind of criteria do you consider while evaluating your English course books?

3. How would you evaluate your current course book for seventh-graders?

B. Interview questions for the students

1. Would you like to take part in the selection of your English course book? Why? Why not?

2. What would you look for in your English course books if you had the chance to evaluate it?

3. How would you evaluate your current course book for seventh-graders?

C. The survey e-mailed to the writer

1. What kind of do you encounter while writing course books?

2. To which features of the course book do you pay primary attention? Why?

3. What do you think about MoNE's criteria and procedures for course book selection?