

Evaluation System of Business English Textbook under Multiple Perspectives

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Abstract: To solve the problem of insufficient study on Business English textbook examination, this thesis proposes a multiple variables comprehensive evaluation method and presents the concept of evaluating information system with attributes of real-timing, sharing and circulating.

1. Introduction

Textbook, as the basic teaching tool, is a carrier of teaching contents and teaching methods which provides important assurance for deepening education reform, improving teaching quality, promoting quality education and cultivating creative talents. The *National Mid-Long Term Education Reform and Development Planning Outline of 2010-2020*, issued by the Ministry of Education has pointed out definitely that strengthening the basic construction of textbook is one of the important factors in talents cultivation.

Textbook evaluation is an important process in textbook construction. First, its conclusion can provide supporting reasons to schooling organizations and teachers when they need to select textbooks based on students' characteristics, teaching requirements, teaching objectives and teaching equipment without blindness and low efficiency. Secondly, it helps teachers form more definite teaching methods and improve teaching and scientific research ability in terms of their clearer understanding on the features and structures of the textbooks in use. Lastly, the periodical evaluation of textbook can also help authors find compiling and editing defects timely and improve the quality of textbooks through revisions.

In recent years, with the development of Business English subject, the market of its textbook is rapidly emerging. Diversified versions of Business English textbook lead to fierce competition in the market. Which is with highest performance-price ratio? Which can bring the best learning experience to learners? Which can make greater contribution to teachers' scientific research guidance? In reality, the more textbooks exist, the more confused teachers become. To solve these problems, it is a must to establish a set of scientific, fair and well-acceptable evaluation standards on Business English textbooks.

2. Current Research on Evaluation of Business English Textbook

Cunningsworth (2002) considered that a set of procedures and standards which can be fairly applied by different textbook play a very important role in a more objective evaluating progress and more reliable evaluating result. It has a guiding significance in teaching research and relevant textbook publishing work. Textbook construction is the weakest link in current Business English teaching (Lin Tianhu, 2001). Among the published thesis, a majority of scholars focus on the introduction of foreign evaluation system on English textbook or providing experiential suggestion on textbook writing (Zhao Yong, Zheng Shutang, 2006; Zhuang Zhixiang, 2006). There also exists some analysis on structure of evaluation mode from the view of subject characteristics (Jia Weiwei, Zhou Long, 2010). But the analytical research on textbook evaluation guided by relevant theory is

seldom found (Suo Gefei, 2015). The lagged behind research on textbook evaluation, on the one hand will lead to disordered competition and waste of resources in textbook publishing industry, on the other hand teachers will become more and more confused on textbook choice.

Combining the reality of Business English subject development and teaching requirement, guided by the Ministry of Education's latest issued *National Standards on Business English Teaching Quality of Higher Education*, to build scientific and reasonable evaluation system on Business English textbook is the importance of current textbook research.

3. Requirements on Evaluation of Business English Textbook

The *National Standards* has definitely pointed out that as an undergraduate major, Business English is a cross-subject which is based on foreign language literature, applicable economics, business administration and law. It is known as its talent cultivating features of business language application, business knowledge and practice and cross-cultural communication skills. Compared with normal English majors, the required knowledge modules of Business English is diversified, compound and applicable. If its evaluation system uses the same principals and methods to normal English major, the result will be improper and inappropriate. So to build its own evaluation system is at top priority in the subject development and teaching scientific research. Evaluation system on Business English textbook should has the following characteristics:

3.1. Diversified Evaluating Standards

Cunningsworth (2002) has proposed the evaluating reference list from the view of linguistics. Evaluating textbook only from a microscopic language perspective is insufficient for the ESP textbook with cross-subject attributes. Language knowledge, business knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, humanities and social sciences knowledge and cross-subject knowledge should be the five evaluating modules mentioned by *National Standards* for evaluating standards of Business English textbook.

3.2. Diversified Valuers

With regard to the applicable and professional textbooks, McDonough, Shaw (1993) and Breen, Candlin (1987) have presented that it is insufficient to evaluate it only from the prospects of teachers and learners. Teachers' evaluation is mainly from the teaching way such as whether the textbook meets the requirements of teaching outline or the selected language materials is appropriate; while learners' evaluation is mainly from their subjective decision such as readability or fun because of their limited knowledge, which is too random to be measured. As a result, only defining valuers as teachers or learners is incomplete. Inviting experts in textbook evaluation is very necessary from the view of cross-subjects. In order to enhance the timeliness and practicality of textbook, enterprise can also be invited who can provide more realistic criterion in textbook examination.

3.3. Diversified Evaluating Methods

Currently used evaluating methods for textbook are qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis is to define the applicability degree of a textbook by a prior designed evaluation reference list under certain teaching environment. Conventional evaluation system is basically established on the basis of qualitative analysis for its strong practicality. Quantitative analysis has advantages of strong objectivity and data accuracy. But the research work is relatively slow for its difficult operation. It is a trend of textbook evaluation research to combine qualitative and quantitative analysis relying on data collection and counting of computer in the future. To research and develop a set of textbook evaluation system which can fulfill the evaluating work conveniently, periodically and circularly can make great contributions to ever-improvement on textbook quality.

4. Designing on Evaluation of Business English Textbook

4.1. Multiple Variables Comprehensive Evaluation Method

Multiple Variables comprehensive evaluation method is a way in which several indicators are used to assess several valued units. The basic idea is to transform several indicators into one indicator that can reflect the comprehensive situation such as social development degree in different areas, achievement degree on well-off life or evaluation on economic benefits of enterprise, etc. The characteristics of this method are: First, the evaluating process on several indicators is completed at one time through some special methods but not one by one orderly; Secondly, in the evaluating process, the indicators should be given different weights according to their importance; Lastly, the evaluating result is no longer a series of counting indicators with definite meanings but a comprehensive sequence of evaluated units shown in forms of index or figure.

On the quantitative analysis of business English textbook evaluation, linguistics factor is not the only evaluating indicator affecting textbook. There are five influencing aspects required in knowledge modules of business English major such as Language knowledge, business knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, humanities and social sciences knowledge and cross-subject knowledge. All of these aspects should be taken as the evaluating indicators. Then according to the influencing degree of different subjects on textbook, adopting the multiple variables comprehensive evaluation method to assess it. The composing variables include:

- Valuator. The diversified valutors include teacher, learner, expert and enterprise. The given goal of evaluation, the establishment of evaluating factors, the choice of evaluating model, the decision of coefficient on weights are all related to valutors.
- Target of evaluation. There are many kinds of business English textbooks among which business writing, business English audio-visual-oral and the like are mainly language ability oriented, while international trade practice, international marketing and the like mainly focus on professional knowledge and skills.
- Evaluating factor. Evaluating factor system is to indicate target of evaluation from multiple views and multiple levels. Evaluating factors of business English textbook are defined according to the issued *National Standards* and teaching outline of different textbooks, those are language knowledge, business knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, humanities and social sciences knowledge and cross-subject knowledge.
- Coefficient on weight. In the process of evaluation, weight is the measurement on function, status and importance degree of different factors. For a particular evaluating goal, the relevant importance is different among them, which can be empowered by weights. In order to realize the scientific of evaluation, different factors have to be empowered by different weights. When the evaluating target and factors (value) are defined, the evaluating result will depend on the weights. The rationality of weight decision relates with the credibility degree so that the weight decision should be cautious. The Expert Consultancy can be applied in deciding weights which means the members of expert group are consulted repeatedly according to the established procedures and respond anonymously. Then the intensive answers are to be collected and the weights of every evaluating factor will be decided. Such group decision of experts is more objective and convenient in operation.
- Comprehensive evaluation model. It refers to an integrated value on comprehensive evaluation which combines several evaluating factor values through a particular mathematical model. The calculation of weight and factors' quantification is the preparation for counting the result of comprehensive evaluation. Quantification weighted function can be divided into two types: one is linear weighted function, the other is geometric weighted function. To illustrate more clearly and directly, linear weighted function is applied in the given case as the following formula.

$$F = \sum_{i=1}^k f(x_i) \times w_i \quad (1)$$

$f(x_i)$ stands for the scores of every factor

w_i stands for the weight of every factor

To take *Business English Writing* as an example, it shows how to evaluate the textbook through multiple variables comprehensive evaluation method.

- First step: *Business English Writing* is a kind of language skill course among the curriculum of Business English major, which means language knowledge should take more weight. Supposing Expert Consultancy method is applied, the coefficient for language is 0.4; business knowledge is 0.3; cross-cultural knowledge is 0.1; humanities and social sciences knowledge is 0.1; cross-subject knowledge is 0.1. Then the evaluating formula is as follows:

$$F = \sum_{i=1}^k f(x_i) \times w_i$$

$$= 0.4 \times f(x_1) + 0.3 \times f(x_2) + 0.1 \times f(x_3) + 0.1 \times f(x_4) + 0.1 \times f(x_5) \quad (2)$$

- Second step: $f(x_1)$, $f(x_2)$, $f(x_3)$, $f(x_4)$, $f(x_5)$ are the given scores of these five impact factors within coverage of 0-10 score. Suppose the scores given by valutors of teacher, learner, expert and enterprise are as shown in Table 1:

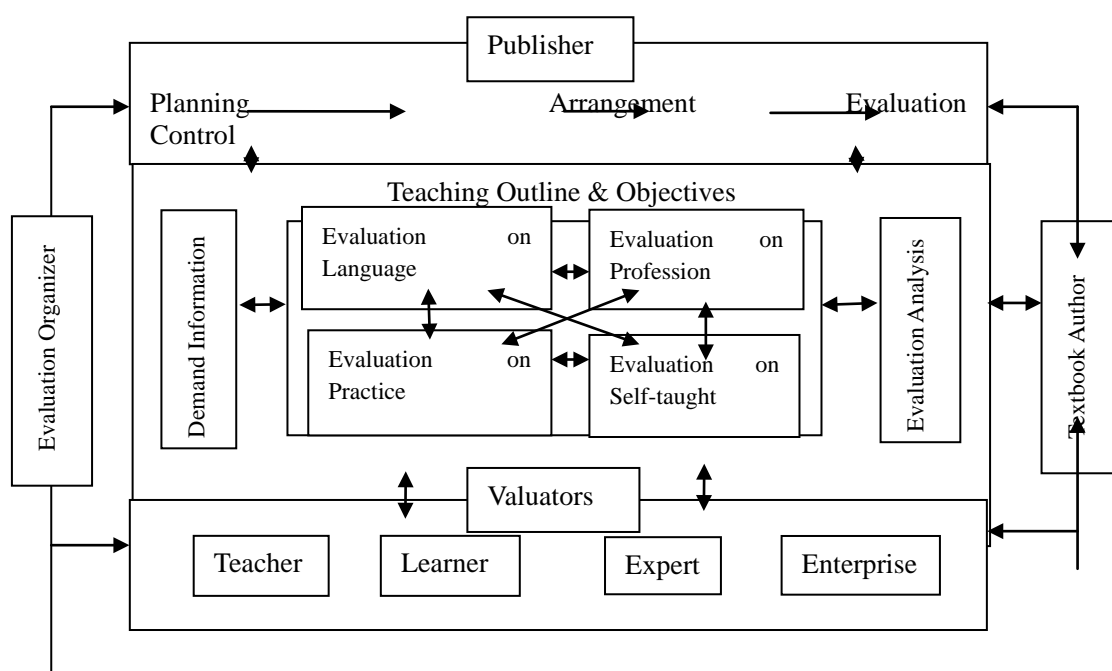
Table 1. Valuator Scores

| | Language (0.4) | Business (0.3) | Cross-culture (0.1) | H&S (0.1) | Sciences | Cross-subject (0.1) |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| Teacher F1 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 | | 6 |
| Learner F2 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | | 7 |
| Expert F3 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 | | 7 |
| Enterprise F4 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 7 | | 6 |

- Third step: Putting the above numbers into Formula 1, then F1=8, F2=7.2, F3=7.6, F4=8
- Forth step: Depending on the valutors' impact degrees for the textbook evaluation, the weights for their roles are empowered again. Suppose teacher is 0.5, learner is 0.3, expert is 0.1 and enterprise is 0.1, the calculation is $F = 0.5F1 + 0.3F2 + 0.1F3 + 0.1F4$. Then putting the result of the third step into this formula, $F = 7.72$ which is the comprehensive evaluation score for this textbook.

4.2. The Structure of Evaluating Information System on Business English Textbook

Table 2. Structure of Evaluating Information System on Business English Textbook



Now the textbook evaluation is normally carried out by teachers who need to choose textbook and provide feedback independently. Such one-sided information can contribute less to parallel comparison between different similar textbooks and have low share of the evaluation result. The

choice of textbook has become the personal experiences from teachers who nearly have no chance to obtain helpful advice and relevant data provided by publishers. Meanwhile, because the feedback information is relatively closed and static it can play limited role in revision of textbook. As the organizer of textbook evaluation, publishers should establish a evaluating information system and relevant database on teaching materials with the help of computer technology to ensure the negotiability, longevity and effectiveness of evaluating information on Business English Evaluation. The supposed structure of evaluating information system on Business English textbook is shown in Table 2, which include three main parts: organizer of evaluation, evaluating process and valutors. The evaluating process is guided by the teaching outlines and teaching objectives under *National Standards*, composing a series of evaluating modules which can get the result through qualitative and quantitative analysis of designed computer system. These evaluating information is integrated in the process of planning, organizing, evaluating and controlling under publisher's management. Such information flow moves in circle of "usage-evaluation-improvement" and authors of textbook, together with publishers can obtain timely, accurate and scientific evaluating results so as to ever-improve the publishing of textbook.

5. Conclusion

Breaking through single-sided valutors of teachers as users of textbook and the single mode of linguistics as the principle of evaluation, from a microscopic perspective, this thesis proposes a multiple variables comprehensive evaluation method with diversified valutors and diversified evaluating factors in order to meet the requirement of cultivating the multifunctional and applicable talents which is known as the characteristics of Business English major. From a macroscopic perspective, it also presents the designing of evaluating information system on Business English textbook with attributes of real-timing, sharing and circulating. As a newly established major, there is no mature experience as the reference for textbook evaluating. It needs our ever efforts on exploring and innovating to establish a textbook evaluation system suitable to Business English teaching.

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