Textbooks in the efl esl classroom english language essay

Linguistics, English

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This section presents the way I was looking for the literature to support and to frame my paper. Almost all the document I got is from the internet. I used the Google search engine as a main source of getting information. By typing the key word in the box such as textbook assessment, textbook evaluation, good textbook, etc. I could access a lot of documents related to my topic. What is more, Google scholar is also an important tool, however; some literatures are not allowed to download free and can be partially downloaded. Moreover, some links that I used to get the literature is http://www. jstor. org/ and http://www. doaj. org and other links. I also emailed to the previous cohort student to get the some related literature review.

2. 1 Important roles of textbooks in the EFL/ESL classroom

A textbook can be referred as a published book specially designed to help language learners their linguistic and communicative abilities (Sheldon, 1987 as cited in Lawrence 2011, p, 5). A textbook has always been the most preferred instructional material in ELT. They are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set concerning learner needs. Cunningsworth (1995) added that it also fosters and effective and quick learning of the language, while Richard (2001) stated that textbooks act as a key component in most language program because they provide a clear structure and a syllabus. They are designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, specific

language-based activities aimed at classroom practice for students. As a result, textbooks can benefit both teachers and students. In addition, Cunningsworth (1995) also mentioned that textbook had multiple roles in EFL/ESL classroom and could serve as: (1) a resource for presenting material (spoken and written); (2) a source of activities for learner practice and communicative reaction; (3) a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, etc. (4) a source of stimulation and ideas for language activities; (5) a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work, (6) a support for less experience teachers. (As cited in Wang, 2005, p. 15-16)

2. 1. 1 Teacher and textbook

In addition to being a learning instrument, the textbook is used as a supporting teaching instrument for less experienced or inexperienced teacher (Cunningsworth, 1995; Richard, 2001; Mahmood, 2009). Textbooks can also serve as a tool to train inexperienced teachers (Richard, 2001) and helps them with standard teaching approach and technique through the provision of resource materials (Weddle, 2009 as cited in Sem, 2012). Richard (2001) & Aqel (2009) stated that textbooks are efficient because they allow much time for the teacher to focus on teaching rather than material's production. Secondly, they can serve as a reference point for teachers managing their teaching progress, and also help provide a focus on teaching. (Tomlinson, 2008 as cited in Lawrence, 2009). Moreover, textbooks can serve as a road map showing direction and ideas how lessons can be instructed and measuring the teaching and learning progress.

2. 1. 2 Textbook and Student

In addition to teaching, textbooks are typically the main source of learning material for students and the source of information on a specific subject or field (Mahmood, 2009). They also serve as a source of activities for learner practice and communicative reaction and a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (Cunningsworth, 1995). Student can also benefit from using the textbooks in many different ways. Similar to the case of teachers, textbook can act as a reference point for their learning process and keep track of their development (Lawrence, 2011) and a source of stimulation and ideas for language activities (Cunningsworth, 1995). Students can use the textbook as a tool for revision of previously taught items, at the same time familiarizing themselves with the item they will learn. More importantly, it secures students as they know what to expect and what is expected from them. O'Neil (1982) and Ur (1996) agreed that textbooks are also one of the more economic and convenient forms of access to carefully structured package learning material. According to Cunningsworth (1995) textbooks provide additional benefits to students as they are an efficient collection of material of self-access learning and for knowledge gathering. They provide the learners with the necessary input that the learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the class. They also serve as the basis for the language content and skills to be taught and other kinds of language practice that the learners take part in (Richard, 2001) and student book usually comes along with teacher book and possibly extra materials. Textbooks play a prominent role in the teaching /learning process and they are the primary agents of conveying the knowledge to the

learners. Besides, one of the basic functions of textbooks is to make the existence knowledge available and apparent to the learner in a selected, easy and organized way. However, the role of textbook may change according to the classroom setting and teaching approaches. Wade and Moje (2000) stated that the variation in textbook use reflected differences of pedagogical approach and further classified the role of text into two different approaches—the transmission approach and the participatory approach. In the transmission approach the role of the textbooks and the teacher were to transmit a large body of authorized or official knowledge and skill to students, meaning the textbook and teachers were the controllers of knowledge and learning. In the participatory approach, on the other hand, the role of textbook is viewed as a tool for learning and constructing new knowledge rather than repositories and controllers of information. Therefore, the instruction relied on wide range of texts, including textbooks, reference books, novels, journals, and magazines (as cited in Wang, 2005, P. 16). In his thesis, Cakit (2006) argues that despite the impact of new technologies, textbooks will doubtless continue to play an important role in language teaching and provide a useful resource for both teachers and learners. What is more it has significant impact on the learners' meeting their language learning objectives. The role of the textbook in the language classroom is undeniable. Both teachers and students need a framework on which to build and textbooks definitely provide this. 2. 2 Features of an Effective TextbookNo textbook is perfect but there are some common characteristic suggested by many authors to consider when selecting a textbook. No matter how good or attractive a textbook is, if it is not aligned to the aim of

the school curriculum, it should not be selected. This claim has been supported by many authors. Several authors (Cunningsworth, 1995; Mahmood, 2009; Bulent, 2006) mentioned that textbook must be in line with the aims of the teaching program, fit the objectives and goals of the syllabus and match the objectives of the curriculum policy or philosophy. As a result of this claim, a good textbook should provide concise aim or objectives of at wherever part of the book. Language teaching and learning has traditionally been associated with each other and the adoption of a method affects how a material is designed. Within the context of foreign language education, an instructional method typically provide a material package which includes student' book, teacher' book, workbook and recent methods provides audiotapes for listening comprehension exercise and with the advent of video cassettes (Francis, 1995). According to Richard (2001) and Cunningsworth (1995) a good textbook package should provide a variety of learning resources such as workbook, CDs, Cassettes, videos, etc. which make learning environment interesting and enjoyable for learners. Masuhara and Tomlinson (2008) supported Richard's ideas and added that a student's book should comes along with other materials such as a workbook, a teacher's book or even additional multimodal texts for reference as a textbook package. Therefore, supplementary material such workbook must be taken into account selecting or evaluating an effective textbook. Regarding the design and organization of a textbook, Liz (2005) suggested some more recent scholars in the area of ELT material development expressed concerns for the cultural content of textbooks which are inherently social and culturally biased. However, cultural sensitivities must

be taken into consideration. Issue which may inhibit or damage their self-confidence must be avoided and the text, illustrations, and pictures should be culturally suitable (Lee, 1975). Cunningsworth (1995) on the other hand, focused more on a well-arranged structures, functions, topics, and skills, etc of the textbook and the content sequence is organized on the basis of complexity moving from more simple aspects to more complex ones (Morris, 1995), learning ability, and usefulness. In addition to learning ability, Lee (1975) stated that designing of the tasks should be flexible and appeal to different learning styles and strategies and should not favor one type of learner over another and must be appropriate for different learning situation and learner needs. To the some extend, the greater consideration lies on the content of the textbook. In a journal article of Keban, Muhtar and Zen (2011) the language content of a textbook was studied. In that area of that small case, the authentic and real-life English, appropriateness of the grammar and vocabulary presented in the textbook is presented. In addition to authenticity, the structures and vocabulary of the text should be attached to real situation (Remero, 1975). Bulent (2006) suggested that the language in the tasks should be carefully scrutinized prior to the exercise in order to ensure that it is concise, clear, and that flow and consistency are maintained. Using Garvin's eight dimensions, Mahmood (2009) believed that an-up-to date, credible and correct information need to be concerned to ensure the content reliability. To achieve this goal, therefore, a regularly revised edition of textbooks needs to be done thoroughly to keep every piece of information updated and to ensure that there are no accidental mistakes of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc. Cunningworths (1995)

summarized a good language content in a textbook shall contain the main grammar points at the level of level of learners, teaching material for vocabulary is adequate, including a range of vocabulary in addition to strategies for individual learning. He also recommended the pronunciation section such as sounds, word stress, and intonation included in every unit. Besides, some other features suggested by Remero (1975) are: (1) a good textbook should be introduced in series. (2) it should be attractive, the letter size should not be too small and there should not be too much text on a page. (3) the lesson should be well organized and include short dialogues. Cunningsworth (1995) stated that topic of each lesson must be interesting to promote students' awareness and their experience. Moreover, man and woman are equally included in the textbook.

2. 2 Theory for evaluating textbook

Cunningsworth (1995) informed that there are three types of materials evaluation: Pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation is when there is no actual experience of using the book for teachers to draw on. In-use evaluation refers to textbook evaluation whilst the materials are in use. Post-use evaluation provides retrospective assessment of a textbook's performance and can be useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses which emerge over a period of continuous use. Similarly, Grant (1987) provided three stages in the process of textbook evaluation, namely, the initial evaluation, the in-use evaluation, and the detailed evaluation. First of all, initial evaluation is done by mainly looking at the appearance of the book without going a lot of detail. Secondly, detailed

evaluation is carried out in order to find out whether the book is suitable to teachers, students and syllabus. Lastly, in-use evaluation is can be carried out to re-evaluate the particular material instantly. In addition, Ellis (1997) indicated two contributions of the retrospective evaluation. Firstly a retrospective evaluation provided the user with information whether it is worthy using the material, which activities worked or which did not, and how to modify the material to make them more effective. Secondly, the retrospective evaluation is also served as a mean of testing the validity of a predictive evaluation (as cited in Wang, 2005). Interestingly, Ur (1996) has suggested that it would be best if the textbook evaluation schemes to adopt a leveled approach in evaluation in which at first level overview " impressionistic" evaluation should be first conducted followed by an in-depth evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995) explained that when applying the impressionistic method, we take the literal meaning of method by quickly looking through the textbook cover to cover, (page to page), to try to get the overview of strengths and weaknesses of the textbook. The overview can provide additional benefits for the evaluators since it gives a quick opinion of the design and structure of the textbook, such as how attractive the cover is, supporting material that comes along with the textbook, and how the textbook is sequenced (Lawrence, 2011). An in-depth evaluation can be carried out subsequently to provide a detailed of specific items in each textbook on areas such as how exercise fit the syllabus and students' need. An example of an in-depth evaluation would be to select one or two chapters to look at the balance of skills and activities contained in each unit (Cunningsworths, 1995). On the other hand, Littlejohn (2011) stated that one

of the principle problems of impressionistic method or judgment on textbook is that it lacks in-depth of what textbooks really contain. To understand deeply how good a textbook is, he would rather examine the implicit assumptions about what desirable material should look like. For example " Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice?" " Do illustrations create a favorable atmosphere for practice in reading and spelling by depicting realism and action".

2. 3 Criteria for Textbook Evaluation

There are many different criteria set by many different authors or researchers when evaluating a textbook. Daoud and Celece-Murcia,(1979) recommended the following criteria for evaluating a textbook: subject matter; vocabulary and structure covered, illustrations; physical make-up which includes cover, size, binding, paper, printing and type; the four language skills; general features of the teacher's book; methodological/pedagogical guidance in the presentation of lessons and exercises; linguistic background that is based on contrastive and error analysis (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and orthography). (as cited in Aqel, 2009)Xu (2004) developed an evaluation tool which concerned textbook with an attractive design and layout, easy access to components and content for organizing instruction, evidence of a developmental progression of content, topics that are of relevance and interest to students, educational validity, an assessment of costs and durability, a wide variety of activities, a sufficient number of practice activities that fit all parts of the learning process, many activities on a similar theme or topic, follow-up

questions for all readings, contemporariness of the curricular content, activities which promote communication, and activities that meet the needs of multi-level classes. Grant (1987) suggests applying a " CATALYST" test since a textbook is to act as a catalyst in the classroom. The eight letters in the word CATALYST refers to the eight criteria by the help of which can decide whether the textbook is appropriate for the classroom use. Thus, the test aims to find out the following issues. Communicative? Is the text book communicative? This question aims to find out whether the students after using this book will be able to use the language to communicate. Aims? Does it fit in with the aims and objectives? Teachable? Does the course seem teachable? Does it seem reasonably easy to use, well organized, and easy to find your way round? Available Adds-ons? Are there any useful adds-ons- additional materials such as teacher's books, tapes, workbooks, etc.? Level? Does the level seem out right? Your impression? What's your overall impression of the course? Student interest? Are the students likely to find the book interesting? Tried and tested? Has the course been tried and tested in real classrooms? Where? By whom? What were the results? How do you know? (P. 119-120)Ellis (1987) also suggest three main criteria in the evaluation of EFL course books, namely, relevance, accessibility and cohesion. They claim that examining relevance in the area of textbook design should concern the signposts, (headlines, titles, photographs, etc.) audience, (availability of sufficient variety of design to intent the learner, the level of cartoon. and photograph for the learner, the level of density and variety of text for the learner), colour, and mimesis. Sheldon (1988) on the other hand, suggests some common main factors that reviewers,

administers, teachers, learners and educational advisors most frequently use in deciding on the suitability of a textbook. The criteria suggested by Sheldon (1988) examines rationale, availability, user definition, layout/ graphics, accessibility of the units and exercises,, linkage, selection and grading, physical characteristics, suitability, authenticity, sufficiency of exercises or activities, cultural bias, educational validity, practice and revision, flexibility, guidance and overall value for money. Williams (1983) suggests a material evaluation scheme which accounts for language teaching assumptions as well as the linguistic and the pedagogical components associated with these assumptions. The assumptions on which the scheme is based are: (1) An up-to date methodology of second language teaching, (2) Needs of learners, (3) Guidance for nonnative speakers of English, and (4) Relevance to socio-cultural environment. He proposes an EFL/ESL textbook evaluation questionnaire, which includes 7 criteria in 28 categories: general, speech, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and technical. While the first criteria, general, " embrace global considerations of methodology, the needs of the learner, the teacher, and the community" (Williams, 1983, p. 352), the technical criteria are concerned with " the quality of editing and publishing; the availability of supplementary material; cost and durability of the text; authenticity of language and style of the writer, etc." (pp. 352-353). Cunningsworth (1995) presents a checklist of evaluation criteria for English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) teaching material. The category of language content addresses how language form, language functions, and patterns of communicative interaction are organized. He mentions that a good textbook should respond to the need of learners and reflect clear aims

and objective of the program. Without doubt, textbooks which will help teachers achieve aims are preferred because aims of the teaching program, signifying the senior high school English education program here, should determine what kinds of textbooks are suitable. In fact, the textbook which fail to achieve the aims will definitely not facilitate the teaching or students' learning. Moreover, Textbook should play an important role in facilitating and promoting students' learning process so as to bring about a smooth flow of learning-teaching activities. Besides, textbooks should serve as a supporting tool to accommodate students' learning and target language. Finally, he also proposed a checklist for textbook evaluation which categorized into: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teacher's guide, and practical consideration. Below is the detailed checklist for evaluation and selection of course books proposed by Cunningsworth:

Aims and approaches

The course book aims are in line with the aims of the teaching program and the learners' needs and fits into the teaching and learning situation. Moreover, the course book is comprehensive, including what is needed learners, serving as a good teaching and learning resources, and it allows more flexibility in term of teaching and learning styles.

Design and organization

In term of design and organization, he suggests that course book include the package such as student book, teacher book, workbook, and cassettes etc. Content of the course book is arranged according to structures, functions,

topics, and skills etc. and content sequence is organized on the basis of complexity, learning ability, and usefulness. He also focuses on whether grading and progression suitable for the learners and the course book contain grammar reference sections or not. Last, the materials shall fit with the learners' ability.

Language content

Regarding with language content, he summarize concludes that course book contains the main grammar points at the level of learners, teaching material for vocabulary is adequate, including a range of vocabulary in addition to strategies for individual learning. The pronunciation section is included in the course book, including individual sounds, word stress, and intonation. The structuring and conventions of language are properly presented above the learners' level like how to participate in conversation and how to identify the main ideas in a reading passage. The styles and appropriateness are given attention and whether the language style matches with the social situation.

Skills

`In addition to language content, four macro skills are also taken into consideration. He states that all macro skills in the course book must be well in balance, taking into the account of the aims and syllabus requirements. The material designed for integrated skills is applicable. The reading passage and related activities appropriate for the learners' levels and interest. The listening materials are authentic with background information, questions, and activities adding learning comprehension. The materials for spoken English such as dialogues or role-plays are well designed for learners' real

life interaction. The use of appropriate style of guidance/control, degree of accuracy and organization are included in the writing activities.

Topics

Moreover, the topic must be interesting. There is a variety of topics which promote students' awareness and their experience. The topics in the content are up-to-date within the learners' language level. The materials are sufficient in term of learners' interest. The students can relate their social and cultural background introduced in the course book. Man and woman are equally included in the course book. Other parties presented with reference to their ethnic origin, occupation, disability etc.

Methodology

In term of methodology, he pays attention to approaches to language learning which must be given emphasis in the course book. These approaches are suitable to the learning/teaching situation. The level of leaner involvement can be widely expected throughout the course book and whether this matched with the learning styles and expectation of the learners. Various techniques should introduce in presenting and practicing new language item and whether these techniques are suitable for the learners. How the different skills are taught in the course book is a question that we should bear in mind. Communicative abilities in the course book are properly developed. The materials in the course book introduce tips to improve students' learning skills and strategies. The students are supposed to take a degree of responsibility for their own learning like planning their own targets in learning.

Teachers' books

Teacher's book is also an important feature to judge a good book. The content of teachers' book should follow these guidelines. The guidance introduced in the teachers' book is adequate for those how use it as well as its supported materials and the information in the teachers' book is comprehensive and supportive. The teachers' book covers teaching techniques, language items like grammar rules. The author states the basic premises and principles underlying the materials. Exercise key are given in the teachers' book.

Practical considerations

Practical consideration plays an important role. The cost of the whole package is one way represents a good value for money. Also, the books should be strong and long-lasting and are attractive in appearance, and they are easily obtained. Some parts of the package are accompanied by specific equipment like a language laboratory, listening centre and video players.(As cited in Richards, 2001, pp. 274-276)In a research conducted by Armbruster and Anderson (1991), they identify some text features which effectively contribute to pupils' learning achievement. They draw up a theoretical framework of text assessment criteria as the following: Structure: Are the key ideas connected together clearly and logically? For example, does the text use signaling devices to make the structure clear, such as: Explicit statements of structure, previews, introductory statements and summaries? Cohesion: This refers to the used of linguistic links to connect ideas together and between sentences. For example: the use of " and", " but", " or", "

because", " therefore", and " in comparison" are terms which explicitly connect together idea in a sentences. Idea Density: It is easier for pupils to understand and retain ideas if a text is " less dense", which means that the text only focuses on a small number of ideas/concepts at one time. Important-unimportant Ratio: A text which focuses on the important ideas is more likely to be understood. Cognitive Strategies: This refers to the way in which pupils are expected to use the text, and the following have been associated with effective learning: Text processing—are the pupils asked to perform tasks/exercises relevant to the objective of the chapter/section? Text structure—are the pupils told the structure of the text and given guidance how to use it? Prior Knowledge—does the text use what pupils already know to introduce and explain new idea? Studying strategies: are pupil taught ways to remember key idea (e. g. outlining or concept mapping)?(As cited in Morris, 1996, pp. 97-98)In his journal article, Mahmood (2009) provide eleven useful indicators that could be use for the production of quality textbook. The indicators are based on features of quality textbook derived from Garvin's eight dimensions (see appendix) of quality product model. The Garvin's eight dimension includes: (1) performance, (2) features, (3) reliability, (4) conformance, (5) durability, (6) serviceability, (7) aesthetic, and (8) perceived value. Using the Gavin's (1988) theory of a quality product, Mahmood (2009) considered a textbook a product and use Gavin's well-known framework to develop the principle conceptual frameworks based on those dimensions. 1. Performance. The Performance of a textbook refers to traits that help students in achieving the learning outcomes laid down in curriculum, and that cater to individual cognitive, social, cultural, religious,

ethnic and other needs2. Features. Features of textbooks refer to traits like promote student thinking and suggests activities for further study through Teachers' Guide, Teaching Kit, Ematerial, and Assessment. 3. Reliability. Reliability refers to the likelihood that a textbook will be useful as expected and nothing will be wrong within the time period during which it is intended to be used. Reliability of a textbook means that it provides updated and accurate information-valid for the period for which it is prescribed, and offers clarity in conveying meanings and is understandable for every reader using the text. 4. Conformance. Conformance refers to the extent to which a textbook meets pre-set standards. These are found in public and education policies, curriculum guidelines and objectives/standards, national ideology and culture etc. These pre-set standards are consistent with the scope of the content given in the curriculum guidelines. 5. Durability. As a measure of textbook life or duration, durability has both economic and technical dimensions. Economic dimension refers to physical state of textbook and technical dimension refers to content matter in textbook. In terms of physical state, durability is typically defined as the length of time a textbook can be used by students before it deteriorates beyond usefulness and replacement becomes preferable to continued repair. This depends largely on paper quality, quality of printing and binding and care of use. From content matter perspective, durability refers the validity of the information content before this information becomes invalid or obsolete. 6. ServiceabilityTextbook serviceability refers to the review of textbook and to the manner of the delivery of its content in the classroom. Review refers to periodic content evaluation in order to keep the book valid without changing its basic

structure. Delivery refers to the availability of textbooks' teachers' guides to guide classroom instruction. In brief, review and delivery seek to ensure, through periodic examinations and updates of content and teachers' guides that the textbook is fit for long term use. In turn these require the availability and capacity of professionals and reviewers. 7. AestheticsHow a product looks, feels, sounds, tastes, or smells is often a matter of personal preference. But there are general areas of agreement. For textbooks, the aesthetic dimension refers to the formulation of the title, layout, format, illustrations, and other graphics-acceptability with respect to age / level / relevant to content and context. Good looking title that attract students of the age and grade for which it has been developed. In brief, the esthetics of textbook include: a) title, binding, font and font size, page layout/format and illustrations, and b) other graphics-acceptability with respect to age / level / relevant to content and context. 8. Perceived QualityFor textbooks, perceived quality refers to positive perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding textbook appearance, content and publication quality. Likewise, Littlejohn (1998) suggested a general framework for analyzing materials as a pedagogic device. The frameworks were divided into two main sections: publication and design. He explained the publication as tangible or physical aspects of materials while design concern more on internal aspects of the material. For physical features of the textbooks, he set criteria with regard to the " physical features and " material in general." The analysis of " material in general" captures fundamental aspects of the textbooks including the published year, format (content of each lesson), additional aids, organization (how lessons are sequenced), functional organization

(organization besides lessons including page numbers), and expected learning sequences (whether lessons are organized step by step and built up on students' previous knowledge). The evaluation of internal features focused on several areas in detail. The first one is the language objectives which concerns how they fit to the course syllabus. Thesecond one dealt with design and organization of the textbook. In this section, he examined the composition of the textbooks, and differences they contain. Moreover, linguistic skills the textbook focuses on and the tasks the students are expected to engage in are also discussed. The third one would be about the language content. The researcher examined how materials writers consider the choice of topics for target audience, cultural awareness, conceptual level of covered content, and authenticity of text. The topics covered in the materials were analyzed in terms of suitability and attractiveness to target students. Cultural awareness is included in the criteria because this is one of the aims of English language education manifested in the national curricula of Cambodia. Authenticity of text is added to this list because authentic of input is one of the key issues in ELT.