



Analyzing the Oral Activities in the Textbook *Let's Keep in Touch 3è Students' Book*

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Abstract: The aims of this paper is to find out the extent to which the speaking activities are represented in the textbook *Let's Keep in Touch 3è*. To reach this objective, a checklist has been used to collect and analyze the data from five (5) units randomly selected in the textbook. Thus, Based on the structured of the checklist, the results show that the first category of the data, grammar and vocabulary, is sufficiently realized in the textbook with an average of 4.5. The second category shows that the pronunciation components are realized but not enough with 2.2 as average. Finally, the third and last category, which is about the different activities of speaking skill, indicates that the activities are sufficiently realized in the textbook with an average of 4.2.

Keywords: Textbook analysis, activities, speaking skill, teaching material, checklist, content analysis.

Résumé : L'objectif de ce travail est de trouver le degré auquel les activités liées à l'habileté orale est représenté dans le manuel *Let's Keep in Touch 3è*. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une grille d'évaluation a été utilisée pour collecter et analyser les données sélectionnées par hasard dans cinq (5) unités de l'ouvrage. Ainsi, sur la base de la structure de la grille d'évaluation, les résultats montrent que la première catégorie des données, la grammaire et le vocabulaire, est très suffisamment réalisée dans le manuel avec une moyenne de 4.5. la seconde catégorie indique que les composantes de la prononciation sont réalisées mais pas assez avec une moyenne de 2.2. Finalement, la troisième catégorie, qui se rapporte aux différentes activités de l'habileté orale, laisse savoir que les activités sont suffisamment réalisées dans le l'ouvrage avec une moyenne de 4.2.

Mots-clés: analyse de manuel, activités, l'habileté orale, manuel d'enseignement, grille d'évaluation, l'analyse du contenu.

Introduction

Speaking skill is considered as one of the most important language skill to develop in language, especially foreign language learning and teaching J. C. Richards (2008). However, some material designers overlook this aspect in designing current teaching materials. This can be noticed through the specific components of this skill such as contrastive analysis of the phonemes, minimal pairs, word stress and syllables.

After having observed the current different and various textbooks used in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the educational system of Côte d'Ivoire nowadays, it comes



that *Let's Keep in Touch* is one of the teaching materials that can be considered as an actual textbook because of its content. This can be justified by the presence of many aspects such as reading passages, pictures and other activities that can help students learn autonomously and do their homework; this is not the case for teaching materials such as *New Ways to English* and *Learn, it Do it*. The fourth form (3^e) being the last level of the first cycle and the same time it is where learners are tested at oral skills during the final examination.

Thus, based on the principle that any language is first spoken before being written, it is reasonable to ask the following question: To what extent are the speaking activities represented in *Let's Keep in Touch 3^e students' book*? Having as hypothesis that the textbook contains some speaking activities, the objective of this study is to find out the degree of importance given to the speaking activities in the textbook. In order to reach this objective, a content analysis through a checklist is used for the collection and analysis of the data. In this case, the present article is organized around four sections which are: (1) Literature Review, (2) Methodology, (3) Results and (4) Discussion

1. Literature Review

This section is composed of three points. The first one is about the definition of the concept of textbook analysis by different researchers. Next, there are the components of speaking skill in terms of language teaching and learning. Finally, it evokes the issue of some activities related to the development of the speaking skill in teaching materials.

1.1. Defining Textbook Analysis

Analyzing textbook accounts for designing some criteria upon which the analysis must be based. In other words, each textbook is analyzed on the basis of some well-defined criteria according to the objective of the analysis. For this reason, it is crucial to make the difference between textbook analysis and evaluation. Thus, according to J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt (2010, p. 206) evaluation is “in general, the systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision making. Evaluation may use quantitative methods (e.g. tests), qualitative methods (e.g. observations, ratings (see rating scale)), and value judgements.” As far as textbook analysis is concerned, it is about the description of the textbook under study taking into account its content without making any decision. This is what is expressed by I. MacGrath (2006, p.30) when he writes that “[T]he purpose of textbook analysis, then, is to provide a description, but this description can be at different levels of sophistication. Beyond the most basic level, the concern is to understand what assumptions and beliefs lie beneath the surface and what effects



can be anticipated; analysis involves inference and deduction”. In fact, textbook analysis is based on the content of the material being analyzed. That is why it is usually called content analysis which, according to L. Cohen et al (2007, p.475), can be defined as “the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages”. From both definitions, it can be well understood that even if both of them deal with the same methods of data collection, but the first aims at decision making while the second one does not. Therefore, the present study does align with the second type because the objective is to find out the different activities that take into account the speaking skills in the textbook without any judgement. In any case, the most important element is the textbook or course book as called by some authors.

The course book is crucial in language learning and teaching because, as suggested by A. Cunningsworth (1995, p.16), that “[C]oursebook can provide much of the stimulation which will motivate them to become more independent in their learning and in their use of English. This can be done by encouraging learners to think for themselves around these exercises and discuss it with others”.

1.2.Components of Oral Skill in Language Learning and Teaching

Speaking like other language skills is composed of some elements such as comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency D. Harris (1974). These elements are described here briefly. But, for the present study, the focus is about only three components which are grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation because these components can be visible during the analysis of a textbook.

Grammar can be defined as the aspect of language which deals with the rules that exist among the linguistic units on the syntagmatic axis in order to describe all the sentences grammatically correct. In the same vein, F. Dubois-Charlier (1970, p.11) writes that “a grammar is a description of a language sentences: an English grammar is a description of all the sentences of English at a given moment (without historical considerations)¹”. From these definitions, it can be noted that the objective of learning grammar is to acquire a good command of the language be it orally or by written form.

¹ Une grammaire est une description des phrases d’une langue : une grammaire anglaise est une description de toutes les phrases de l’anglais à un moment donné (sans considérations historiques).



As far as vocabulary is concerned, it is about the aspect of language that deals with the lexis or words. It means the appropriate linguistic unit used in communication. Thus, it is important in that one cannot speak without using words to express his/her ideas. This is the idea explained by Harmer quoted by A. S. Ben (2013, p. 9) when he states that “the knowledge of the word classes also allows speakers to perform well formed utterances”. So, to be considered as a competent learner at oral skills, students need the appropriate selection of words when they are speaking, and using these words and expressions accurately S. Soro (2019).

The last component to consider is pronunciation. In fact, it is the aspect where the sound system is perceived through its components in a textbook. Thus, according to J. Harmer (1998, p. 50) “[T]here are three areas we need to know about in the pronunciation of English – apart from the speed and volume – which are immediately connected with meaning”. For him, these areas are sounds, stress, and pitch and intonation. In fact, the first area is about sounds and words are made up of individual sounds (or phonemes) and these sounds (or phonemes) are represented by phonetic symbols (/b/, /i:/, /k/). The second area is the stress where the emphasis is placed in words and sentences. Thus, the stressed syllable, that is the one which carries the main stress, is that part of the word or phrase which has the greatest emphasis because the speaker increases or changes the pitch of their voice when saying that syllable. For example, important, complain, medicine. The third and last area are pitch and intonation. By the way, pitch describes the level at which you speak. Some people have high-pitched voices others say things in a low-pitched voice. As far as intonation is concerned, it is often described as the music of speech. It encompasses the moments at which we change the pitch of our voices in order to give certain messages. It is absolutely crucial for getting our meaning across J. Harmer (1998). From these arguments, one cannot deny the importance of pronunciation in speaking skills.

In the same way, T.T. Vrabel considers it as “a process of materializing of features relating to the system of sounds/phonemes, the syllabic structure, prosody (word stress and intonation) while speech/oral verbal message is constructed” (T.T. Vrabel, 2009, p.7). Thus, this component is important in that its bad use can create communication breakdown. Actually, “an acceptable pronunciation of a foreign language like English’s sounds facilitates the comprehension of the speech since the essential function of language is the communication” S. Soro (2019, p.16).



1.3. Activities for the development of speaking skills in textbooks

Talking about the concept of activity, in language teaching, J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt (2010, p.9) describe it as “a general term for any classroom procedure that requires students to use and practise their available language resources”. As such, an activity can be described as being more creative and based on solving problem by using the target language because in dealing with the activity learner is required to create new sentences or utterances in order to communicate in the classroom first and then in real life situation.

The issue of activities for the development of speaking skills in language teaching/learning, especially in textbooks. Thus, for J. Harmer (2007, p.348) indicates that “[M]any of the classroom speaking activities which are currently in use fall at or near the communicative end of the communication continuum”. According to him, there are a number of widely-used categories of speaking activity, for example, acting from a script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks (oral presentation), questionnaires (questions-answers), simulation and role-play.

In the same way, S. Aryal (2017) in a research work found the similar classroom activities for the development of speaking skill. These activities are role-play, discussion, simulations, information, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews.

Another research conducted by S. Soro (2019) about the development of students’ speaking skills. Thus, the results have shown that activities like discussion, role-play, debate, simulation and information gap are very important in developing students’ speaking skill.

From these different studies, it comes out that this kind of activities are also found in many teaching materials nowadays. So, the analysis of the textbook under study in this study will be analyzed taking into account the suggested activities in order to see their representativeness.

2. Methodology Design

2.1. Tool and procedure of data collection

The methodological design of this paper is based on two main aspects; the procedure and the tool of data collection. As far as the procedure of data collection is concerned, it is about the different techniques used to collect the information. Thus, the sampling methodology is



employed here is the following. The textbook is organized into ten (10) units. Among these ten units, five units have been randomly selected by selecting unit 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. It can be concluded that the sample is representative because the number of the units which have been selected represents 50% of all the units in the textbook. This technique of sampling is based on method of probability; this technique gives equal chance to all the participants, subjects or units to be selected Y. K. Singh (2006).

Concerning the tool of data collection, it is a checklist that has been used because according to T. V. Els et al (1987, p.302) suggest “ both textbook description and evaluation can be carried out on the basis of checklists”. Thus, for a better understanding of the instrument, it needs being explained in details. The checklist is composed of criteria on the left and the scores on the right. Zero (0) means nonexistent, while one (1) equals weakly realized in the material. Then, two (2) represents realized but not enough to be selected. As for three (3), it means realized enough in the material to be selected. So, three (3) corresponds to a pass. Four (4) equals sufficiently realized in the material. Finally, the score five (5) means maximally realized in the material. This checklist has been based on the checklist model suggested by A. H. G. Dahigo (2012).

2.2.Data Presentation and Analysis

SEARCHED OR REQUIRED ELEMENTS	Presence of the elements in the textbook SCORES					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Category 1: Components of speaking skill						
1. vocabulary						X
2. grammar					X	
Category 1: Sounds system (Pronunciation)						
1. contrastive analysis of phonemes				X		
2. intonation		X				
3. word stress					X	
4. words end sounds			X			
5. syllable		X				
Category 2: Speaking activities						



1. discussion						X
2. question and answer					X	
3. debate				X		
4. oral presentation			X			
5. role-play					X	
6. story telling				X		

2.2.1. Data Analysis

The checklist is composed of three main categories of the elements required in the textbook. Thus, the first one is about the components of the speaking skills; that is vocabulary and grammar because it is difficult to use a language without referring to its grammatical rules and vocabulary items. The next category deals with the sub elements of pronunciation that is, in fact, the core element of oral production. The final category concerns itself with the different activities that are supposed to develop learners speaking ability in the textbook.

Category 1: $4+5 = 9/2 = 4.5$

Category 2: $1+1+2+3+4 = 11/5 = 2.2$

Category 3: $2+3+3+4+4+5 = 21/5 = 4.2$

2.2.2. Commentary upon the Analysis of the Data

From the analysis of the data, one can notice that the first category has an average of 4.5 that means that these components are sufficiently realized in the textbook. It also implies that, in each lesson of the units, there are some grammatical structures and vocabulary items to be studied.

Concerning the second category, there is an average of 2.2. This percentage indicates that these elements are present in the material but not enough. In the same vein, it means that these sub elements are not found in each lesson per unit. For example, intonation is weakly realized (1), meaning that the teaching material does not put the stress on this particular aspect.

As far as the third category is concerned, there is a percentage of 4.2 as average showing that the speaking activities are given great importance in designing this textbook. In fact, all the different activities are realized even if there are not enough this is the case of oral presentation activity. The most realized activity is that of discussion with (5) showing that is maximally



realized in the teaching material. Actually, there is generally a discussion activity in almost of each lesson.

3. Results

The findings of this study are presented according to the information collected with the checklist. Thus, talking about the first category of data; that is to say the components of speaking skill, the results indicate that the textbook contains grammatical structures and vocabulary items at 4.5 as average that means that these linguistic aspects are sufficiently realized in the textbook. it can be understood that each lesson contains a section for vocabulary and grammar. As far as the second category which deals with the pronunciation aspect, the results show that this aspect is realized at 2.2 as average. This percentage implies that the components of pronunciation are realized in the textbook but not enough. Finally, the third category, which is about the different activities for the speaking skill, shows an average of 4.2. From this percentage, it must be understood that these activities are sufficiently represented in the textbook. in a nutshell, it can be said that the teaching material understudy takes into account the speaking activities sufficiently even if the components linked to pronunciation are not represented sufficiently.

4. Discussion

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned results, it can be concluded that the research question has been answered. In fact, the research objective has been achieved because the results show that the textbook contains sufficient activities that aim at developing the students speaking skill.

In this section, some previous works are compared to the present one in order to see if the results go in the same direction or not. Thus, H. P. Widodo (2007) analyzed a textbook on college academic writing in an EFL context Indonesia with an in-depth method. The objective of this study was to see the extent to which the selected textbook reflected the recent views of the teaching and learning of writing skill. After the analysis, the results showed that the author echoed his clear goal and organization. The contents of the textbook regarding the inputs, models, exercises, and writing assignments reflected the features of academic writing required for college students.

Another researcher, N. Fuyudloturromaniyyah (2015), analyzed an EFL textbook for seventh grade in order to find out to what extent the activities given in the textbook follow the



scientific approach in its design. The findings showed that in terms of physical appearance and types of activities the textbook was attractive since it is printed full color filled with pictures, illustration, various activities, songs, and games. However, the activities did not fully apply scientific approach as demanded by Curriculum 2013 since the five scientific learning activities were not evenly distributed. Questioning and Communicating activities existence were superior with 61% and 52% compared to Observing, Collecting information, and Associating ones with 22%, 14%, and 19% respectively.

Another research conducted by M. Ayu and R. Indrawati (2018) have conducted a research on textbook evaluation with the objective to discuss how the tasks and the distribution (simple to complex) of tasks are presented in *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X Semester 1* textbook. Thus, the results have indicated that the English textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X Semester 1* has interesting tasks which meet the objectives in curriculum 2013 and a good distribution of tasks across chapters and the whole book.

From the results presented in the different works, it can be said that these results differ from that of the present study for a number of reason. First, the objective of each study is not the same with one another. Next, the methodology in terms of tools of data collection and analysis is not always the same. Finally, the context of each of these studies is different from one another.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be argued that the objective of the present study is to analyze the students' book named *Let's Keep in Touch 3è* in order to see the representativeness of the speaking activities. To do so, a checklist has been used to collect and analyze the data from five (5) units randomly selected in the textbook. Based on the structured of the checklist, the results show that the first category of the data, grammar and vocabulary, is sufficiently realized in the textbook with a percentage of 4.5 as average. The second category shows that the pronunciation components are realized but not enough with 2.2 as average. Finally, the third and last category, which is about the different activities of speaking skill, indicates that the activities are sufficiently realized in the textbook with an average of 4.2. However, this does not mean that another study cannot be conducted on the same textbook by using other tools and techniques of data collection.



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**Appendix**

SEARCHED OR REQUIRED ELEMENTS	Presence of the elements in the textbook SCORES					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Category 1: Components speaking skill						
1. Vocabulary 2. grammar						
Category 1: Sounds system (Pronunciation)						
1. contrastive analysis of phonemes 2. intonation 3. word stress 4. words end sounds 5. syllable						
Category 2: Speaking activities						
1. discussion 2. question and answer 3. debate 4. oral presentation 5. role-play 6. story telling						