

Textbook *Evaluation of English for Academic Purposes* by British Council

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Abstract

The present study evaluates the course book English for Academic Purposes recommended by British Council in Pakistan. It is a collaborated effort of British Council and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan to enhance the English language skills of Pakistani students. The researcher has evaluated the effectiveness of this book that is it fulfilling the theoretical needs of International standards? Bloom's taxonomy (1956) of Learning Domains is used because it is most appropriate for the evaluation the textbooks. The researcher has evaluated the course book on different levels e.g. cognitive, affective and psycho-motor with the help of Blooms taxonomy. This is a qualitative research basically though the frequencies of the certain words (verbs) are also find out. The researcher has used find out that which areas of learning process are focused and which are ignored in the textbook. The research is important as it will find out the strapping as well as frail areas of the course book and this information may be helpful for the improvement of the course book. Moreover this research has opened new horizons for further studies in the field of textbook evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks play a very significant role in the teaching and learning especially in developing countries where teachers and students can utilize them according to their needs (Mahmood, 2011). Textbooks influence both the teachers and students, as they provide pattern to the teachers so the teachers could teach in a better way and guide line to the students for better learning. "Textbooks are considered as the sole and legitimate source of knowledge both for students and teachers" (Bano, 2005, p.5). Textbooks are a major source of providing instructions to the teachers and students that's why it is stated that textbooks are the backbone of every educational system. They help in designing the assessment and evaluation system for the students, shaping the process of classroom teaching and learning (Mahmood, 2011). They are the core of all the educational activities because they provide students "a rich array of new and potentially interesting facts, and open the door to a world of fantastic experience" Chambliss and Calfee, 1998. P.7).

Dublin and Olshtain (1986) state that "the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many teachers and learners is the textbook"(p. 167). Hutchinson and Torres (1994) have discussed the importance of textbooks in the educational settings and have discussed that textbooks work as a supporter through disturbing threatening processes, introduce change gradually, demonstrate new methodologies, and create a platform on which the non-experienced teachers can build their own methodologies. Tok (2010) stated that textbooks offer a framework to the teachers and facilitate them in achieving the objectives of the course. McGrath (2002) asserts that textbook is important because it provides the content, sets the direction, and guides for the lesson delivery. Haycroft (1998 cited in Tok, 2010) that textbooks are psychologically required for the learners otherwise the students may consider the educational process a futile activity. Mahmood (2009) describes the importance of textbooks as "most widely used tool for curriculum interpretation and implementation" (p.158). Textbooks are used as tutor and tool to achieve the objectives of any educational program. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1997).

Textbooks are the most important element of any educational programme. Sheldon (1988) suggest that textbooks "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" (p.237). Teachers are the practical users of the textbooks and choosing the most appropriate textbook is an overwhelming task for them (Miekley, 2005). The textbook that the teacher chooses would satisfy his and his students' needs (Chen, 2002).

Textbook evaluation is the most critical especially in the field of English Language Teaching (Shatery, 2012). Tok (2010) describes that course book analyses and evaluation help the teachers to improve them and help them to attain useful insights into the basis of material. A lot of work has been done in EFL/ESL context. Williams

(1983) has done his research on ESL textbooks. He has developed criteria for the textbooks evaluation which also considers the needs and socio-cultural environment of the students. Ansary and Babii (2002) have tried to evaluate the EFL/ESL textbooks. The aim of their research was to explore the characteristics of a standard EFL/ESL textbook.

In many countries textbooks are compiled according to the national curriculum by the professionals publishers and writers and after that the evaluation process is done by government agencies to ensure their quality (Mahmood, 2009). In Pakistan textbooks are developed by Textbook Boards and different private publishers according to the guidelines given by the Curriculum Wing or Ministry of Education Pakistan (Mahmood, et al., 2009). In Pakistan, “the textbook is the only available learning material in most schools. Additional materials like teaching aids, supplementary reading materials and school libraries are virtually non-existent” (Govt. of Pakistan, 2006, p. 2). So it is the need of the hour to evaluate this book *English for Academic Purpose* because this is a pilot project of Pakistani universities and British Council and just on the initial stages.

This research is going to be different from the previous researches because it is going to evaluate the EAP textbook first time in Pakistan. There are several checklists for the evaluation of textbooks but Bloom’s taxonomy of educational purposes is mostly used for the textbook evaluation. Because it is most appropriate for material evaluation and it evaluates the textbook material on so many levels as cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The researcher will devise a checklist on the basis of Bloom’s taxonomy and then will evaluate the textbook against that checklist. It is anticipated this is the very first research which is done on the book *English for Academic Purposes* to explore the areas which are focused and ignored in the EAP textbook (Tok, 2010).

Aim of Research

The aim of the study is to highlight which levels are focused and which are ignored in the book *English for Academic Purposes* according to the Bloom’s taxonomy.

Research Questions

1. How far does this book fulfil the international standards of teaching material?
2. How far this book focuses on the levels of Bloom’s taxonomy?
3. How the knowledge is presented in the book (cognitive domain)?
4. How much space is given to the feelings, attitudes and emotions of students in the book (affective domain)?
5. How far the activities address the skills’ improvement regarding manual tasks and physical movements (psychomotor domain)?

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to...

1. Find out that how far this book fulfils the international standards of teaching English
2. Explore that how far this book focuses different levels of Bloom’s taxonomy.
3. Judge what kind of knowledge is provided in the book.
4. Discover how much space is given to the feelings, attitudes and emotions of students in the book.
5. Locate how far the activities address skills development relating to manual tasks and physical movements.

Significance of the study

English for Academic Purposes is devised to train the students for the higher education where they have to use the English language both in written and spoken form quite appropriately. It is a pilot project newly started in the universities of Pakistan for the B.S students by British Council. Initially it was started in the Universities of UK for IELTS examination, and US to get better scores for TOFEL. But in Pakistan it is started to develop the language skills for certain subjects. This book will focus on four basic skills (writing, reading, listening and especially speaking) and other skills related to the presentation skills and professional writings. Increasingly English is being used as the teaching medium for Business Studies, Medicine, Engineering etc. at Higher Education and University levels. (Wikipedia, 2012)

An evaluation of material presented in EAP textbook can prove to be a significant one for the improvement of the EAP textbook as it is a pilot project. The findings may be an asset for the Department of English Language as well as other universities which are using the book.

Data collection instrument

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains is widely used for the evaluation because it describes different levels of cognitive/knowledge, affective/attitudes and psychomotor/ skills and this framework is commonly used in educational circle to analyse the levels whether of educational objectives or assessment. The three levels are further divided into many sub-categories and then frequencies of the key words (verbs) are calculated and results are compiled.

Cognitive Domain

The cognitive domain of Bloom’s taxonomy deals with the following aspects:

1. Knowledge level

At this level of cognitive domain the students may recall data or information. The researcher will find out that how much space is given to this level of Bloom’s taxonomy in the book and how the given knowledge is

checked through the activities. The key words (verbs) of this level are: state, label, describe, define, arrange, select, reproduce, relate, recognise, memorise, list etc.

2. Comprehension level

At this level the learners may understand the meaning, interpret, the instructions and state the problem in one's own words. With the help of the key words (verbs) the researcher will find out that how much space is given to this level of Bloom's taxonomy in the book. The key words (verbs) are explain, reference, paraphrase, theorise, interpret, estimate, re-write, discuss, report, review, translate, illustrate, summarise, classify, critique, analysis, reword, repeat, reiterate, example etc.

3. Application level

At this level of Bloom's taxonomy the students will apply the learned skills in the real life situation, s different tasks will be given to the students to make the use o their learned knowledge. The key words (verbs) to find this level in the book are: use, role play, respond, react, perform, conduct, prepare, change, construct, implement, produce, solve, execute, manage, discover apply etc.

4. Analysis Level

At this level of cognitive domain the students will relate the materials and the basic concepts which are given in the book so the students may be able to improve their basic skills regarding report writing and presentation. The key words (verbs) to find this level in the book are: analyse, divide, value, infer, extrapolate, plot, diagram, graph, relate, experiment, examine, test, measure, count, qualify, compare, catalogue, break down, etc

5. Synthesis Level

At this level of cognitive domain the learners may structure of the the given material and will be able to make the material able to use in the real life situations. They key words (verbs) to find this level of Bloom's taxonomy in the book are: develop, modify, re-arrange, integrate, assemble, establish, propose, formulate, revise, organise, design, create, build, plan etc.

6. Evaluation Level

At this level the learners may evaluate the things and materials given in the book. Moreover he can evaluate the given activities also The researcher will check that how much space is given to this level. So students can reflect on their evaluation through the provided material. The key words are: review, project-manage, argue, appraise, direct, investigate, report on, defend, present a case for, assess, justify etc.

Data Analysis

In this chapter the data analysis is done which is collected through Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom's revised taxonomy of learning domains was used as a tool for data collection. The data was analysed manually and the frequencies were find out to check the inclination of the provided material. There are three major levels of Bloom's taxonomy and each level is further divided into many categories. So here each level is analysed individually and necessary graphs are also included.

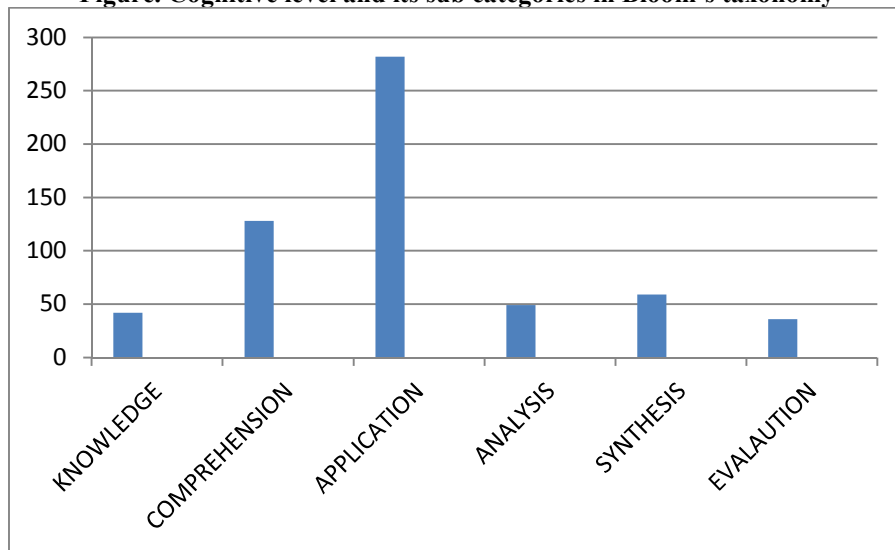
First of all cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy is given here to show its part in the analysed material. This level is further divided into six categories and each category consists on many key words (verbs). So here the frequencies of the key words (verbs) are given. This research falls in the category of qualitative research though quantitative analysis is also given to find out the frequencies of each level of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in the book.

Cognitive Domain and its findings/results

Level	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evalaution
Instances	42	128	282	49	59	36
Percentage	7%	21%	47%	8%	9.8%	6%

Cognitive domain is the very first domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. In the book low level learning skills are more focused as the presence of comprehension level in book is 21% and application of application level is 47%. Other higher level skills e.g. analysis, synthesis and evaluation are almost ignored as their presence in the book is 8%, 9.8% and 6% respectively. So the learners cannot analyse and evaluate their own progress in the learning process.

Figure. Cognitive level and its sub categories in Bloom’s taxonomy

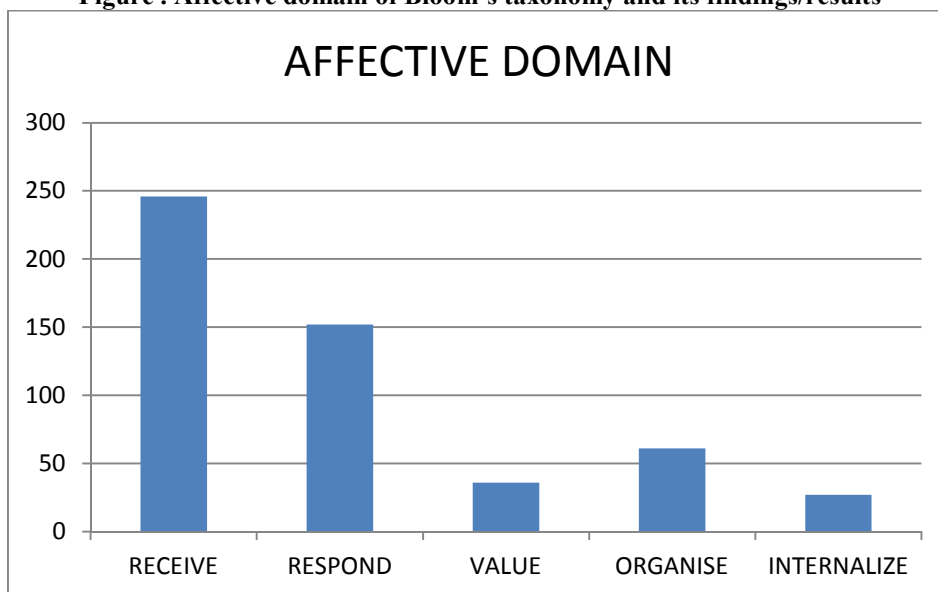


Affective Domain and its findings/results

Level	Receive	Respond	Value	Organise	Internalize
Instances	246	152	36	61	27
Percentage	47%	29%	6.8%	11.6%	5%

While talking about affective domain of Bloom’s taxonomy we came to know that this domain is the in the book as it is having 42.6% of the whole book. But here again the focus is on “receive” category which is having 47% of the whole domain. A very little attention is given to all other levels e.g respond 29%, value 6.8%, organize 11.6% and internalize 5%.

Figure . Affective domain of Bloom’s taxonomy and its findings/results

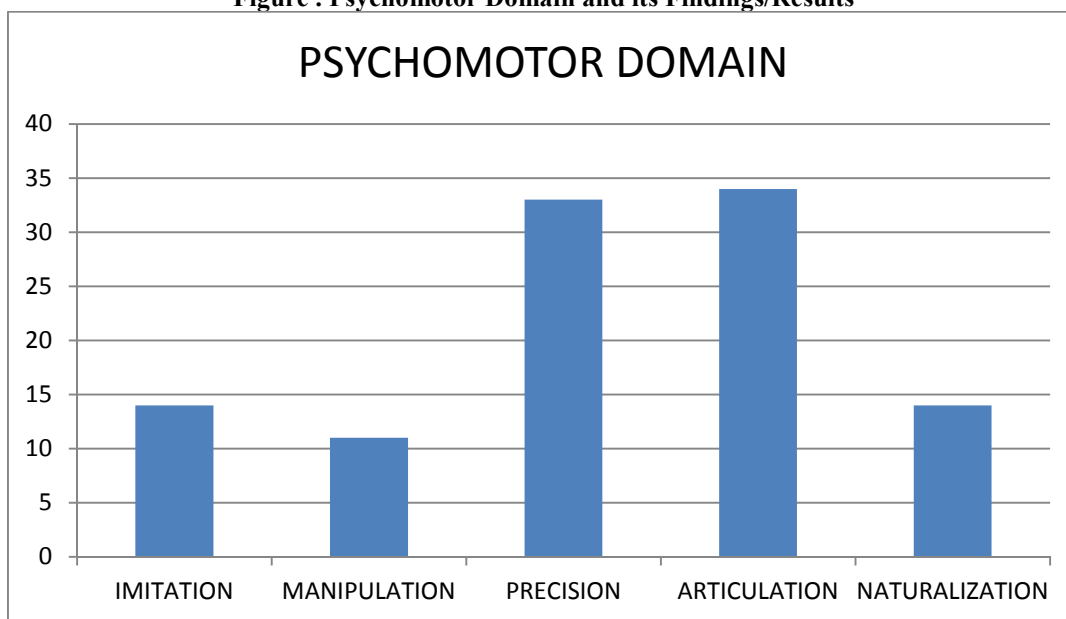


Psychomotor Domain and its findings and results

Level	Imitation	Manipulation	Precision	Articulation	Naturalization
Instances	14	11	33	34	14
Percentage	13%	10%	31%	32%	13%

This is the last domain of Bloom’s taxonomy. It is the least discussed in the book because there are only a few instances of this domain present in the book. Here only two levels worthy of any consideration “Precision” and “Articulation” as their presence is 31% and 32%. Rest of the levels e.g. “Imitation”, “Articulation” and “Naturalization” are only mentioned in the book.

Figure . Psychomotor Domain and its Findings/Results

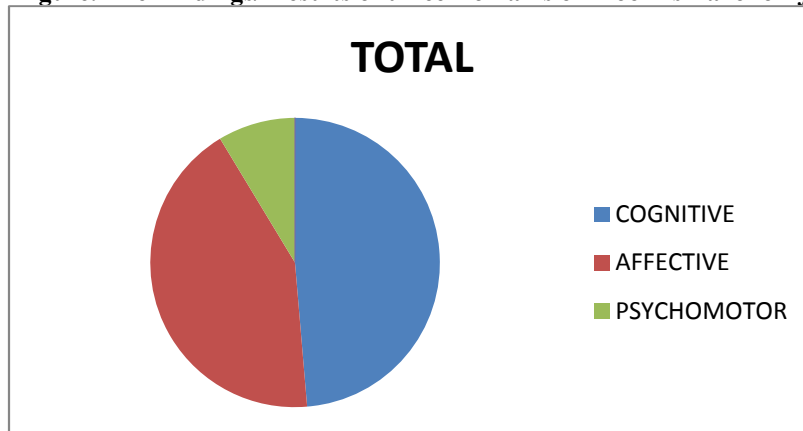


Summation of Bloom’s taxonomy and its Domains

cognitive	knowledge	comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evalaution
Instances	42	128	282	49	59	36
Affective	Receive	Respond	Value	Organise	Internalize	
Instances	246	152	36	61	27	
Psychomotor	Imitation	Manipulation	Precision	Articulation	Naturalization	
Instances	14	11	33	34	14	

The graph below shows the division of three domains of Bloom’s taxonomy in the book *English for academic purpose*. Here we find that cognitive and affective domains are more focused in the book than that of psychomotor domain. In cognitive domain focus is on “comprehension” and “application” which are considered low level learning skills and other levels such as “analysis”, “synthesis” and “evaluation” are virtually ignored. In affective domain the focus is on “receive” level which basically gives awareness to the students. Again other levels e.g “value”, “organise” and “internalize” are totally ignored. The psychomotor domain which focuses on the skills is totally ignored in the whole book. This is a flaw of the book that no attention is given to the skills so students may not be able to learn the skills e.g “imitation”, “manipulation” and “articulation” which are also very necessary to get good results. This figure clearly shows the presence of three levels in the book.

Figure. The Findings/ Results of three Domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy



DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The learning domains of Bloom’s taxonomy e.g. cognitive, affective and psychomotor are discussed here. Each

level focuses on a different thing as cognitive/knowledge, affective/attitude and psychomotor/skills. All these levels are discussed in the book but again there are some flaws in their representation in the book. Whenever English is used as a medium of instruction, it is very that textbooks must provide a systematic and balanced training in all the language skills.

English is going to be the global language so it allows the university students to continue their studies especially in the areas of science and technology. So the emphasis of English teaching materials should be on the following points.

1. The development of communicative skills for the expression of basic needs and basic interactive skills, especially in the academic context.
2. The development of the ability to communicate (with emphasis on effective reading and writing skills) about topics related to subject matter areas, especially science and mathematics.
3. The preparation of students to pursue university education through the medium of English.
4. The development of the ability to work with others in a cooperative learning framework.
5. The development of understanding and appreciation of the similarities and difference between English language and culture and other languages and cultures the students are familiar with. (English As A Second Foreign Language Curriculum).

This book *English for Academic Purposes* fulfils almost all the international standards of teaching material. It focused on the interaction of the students and provides different topics to interact in the educational settings. Most of the given activities and discussions are in the pair or group form so the students may learn to interact with the fellows in a cooperative environment. Moreover the cultural topics are also included in the book so the students must be clear in in the cultural similarities and differences between their first language and second language. The presented material is quite appropriate for the students of Pakistan as its is developed according to the objectives of national curriculum.

This book focuses on almost all the domain and levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as instances of every level are present in the book. Cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy is very much focused as its presence is 47% in the book. All the levels of cognitive are discussed in the book but not equally. The next affective domain of Bloom's Taxonomy is discussed in the book which is having 42.6% of the book. In this domain again all the levels are discussed though the focus is on the first levels and the later are ignored. The last domain of Bloom's taxonomy is psychomotor domain and its presence is 8.6% in the whole book and it looks that it the most ignored in the book. Instances of all its levels are present in the book though they are few in number.

Cognitive domain deals with intellectual capability e.g. knowledge and thinking. The cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy is having the 48.6% of the book and it is the maximum. Here on this level we came to know that the writers of the book *English for Academic Purposes* has given more importance to the comprehension and application level as there instances were more frequent in the whole book. It was usual with the previous books that their focus was always on "knowledge" level as the students were forced to cram the given material of the book but here we find a different approach. More activities are related to the comprehension opportunities are given so the students may apply the learned skills. But three other levels e.g. analysis, synthesis and evaluation are almost ignored as compare to the comprehension and application. Cognitive domain consists on both lower order skills (Knowledge, Comprehension, Application) and higher order skills (Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation). Again the focus is on the lower order learning skills. Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012) has mentioned in their research that students on this level are quite mature and they should be introduced with the higher level learning skills as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Affective domain deals with feelings, emotions and behaviours. The presence of this level in the book is 42.6%.Level "receive" is more focused in the book while other levels e.g value, organise and internalize are almost ignored. "Receive" level is basically consists on awareness which the authors of the book want to give to the students and after that they want to check their response. But the other levels as value, organise and internalize are also very important to evaluate the change in student's attitudes which are virtually ignored. After these findings we may say that students will only receive the knowledge which is presented in the book while they would be unable to respond and value the given knowledge. Students receive the knowledge from class one till matriculation but unable to value and organize the given knowledge. The students on this level are able to value and organize the given knowledge but here again these skills are not developed in the students. So the whole educational programme may lose its significance.

The last Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy which is psychomotor domain deals with skills. Imitation, manipulation, precision articulations are taught to the students through this level. Here we find that a very little attention is given to this level of Bloom's taxonomy in the book as its overall presence in the book is only 8.6%. Only precision and articulation are worthy to be discussed here. All other levels e.g imitation, manipulation and naturalization are virtually ignored in the book.

5.2. Conclusion

English has become an international language and this book *English for Academic Purposes* is a positive effort

to make the Pakistani students more confident and fluent in their use of English language. There are more activities in the book which insist the learners for the practical use of English language so the students now would be fluent in their use of English language as they were in the past in writing English. Moreover this book focuses on the personnel thinking of the students so the students may go towards critical thinking after using this book. Though there are some flaws in the book, as skills are not focused here, but overall this book is very effective for the students' use. But the teacher should use the book in the way so he/she may be able to assess the strengths and flaws.

Textbook evaluation should be included in the English language teacher' training. Through the evaluation of the textbooks they can consider the logic behind the organization of the given materials and its strengths or weaknesses. Moreover they could analyses that the given activities in the textbooks are improving the students' competency in the English Language or not. Textbook is considered as a tool so the instructor should be aware with its usage to get the good results.

In Pakistan textbooks are not evaluated after their compilation that why we find the flaws with the textbooks. Owing to the absence of evaluation system the curriculum is not able to fulfil its designed objectives. Textbooks are used for years in Pakistan and do not cope with the needs of the new generations. Hebrew has said about this situation that "doesn't confine your children to your own learning because they are born in another time". This *book English for Academic Purposes* is very appropriate for the university students in Pakistan because the given material is according to the needs of the students and it may give them practical skills to be successful in the real world.

Recommendations

Following recommendations can be made on the basis of findings:

1. There is a need to review this book as skills like "imitation" and "manipulation" are not presented well in the book and this is a major fault with this book.
2. Lower level learning skills are focused in the book and the book does not satisfy the higher order learning skills. Students at this level are mature and able to think critically so they must be introduced with higher level learning skills at this level.
3. This book is quite appropriate for the university even then it is recommended that teachers must not stick to the book only because it does not satisfy the higher order skills of the students as Cunningsworth (1984) states "that the course materials for English should not be regarded as the teacher's master, rather they are the teacher's servant and should be at the service of teachers".

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