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Evaluation of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Textbooks Taught at the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to evaluate the ELT textbooks prescribed for study at the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), Kakul. The aim of this paper is to determine the overall pedagogical value of the ELT textbooks towards this specific language programme.

The merits and demerits of the textbooks are discussed in detail with reference to 7 common features developed from different evaluation checklists.

The findings reveal that the syllabus is traditional in approach. The choice of any language teaching material must be made with the proper context in which the materials will be used. If the learners can see a close connection between the content of the material and their academic/professional/general needs, then there will be a strong motivating force for the language learners and better results will be achieved. Thus, it is suggested that instead of heavily literature based content, subject specific/general material should be included in the course.

Key Words: Evaluation; Academic/ Professional Language Needs, Checklists, Subject Specific Material; PMA

1. Introduction

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In bilingual/ multilingual situations with different educational systems and different socio-economic background of people in Pakistan, an ELT textbook should be selected judiciously, since it cannot cater equally to the needs of every classroom situation. One way to improve the curriculum is to improve the textbooks and the materials used in the language programme. Nothing is perfect, therefore, the textbooks that are once selected after consideration of many issues can lack many things related to them. However, there is always a room for improvement and refinement. Hence, the evaluation is carried out to overcome the deficiencies in the ELT textbooks taught at the PMA. For the purposes of the present study, evaluation of the literature module only will be done. Teaching methodology and evaluation procedures are not considered at all.

The following textbooks have been prescribed for teaching prose to the military cadets:

- An Anthology of Modern English Prose (compiled by the Department of English in 1989)
- Modern Short Stories (edited by A.J. Emerson)
- Anthology of English Prose and Poetry (compiled by the Department of English in 1998)
- Arms and the Man (Bernard Shaw)
- The Pearl (John Steinberg)

The syllabus under study has been in use for about twenty years with a few minor changes. For example, at different times Austen, Maugham and Hemingway have been taught. The prose and poetry selections have also been different at different times. However, the structure and pattern of the syllabus have, more or less, remained unchanged. The only significant addition in the syllabus has been the inclusion of the Phonetics module and Audio-Visual Aids Packages.

Like the syllabus of most courses taught at the graduate level, the syllabus under study is also a fixed syllabus. The syllabus is handed over to the instructors before they start their teaching assignments. It tells them what is to be taught and in what order, and which teaching methodology is to be used. The syllabus (with the exception of public speaking module) is based on the teacher-centered approach. Generally, the instructor is the sole authority in the class and the concept of learner-centeredness is ignored.

2. Literature Review

Evaluation is universally acknowledged as a crucial part of any educational endeavour. No curriculum is complete without the evaluation component. For Flowerdew and Peacock (2001:193), 'programme evaluation means evaluating or re-evaluating the course design --- the syllabus, materials, tasks and methods as they were originally planned -- to see if the course is meeting its stated objectives'.

According to Nunan (1988:118),

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The data resulting from evaluation assist us in deciding whether a course needs to be modified or altered in any way so that objectives may be achieved more effectively. If certain learners are not achieving the goals and objectives set for a course, it is necessary to determine why this is so. We would also wish, as a result of evaluating a course, to have some idea about what measures might be taken to remedy any shortcomings. Evaluation, then, is not simply a process of obtaining information; it is also a decision –making process.

It emerges from the above definition that evaluation performs two functions: firstly, it makes value judgments and secondly, it involves action.

Evaluation of textbooks is not done haphazardly; there exist some specific criteria suggested by various authors and researchers in the form of checklists. Sheldon (1988) argues that no general list of criteria can ever really be applied to all teaching and learning contexts without considerable modification. He believes, most of the standardized evaluation checklists can be used as helpful starting points for English language teachers in a wide variety of situations only after some modification, as they contain similar components.

There are different checklists proposed by eminent authors such as Rivers (1981), Williams (1983), Grant (1989), Brown (1995), Cunningsworth (1995) and Ur (1996), for evaluating ELT textbooks. They all agree that evaluation checklists should have some criteria related to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics.

Other important criteria that should be included are those that assess methodology of a textbook, 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 overall curriculum of the organization. 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.

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) have discussed three types of material evaluation; the 'predictive' or 'pre-use' evaluation that is designed to examine the future or potential performance of a textbook; the 'in-use' evaluation designed to examine the existing material being used; and the 'retrospective' or 'post-use' (reflective) evaluation of a textbook that has been used in any respective institution.

The evaluation used in the present study can be termed as the 'retrospective' type of evaluation in which an attempt has been made to check the characteristics of the textbooks under study against a collection of criteria proposed by various authors.

3. Method / Procedure

For evaluating the poetry and prose textbooks, an eclectic checklist was prepared based on different checklists suggested by Celci-Murcia (1979), Rivers (1981), Williams (1983), Grant (1989), Cunningsworth (1995), Ur (1996), along with the evaluative items added on the basis of our study for the present work. After a close examination of the Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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checklists, the following criteria were found to be common to all the schemes proposed by the above mentioned materials:

1. Objectives of the syllabus in relation to the objectives and contents of the course books
2. Subject matter
3. Vocabulary and Structure
4. Clear attractive layout, print easy to read
5. Illustrations
6. Tips for Teaching
7. Potential for Adaptability

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, first the three textbooks prescribed for study are evaluated against each one of the features in the checklist one by one. The results of the scrutiny of all the three textbooks on every feature are combined under common headings to save space and time. Next, a general evaluation of the novel and play is presented, based on our study of relevant literature on evaluation and ELT.

The very inclusion of the component of literature can be called into question since the military cadets are more in need of functional English rather than the acquaintance with the emphatic poetry and personal reflections of different authors. Before the students are linguistically competent, they cannot be expected to benefit from the study of literature. Although, carefully selected texts can serve as a tool to reinforce language teaching points, the current syllabus does not seem to consider this crucial factor. It seems that the selection of textbooks has been made in haste and with a lack of systematically applied criteria. This requires a detailed evaluation of the contents of the syllabus.

4.1. (i) Objectives of the Syllabus in Relation to the Objectives and Contents of the Textbooks

Objectives should be in the form of appropriate and specific statements which serve as a base for the curriculum developer to devise an appropriate content (Print, 1993). Curriculum serves as a tool in the hands of teacher. It is the duty of the teacher to realize the objectives of the content or material through it (Kelly, 2004).

From the above definitions and statements on content and objectives, it becomes evident that clear objectives are very essential for a curriculum because they are the unifying force which unites all the elements of curriculum.

The most important objective of teaching a language course to students of professional institutions is to enable them to meet the academic needs as well as the Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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communicative needs of their professional life effectively. It seems that the three textbooks have been compiled without taking into consideration the objectives of the syllabus of English prescribed by the PMA authorities. Moreover, the language used for defining these objectives is not in accordance with the language required for stating objectives under the domain of education.

Objectives should be precise, specific and measurable (Print, 1993). Most of the objectives do not conform to these requirements. The PMA authorities have not clearly specified the objectives of the syllabus in vivid words so that the learners know what they are expected to have learnt at the end of the course. We do not know what the learners should be able to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended objectives at the end of each term.

(a) Book 1: An Anthology of Modern English Prose

In the foreword to ‘An Anthology of Modern English Prose’, Malik (General Ghulam Muhammad Malik served as the Commandant of the PMA from 1988-1990) (1989: i) states:

The department of English was assigned the task to compile a book that should, on the one hand, fulfill our cultural and ideological needs and, on the other, meet our linguistic and professional requirements.

Cadets of the PMA have a special purpose to serve; they have to dedicate themselves to the service of Islam and Pakistan...All training gadgets and course books have to be designed in such a manner that along with professional excellence they go on imbibing, imperceptibly, the eternal spirit of religion and the abiding love of their motherland. A graduate of this Academy must be imbued with the character and professional qualities of the true Muslim soldier.

It is obvious from the above statements that one of the major aims of the PMA authorities is to promote religious and nationalistic ideology among the cadets through the teaching of English textbooks. Another important aim of teaching English is to fulfill the linguistic and professional requirements. On the contrary, the above mentioned aims do not directly match with the objectives of teaching the prescribed “Anthology”. The objective of teaching the Anthology of Modern English Prose, as provided in the syllabus document is:

To raise and broaden the base of intellectual and mental horizon, through the teaching of Prose lessons.

The language used for defining this objective does not seem appropriate. Moreover, this objective is quite unrealistic; it is neither precise nor measurable. It appears that the PMA authorities are not really clear about their objectives. Perhaps, that is why they fail to achieve any objective mentioned above. The linguistic and communicative needs were not specified while formulating the objectives. In the Preface to this textbook the compiler states:

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This Anthology has been compiled to fulfill the peculiar needs of the Gentleman Cadets of the PMA...the previous books were a representation of western ideas and an alien culture. Their replacement by a fresher, more modern and more purposeful reading material was overdue. The present book is intended to meet all these requirements. It aims at providing an easy and attractive introduction to the modern English prose...

This book ignores the students' objectives of learning English at this level as well as objectives of the syllabus. There is no reference to the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing or to study skills. Even the one aim mentioned is not fulfilled because the textbook is neither easy nor provides modern English language.

The second part of the book contains literary essays,

...which have specifically been included to enable our students to compare the style of the western prose writers with that of the Muslim writers from the east whose essays are included in the first part (Irshad, 1989: iii).

This objective appears to be quite irrelevant as it does not match with the needs of the potential army officers. It should have been suitable for the students of literature but not for the military cadets who need to learn language for practical purposes.

(b) Book 2: Modern Short Stories

The objective of teaching 'Modern Short Stories' as stated in the syllabus document is,

To instill an insight and ability to understand cultural, social and moral values through the teaching of prose and novel.

It is interesting to note that the objective of teaching the novel 'The Pearl', and the book 'Modern Short Stories' is not stated separately. This objective seems to be unrealistic and difficult to measure.

(c) Book 1: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry

This book is also not different from the other two books. The objectives of teaching prose given in the syllabus document are:

1. To enhance the process of intellectual curiosity and creativity through teaching of prose. This will further develop a deeper insight, wider vision and a suitable observation among the cadets.
2. To augment exposure to rich literary heritage of emotional experience and intellectual insight to read, to ponder and to enjoy.
3. To reinforce the ability to learn form and technique of good writing through extensive and varied menu of good model writing. This will be done through the teaching of selective prose lessons.

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Keeping in view, the educational background of the learners and the teaching methodology of instructors, these objectives again seem quite unrealistic. The methodology for teaching prose lessons is lecture/direct method. According to the instructors, while teaching prose lessons, they usually ask the cadets to read aloud from the book. Most of them usually point out the mistakes in pronunciation, provide meanings of the difficult words and finally discuss the ideas presented in the lessons. There is no effort on the part of instructors to analyze the language and style of the writers. No writing activities are conducted in the class to inculcate creativity among the students. The instructors believe that forty minutes period leaves no time for any writing activity. Thus, it becomes evident that the objectives stated above are quite unrealistic in the present circumstances.

The book aims at literary achievement which should not be the objective of teaching English to the cadets. The ex-cadets also revealed during informal discussions that they desired to have sound knowledge of functional grammar and excellent command over writing and speaking skills. The military cadets would need effective writing skills and reasonable vocabulary, which are ignored while defining the objectives of teaching prose. It appears that those responsible for formulating the syllabus are ignorant of the general principles of ELT.

The objective of teaching poetry as mentioned in the syllabus document is:

To provide poetic touch and develop Gentleman Cadets' literary taste through teaching of poetry.

Most of the Pakistani students do not have any interest in foreign language poetry as they are unable to appreciate the fine nuances of poetry. Same is the case with the military cadets. It is quite inappropriate to teach poetry to cadets who require English language for practical purposes. The requirements of the cadets are not to acquaint themselves with the love poetry of Shakespeare or romantic poetry of Keats but to acquire sufficient linguistic and communicative competence. Poetry with its structural complexity and special use of vocabulary also causes problems to the cadets. It appears as if the objectives have been prepared without considering the future needs of the cadets.

4.1. ii Subject Matter

‘The subject matter which is available to the students must be in harmony with the needs and interests of pupils at that level’ (Sherwani, 2001:82).

Book 1:

‘An Anthology of Modern English Prose’ is divided into three parts. The first part contains essays and articles. Five essays are selected from this section. Out of these five essays, three are written by the Muslim authors and the other two by the British writers. However, the three essays, ‘The Holy Prophet’, ‘Islamic Culture’ and ‘The Rationale of Pakistan’ cannot be termed as essays in the real sense of the term. ‘The Holy Prophet’ and ‘Islamic Culture’ are extracts from two different books written by Syed Amir Ali and Pickthal respectively. The third essay ‘The Rationale of Pakistan’ is an extract from a

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speech delivered by the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It is a formal speech using the language of politics which is neither needed by the cadets nor is graspable by them. The lessons are difficult linguistically for the learners whose reading age is thirteen.

Although these lessons are culturally relevant and acceptable for the learners, “incidentally” these lessons are the most unintelligible for the students. It became evident from informal discussions with the cadets that they did not like the present selection of essays in the section ‘Islam and Pakistan’ because of the difficult language as well as the boring content. In an earlier study, majority of the cadets have not approved the present selection of essays, (see Khushi: 2004). However, they expressed their desire to include more interesting essays related to Islam and Pakistan, perhaps because ‘the Gentlemen Cadets of the Pakistan Military Academy have a special purpose to serve; they have to dedicate themselves to the service of Islam and Pakistan’ (Malik, 1989: i).

Only one essay, entitled ‘On Babies’ is selected for study from the second section. This is a humorous essay written by an English writer, Jerome K. Jerome. The students seem to enjoy this lesson not only because of the story but also because of the easy language.

The third section deals with the subject of war. Again only one lesson, ‘Morale in Battle’ is prescribed for study. This essay is taken from a book written by Field Marshal Montgomery. The selection of this article seems appropriate as morale in battle is an important factor in the army. The theme of the lesson is of interest to the learners.

Home-culture content should be increased because cadets need to know how to talk about it in the future. For this purpose, instead of formal speeches, and lectures by statesmen, stories of Pakistani war heroes may be included in the syllabus. Moreover, authentic material adapted from newspapers and military journals can be used to teach various language points to the cadets. The emphasis should be more on teaching language skills instead of trying to inculcate literary taste among the cadets.

Book 2

The following three short stories are included in the syllabus:

The Refugees
The Open Window
The Last Leaf

These stories may be delightful for readers familiar with a wide range of literary style but they fail to impress the foreign language learners. The socio-cultural background of these stories is Western, and the dialect of English presented in these stories shows a difference of society. There are many culturally alien references e.g.: “brownness in October wood or in beer”.

Literature and language are closely linked to each other and literature can be used to illustrate different language points and various authentic uses of language. Moreover, it encourages critical and creative thinking, but if literature-based texts are to form part of Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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compulsory English syllabus then the students have to be linguistically equipped before being able to understand a literary piece. The students' basic need is to learn functional English, which is not catered through the present literary selection.

Book 3

'The Anthology of Prose and Poetry' comprises two separate sections: prose and poetry. The prose selections, written by English writers are linguistically and conceptually quite difficult for the cadets. The lessons also contain a number of culturally alien references. For example, the following extract from 'A Piece of Chalk':

"...they blazoned the shields of their paladins with the purple and gold of many heraldic sunsets. The greenness of a thousand green leaves clustered into the live green figure of Robin Hood. The blueness of a score of forgotten skies became the blue robes of the virgin. The inspiration went in like sunbeams and came out like Apollo" (p, 185).

The selection of these articles seems inappropriate. The cadets with no literary background find these articles quite difficult and boring as was revealed during interviews with the cadets. These literary selections may be enjoyable for students familiar with a wide range of literary style but they fail to impress the foreign language learners. It was found during informal discussions with the instructors that the existing syllabus is not organized around any established linguistic criteria and the selection of content is non-purposive. The presentation of texts, which represent different areas of human activity, is a good prospect but the focus seems to be on "covering large area" not on the selection of texts, which present functional English.

The textbook does not make an attempt in making the students feel that they are studying an up-to-date text. They know that for the last 20-25 years this syllabus has been in use with a few minor changes. This sense of oldness and out-dated ideas creates in them a sense of disliking, as they do not become active participants and good receptors for this text. Hence, this book as such has no contribution in making the cadets proficient in English.

The poems included in the syllabus are written by Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, and Robert Frost. The ideas expressed by these poets are intricate as they sound the various trends, political and social movements of their ages. Without understanding the historicity of the poems, the cadets would not be able to understand and enjoy them. The instructors also admitted during discussions that they could not develop interest among the students for appreciating poetry due to time constraints. Besides, the selection of poems seems to be inappropriate. The poems like 'Ode to the West Wind' and 'Ode to the Nightingale' are difficult for most of the cadets who have inadequate language proficiency. It seems that these odes have been selected without any regard to learners' linguistic level and proficiency in language. The noticeable point is that if it is really essential to teach poetry to the cadets then it should be of their interest. As Littlewood (1986) points out, that students' interest and appreciation of the experiences described will be enhanced if the content of the poems makes contact with their experience. Unfortunately, this is not valid for the present textbook. The poems like 'Ode to the West

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Wind' and others are not of any interest for cadets. Moreover, the way poetry is taught also contributes to the lack of students' interest in poetry.

4.1. iii Vocabulary and Structure

The vocabulary load depicted in all the three textbooks seems to be unreasonable for the cadets. The vocabulary items are such that are not likely to be of use in everyday language by the cadets. Words like 'capercaillie', 'Repudiator,' sanguinary', 'abstention', 'primeval', 'heraldic', 'concourse', and 'paladins'- these are just a few examples- are not only difficult but also irrelevant to and absent from common language. Moreover, the vocabulary used in the textbooks is not repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement and therefore these and other such words remain alien for the learners. Such words are difficult even for the instructors who are handling these books.

The textbooks are also difficult syntactically as there are complex structures of lengthy sentences. For example,

In the Quran, men are bidden to observe the Phenomena of nature, alternation of day and night, the properties of earth and air and fire and water, the mysteries of birth and death, growth and decay – evidences of a law and order which man can never bend or alter by a hair's breadth – as proof of that man is not the sovereign of this world: his province of free will, research and fruitful efforts is but a delegated power within an absolute sovereignty, which absolute sovereignty belongs to Allah the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, the Lord of all the worlds.

This single sentence from the lesson 'Islamic Culture' comprises 106 words. Similarly, the following sentence from the lesson "The Rationale of Pakistan" (An Anthology of Modern English Prose) comprises 59 words:

On the other hand, the rivalry and the natural desire and efforts on the part of one to dominate the social order and establish political supremacy over the other in the government of the country will disappear and will lead more towards natural goodwill by international pacts between them, and they can live in complete harmony with their neighbors (p. 50).

These two sentences are just a few examples of difficult sentence structures in the textbooks. Such sentences are problematic for the students who are not provided with any reading skill. Moreover, lengthy and difficult sentences lead to emotional fatigue and boredom.

The lessons are also difficult conceptually. For instance, the lessons 'Lenin', and 'The Rationale of Pakistan' use the language and ideas of politics which is neither required by the cadets, nor is according to their proficiency level. The fact that 'The Rationale of Pakistan' is a formal speech renders it unintelligible for the cadets despite the fact that it is culturally relevant. Furthermore, the language of these books is not completely authentic as there are outdated and unfamiliar phrases and idioms in the lessons. The language used in the various essays, stories is that of eighteenth or nineteenth century.

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As far as the poetry section is concerned, an average B.A./B.Sc. student is not competent enough to appreciate nuances of poetry. The student usually gets confused in managing various literary devices, ideas and mental state of the poet at this level. It is pointless to expose them to uninteresting literary text as they can appreciate neither the language nor the mood, tone, or special intent of the literary material. They generally read the poems only to pass the examination rather than to gain something.

The vocabulary load in some poems is too heavy for the students. Words like ‘stubble’, ‘suckled’, ‘crofts’, ‘swath’, ‘treble’, ‘drayd’ are ambiguous for students as well as for the teachers. These words do not belong to current everyday language in the Standard English.

4.1. iv Clear Attractive Layout, Print Easy to Read

The quality of paper used for the books (I, II and III) is not very good. The books are acceptable regarding the clarity. However, it would be more appealing if orthographic beauty is considered. All the three textbooks under study lack orthographic beauty.

4.1. v Appropriate Visual Materials Available

Visual materials can be defined as the facilities that can be employed by teachers and learners to enhance language learning in classrooms. They may range from simple hand-made realia, charts and pictures, to electronic and digital materials. Visual images can play an important role in conceptual clarity of different things and can also help in understanding written text. Through visual images the teacher can also exploit the text for various language activities. None of the three books have any illustration or visual to help learners’ comprehension ability.

4.1. vi Tips for Teaching

The prescribed syllabus should explicitly state what kind of methodology is amenable to the achievement of its objectives. The teaching methodology to be used for teaching a specific module has been provided in the syllabus document but it has not proved useful as various tips/techniques for teaching are not given. There is no teachers’ manual accompanying the textbooks. It was found during discussions with the instructors that they adopt the teaching methodology they feel comfortable with. Most of the instructors are not ELT trained so they generally teach through the lecture method.

The present textbooks do not offer any exercises that can develop any reading sub-skills like skimming, scanning, reading for main idea, etc. The teaching methodology is such that the teacher reads out from the text in the class and the students are not given any exposure to the text. It appears as if the textbooks are compiled in such a manner that the teaching points are not taken into consideration. Moreover, the compilers are not aware of modern concepts of syllabus designing and communicative teaching methodology. We do not see anything that can help students and teachers because the lessons end abruptly without offering any teaching exercise. Only in ‘An Anthology to Modern English Prose’ some comprehension type questions are given at the end of each lesson but these are also not helpful for teaching purposes. The cadets usually cram the notes prepared by their seniors and reproduce them in the examination.

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Although, in the present situation 80 percent marks are allocated for the written examination but there are no exercises in the textbooks to give cadets practice in writing skills. There is a great need for including exercises like sentence completion, spelling, guided and free writing.

The ability to speak English is a clearly perceived need of the cadets in the academic as well as in the professional life. Keeping in view the importance of spoken English in the armed forces, the Public Speaking Module is taught to the PMA cadets. However, public speaking is taught separately; the textbooks do not offer any exercises to students in the development of this skill. Listening is as important as speaking, as Rivers (1981:151) puts it:

Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is being said is comprehended by the other person...teaching the comprehension of spoken language is of primary importance if the communication aim is to be achieved.

But the textbooks do not provide any exercises for the learning and practice of the skill. There are no communicative activities for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Subsidiary skills like grammar, vocabulary and punctuation have also not been given any importance (grammar and vocabulary are taught as separate modules). There are no structured exercises in the textbooks with which these skills can be taught either in a traditional manner or through communicative teaching methodology. The general impression, which one gets after evaluating the textbooks, is that these books do not offer any teaching points either for linguistic competence or for communicative competence.

4.1. vii Potential for Adaptability

Though the textbooks do not offer activities to teach the students with communicative methodology and they do have a number of other flaws as well, but a trained teacher can adapt the texts to make them communicative by picking out certain points from the texts which could be exploited for teaching purposes by designing various activities for the learners to give them practice in the main/subsidiary skills of language. Moreover, after adapting them, the books could be used for teaching with communicative methodology.

4. 2. Drama

Shaw's play, 'Arms and the Man' has been prescribed for teaching in the third term. The present selection does not seem to be the right choice. At the superficial level it is a simple, romantic love story. Ordinary readers can not comprehend the serious views propagated by Shaw through his plays. Initially, even the sophisticated audience of Shaw's own age could not discern the serious purpose of his play. The objective of teaching drama as stated in the syllabus document is, 'to create a craving for literature and develop imaginative inquisitiveness'. Keeping in view, the language background of the cadets and the methodology used at the PMA, the above stated objective seems unrealistic and unachievable.

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This fact is supported by the responses of the cadets in an earlier study by Khushi (Khushi, 2004). A vast majority of them reported that the teaching of drama has not developed imaginative inquisitiveness among them. Reading a drama or novel requires high level of reading skills such as analyzing, interpreting and inferring, which the students clearly lack. Such heavy literary texts like drama or novel can be suitable for literature students but not for students learning language for specific purposes.

4.3 Novel

The novel, 'The Pearl' by Steinbeck has been prescribed for study during the second term. It is a short novel comprising only 104 pages. The stated objective of teaching the novel is, 'To instill an insight and ability to understand cultural, social and moral values through the teaching of novel'. However, the cultural values presented in the novel are quite alien in our socio-cultural context.

Again it seems quite inappropriate to teach novel to military cadets who study English language to cater the demands of their professional life. The cadets do not need to study English for developing aesthetic abilities and understanding cultural values. 'The Pearl' is an allegorical novel. Majority of the cadets do not have a background of literature. The novel contains a number of images and symbols which are not at all explored while teaching. The students do not enjoy reading the novel mainly because they are unable to understand the deeper meanings.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to evaluate the current textbooks taught at the PMA. This evaluation reveals that the syllabus is traditional in approach. It is expected that the cadets will learn the language and acquire proficiency in language skills through the study of literature. Whereas literature is the best exposition of language, it is doubtful that the study of literature can be very effective as a vehicle for teaching and learning of the language in the case of military cadets.

The choice of any language teaching materials must be made with the proper context in which the materials will be used. If the learners can see a close connection between the content of the material and their academic/professional/general needs, then there will be a strong motivating force for the language learners and better results will be achieved. Therefore, instead of heavily literature based content, subject specific/general material should be included in the course.

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