

## **TEXTBOOK EVALUATION AND ELT MANAGEMENT: A SOUTH KOREAN CASE STUDY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*ELT materials (textbooks) play a very important role in many language classrooms but in recent years there has been a lot of debate throughout the ELT profession on the actual role of materials in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language (TESL/TEFL). Arguments have encompassed both the potential and the limitations of materials for 'guiding' students through the learning process and curriculum as well as the needs and preferences of teachers who are using textbooks. Other issues that have arisen in recent years include textbook design and practicality, methodological validity, the role of textbooks in innovation, the authenticity of materials in terms of their representation of language, and the appropriateness of gender representation, subject matter, and cultural components.*

*Whether or not one accepts the value of textbooks, it must surely be with the qualification that they are of an acceptable standard or level of quality and appropriate to the learners for whom they are being used. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that we establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks that we use in our language classrooms. This paper will discuss and describe the intricate and complex evaluation process that was undertaken at Sung Kyun Kwan University in Suwon, South Korea in 2000-2001 for a textbook (English Firsthand 2) that was being used in this particular learning environment. The purpose of this research project was to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the book towards this specific language program.*

## Table of Contents

<b><u>CHAPTER: 1 - INTRODUCTION &amp; METHODOLOGY</u></b> .....	<b>5</b>
(1.1) The Role of Textbooks in the EFL/ESL Classroom: .....	5
(1.2) Justification for Textbook Evaluation: .....	8
(1.3) Textbook Evaluation Schemes: .....	9
(1.4) Background Information: .....	10
(1.5) Subjects: .....	10
(1.6) Materials and Methods: .....	11
<b><u>CHAPTER: 2 - TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY</u></b> .....	<b>12</b>
(2.1) The Textbook Package - Value, Content, & Methodology: .....	12
(2.2) Layout & Design: .....	15
2.2.1 Overall Organization of Textbook .....	15
2.2.2 Layout and Design of Each Unit .....	16
(2.3) Activities and Tasks: .....	21
2.3.1 Negotiation of Meaning/Task-Based and Cooperative Learning Activities .....	22
(2.4) Skills: .....	24
2.4.1 Receptive Skills - Reading & Listening .....	25
2.4.2 Productive Skills - Speaking .....	26
2.4.3 Productive Skills - Writing .....	27
(2.5) Language Type and Content .....	28
(2.6) Subject & Content: .....	31
<b><u>CHAPTER: 3 - CONCLUSION</u></b> .....	<b>33</b>
(3.1) Overall Consensus: .....	33
(3.2) Conclusion: .....	34
<b><u>REFERENCES</u></b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX I</u></b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX II</u></b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX III</u></b> .....	<b>41</b>

<b><u>APPENDIX IV</u></b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX V</u></b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX VI</u></b> .....	<b>48</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX VII</u></b> .....	<b>51</b>

## **CHAPTER: 1 - INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY**

### ***(1.1) The Role of Textbooks in the EFL/ESL Classroom:***

English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents to many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors. As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest:

"The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook." (p.315).

Other theorists such as Sheldon (1988) agree with this observation and suggest that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" (p.237) but also offer considerable advantages - for both the student and the teacher - when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom. Haycroft (1998), for example, suggests that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them. Second, as Sheldon (1988) has pointed out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials. Third, as O'Neill (1982) has indicated, textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation. Fourth, textbooks yield a respectable return on investment, are relatively inexpensive and involve low lesson preparation time, whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective. In this way, textbooks can reduce potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988). A fifth advantage identified by Cunningsworth (1995) is the potential which textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argues that they are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Although some theorists have alluded to the inherent danger

of the inexperienced teacher who may use a textbook as a pedagogic crutch, such an over-reliance may actually have the opposite effect of saving students from a teacher's deficiencies (O'Neill, 1982; Williams, 1983; Kitao & Kitao, 1997). Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) have pointed out that textbooks may play a pivotal role in innovation. They suggest that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new and/or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own.

While many of the aforementioned theorists are quick to point out the extensive benefits of using ESL/EFL textbooks, there are many other researchers and practitioners who do not necessarily accept this view and retain some well-founded reservations on the subject. Allwright (1982), for instance, has written a scathing commentary on the use of textbooks in the ELT classroom. He suggests that textbooks are too inflexible and generally reflect the pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors. Subsequently, the educational methodology that a textbook promotes will influence the classroom setting by indirectly imposing external language objectives and learning constituents on students as well as potentially incongruent instructional paradigms on the teachers who use them. In this fashion, therefore, textbooks essentially determine and control the methods, processes and procedures of language teaching and learning. Moreover, the pedagogic principles that are often displayed in many textbooks may also be conflicting, contradictory or even out-dated depending on the capitalizing interests and exploitations of the sponsoring agent.

More recent authors have criticized textbooks for their inherent social and cultural biases. Researchers such as Porreca (1984), Florent and Walter (1989), Clarke and Clarke (1990), Carrell and Korwitz (1994), and Renner (1997) have demonstrated that many EFL/ESL textbooks still contain rampant examples of gender bias, sexism, and stereotyping. They describe such gender-related inequities as: the relative invisibility of female characters, the unrealistic and sexist portrayals of both men and women, stereotypes involving social roles, occupations, relationships and actions as well as linguistic biases such as 'gendered' English and sexist language. Findings such as these have led researchers to believe that the continuing prevalence of sexism and gender stereotypes in many EFL/ESL textbooks may reflect the unequal power relationships that still exist between the sexes in many cultures, the prolonged marginalization of

females, and the misrepresentations of writers with social attitudes that are incongruent with the present-day realities of the target language culture (Sunderland, 1992; Renner, 1997).

Other theorists such as Prodromou (1988) and Alptekin (1993) have focused on the use of the target language culture as a vehicle for teaching the language in textbooks and suggest that it is not really possible to teach a language without embedding it in its cultural base. They argue that such a process inevitably forces learners to express themselves within a culture of which they have scarcely any experience and this may result in alienation, stereotyping, or even reluctance or resistance to learning. Phillipson (1992) is also wary of the complex relationship between language textbooks and the target language culture but he sees the promotion of 'Western' (British) global textbooks as government-backed enterprises with both an economic as well as an ideological agenda. Gray (2000), on the other hand, has defended the socio-cultural components of many textbooks. He suggests that English language textbooks are actually ambassadorial cultural artifacts and that students should not only critically engage their textbooks but also view them as more than mere linguistic objects. In this way, he argues, learners will improve their language skills by using their textbooks as useful instruments for provoking discussion, cultural debate, and a two-way flow of information. Clearly there is no consensus on this issue at this particular time and this would seem to warrant some degree of caution when using these types of books in certain teaching and learning contexts.

Some proponents of authentic classroom language models have argued that the problems with many textbooks are not necessarily the fact that they are culturally or socially biased but that they are actually too contrived and artificial in their presentation of the target language. They argue that it is crucial to introduce learners to the fundamental characteristics of authentic real-life examples of both spoken and written discourse. They have demonstrated that many scripted textbook language models and dialogues are unnatural and inappropriate for communicative or cooperative language teaching because they do not adequately prepare students for the types of pronunciation (Brazil, Coulthard, and Johns, 1980; Levis, 1999), language structures, grammar, idioms, vocabulary and conversational rules, routines and strategies that they will have to use in the real-world (Cathcart, 1989; Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 1991; Yule *et al.*, 1992). They further contend that the scripted unauthentic language found in many textbooks does not lend itself to communicative practice but instead can lead to an oversimplification of language and unrealistic views of real-life situations. It can also provide additional inaccurate advice about the target

language society that can be particularly dangerous for students entering the target language community or those who are expecting to engage in significant amounts of real-life interactions with native speakers.

A final reason for disappointment and skepticism with many ELT textbooks is the fact that they are often regarded as the "...tainted end-product of an author's or a publisher's desire for quick profit" (Sheldon, 1988 p.239). Too many textbooks are often marketed with grand artificial claims by their authors and publishers yet these same books tend to contain serious theoretical problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings. They also present disjointed material that is either too limited or too generalized in a superficial and flashy manner and the vast array of "...single edition, now defunct [text]books produced during the past ten years testifies to the market consequences of teachers' verdicts on such practices" (Sheldon, 1988 p.239).

### ***(1.2) Justification for Textbook Evaluation:***

Whether one believes that textbooks are too inflexible and biased to be used directly as instructional material or that they actually help teaching and learning, there can be no denying the fact that textbooks still maintain enormous popularity and are most definitely here to stay. It is important to remember, however, that since the 1970's there has been a movement to make learners the center of language instruction and it is probably best to view textbooks as resources in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs. Moreover, they should not necessarily determine the aims themselves (components of teaching and learning) or become the aims but they should always be at the service of the teachers and learners (Brown, 1995). Consequently, we must make every effort to establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks that we use in our language classrooms. We should also ensure "that careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program." (Cunningsworth, 1995 p.7).

Sheldon (1988) has offered several other reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of an ELT textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, or even political investment. A thorough evaluation, therefore, would enable the managerial and teaching staff of a specific institution or organization to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market. Moreover, it would provide for a sense of familiarity with a book's content thus assisting

educators in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. This would go a long way in ultimately assisting teachers with making optimum use of a book's strong points and recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks, and entire texts.

One additional reason for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very useful in teacher development and professional growth. Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) suggest that textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting action research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can also be a valuable component of teacher training programs for it serves the dual purpose of making student teachers aware of important features to look for in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language instruction materials.

### ***(1.3) Textbook Evaluation Schemes:***

As mentioned previously, if one accepts the value of textbooks in ELT then it must surely be with the qualification that they are of an acceptable level of quality, usefulness, and appropriateness for the context and people with whom they are being used. While the literature on the subject of textbook evaluation is not particularly extensive, various writers have suggested ways of helping teachers to be more sophisticated in their evaluative approach, by presenting evaluation 'checklists' based on supposedly generalizable criteria that can be used by both teachers and students in many different situations. Although Sheldon (1988) suggests that no general list of criteria can ever really be applied to all teaching and learning contexts without considerable modification, most of these standardized evaluation checklists contain similar components that can be used as helpful starting points for ELT practitioners in a wide variety of situations. Preeminent theorists in the field of ELT textbook design and analysis such as Williams (1983), Sheldon (1988), Brown (1995), Cunningsworth (1995) and Harmer (1996) all agree, for instance, that evaluation checklists should have some criteria pertaining to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics. Other important criteria that should be incorporated are those that assess a textbook's methodology, aims, and approaches and the degree to which a set of materials is not only teachable but also fits the needs of the individual teacher's approach as well as the organization's overall curriculum.

Moreover, criteria should analyze the specific language, functions, grammar, and skills content that are covered by a particular textbook as well as the relevance of linguistic items to the prevailing socio-cultural environment. Finally, textbook evaluations should include criteria that pertain to representation of cultural and gender components in addition to the extent to which the linguistic items, subjects, content, and topics match up to students' personalities, backgrounds, needs, and interests as well as those of the teacher and/or institution.

#### ***(1.4) Background Information:***

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) have suggested that there are three different types of material evaluation. They argue that the most common form is probably the 'predictive' or 'pre-use' evaluation that is designed to examine the future or potential performance of a textbook. The other types of textbook evaluation are the 'in-use' evaluation designed to examine material that is currently being used and the 'retrospective' or 'post-use' (reflective) evaluation of a textbook that has been used in any respective institution. This particular paper will report on a survey that was conducted at the Sung Kyun Kwan University Science & Technology Campus in Suwon, South Korea for the purposes of evaluating and analyzing a textbook (*English Firsthand #2*) that was being used by all of the high-beginner English classes in the university's EFL program. This particular course was available to undergraduate science students and the instructors had been using a variety of "in-house" materials during the five years of its existence. In 1998, however, the university administration arbitrarily introduced a new mandatory textbook (*English Firsthand #2*) to the course and it was decided by the teaching staff soon thereafter that a research project needed to be initiated in order to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of this book towards this important component of the university language program.

#### ***(1.5) Subjects:***

While the decision to use and evaluate a particular textbook is sometimes left up to individual teachers, some authors such as Chambers (1997) have pointed out that this activity is usually more beneficial if it is collectively undertaken by everyone involved in the teaching and learning process. He suggests that when teaching materials are to be used by a large group of teachers and students it seems sensible for these materials to be evaluated by all or most of those who will be involved in their use. As such, this study relied on the active participation of all eight

of the intermediate English course instructors as well as the five hundred students who were enrolled in the 2000-2001 program.

***(1.6) Materials and Methods:***

No textbook evaluation or consultation with the instructors had been conducted by the university administration prior to the introduction of the textbook to the language program. It was decided by the teaching staff, therefore, that in order to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of the book and ultimately decide how well it suited the desired and attainable goals of the newly structured intermediate EFL curriculum, a series of textbook evaluation questionnaires would be created and provided to the instructors and students at the conclusion of the first year of the course (See Appendix: 3 & 4). Both the student and teacher evaluation survey questionnaires were based on the specific concerns and priorities of Sung Kyun Kwan University. They contained questions that pertained to the practical considerations (price, accessories, methodology etc.), layout and design, range and balance of activities, skills appropriateness and integration, social and cultural considerations, subject content, and language types represented in the textbook. It was felt as though the questionnaires would be extremely beneficial in specifying aims and analyzing the teaching and learning situation more clearly, gathering additional ideas, and acquiring a variety of opinions and concerns that may have otherwise been overlooked. The results of the teacher and student textbook evaluation questionnaires can be found in Appendix: 7.

An additional component of the study consisted of a student 'needs analysis' (See Appendix: 1 & 2) that was conducted at the same time as the textbook evaluation survey. It was felt in this instance that an accurate representation of classroom demographics as well as the students' aims, concerns, interests, expectations, and views regarding teaching methodology would assist in the overall textbook evaluation process by creating a clearer picture of the compatibility between actual students' 'needs' and the perceived goals and objectives of the EFL program. The results of the 'needs analysis' are located in Appendix: 6.

## **CHAPTER: 2 - TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY**

### ***(2.1) The Textbook Package - Value, Content, & Methodology:***

One of the most useful starting points in any textbook evaluation is an analysis of the authors and publisher's credentials. The authors of *English Firsthand #2* are Marc Helgesen, Steven Brown, and Thomas Mandeville and the publisher is a well-established company based in Hong Kong, Longman Asia ELT. Ample information about the publishing company such as the contact address and telephone numbers can be found on the inside front cover but no information about the authors formal education or amounts and types of teaching, administration, and curriculum/syllabus and materials development experience is present. This makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not the authors have a recognized standing in the field or a reputation for producing innovative materials.

Another important factor that relates to the choosing of a textbook is cost. While some might feel that price is not necessarily an important factor in textbook evaluation the fact that most ESL/EFL textbooks are published and manufactured in wealthy English-speaking nations such as England and the United States but used in many less-developed nations suggests that price should play a pertinent role in textbook selection. This is particularly the case in countries in which the economic conditions are somewhat less than desirable and/or in cases such as this in which many students with limited incomes are required to purchase the books for a mandatory foreign language course. It is interesting to note that in this case, the teachers (who were from economically developed countries) didn't find *English Firsthand #2* (EF2) too costly but the students found it to be a little too expensive in the evaluation survey (See Appendix: 7).

Additional practical concerns are accessibility and availability. In order for a textbook to be purchasable, for instance, it must be currently in print and readily available. Moreover, the publisher should be accessible for additional information, teaching demonstrations, and order requests. At first glance it would seem that EF2 meets many of these requirements for it is a relatively new book that was most recently published in 1998 and representatives from the publisher (Longman Asia.) can be easily contacted for ordering information and assistance, teaching demonstrations etc. In terms of availability, however, the results of the survey appear to suggest something different. While the teachers rated the book as being relatively accessible, some of the students did not (See Appendix: 7). This may be a result of the fact that teachers

were given a copy of the book by the administration and students were expected to purchase their own copy but it may also be a result of the fact that *EF2* may not be as readily available in Korean bookstores as other better known and widely distributed series of textbooks such as the *Headway* or *New Interchange* series.

Other practical considerations that we should be aware of are quality and value for money (Sheldon, 1988) and in terms of these criteria *FH2* seemed to measure up quite well in the survey (See Appendix: 7). The textbook is made of high-grade, durable paper and the presentation of information appears to be clear, concise, and user-friendly. The book also contains several charts, models, and photographs that help clarify and contextualize information while the presence of hand-drawn pictures portrays a friendly and humorous atmosphere. In addition, *FH2* contains an excellent accessories package and a diverse array of supplementary materials including items such as classroom tape cassettes or CD's, a student workbook, and a teacher's manual. More specifically, the teacher's manual features many useful page-by-page instructions, teaching suggestions and instructional input, lesson notes, optional tasks and variations, classroom management advice, language notes, general notes about the task and cultural data, expansion activities and game ideas, tests, answer keys, transcripts for listening activities, and opportunities for teacher reflection. The student workbook, on the other hand, provides review exercises and a variety of practice exercises that assist with the development of students' proficiency with grammar, reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, and speaking and has enormous potential for classroom use or for homework assignments. In addition, each student textbook and teacher's guide comes complete with a CD that can be used for classroom or individual study. This is a particularly progressive, useful, and cost-effective feature of the book and it is something that seems to set it apart from other publications that still sell these types of items separately. These CD's are of good quality with relatively natural-sounding recordings of conversation, grammar points, pronunciation exercises, and listening activities. Although the English employed is North American, a variety of registers and non-native accents can be heard. While this emphasis on American dialects and accents could be problematic in some contexts, the results of the 'Needs Analysis' demonstrated that American English was, in fact, the preferred type of English accent in this particular learning environment (See Appendix: 6).

One interesting feature of the accessories package that is worthy of a closer examination is the website ([www.efcafe.com](http://www.efcafe.com)) that has been designed to accompany the textbook. The

integration of the personal computer and information technology to language learning is becoming increasingly commonplace in many institutions and it seems as though the authors and publishers of *FH2* are well aware of this growing phenomenon. In this particular case the publishers have developed an accompanying web-site that teachers can use to find Internet links to professional articles and that students can use to gain additional practice with the material covered in the textbook, write to email pen pals, or discover links to activities, quizzes, information etc. While this web-site may, in the right circumstances, be used as a useful teaching and learning tool, it also provides teachers with assistance in professional development and provides students with an opportunity to become increasingly self-reliant and thereby less teacher-dependent. In addition, the promotion of ongoing professional teacher development similar to that which exists on the *EF2* web-site is very encouraging, as this type of growth is essential in developing a personal commitment to students and student learning, improving one's teaching and knowledge of teaching, and developing a sense of personal self-efficacy. Moreover, the promotion of student self-directed and metacognitive learning is integral in allowing students to become increasingly aware of their own abilities to remember, learn, and solve problems and more strategic and reflective in their learning, thinking, and problem solving.

A final pragmatic criterion that pertains to the overall textbook package is the author's approach to teaching methodology. Brown (1995) and Cunningsworth (1995) suggest that it is absolutely essential in evaluating any textbook to determine whether or not its inherent methodology will reinforce the institutional aims as well as conform to the classroom context. The simplest and quickest route for initially discovering a textbook's theoretical premises and methodological underpinnings is to examine its back cover as the terminology employed generally exemplifies the author's pedagogic ideology towards language learning processes. A closer examination of *EF2* reveals that the writers (Steven Brown, Marc Helgessen, and Thomas Mandeville) claim to adhere to the 'Communicative Approach' and the textbook features a multi-skills curriculum and follows a topical/functional format. The book also tends to focus on both accurate and fluent communication, the promotion of integrated language-skills practice, and the inclusion of topical themes, grammatical structures and functions, as well as lexical development. Particular emphasis is placed on meaningful and authentic communication with the goal of establishing communicative competence in production and comprehension. Moreover, many of the activities such as information-gap tasks and role-playing activities are intended to

facilitate learning through genuine interaction and the language skills and sub-skills are presented and practiced through the use of both top-down and bottom-up processing strategies.

An analysis of the evaluation questionnaire revealed that the survey respondents regarded the methodology employed by the authors of *EF2* quite highly (See Appendix: 7). In addition, the results of the student 'needs analysis' indicated that the students wanted this course to provide a balance of activities as well as an integration of all the target language skills (See Appendix: 6). This suggests, therefore, that many of the authors' views about language learning and teaching were actually fairly comparable with the beliefs, perceptions, and opinions of the teachers and students.

The only potential problem that related to the overall methodology and syllabus of *EF2* was the fact that the teacher's guide contained several ideas for using alternative classroom management strategies and multi-sensory teaching techniques that are often associated with 'Counseling-Learning' (Curran, 1976), 'Silent Way' (Gattegno, 1972), 'Suggestopedia' (Lozanov, 1978), and 'Dartmouth Pedagogy' (Rassias, 1972) approaches. This eclecticism is certainly well intentioned, courageous, and innovative but there is always the possibility that this multi-faceted use of 'packaged pedagogies' could result in confusion and apprehension in certain circumstances involving inexperienced teachers or in contexts in which the students are expecting more traditional teaching approaches. Thankfully, the results of the survey showed that this was not the case in this instance as almost all of those surveyed had few problems with this aspect of the textbook and accompanying teacher's guide. (See Appendix: 7).

## ***(2.2) Layout & Design:***

### **2.2.1 Overall Organization of Textbook**

The layout and design of a textbook refers to its organization and presentation of language items and activities and the results of the teacher/student evaluation survey demonstrated that, aside from a few shortcomings, most people actually responded relatively favorably to these particular aspects of the book (See Appendix: 7). In this textbook, for instance, the learning objectives are clear and concise and a detailed overview of the topics, functions, structures/grammar, and skills within each unit can be found in the introductory table of contents. The course components are also effectively and clearly organized around specific topics such as culture, travel, rules, jobs and working, stories etc. and they are divided up into twelve, eight

page units with review units after every six lessons. While the topics do not seem to be connected between units or do not necessarily coincide with those that the students mentioned in the 'Needs Analysis' (See Appendix: 6), they do appear to cover a vast array of subject areas consistent with a present-day younger audience's experience. Additional useful components of the overall layout and design of *FH2* are the rather extensive vocabulary lists, expression glossaries, grammar references, and communicative expansion 'Firsthand Activities' that are all arranged per unit as appendices. The vocabulary lists, glossaries, and references are all very helpful supplementary aides for students while the expansion activities at the end of the book provide them with further opportunities to use the language points from each particular unit in a 'quasi-creative' and meaningful manner.

While the overall layout and design of *EF2* was not only satisfactory but also comparable to many other textbooks, one glaring weakness stemmed from the fact that there were an inadequate number of review units. A close inspection of the book, for example, revealed that there were merely two review units in the entire textbook. This meant that students only had the opportunity for formal review after every six lessons and it is likely the reason that the survey respondents gave relatively low scores to this particular component of the book (See Appendix: 7).

### **2.2.2 Layout and Design of Each Unit**

With respect to each individual unit, the breakdown and sequencing is demonstrative of the approach known as PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) and is organized as follows: 1. A warm up listening task that introduces the unit topic and prepares learners for more difficult listening challenges later on by activating their schemata of content, grammar, and vocabulary. 2. A second listening task based on the same prior recorded input that is designed to cover a range of skills such as listening for specific information, gist listening, and making inferences. 3. A short, functional dialog complete with an attached vocabulary box designed for the students to engage in role-playing and controlled speaking practice with a partner. Students begin by practicing the dialogue just as it is presented in the text and on the accompanying tape or CD. During the next phase they are gradually expected to become more creative with the dialog by making substitutions from the provided choices, adding their own ideas, and then finally by closing the book and having a similar conversation of their own. 4. Motivating pair-work tasks designed to gradually move the learner beyond simple exchanges, 'divergent tasks' or

information gap activities to freer communicative exercises in which the students are expected to produce the language points of each respective unit and truly engage the material in a more meaningful fashion. 5. A language-check section designed for the review and consolidation of grammar and vocabulary. 6. Communicative group work tasks designed for additional fluency improvement and genuine production of the target language. 7. A final short reading and writing activity.

It is suggested by the authors that the aforementioned linear organization and sequencing of each unit in *EF2* is intended to 'recycle' or reinforce specific grammatical structures and vocabulary items as well as various functions in an effort to assist learners to store them in long-term memory. The most common form of recycling is for specific items to be encountered in a structured way on several occasions in different contexts. In this way learners are encouraged to learn various items through progressive exposure, and by meeting them in a number of contexts they can develop an increasing understanding of their meaning. Although it appears as though this calculated progression and schematized layout of each unit is well-intentioned and firmly grounded in traditional second language acquisition theory, this apparent strong point is also one of *EF2*'s greatest weaknesses as the design and organization of every unit is virtually identical to the next. This tends to make the book seem simplistic, redundant, and even boring after a few lessons - especially in cases where a new and inexperienced teacher might be relying on the text for most of their teaching ideas, strategies, activities, and lesson planning. Another problem with the specific layout and design of each unit and their accompanying appendices is the fact that the tasks, expansion activities, and review unit's answer keys and tape scripts, are not included in the student books. While not particularly serious, this might still hamper the execution of lesson preparation by some teachers who don't have access to a teacher's manual. It might also be somewhat problematic for certain students who wish to use the book for independent and/or additional study.

An additional characteristic of the specific layout and design of each unit in *FH2* that is not only potentially problematic but also worthy of closer scrutiny is the author's consistent reliance on the classical teaching model of presentation, controlled practice, and production (PPP). The PPP approach is based on the belief that out of accuracy comes fluency. Instruction at the outset is form-focused and teacher-centered and grammatical accuracy is stressed. This presentation stage is then followed by practice activities that are designed to enable learners to

produce the material that has been presented. In the final production stage, opportunities are provided to use language freely in the expectation that this will consolidate what is being learned and extend its range of applicability (Swan, 1985). Essentially, the teacher's role is to present a new form to students while the student's role is to practice this particular form in activities that will display their mastery of it.

Proponents of presentation and controlled structured practice such as Swan (1985) have suggested that learning a language is not the same as using a language and argue that some formal instruction and controlled activities must have their place in the ELT classroom. This opinion has been supported by studies conducted by Beaumont and Gallaway (1994) and Master (1994). Their research, for example, shows that direct language instruction that is later practiced does seem to become part of the learners acquired store even though, as Ellis (1992) suggests, it may be the case that only certain grammatical features are susceptible to such treatment. Littlewood (1981), on the other hand, has labeled presentation and controlled practice activities as being pre-communicative. He sees them as being necessary points of departure for more communicative activities. Rossner and Bolitho (1990) and Harmer (1996) have also made a case for the use of presentation and practice in a communicative context. They suggest, however, that structured presentation and controlled practice is vital to their communicative 'balance of activities' approach. While one goal of a 'balance of activities' approach is to increase student interest and motivation, they argue that there should also be a balance between the different types of language input and output where communicative or freer language activities will tend to predominate over, but not exclude, controlled language presentation and practice activities.

After one examines the many arguments in favor of the PPP approach to instruction, it is easy to understand why it has become so popular with many teachers and textbook authors. Nevertheless, a number of authors such as Willis, J and Willis, D. (1996), Willis, D.(1996), Willis, J (1996) and Skehan (1996) have demonstrated that current second language acquisition (SLA) research reveals that teachers cannot really predetermine or presuppose the natural order of a learner's acquisition through focused instruction and that learners rarely move from the early stages of presentation and practice to outright mastery. They have also shown that pedagogic approaches that focus on conformity don't necessarily expose students to sufficient amounts of language and they rarely leave any room for subsequent communicative language use. Finally,

they argue that because the PPP paradigm presents language and requires little intellectual involvement on the part of the learner it does not provide for a critical focus on language form.

Long (1990), Willis D. (1996), and Willis J (1996) have suggested that a better alternative to PPP would perhaps be a task-based learning (TBL) approach which, simply put, sounds a little bit like PPP in a reverse order. They claim that such an approach creates a need for learners to acquire new language through the setting of tasks that require them to carry out and struggle through a communicative task, before going on to focus on specific language items that the students have themselves recognized as difficult or problematic. They are also harshly critical of controlled activities but emphasize tasks that have as their primary aim a non-linguistic and genuine goal such as negotiation of meaning routines, winning a game, solving a puzzle, or deciphering a solution that tends to stimulate interaction as well as require the use of language in its execution. The parts of the activities that the students have difficulty with in terms of communication will set the agenda for later post-task language focus, analysis and practice. This would dispense with the need for a pre-determined or graded syllabus.

The final post-task language focus and analysis phase of TBL is particularly interesting for it is similar to the various consciousness-raising activities envisaged and developed by researchers such as Rutherford (1995), Sharwood-Smith (1988) and Ellis (1992). Rutherford (1987) has suggested that traditional approaches to grammar instruction were very regimented and did nothing more than promote the segmentalization of language and the creation of hierarchically arranged constructs. Their main shortcomings were the fact that they failed to see language as an organic whole where the learners are encouraged to take an active role in the development of their overall language skills. Theorists such as Sharwood-Smith (1988) and Rutherford (1995) have demonstrated, however, that learners do have a variety of skills and a range of background knowledge including cognitive problem-solving mechanisms, personalized learning strategies, knowledge of their L1 and schematic knowledge of the world at their disposal. These theorists also suggest that teachers can take advantage of these skills and knowledge by employing a process of grammatical instruction that they refer to as 'consciousness-raising' or 'discovery learning'.

Rutherford (1987) and Sharwood-Smith (1988) have essentially stated that consciousness-raising tasks should be viewed as a facilitator to grammatical competence. They emphasize contextualized practice and use an inductive, process-orientated approach where-by

students are encouraged to use their cognitive skills and prior knowledge to process linguistic input and create an awareness of both grammatical and lexical patterns. When linguistic awareness is internalized it is hypothesized that communicative competence and fluency, as well as linguistic competence and grammatical accuracy should improve (Rutherford, & Sharwood-Smith, 1985). It would seem, therefore, as though these types of tasks are well suited to TBL for they provide for implicit grammar instruction to learners through the use of authentic language data and they essentially allow learners to test hypotheses and make generalizations about linguistic items. Moreover, the cognitive processes that are stimulated during consciousness-raising activities are thought to be crucial for constructing an inter-language system and consolidating acquisition.

While *EF2* does not adhere to the innovative and admirable TBL approach, and although it doesn't contain enough consciousness-raising activities, it does utilize justifiable alternatives such as a PPP methodology. As recently discussed, for instance, PPP espouses explicit grammar instruction and exercises that are both free and controlled. The inclusion of form-focused activities, as well as communicative activities, in an ESL/EFL syllabus, therefore, ensures an equitable balance between these types of activities. Moreover, most ESL/EFL practitioners believe that form-focused activities should figure in ELT course materials in their own right because they contribute to student motivation, direct students' attention towards pronunciation, and consolidate isolated 'chunks' of language. Likewise, formal instruction is valuable too as it has been shown to accelerate the rate of acquisition, lead to higher levels of ultimate attainment, promote grammatical accuracy, and delay fossilization (Beaumont and Gallaway, 1994; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1994; Master, 1994). While not a supporter of PPP, Skehan (1996) has explained some additional reasons for PPP's prominence and persistence as an English language teaching methodology. He has pointed out that a range of teaching techniques often accompanies the PPP approach. These techniques define clear-cut roles for teachers and students and describe how to systematize classroom instruction. These techniques are also inherently trainable and relatively easy to replicate and therefore likely to instill feelings of security, professionalism and empowerment in teachers. In addition, the PPP approach lends itself to accountability since there are clear, tangible lesson objectives. These goals can subsequently be subjected to evaluation simply by determining whether or not students can reproduce that lesson's specified structure. Perhaps these same arguments influenced the authors of *EF2* and provided them with a solid

rationale for embracing a PPP methodology. From the literature it is evident that PPP is not devoid of positive elements, and in actual fact, a worthwhile and reliable methodology upon which to either base a textbook or use a textbook that advocates such an approach in certain teaching and learning situations.

### ***(2.3) Activities and Tasks:***

A number of theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) and Long (1990) have advocated the cognitive value of student-student/social interaction for promoting learning. Long (1990), for example, cites five benefits of interactive group activities in comparison with teacher-fronted whole class instruction. These include increased quantities of students' language use; enhanced quality of the language students use; more opportunities to individualize instruction; a less threatening environment in which to use the language; and greater motivation for learning. In addition, peer interaction gives students the opportunity to encounter ideas and perceptions that differ from their own as well as the opportunity to clarify, elaborate, reorganize, and re-conceptualize information, express ideas, get feedback, and justify their claims (Bruning, Schraw, and Ronning, 1995).

Nevertheless, as Jacobs and Ball (1996) have pointed out, not all group work promotes learning.

"In some ELT [text]books, group activities appear to have been created merely by putting the words 'in groups' or 'in pairs' in front of what were formerly individual activities, without making any changes to encourage learners to cooperate with one another. Such instructions may suffice in some situations, but for effective interactions to take place students will generally need more guidance and encouragement." (p.99)

They suggest that the best types of activities are those that encourage the negotiation of meaning or those that promote positive interdependence and facilitate individual accountability through cooperative learning strategies. Negotiation of meaning, they argue, is the action taken to be sure that communication has been successful among all the group members. Positive interdependence, on the other hand, exists when students perceive that they are linked with fellow group members so they cannot succeed unless their group members do (and vice-versa) and/or that they must co-ordinate the efforts of their entire group to complete an assigned task. Finally, individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual student is assessed, the results given back to the individual and the group, and the student is held responsible for contributing to the group's success. Obviously, the key in these instances is for

groups "...to avoid the parallel problems of the group member(s) who do nothing, or who do everything and discourage others from participating" (Jacobs and Ball, 1996 p.101).

### **2.3.1 Negotiation of Meaning/Task-Based and Cooperative Learning Activities**

Until the late 1950's, the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual Methods characterized language teaching methodology throughout the world. These approaches advocated decontextualized and rule-focused instruction and practice. Later studies demonstrated, however, that a focus on form and accuracy did not necessarily ensure communicative competence outside the language classroom. This notion of communicative competence was refined along with the Communicative Approach in the 1960's, and this term was eventually accepted to encompass all components of language; from grammar and discourse to social context and strategic ability (Hymes 1972; Widdowson, 1978; Canale and Swain, 1980; Richards and Rogers, 1996). Proponents of the 'Communicative Approach' to language teaching stressed the importance of language use versus knowledge about language (Harmer, 1996). Observation of social interactions attested to the importance of communicative competence and showed that authentic language communication also involved the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors. Negotiation of meaning occurs when some form of information exchange transpires for a real purpose thereby making the context of communication as relevant as the content (Harmer, 1996; Nunan, 1998). As mentioned in the previous 'design and layout' section, virtually every unit in *EF2* is deficient in many of the types of task-based learning, consciousness-raising, and discovery learning activities that are not only intended to introduce language forms in authentic data but also engage them in truly meaningful and effective communication such as negotiation of meaning. This certainly has the potential to be a serious problem in some teaching and learning contexts.

With regard to the use of positive interdependence by *EF2*, activities that did not meet this specific criterion were those that typically asked students to work alone first and then compare and/or discuss their answers. In these cases the activities did not provide enough need for group members to interact. In terms of individual accountability, activities that did not meet this criteria were typically those that asked groups to arrive at a single decision or answer without structuring or specifically specifying the nature of the participation expected from each specific group member. While the problems associated with interdependence and accountability were somewhat discouraging Kagan (1992); Jacobs and Ball (1996), and Nunan (1998) suggest

that these types of deficiencies are often typical of many textbooks. They also point out that they can generally be overcome through simple task modifications, particularly in cases where an experienced teacher is using a specific book. The most common revisions and alterations, they argue, are those that provide each group-member with unique information that must be combined in order to complete a task.

On a more positive note, *EF2* does contain a wide variety of role-play and information-gap tasks that focus on fluency production as well as several open-ended discussion questions that allow students to personalize their responses, share information, and express their thoughts and experiences in English. Alternately, numerous exercises exemplify 'non-communicative' situations that demand controlled responses, such as drilling, listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, matching and filling-in-the-blanks. As mentioned previously, several researchers such as Rossner and Bolitho (1990) and Harmer (1996) suggest that a variation in activity types, tasks and interaction patterns such as these may not be particularly genuine or authentic but they are still effective in the sense that they play an important role in ultimately securing a 'balance of activities' approach to language teaching and learning. One particular characteristic of this approach sees the role of the teacher and ELT materials writer as one which ensures that the students are exposed to a variety of activities designed to foster language acquisition, activate and continue student interest and motivation, and ultimately assist with learning. More specifically, a so-called 'balance' occurs when linguistic input fluctuates between finely- and roughly-tuned and output rotates between free and controlled (Harmer, 1996). By ensuring both fluency and accuracy production, the paradox between 'accuracy at the expense of fluency' and 'fluency at the expense of accuracy' is eliminated. *EF2* is very effective in this respect.

The students at Sung Kyun Kwan thought that the activities contained in *EF2* were both motivating and interesting, and that they generally promoted meaningful exchanges and genuine communication in realistic contexts. The teachers, on the other hand, believed that *EF2* was partially lacking in authenticity on all counts. Thankfully, they also thought that any deficits in *EF2*'s activities and tasks could be overcome through adaptation or supplementation (See Appendix: 7). Justification for the discrepancy between these results could be linked once again to the over-whelming and widening influence of the Communicative Approach and other newer instructional techniques such as Task-Based Learning. The aforementioned 'Communicative' backlash against the Grammar-Translation Approach as well as the increasing popularity of TBL

and consciousness-raising might have had the detrimental effect of procuring ELT professionals with attitudes that support an overabundance of authentic communication practice, and this could explain why the teachers at Sung Kyun Kwan thought *EF2* was not communicative or meaningful enough. Another reason for the difference in opinion might be that the Grammar-Translation Method is highly reflected in the Korean educational system. Most Korean classrooms are teacher-centered and learning is the result of drilling and memorization. Purely out of familiarity with this type of methodology, Korean students may have actually preferred the inclusion of some controlled activities; which would explain their positive rating of *EF2*'s activities. Not to mention the fact that alternating learning conditions and circumstances likely increased the learners' intrinsic motivation, and thereby their appreciation for the textbook's exercises.

#### **(2.4) Skills:**

As mentioned in the 'design and layout' section, *EF2* is a multi-skills syllabus and therefore covers and integrates both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading). However, it does place a larger emphasis on listening and speaking. Three prominent authors in ELT, Swan (1985), Harmer (1996) and McDonough and Shaw (1997) advocate an integrated, multi-skills syllabus because it considers and incorporates several categories of both meaning and form. While both teachers and students at Sung Kyun Kwan stated that *EF2* did indeed provide an integrated balance of the four language skills, the students were unhappy with the representation of skills that they felt deserved attention (See Appendix: 7). Korean EFL students have spent years learning English grammar (vis-à-vis the 'Grammar Translation' approach) in school but can not actually converse in English. They subsequently tend to be preoccupied with the desire to learn conversational English and thus predominantly want to focus on speaking and listening skills (See Appendix: 6). Subsequently, any class time spent on reading or writing is likely to be seen as a waste of time to Korean language learners and is also probably the reason behind Sung Kyun Kwan's students reporting that their needs were not properly attended to in *EF2* (See Appendix: 7).

A more positive characteristic of the integrated syllabus within *EF2* is the fact that the linguistic elements of the textbook such as grammar and vocabulary items are closely connected to the skills-base. So, as the grammar element in the textbook or course progresses and the vocabulary base becomes more demanding, the skills work will also become more demanding. A

close examination of each unit, for instance, reveals that dialogues become more complex as the units progress. Similarly, listening passages become a little longer and are occasionally spoken quicker or with slightly non-standard accents or dialects. Reading texts also become slightly longer while the discourse structure becomes more complex. In addition, comprehension questions check the students understanding of simple facts in early stages, but as the textbook progresses the questions start to require students to undertake more difficult tasks such as inferring meaning or extracting certain relevant information from a mass of less relevant information. An analysis into the treatment of receptive and productive skills as well as the productive skills of speaking and writing in *EF2* will follow.

#### **2.4.1 Receptive Skills - Reading & Listening**

Receptive skills are those that involve active participation on the part of the reader or listener. They are taught/practiced in *EF2* by using both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' processing skills and learning strategies. Top-down processing skills require learners to use schematic and contextual knowledge as well as specific topics to arrive at comprehension. Conversely, bottom-up processing skills require learners to derive meaning through the decoding of single words in a message or passage (Nunan, 1998). In general, the combination of these processes requires the reader or listener to "decipher the meaning of individual lexical items [and] have clear ideas about the overall rhetorical organization of the text" (McDonough and Shaw, 1997, p. 109). These two kinds of skills are used in *EF2* for practicing such sub-skills as making predictions, extracting specific items (scanning/listening for detail), acquiring general information (skimming/listening for gist), extracting detailed information, recognizing function and discourse patterns/markers, and for deducing/inferring meaning from context. Finally, top-down and bottom-up processing skills are presented and practiced in *EF2* through the use of various listening and reading texts types to ensure diverse linguistic coverage. These text types include captivating newspaper and magazine articles, surveys, postcards, letters, interviews, every-day conversations and radio/TV programs. The type of formal and informal English that learners are exposed to in *EF2* is predominantly North American. Nevertheless, various native-speaker and non-native speaker accents as well as dialects from different geographical regions and ethnic backgrounds in the U.S. can be heard on the audiocassettes or CD's. Although very few accents from other English speaking nations are included on the tapes and CD's, the listening models are

suitable for the needs of Sung Kyun Kwan's students; who actually reported that they preferred to learn American English (See Appendix: 6).

#### **2.4.2 Productive Skills - Speaking**

Speaking skills are certainly a central focus of *EF2*. Many elements in the syllabus focus on conversational fluency and the textbook contains plenty of opportunities for oral communication. Speaking practice takes place through the oral presentation and practice of new language items, in dialogue work, role plays, group work, and class activities. The more mechanical aspects of speaking are also occasionally covered in pronunciation practice. In addition, a number of specific conversation strategies are provided such as practicing the ability to open and close conversations, introducing and developing topics, turn-taking, clarification requests, hesitating, checking, and practicing a variety of idiomatic expressions. Much of the speaking practice can be found in the "Conversation" dialogues, which are role-play exercises designed to introduce new structures and present functional and conversational expressions. Further speaking practice is found in the "Duet" sections. These pair exercises and role-play activities build on the teaching points and increase the opportunities for individual practice. Finally, the "Firsthand Expansion Activities" are intended to involve the students in active information sharing, freer cooperative group tasks, and other types of exercises designed to encourage communication skills. These latter exercises are a central component of each unit and they allow the students to extend, refine, and personalize the material they have practiced and studied in each unit.

With respect to pronunciation, the results of the survey seemed to demonstrate that this was one of the book's major weak points (See Appendix: 7). One of the most glaring inadequacies was the fact that very few units contained any exercises devoted to the teaching of word stress, sentence stress, and intonation. Moreover, on the few occasions that these aspects of phonology were actually addressed the activities were either lacking in a communicative focus and context or there was an obvious attempt to emphasize the global aspects of phonology through the use of inadequate and generalized rules, descriptions and functions of speech patterns, stress, and intonation.

Authors such as Brazil (1985), Cauldwell and Hewings (1996), Clenell (1997), and Levis (1999) have suggested that intonation problems are typical of both traditional and modern ELT textbooks and point out that these shortcomings can often be overcome or "greatly lessened by

thinking differently about the uses of intonation and the needs and abilities of learners" (Levis, 1999 p.53). More specifically, they have argued that pronunciation skills such as stress and intonation should only be taught in an explicit context so as to emphasize their communicative value and relevance. They have further argued that teachers and textbooks should only describe intonational meaning very generally at the outset but gradually work towards the demonstration of specific meanings, roles, (i.e. information markers, discourse markers, conversational managers, attitudinal or affect markers, grammatical/syntactic markers, pragmatic markers), and grammaticality (i.e. tone group divisions, marked and unmarked tonic syllables, pitch change, pitch choice) by presenting them in particular contexts through systematic exposure to meaningful, authentic, and phonologically salient texts. In addition, they suggest that we should not only focus on affective and attitudinal meanings but also examine the impact that intonation and stress has in a communicative conversational setting. Moreover, they recommend that teachers and ELT materials should never use generalized affective meanings that depend on native speakers' intuitions as overly precise meanings are rarely conveyed by intonation and stress alone. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, they suggest that the primary purpose to teaching intonation should be to highlight its role, purpose, use, and significance in communication and discourse, not simply to teach the intonation pattern. Perhaps the 'Intermediate English' course at Sung Kyun Kwan might be improved if the teachers supplemented *EF2* with some of these aforementioned techniques and principles that are ultimately designed to foster a receptive and productive awareness of prosodic skills.

### **2.4.3 Productive Skills - Writing**

Writing activities in *EF2* typically ask students to perform tasks of various kinds such as descriptions, narratives, postcards, reviews, letters etc. while the teacher's guide offers suggestions on how students can improve their compositional skills by completing these written tasks accurately and focusing on the writing process simultaneously. It can be suggested, therefore, that the writing skills in *EF2* are attended to through both 'product' and 'process' approaches. Essentially, a product-oriented approach centers on the end-result of writing, whereas a process-oriented approach centers on the process of writing itself. In addition, product-oriented approaches typically engage learners in imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language texts while process-oriented approaches emphasize brainstorming,

planning, drafting, revision, and editing. In other words, the former approach demands quality while the latter approach demands quantity.

Despite their differences, both approaches to the teaching of writing skills have their advantages. Product writing, for example, emphasizes sentence structure and grammar and is often utilized as an excellent means of preparing students for written examinations. The process approach, on the other hand, recognizes that rarely is there only one draft and prepares students for the complex procedure involved in writing compositions (Nunan, 1998). Moreover, each kind of writing also has particular conventions for their organization and expression and studying and practicing these different conventions will only lead to better writing competence in English. For these reasons, it is clear why the authors of *EF2* have included activities that incorporate both the product as well as the process approach in this particular textbook.

### ***(2.5) Language Type and Content***

Under 'language type and content' the textbook/materials evaluation form asked the teachers and students to consider whether the language included in the materials was realistic and authentic. It also examined the extent to which the textbook encouraged both personalization and localization whereby students were required to use language that they had learned in order to engage in purposeful and genuine situations or to talk about themselves and their lives in a meaningful manner. Other criteria that were deemed to be important included whether or not the language was at the right level or of the right type for the students and whether the progression of new language was both logical and appropriate for students. This last point concerns how, and in what order, students are asked to produce new language. In general we would expect there to be some intelligible connection or sequence between what students have previously learned and what they are learning now.

In terms of grammatical structures and functions, *EF2* places a fair bit of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and repetition or 'recycling' of structures and functions. The authors believe that correct knowledge of grammar and functions are an essential aspect of communicative competence and they have adopted the PPP teaching approach as a means of accomplishing their objectives. The graded items for *EF2* are introduced in the initial sections of each unit. They are presented with an emphasis on their use and their form and the approach is rather deductive. The author's claim that the textbook contains the essential functions, tenses, and structures required for an intermediate level of language proficiency, and a quick glance through

the table of contents gives the impression that the material found in this textbook would be useful and interesting for the students.

With respect to vocabulary, *EF2* does make an effort to sensitize learners to the structure of the lexicon of English and to the various relationships that exist within it. Most 'productive' or 'active' lexis and identifiable fixed phrases, for instance, are presented in the controlled practice activities while some 'receptive' or 'passive' lexis is introduced through reading and listening tasks in which students are required to decipher meaning from the surrounding context. In addition, a few useful vocabulary skill-building exercises that include the use of mnemonic techniques (i.e. method of loci, cognitive maps, visual associations, associations of meanings, and sound and paired work associates), semantic relationships, situational relationships, word sets, relationships of form, and collocations are also provided in the review sections/units of the book.

A close inspection of the survey revealed that most respondents seemed disappointed with the textbook's treatment of linguistic items such as grammatical structures, functions, and vocabulary. These problematic results may have stemmed from the selection, ordering, progression, and sequencing of the grammar, structures, vocabulary, and functions covered in the textbook (See Appendix: 7). White (1997) has argued that all structural-functional syllabuses contain some form of grading or selection criteria for grammatical items and functions. He demonstrates that coverage (the number of things which can be expressed by a particular structure or grammatical pattern), potential learnability, and teachability can all be used. Moreover, he mentions that combinability (the potential for simple structures to be combined to form larger and more complex structures), grouping (the bringing together of structures that are similar on one level but different on another), and contrast (the contrasts that can be found between plurality and singularity, tenses, and between linguistic and psychological considerations) are relevant as well. In addition, White (1997) has also suggested that there are a number of criterion that can be used in the selection and grading of vocabulary. He argues that frequency (the total number of occurrences of an item in a given corpus of language), coverage (the number of things which can be expressed by any given item), range (the amount of times a word or words appear in texts within a given corpus), availability (the readiness with which a word is remembered and used by native speakers in certain situations), and potential learnability can all play an important role in vocabulary selection. While it is obvious that some or all of the

aforementioned selection schemes had to be used for the grammatical structures, functions, and vocabulary in *EF2*, the authors never mention the particular schemes nor the rationale or criteria that were used to determine what would be included. The inclusion of such information would have been helpful for the teachers and students to see if the authors' criteria and selection schemes were appropriate and transferable to this particular teaching and learning context.

An additional problem that pertained to 'language type and content' was the fact that the students taking intermediate English at Sung Kyun Kwan University were all from different scientific disciplines (i.e. engineering, medicine etc.) and likely required materials that covered certain aspects of social English as well as those that specifically covered the type of language structures, functions and vocabulary items that were of the right type and usefulness for them in their areas of expertise. Unfortunately, *EF2* is not an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) textbook. It is an ELT textbook devoted to improving student's overall social English and communication skills. While this particular weakness is not a particular fault of *EF2* it does pose some interesting questions about the design and organization of the intermediate English course within this particular language program. The purpose of this course has always been to provide the students with a solid and broad foundation of intermediate social English and communication skills that they could use later on in specific ESP courses. Perhaps the survey results suggest, however, that the students and teachers would like this particular course to also include the coverage of certain linguistic items and content that would have been otherwise included in later, more specialized, courses (See Appendix: 7).

A final element of the 'language type and content' of *EF2* that is worthy of a closer examination is the degree to which the language employed in the textbook was authentic and/or realistic. Since the advent of the 'Communicative Approach' to language teaching in the 1970's and 80's, there has been a growing school of thought that says that authentic reading, speaking, listening, writing, and grammatical language models should be used to teach English language skills as long as the activities or tasks associated with them are also authentic and suitably graded to the level of the students with whom they are being used. Proponents of authentic materials such as Cathcart (1989) and Lee (1995) suggest that when we expose our students to these types of materials we can be confident that the models of language are not only genuine but also representative of real-life language use, particularly in terms of discourse structure. In addition,

they point out that the use of these materials brings greater realism and relevance to the ESL/EFL classroom and they can increase learner motivation.

While the examples of language used in *EF2* are not authentic and in fact appear to be either semi-authentic (originally authentic but simplified) or scripted, the author's rationale can be supported on various grounds. First, researchers such as Young (1991) and Alptekin (1993) have suggested that authentic materials can often create a number of difficulties and problems for students who are lacking in the proper cultural background knowledge or schemata to properly comprehend a message's meaning and content. Second, the selection of authentic texts is frequently quite difficult and challenging and a student's inability to understand a text can be extremely demoralizing and thereby de-motivating in some instances (Harmer, 1996). Finally, and most significantly, since unreal or unauthentic English is easier to comprehend and more pedagogically real, and since real English is indeed genuine but more difficult to comprehend and less real pedagogically, a middle ground should be obtained between these two poles (Carter, 1988). With respect to the survey, it would appear as though the authors of *EF2* have done a reasonable job of achieving such an intermediary position as both the teachers and students reported that the language used in the book was relatively authentic and suitable for their teaching and learning purposes respectively (See Appendix: 7).

### **(2.6) Subject & Content:**

Many theorists believe that it is indisputable that language is culturally bound and since language teaching and culture can not be distinctly separated from each other it is probably inevitable that students will be exposed to some elements of the target language culture when using many ELT textbooks. Furthermore, to become fluent in a second language requires communicative competence, and a significant portion of communicative competence encompasses a cultural understanding of things such as conversational routines and discourse nuances as well as the target society's norms, values, and etiquette (Kramsch, 1994; McDonough and Shaw, 1997). These factors in themselves establish that a fundamental requirement for ELT textbooks should be to display an accurate representation of the target language culture.

In terms of the representation of subject and cultural content, *EF2* covers a wide variety of interesting contemporary topics and themes such as 'entertainment', 'stories', 'travel', and 'culture and customs' that both the teachers and students seemed to enjoy (See Appendix: 7). *EF2* also frequently portrays a diverse array of ethnic groups, realistic characters, and a number of

internationally recognized actors and musicians to whom users of this book can easily relate. In addition, it is fairly clear that the authors sought to avoid stereotypes and biases of age, race and ethnicity, gender, and class and all characters are always represented equally in the book. Many characters, for example, come from different ethnic origins and the sexes are sometimes shown in traditionally unconventional occupations while the vocabulary that is presented is gender-neutral and exhibits terms that are representative of modern society. Finally, the presentation of characters in realistic social settings and relationships furthers the textbook's authenticity in regards to the target language culture.

One potential problem with the textbook's subject matter and social content pertains to the presentation of the target language culture. Some theorists such as Prodromou (1988) and Alptekin (1993) suggest that the inclusion of foreign subject matter and social constructs in ELT textbooks has the potential to create comprehension problems or other serious cultural misunderstandings due to the fact that students might lack the proper schemata to interpret these foreign concepts correctly. In this particular case, however, any student's failure to comprehend a unit's subject matter and content could be easily remedied through a simple explanation given by a native-speaker instructor. In addition, *EF2* may actually enrich our learners' overall awareness and experiences by exposing them to another culture's attitudes and practices - a claim bolstered by the survey respondents who found the textbook to be both culturally realistic and appropriate (See Appendix: 7).

A final minor problem with *EF2*'s presentation of subject matter and content centers around the author's claims that this particular book is suitable for both homogeneous and heterogeneous ESL/EFL classes. Some exercises (most notably those in the 'travel' and 'culture and customs' units) call on the students to describe and share information about their travel experiences as well as facts about their own country, history, culture, and customs. While activities such as these often work very well with typical heterogeneous ESL/EFL classes in Britain and North America that consist of a wide variety of students from a diverse array of cultural backgrounds, they generally seem redundant, de-motivating, and uninteresting when used with a class of 10-15 Korean university students. Because the experienced teacher could quickly recognize the shortcomings of many of these aforementioned tasks and subsequently modify and adapt them to suit the needs of their particular students, this should not be construed as a serious problem in this instance.

## **CHAPTER: 3 - CONCLUSION**

### ***(3.1) Overall Consensus:***

*EF2* is a relatively new addition to the vast array of ELT materials that are currently available on the market. While perhaps not as well known as other prominent series of textbooks, *EF2* has many notable and worthwhile characteristics. For example, the entire textbook package is well conceived and it contains a wide variety of useful supplementary materials. The book is also very attractive and organized in a clear, logical, and coherent manner. This organization reflects a topic-based structural-functional syllabus that is designed with the goal of facilitating communicative competence. In addition, *EF2* reflects a multi-skills syllabus, and it manages to integrate the four language skills without neglecting other important aspects of ELT such as vocabulary development. In particular, receptive and productive skills are covered through a wide variety beneficial teaching and learning strategies that are consistent with many fundamental principles of SLA such as 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' listening and reading exercises and both 'product' and 'process' oriented approaches to writing skills. Vocabulary skills, on the other hand, are attended to through a variety of reliable techniques such as mnemonic devices that should help students to assign meaning and store words and phrases in their long-term memories.

With respect to the treatment of grammatical structures and functions, *EF2* utilizes the somewhat contestable but successful and long-standing PPP approach. Although it was shown that newer approaches such as TBL may be more consistent with recent theories of SLA, the PPP approach is still acceptable and appropriate in many circumstances. In addition, the activities and tasks in *EF2* were found to be basically communicative and they seemed to consistently promote a balance of activities approach. This in turn encouraged both controlled practice with language skills as well as creative, personal, and freer responses on the part of the students.

Despite its strengths, *EF2* still had shortcomings. Many of the activities, for instance, were repetitive, failed to encourage truly meaningful practice, promote realistic discourse, nor lead to the internalization of language. It was suggested that the inclusion of more consciousness-raising activities, genuine negotiation of meaning tasks, and effective cooperative learning strategies would have improved this particular aspect of the book. Additional problems

centered around the grading and selection criteria that were used for the book's syllabus as well as the fit between some aspects of the syllabus and the actual needs and desires of the students and teachers in the intermediate English program. The adoption of a learner-centered approach, a reassessment or evaluation of the overall goals of the language program, and the inclusion of ESP materials within the course framework might have been appropriate in this case. Final problems centered on *EF2*'s treatment of pronunciation skills and it was suggested that the inclusion of activities designed to teach students the relevance and importance of prosody as well as the communicative purposes and functions of intonation would have been beneficial.

### **(3.2) Conclusion:**

While this study did identify disconcerting problems with *EF2*, the results of the survey seemed to demonstrate that this particular textbook actually stood up reasonably well to a systematic in-depth analysis and that the positive attributes far out-weighed the negative characteristics. Despite a few reservations and shortcomings (i.e. lack of an ESP focus), the teachers felt that *EF2* was relatively compatible with the university's language-learning aims (intermediate communication skills) and suitable for small, homogeneous, co-ed. classes of senior Korean students. It was also felt that any superfluous concerns might be alleviated or eradicated through supplementing, modifying, and adapting problematic aspects of the book. Moreover, the teachers found that *EF2* actually raised their students' interest in further language study and would voluntarily choose to use the textbook again while the majority of students reported that the textbook was somewhat stimulating and useful for their purposes (See Appendix: 7). In conclusion, *EF2* can be neither whole-heartedly recommended nor unreservedly utilized in this particular teaching and learning situation. Nevertheless, it still can be an effective textbook in the hands of a good teacher and instructors should not be discouraged from using it with the appropriate learner audience.

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## Appendix I

### STUDENT PROFILE

1. **AGE:** 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
2. **SEX:** Male Female
3. **CULTURAL BACKGROUND:** Korean Other (\_\_\_\_\_)
4. **OCCUPATION:** Student Other (\_\_\_\_\_)
5. **MOTIVATION:** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
(One = Highly motivated, Ten = Slightly motivated)
6. **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Year 1 2 3 4 Graduate
7. **KNOWLEDGE** A) Of English: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
B) Of The World: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
(One = Extensive, Ten = Minimal)
8. **INTERESTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix II**

### **STUDENT NEEDS ANALYSIS**

1. Why are you studying English?
2. Where do you expect to use English in the future (ex. what context or situation)?
3. Order the following language skills from 1 (important) to 6 (unimportant):  
\_\_\_\_ reading                      \_\_\_\_ listening                      \_\_\_\_ vocabulary  
\_\_\_\_ writing                        \_\_\_\_ speaking                      \_\_\_\_ grammar
4. What percentage (%) of class time do you think should be spent on each skill?
5. What do you expect to learn from this class?
6. What are your language strengths and weaknesses?
7. Do you have a preferred learning style? If so, what is it?
8. Do you prefer to learn individually, in pairs or in a group?
9. Would you prefer to learn American or British English? Or both?
10. Do you like using a textbook? Why or why not?

## Appendix III

### STUDENT TEXTBOOK EVALUATION FORM

\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE:                      1 = HIGHLY DISAGREE                      10 = HIGHLY AGREE \*\*\*

**A/ *Practical Considerations:***

1. The price of the textbook is reasonable.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
2. The textbook is easily accessible.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**B/ *Layout and Design:***

3. The layout and design is appropriate and clear.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
4. The textbook is organised effectively.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**C/ *Activities:***

5. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
6. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
7. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
8. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
9. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**D/ *Skills:***

10. The materials include and focus on the skills that I need to practice.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
11. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
12. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills - i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**E/ Language Type:**

13. The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
14. The language used is at the right level for my current English ability.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
15. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
16. The grammar points were presented with brief and easy examples and explanations.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
17. The language functions exemplify English that I will be likely to use in the future.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
18. The language represents a diverse range of registers and accents.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**F/ Subject and Content:**

19. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my needs as an English language learner.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
20. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
21. The subject and content of the materials is interesting, challenging and motivating.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
22. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
23. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**G/ Overall Consensus:**

24. The textbook raises my interest in further English language study.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
25. I would choose to study this textbook again.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## Appendix IV

### TEACHER TEXTBOOK EVALUATION FORM

\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE:                      1 = HIGHLY DISAGREE                      10 = HIGHLY AGREE \*\*\*

**A/ *Practical Considerations:***

1. The price of the textbook is reasonable.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
2. The textbook is easily accessible.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
3. The textbook is a recent publication.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
4. A teacher's guide, workbook, and audio-tapes accompany the textbook.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
5. The author's views on language and methodology are comparable to mine (Note:  
Refer to the 'blurb' on the back of the textbook).  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**B/ *Layout and Design:***

6. The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions, structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
7. The layout and design is appropriate and clear.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
8. The textbook is organised effectively.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
9. An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
10. Adequate review sections and exercises are included.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
11. An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
12. The teacher's book contains guidance about how the textbook can be used to the utmost advantage.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
13. The materials objectives are apparent to both the teacher and student.  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**C/ Activities:**

14. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
15. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
16. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
17. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
18. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
19. The tasks are conducive to the internalisation of newly introduced language.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
20. The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**D/ Skills:**

21. The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
22. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
23. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills - i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
24. The textbook highlights and practices natural pronunciation (i.e.- stress and intonation).  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
25. The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**E/ Language Type:**

26. The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
27. The language used is at the right level for my (students') current English ability.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
28. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
29. The grammar points are presented with brief and easy examples and explanations.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
30. The language functions exemplify English that I/my students will be likely to use.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

31. The language represents a diverse range of registers and accents.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

***F/ Subject and Content:***

32. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs as an English language learner(s).  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
33. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
34. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
35. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
36. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

***G/ Conclusion:***

37. The textbook is appropriate for the language-learning aims of my institution.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
38. The textbook is suitable for small-medium, homogeneous, co-ed. Classes of university students.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
39. The textbook raises my (students') interest in further English language study.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
40. I would choose to study/teach this textbook again.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Appendix V

STUDENT PROFILE ANALYSIS

Figure 1. Age Demographics

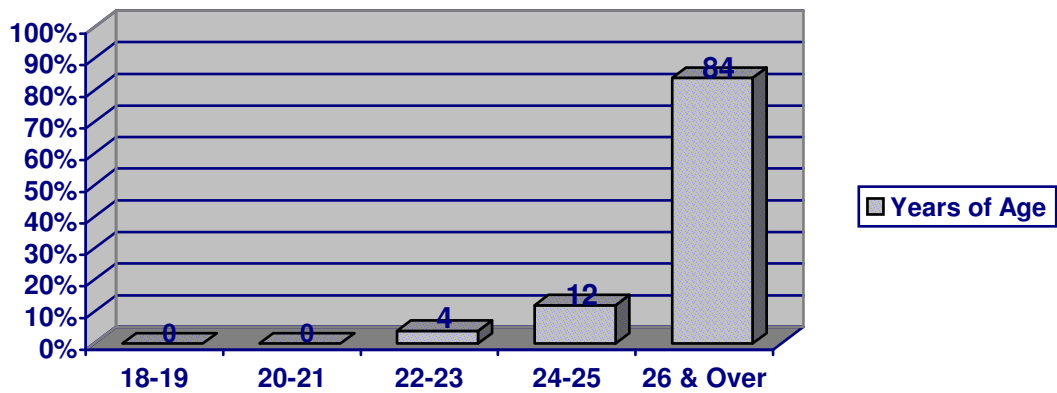
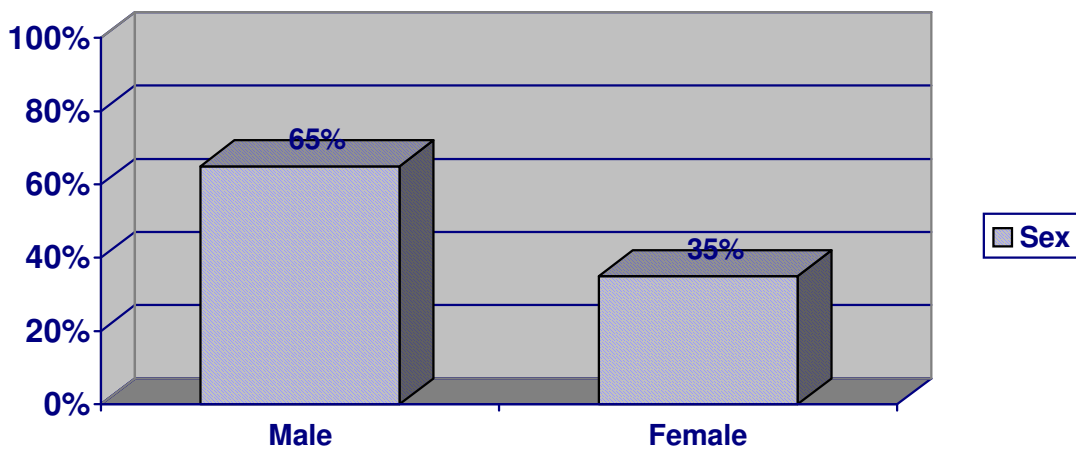
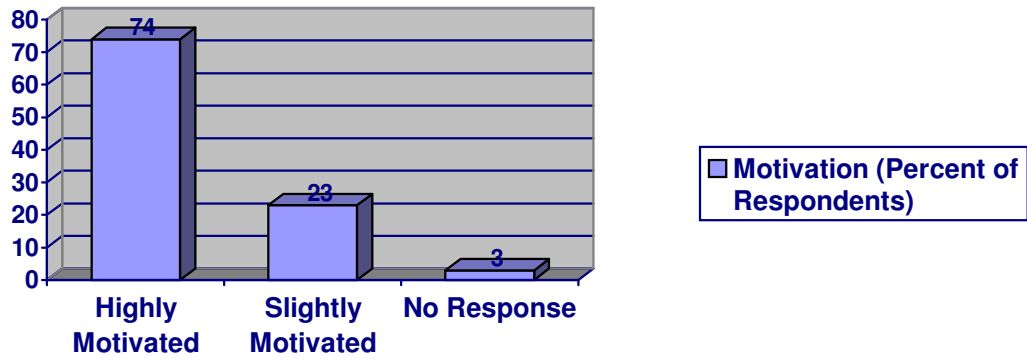


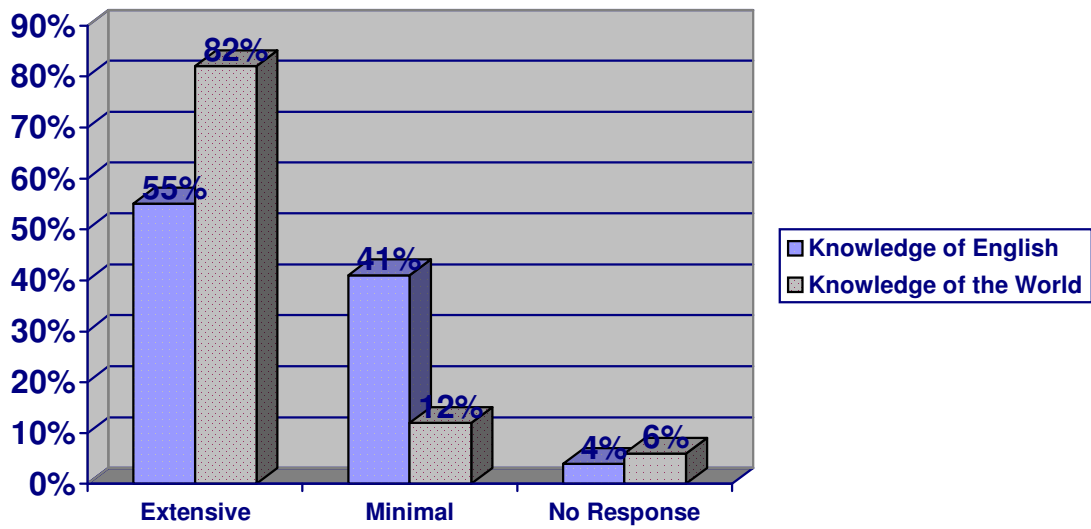
Figure 2. Sex Demographics



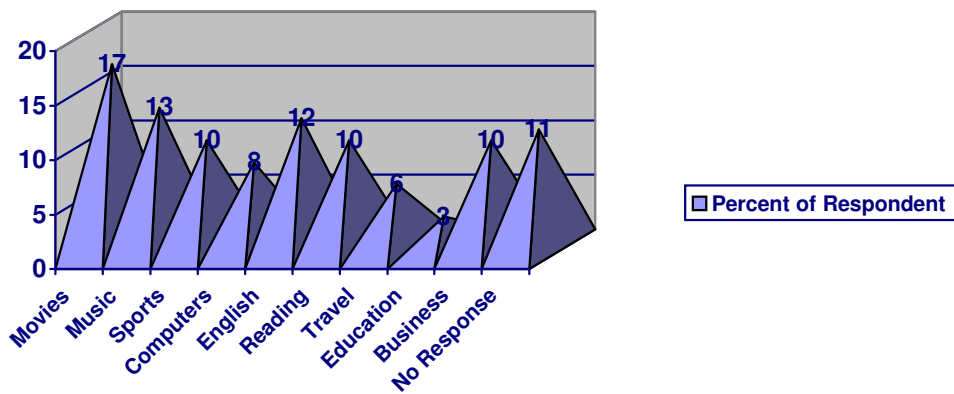
**Figure 3. Motivation Statistics**



**Figure 4. Knowledge Analysis**



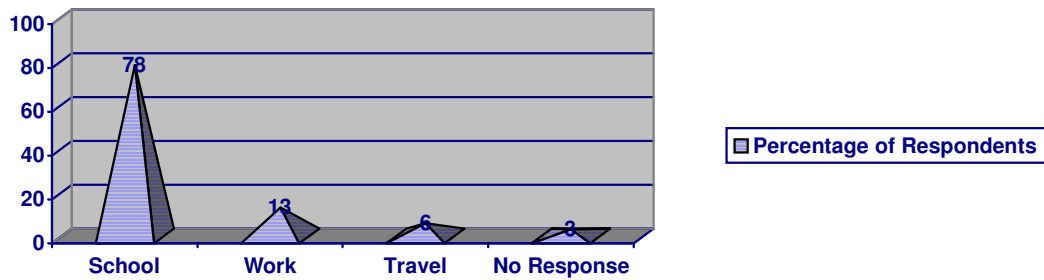
**Figure 5. Interest Table**



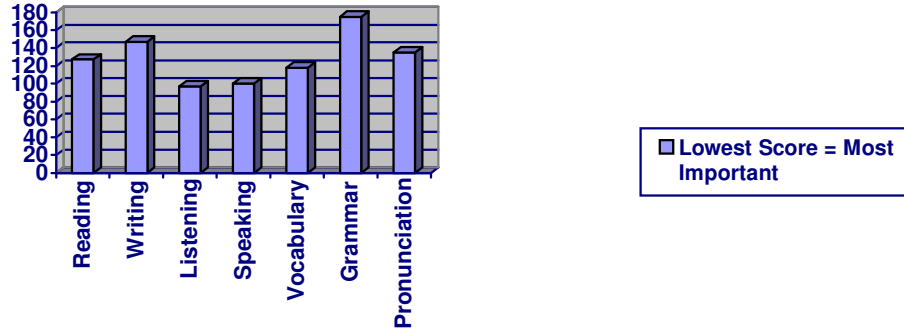
## Appendix VI

### STUDENT NEEDS ANALYSIS RESULTS

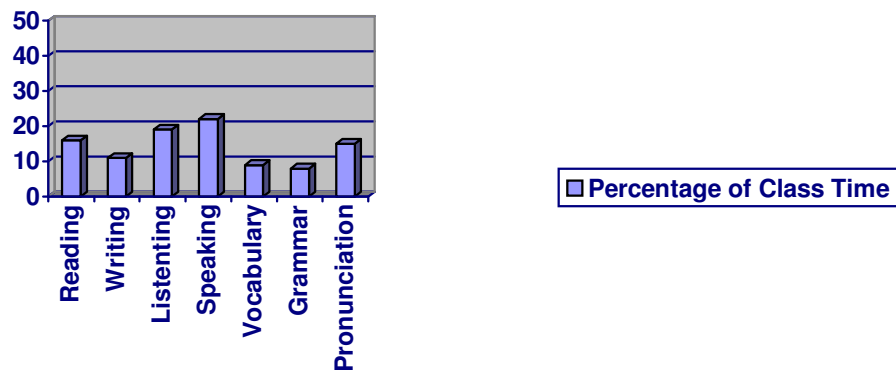
**Figure 6.** Future Situations of Potential English Use



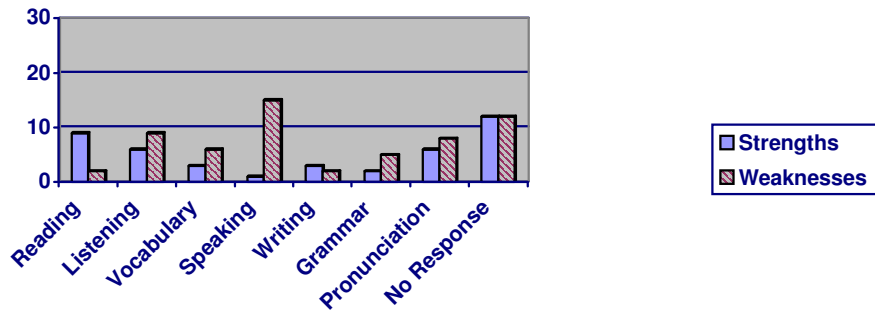
**Figure 7.** Skills Importance Ranking



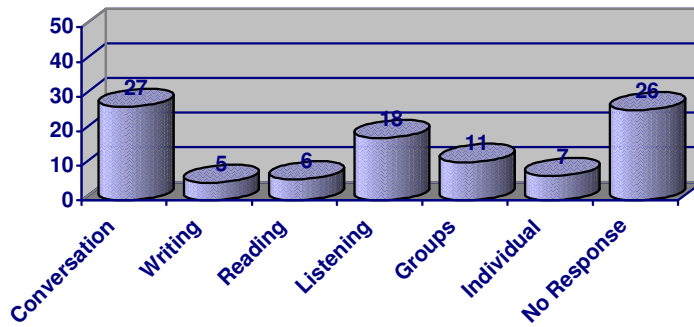
**Figure 8.** Skills vs. Class-Time Distribution



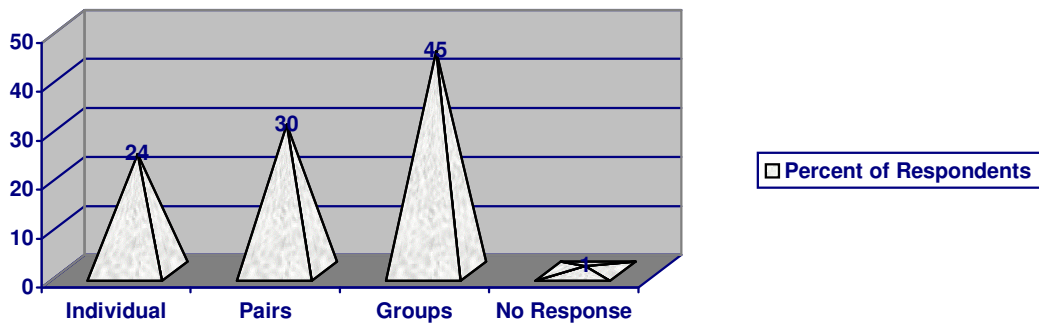
**Figure 9.** Students Perceived Language Strengths and Weaknesses (By Percent of Respondents)



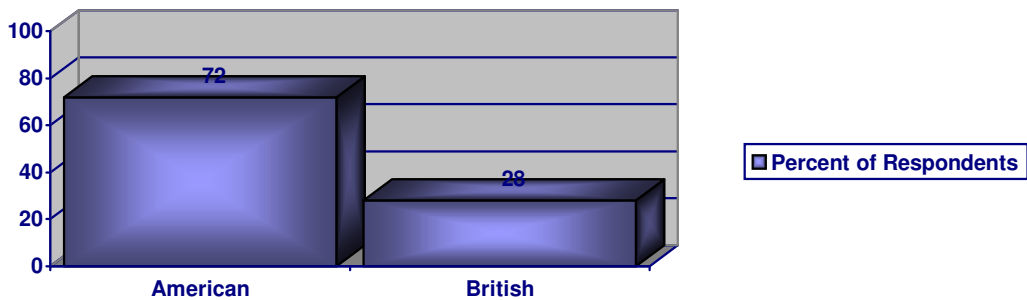
**Figure 10.** Preferred Learning Style - (By Percent of Respondents)



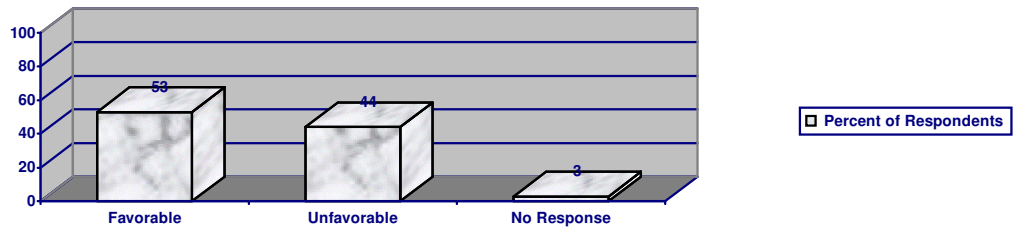
**Figure 11.** Preferred Type of Interaction



**Figure 12.** Preferred Type of English



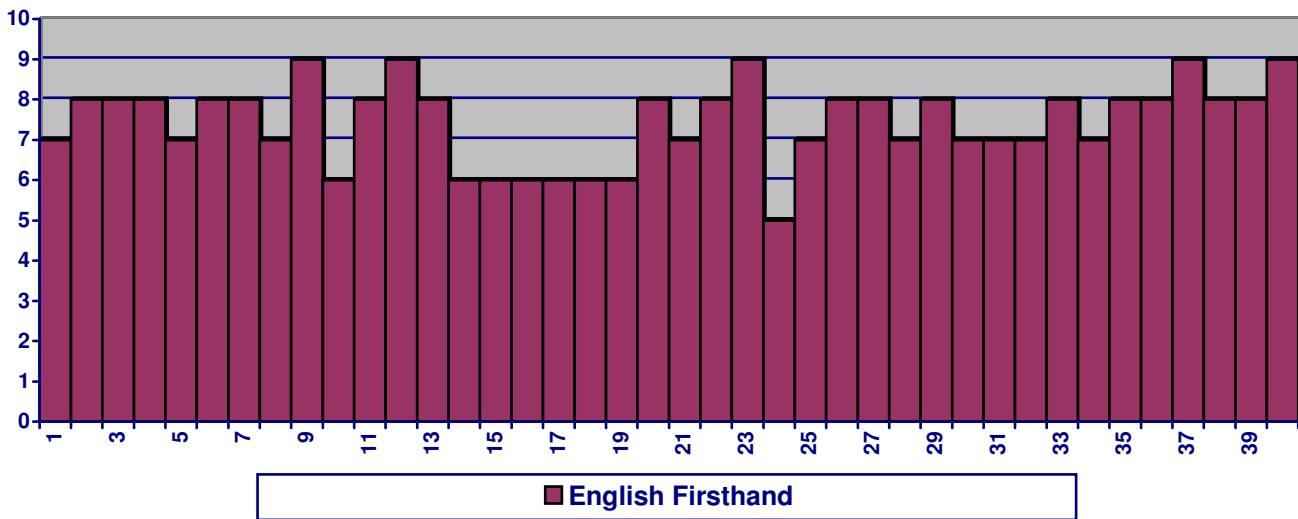
**Figure 13.** Attitudes Toward Using a Textbook



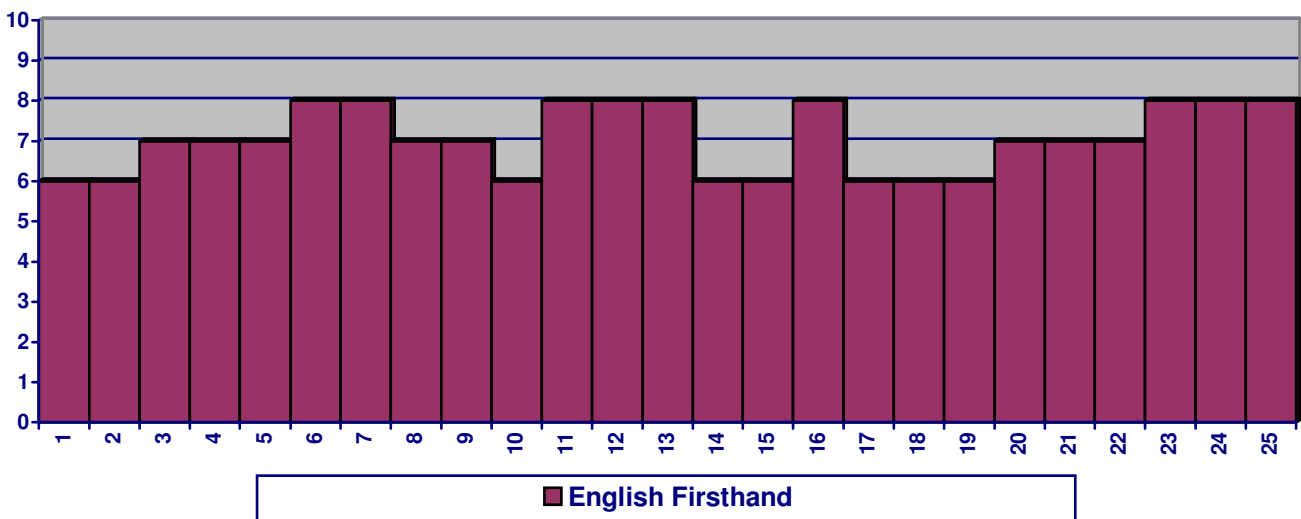
Appendix VII

TEXTBOOK EVALUATION ANALYSIS

**Figure 14.** Textbook Evaluation Form Analysis - Teachers' Overall Average/Question



**Figure 15.** Textbook Evaluation Form Analysis - Students' Overall Average/Question



**Figure 16.** Textbook Evaluation Form Analysis - Overall Average Per Question

Question #	Students' Average	Teachers' Average
1	6	7
2	6	8
3	7	8
4	7	8
5	7	7
6	8	8
7	8	8
8	7	7
9	7	9
10	6	6
11	8	8
12	8	9
13	8	8
14	6	6
15	6	6
16	8	6
17	6	6
18	6	6
19	6	6
20	7	8
21	7	7
22	7	8
23	8	9
24	8	5
25	8	7
26		8
27		8
28		7
29		8
30		7
31		7
32		7
33		8
34		7
35		8
36		8
37		9
38		8
39		8
40		9

**Figure 17.** Textbook Evaluation Form Analysis ('English Firsthand' - Overall Average)

