

# **Evaluating ‘English Language Teaching’, an ELT training textbook in use on the second-year pre-service B. Ed course, Yangon Institute of Education, Myanmar**

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**Abstract:** With the increase in numbers of students learning English due to its status as a global language, English language teaching (ELT) and ELT teacher education have become engaging areas of interest for many scholars and researchers. However, despite growth in the literature on ELT teacher education, a systematic evaluation of ELT teacher training materials seems to have been ignored. This research study was carried out to evaluate the ELT teacher training materials in use at public teacher training institutions in Myanmar, and includes a document analysis, where the textbook in question is analysed and a questionnaire survey to find out the opinions of the textbook users. The research indicated that the textbook reflected neither widely accepted principles and practices of teacher learning nor those of language learning, revealing that there was a need to update and upgrade the textbook.

**Keywords :** English Language Teaching (ELT), teacher training, material evaluation, document analysis, opinion survey

## **INTRODUCTION**

ELT teacher education has become professionalized (Richards, 2008, p.160), and its scope broadened (Freeman, 2009, p. 15-17). However, unlike the English Language Teaching itself, there seems to be a gap in the literature for frameworks

in writing and evaluating ELT training materials, a vital step to help teachers develop more effective ELT practices. Additionally, in the face of growing need for and upgrading of ELT, there seem to be problems in implementing ELT goals, 'a disjunction between curriculum rhetoric and pedagogical reality ... [which is reflected in such factors as] inadequately trained and skilled teachers' (Nunan, 2003, p. 589). This problem seems to be more pronounced in countries in transition, where the status of English is changing from that of a foreign language to one that is used for wider communication. Accordingly, it is essential to acknowledge that ELT training textbooks merit more attention.

For this research, I evaluated 'English Language Teaching', an ELT teacher training textbook used in all teacher training institutions (two institutes and twenty colleges of education) of the Ministry of Education, Myanmar, to prepare trainees to be able to teach the state ELT curriculum at the middle-school (lower secondary) level. My particular focus is on the context of one such institution, the Yangon Institute of Education.

### **A Brief Background of Teacher Education in Myanmar and an Overview of 'English Language Teaching'**

In Myanmar, the Ministry of Education has been primarily undertaking both pre-service and in-service teacher education, at two institutes and twenty colleges of Education, awarding Diploma (Dip. Ed), Post-graduate Diploma (PGDT), Bachelor (B. Ed), Masters (M. Ed), and Doctorate (PhD) qualifications.

The trainees participating in this research are following a four-year B. Ed course at the Yangon Institute of Education. They have learnt English for eleven years, mainly through an approach focusing on structures. The course modules are on education, academic disciplines from the social and natural sciences, and English language study: English Language Proficiency and English Language Teaching. Classes are usually large, with eighty to a hundred trainees; trainer-

centred and trainer-fronted approaches are not unusual.

The basic principle of training models is behaviourist, involving the transfer of knowledge and skills from the master-trainer to the trainees. With sole reliance on trainers' expertise, spoon-feeding rather than scaffolding is common, while learning through experimenting and reflection, humanistic and individualistic values, linking contextual factors to classroom practices, trends of viewing teachers as thinkers, teacher knowledge and teacher cognition do not seem to be popular.

With 'English Language Teaching', it is said to aim at developing trainees' language proficiency; at teaching subject matter knowledge – language and learning, and textbooks in use; and at developing effective teaching skills, along with familiarity with innovative methods and techniques. It provides brief information about ELT at Middle School level, how to teach language skills and systems, English language development for trainees and how to prepare tests. As to the unit structure, the chapters follow a uniform format, beginning with general and specific objectives. After the objectives comes the input, which is given in the form of reading texts sub-divided into different, but related sections, such as techniques for developing listening skills and techniques for developing speaking skills. The input section is followed by practice tasks. Each chapter has one to ten tasks with about five items, and most of which require objective-type, close-ended answers. Looking at the syllabus organization and the unit structure, the textbook presumably provides the knowledge and skills components of teacher education, with tasks as reinforcement.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For literature review, I firstly discuss how ELT teacher training models have been shaped by theoretical constructs from learning theories and trends in professional development. Secondly, I examine how these constructs are reflected in ELT teacher training materials by looking at certain common features in terms of teacher learning as well

as language learning.

## **Trends and Models in ELT Teacher Education**

Notwithstanding that there are overlapping and recurring ideas, for convenience of analysis, I have categorized the relevant constructs and trends thematically: those influenced by learning theories, and those influenced by professional development concepts.

The learning theories which seem to have influenced teacher training models are behaviourist, humanistic, constructivist and sociocultural ones.

The earlier ELT teacher education models seem to have their roots in the behaviourist ground. Such models are viewed as 'transmission' models (Freeman, 2002, p. 2) because assumedly they have taken the stimulus-response structure. One of the most well-known approaches is the 'craft model', or 'sitting with Nellie', taking the form of trainees' apprenticeship through observation of the master-teacher (Wallace, 1991, p. 6-7; Roberts, 1998).

Although behaviourist trends take teachers as mere recipients of skills and knowledge, humanistic teacher education views teachers as unique individuals and whole persons, with self-agency and self-actualization capacities (Roberts, 1998, p. 12). Underhill (1992, p. 71-72) stressed the importance of self-awareness, self-direction and self-evaluation, which he saw as 'primarily a version of personal development'. Edge (1992, p. 62) proposed 'co-operative development' which he referred to as teachers 'working towards the widely accepted goal of autonomous development'. Also widely discussed in current teacher education literature are 'teacher identity' and 'teaching selves' (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 35).

Another ideological influence in teacher education is constructivism. One of its most cited frameworks is the 'experiential learning theory' (Kolb, 1984, p. 20-38; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 200), which proposes a four-stage cycle of learning comprising 'concrete experience, reflective

observations, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation'. A well-known instance of the experiential learning theory is the 'loop input' (Woodward, 1991, p. 12-14; 2003, p. 301-303), which follows the procedure of trainees being engaged in the training content, then reflecting and conceptualizing, and lastly, trying out the techniques for active experimentation.

Related to humanistic principles of individualistic values are Vygotskian sociocultural constructs, which put forward the importance of societal factors, focusing on essential links between teacher education and social contexts (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 2). Anchored in the concepts of 'scaffolding' and the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978), advocates of sociocultural theories in ELT teacher education (e.g., Lantolf, 2000, p. 1-27; and Johnson, 2006, p. 235-257) emphasise the role of their socio-political and socioeconomic contexts.

The most well-known trends from professional development are the reflective practice, knowledge base and teacher cognition.

In the distinguished 'reflective model' by Wallace (1991, p. 48-59), reflection is viewed as key to professional competence, transforming 'received knowledge', the data and facts handed down from well-established authority, into 'experiential knowledge', the accumulated knowledge gained through linking the received knowledge with one's past learning, present actions and future practices. Richards and Lockhart (1996, p. 1-2) also called for reflective practices which encouraged teachers to ask themselves questions on their beliefs and practices. The reflective model proposed by Farrell (1998, p. 2-3; 2007, p. 200) comprised five components: technical rationality, reflection-in-action; reflection-on-action; reflection-for-action, and action research.

Regarding teachers' knowledge base, Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 406-412) proposed that teacher education should acknowledge the teacher knowledge base which encompasses three domains: teacher learning, the social context and the pedagogical context. Freeman (2002, p. 1) claimed that teacher learning and teacher knowledge are central to teacher education; thus, for teacher education,

he recommended recognition of experiences, collaboration between experienced and less experienced teachers and the sociocultural environment of the community and school.

Related to knowledge base, 'teacher cognition' (Borg, 2003; 2006) is a concept to link what teachers think, know and believe with what they do. Teacher cognition, according to Borg, refers to 'what language teachers think, know and believe – and of its relationships to teachers' classroom practices' (Borg, 2006, p.1). He saw cognition in terms of three themes: cognition and prior language learning experience, cognition and teacher education, and cognition and classroom practice.

In sum, ELT teacher education could be conceptualized as being composed of the following trends and constructs: skills training, individual development, experiential learning, sociocultural awareness, reflective practice, knowledge base and teacher cognition. All things considered, teacher education used to appear external and top-down, viewing teachers as passive recipients relying on master-trainers for their craftsmanship. With the advent of new perspectives, it is now often viewed as the act of creating opportunities for teacher learning, with teachers taking central roles. That is, teachers are not seen merely as 'doers', performing tasks assigned to them by applying the skills they were trained in, but as 'thinkers', with their own belief systems shaped not only by schooling and training, but by personal and professional experiences and contextual factors.

## **Materials in ELT Teacher Education**

To examine how the teacher learning constructs are reflected in ELT teacher education materials, I chose the following four widely known textbooks to analyse topic coverage, input, tasks, and theoretical assumptions.

- A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory (Ur, 1996)
- Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Celce-Murcia, 2001)
- Learning Teaching: A Guide Book for English Language

Teachers (Scrivener, 2005)

- The Practice of English Language Teaching (Harmer, 2007)

**A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory** (Ur, 1996) covers a wide range of topics on teaching skills, embedded with background information: macro skills such as how to present, practice and test, how to teach language systems and skills; how to plan and prepare syllabus and materials; and micro teaching skills such as how to plan lessons, manage interactions and give feedback. It also provides the components about learner differences and teacher development. The input is given either directly as reading passages, or in a loop construction. A variety of authentic and realistic texts such as textbook materials and samples of learners' work are used. Tasks either precede the input to activate schemata or link with past learning, or come afterwards to check comprehension and provide interaction with and reflection on the text. A variety of task-types are used, and tasks are realistic and provide classroom practices. They also provide collaboration and interaction with others and reflection afterwards. In terms of theoretical assumptions on teacher learning, the reflective approach is dominant; and skill learning and humanistic values are also present in the input and tasks, considering sociocultural aspects of learning, teacher knowledge base and teacher cognition. With respect to language learning theories, sample materials and tasks for learners reflect communicative, learner-centred constructs.

Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (Celce-Murcia, 2001) is a combined work by forty writers, and shares similar features with 'A Course in Language Teaching' in that its topics also cover knowledge, skills and attitude; and additionally, it deals with topics on bilingualism, non-native speaker teachers and cross-cultural communication. The input of each chapter is in the form of articles, extensive descriptions and discussions on the subjects. Tasks, following reading texts, fall into two categories – discussion questions and suggested activities. Discussion questions encourage reflective thinking and suggested activities encourage experiential learning. Regarding constructs of teacher

learning, tasks following texts, perhaps the stimulus-response approach seems predominant, though the tasks do encourage linking received knowledge and experiential knowledge. Group tasks for expressing and sharing opinions encourage collaborative and humanistic learning; and by considering classroom contexts, teacher knowledge and teacher cognition may be promoted.

*Learning Teaching: A Guide Book for English Language Teachers* (Scrivener, 2005) also covers a wide range of topics on knowledge integrated with skills. One unique aspect of this book is 'Toolkit' chapters, which provide specific micro classroom skills such as 'Using the board well', 'Timelines' and 'Flash cards'. Another interesting feature is the organization of chapters, beginning with fundamental concepts and guiding trainees towards inner-directed topics. The input is provided in the form of brief reading texts, with visuals to clarify ideas, for example, of seating, and sometimes it is given as stimulus for the task.

Tasks are given either before the input to activate schemata or after it to stimulate reflection. Tasks do not specify interaction patterns, but perceptibly can be done both individually and in groups. Tasks also encourage teachers to personalize and contextualize. An advantage of the book is that it provides photocopiable observation task templates and worksheets, which trainers can use readily. The central rationale of the book seems to urge teachers to view themselves as learners, central in the process of teacher learning. In terms of language learning, the topics input and tasks suggest that a communicative, learner-centred approach is prevalent.

*The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Harmer, 2007) has more topics than in the previous three, and includes a topic on 'The Changing World of English'. The input is in the form of articles, with sample materials from course books and example teaching techniques. The classroom principles and techniques are explained in detail, giving visual representations to make the input more comprehensible. Interestingly, it does not have any tasks; teachers are assumed to form concepts from reading and



transform them into practice in their classrooms. From its topics, input and sample materials, the book seem to foster communicative language teaching. It provides a DVD with nine ‘Lesson stories with teacher talking’ (p. 438-441), thus providing trainees with opportunities to observe and reflect on authentic classroom encounters.

From the study of four ELT teacher training course books, I drew the following checklist for evaluating other ELT training materials.

**Table 2**  
 Checklist for evaluating ELT teacher education materials

1	Topic coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge (language, learning and teaching)</li> <li>• Skills (macro and micro)</li> <li>• Attitude (for teacher development)</li> </ul>
2	Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of input</li> <li>• Presentation of input (loop input/ direct input)</li> <li>• Visual representations</li> <li>• Length/ extent</li> </ul>
3	Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task-types</li> <li>• Interaction patterns</li> <li>• Realistic tasks</li> <li>• Classroom skill practice</li> </ul>
4	Theoretical assumptions	<p>Language learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skill training</li> <li>• learner-centeredness</li> <li>• communicative competence</li> </ul> <p>Teacher learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skill learning</li> <li>• individual development</li> <li>• experiential learning</li> <li>• sociocultural awareness</li> <li>• reflective practice</li> <li>• knowledge base</li> <li>• teacher cognition</li> </ul>

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research questions**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the textbook by identifying its features and the opinions of its users, the following research questions were developed:

1. What features (topic coverage, input, tasks and theoretical assumptions) does the ‘English Language Teaching’ have?
2. What opinions do the users of the book (trainers, trainees and practicing teachers who have been trained with the book) hold towards ‘English Language Teaching’?

### **Research Method**

#### ***Instruments***

I employed two research instruments: document analysis and opinion surveys. To analyse the features of the textbook, I performed document analysis, using the checklist composed of common features found in current internationally published ELT training books studied in Chapter 2.2. To identify users’ opinions, I developed three sets of questionnaires for three groups: trainers, teachers and trainees. There were five sections for all three sets: background information; ELT lessons; opinion about learning from the book; application of textbook techniques; further information on training techniques (trainers) and possible reasons for not using textbook techniques (teachers and trainees), and an extra section for a sample training lesson plan for trainers. Items for background information and ELT lessons included open questions, requiring short responses, while for those for the

opinion and application of textbook techniques, I used a 5 point Likert-scale, ranging from '1' for 'Don't know' to '5' 'A lot', providing spaces for comments and other reasons.

### ***Participants***

The opinion survey involved three groups of participants: five trainers, nineteen practising teachers who were trained using the book; and twenty-two trainees who were attending the course. All trainers are currently, or were recently, involved in the training programme, and the trainees and teachers were chosen randomly from relatively homogeneous groups in terms of education attainment, learning experiences and sociocultural backgrounds. Teachers were from different schools; seventeen from the state sector and two from private and international institutions, varying in years of experience from two to eleven years. Of the twenty-two trainees, twelve were from the third year, and ten from the fourth year. Second year trainees were not asked to participate because they might still not have gained a sufficient overview of the textbook.

### ***Data analysis***

The study was partly qualitative and partly quantitative. It was qualitative regarding the document analysis and when interpreting comments from participants; and it was quantitative when responses regarding opinions on the application of textbook techniques were computed using descriptive statistical measures.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, I present and discuss the results from evaluating 'English Language Teaching'. For the document analysis, this involved using the checklist of common

features found in current teacher education textbooks: topic coverage, input, tasks and theoretical assumptions; and from the opinion survey responses of the textbook users, it included the extent of (perceived) learning from the textbook, the extent of (perceived) application of textbook techniques, training techniques used by trainers, possible reasons why teachers did not, and why trainees would not, use the textbook techniques.

## **Results and Discussion of Document Analysis**

### *Discussion*

The textbook 'English Language Teaching' has certain advantages. Unlike ELT training books published for general readers, it offers content topics specific to its target audience, such as a background to the ELT context in Myanmar; and sample lesson plans, sample test materials, and words and structures of the Readers that trainees need to be familiar with. Another unique feature is that it includes a language development component for trainees, especially to be able to cope with teaching Middle School level. However, it is not without drawbacks.

Topic-wise, the textbook seems inadequate. As regards teaching language skills, although it covers classroom skills at macro level, it does not cover those at micro level, and it lacks integrating skills. As to teaching language systems, it does not include teaching pronunciation although it includes teaching spelling and dictation. Furthermore, it does not have any topics for teacher development or lifelong learning.

Regarding input, they lack a variety of types and presentation, and the extent of input seems rather scanty. Thus, the input of the book does not provide a full picture of what teaching English is or how it is done.

Taking tenets in defining language learning tasks – use, goals and objectives, one's own resources, and cognitive process (Bygate et al., 2001, p. 11; Ellis, 2003, p. 16), ELT teacher training tasks could be defined as activities which engage trainees in a cognitive process of using their own

resources (past learning, personal beliefs and experiences) through reflection and collaboration to achieve goals and the objective of accomplishing professional competence in ELT. Against this notion, the tasks in 'English Language Teaching' do not seem to engage trainees in cognitive processes, encourage them to use their own resources, nor enable them to achieve realistic and practical teaching knowledge and skills. ]They lack variety, challenge, recycling, reflection, collaboration and contextualization, and do not reflect the daily working life of teachers. In behaviourist terms, they do not provide skill practice; and in social constructivist terms, they do not provide scaffolding or develop self-agency and teacher identity.

With respect to theoretical assumptions, considering teacher learning constructs, it does not provide skill learning or individual development or experiential learning. Moreover, it does not seem to raise sociocultural awareness, encourage reflective practice, or develop the teacher knowledge base and teacher cognition. As most tasks are merely close-ended, they seem to view trainers as informants but not as facilitators, and trainees also as passive recipients. In the same way, in terms of language learning constructs, analysis of the input and tasks of certain sections indicates that the textbook seems to be lacking learner-centredness and learning-centredness. It would enhance neither ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) nor the communicative competence of students. It positions teachers as controllers and prompters perhaps, but not as participants, tutors or resources (Harmer, 2007, p. 108-110).

All things considered, from the document analysis of its features on topic coverage, input, tasks and theoretical assumptions, 'English Language Teaching' does not seem to encourage teacher learning or language learning, and the findings indicate that it is high time it were revised or rewritten to meet to needs of trainees and students, its end-users.

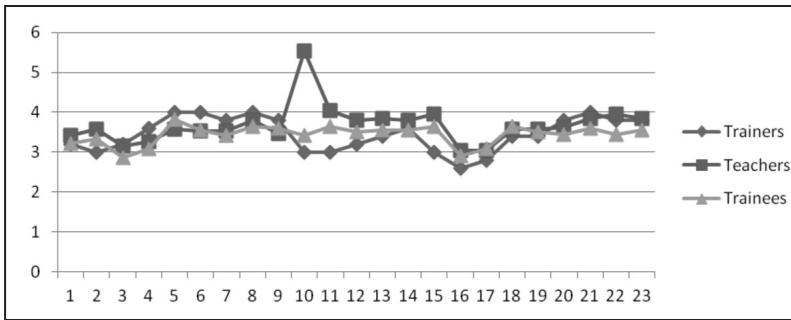
## **Results and Discussion of the Survey**

**Extent of (Perceived) Learning from the Textbook**

Based on responses of ‘1’ for ‘Don’t know’ to ‘5’ for ‘A lot’, from Section C of the questionnaire, I computed the mean for each item for each group to identify the pattern of opinions regarding learning from the textbook. Then, the total mean, standard deviation and skewness of each group were calculated to identify variations.

The following graph, representing mean scores for each item, shows the comparison of the extent of learning perceived by the three groups.

**Figure 1a**  
 Extent of (perceived) learning from the textbook



As shown in the graph, the means of all the three groups are relatively similar for most items. However, the trainers scored slightly higher than teachers and trainees for Items 4 to 9, though they scored slightly lower for Items 10 to 18. Comparing teachers and trainees, the former scored slightly higher than the latter throughout. But they scored significantly higher for Item 10 (giving dictation) than the others.

For further analysis to identify variations, I used descriptive statistic measures to compare the three groups, as shown in the following table.

**Table 1a**  
 Extent of (perceived) learning from the textbook

	Trainers	Teachers	Trainees
Mean	80.4	82.78	78.95
SD	7.70	5.60	8.96
Skewness	-0.50	0.58	-0.17

As seen from the table, the total mean scores for all groups are similar, though teachers scored slightly higher. Similarly, results for standard deviation (SD) indicate that the consistency of opinions seems considerably higher in teachers' group than the other groups. One possible reason for these variations in SD is that with the trainers' group, the majority of trainers, Trainers 1 to 4 have similar positive responses, while Trainer 5 gives a range of responses, from 'Don't know' to 'A lot'. With teachers and trainees, the variation was due to differences in responses. That is, the majority of teachers had similar responses and variations in responses are detected only for some items (e.g., Items 1, 2, 3, 13, 16, 17, and 20) ranging from 'Not at all' to 'A lot', hence the SD is relatively low. However, with trainees, variations were detected in most items, which led to high SD showing a wide range of opinions among the participants. As to skewness, there was left-tailed negative skewness for trainers and trainees, as they gave more positive responses than the teachers' group, whose skewness was positive due to their mixed responses.

Thus, it can be concluded that all three groups seem to have similar opinions about the textbook despite slight variations. For Items 4 to 9, trainers scored slightly higher than the two other groups, thus they seem to have a more positive opinion regarding the extent of learning for the topics on teaching skills (teaching speaking, reading, writing, grammar vocabulary and spelling). In contrast, from Items 10 to 18, teachers and trainees found topics on skills (lesson planning, testing speaking and reading) and on teachers' language development (classroom language, punctuation, dictionary use) more useful than trainers. Teachers who scored the highest for Item 10 might have found the techniques for doing dictation useful based on their experience. In sum, the statistical evidence indicates that despite slight variations,

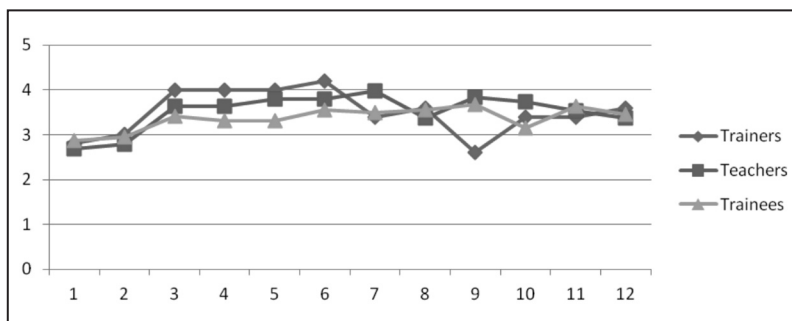
all three groups generally had a positive opinion of the textbook, portraying the perception that the textbook could provide the necessary teacher learning opportunities.

### ***Extent of (Perceived) Application of Textbook Techniques***

I followed the same statistical procedure as in Section 4.2.1, to measure the mean for each item for each group to investigate the extent to which textbook techniques were perceived as likely to be applied. The total mean, standard deviation and skewness of each group were then calculated to identify variations.

The following graph, representing mean scores for each item, shows the comparison of extent of perceived application of textbook techniques by the three groups.

**Figure 1b**  
Extent of (perceived) application of textbook techniques



Overall, all the three groups seem to have relatively similar mean scores. For Item 1 and 2 (teaching listening and speaking), all three groups scored rather low. Items 3 to 6 (teaching reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) scored noticeably higher than other items, which shows that participants found the techniques (on teaching skills) useful. For Item 9 (lesson planning), trainers scored lower than the



other two groups, while for Items 10 to 12, all groups scored similarly.

For further analysis to identify the variations, I used descriptive statistical measures to compare the three groups, as shown in the following table.

**Table 1b**  
Extent of perceived application of textbook techniques

	Trainers	Teachers	Trainees
Mean	42	42.05	40.36
SD	5.48	3.36	8.51
Skewness	-0.61	-0.83	-0.95

The total mean scores, which are similar for all groups, are quite high. As to the standard deviation, trainees scored the highest, which indicates that they varied more in their opinions regarding the application of techniques from the textbook than the other two groups. One possible reason for this varied SD lies in the differences in size and experience between the groups. Trainers gave a range of responses for six items out of twelve (i.e., Items 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, and 12). With teachers, despite varied responses for certain items (i.e., Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12), the SD was probably found to be low due to the larger number of participants in this group compared to the trainers' group. With regard to trainees, the third-year trainees gave more positive responses than the fourth-year trainees, hence producing a high SD. Regarding skewness, there was left-tailed negative skewness for all groups, with trainers scoring higher than the others because they gave more positive responses about application of the textbook techniques.

As expected, like the participants' opinions on the extent of learning, there were slight variations in responses; however, all groups of participants had a positive opinion regarding the extent to which they would likely to apply the textbook techniques. Looking at the items with the most varied responses for teachers and trainees, which were those

on skills (teaching listening and speaking, lesson planning and testing) and on language development (classroom language and dictionary use), it could be concluded that these participants did not seem to rate these topics as very useful. In my analysis, I also referred to the participants' comments (Trainer 3), and found consistency between comments and responses. As discussed earlier, Items 1 and 2 (teaching listening and speaking) scored lower than others. This may be because these skills are not taught and tested in schools, thus participants felt them not to be very applicable. For Item 9 (lesson planning), trainers scored lower than other groups, as trainees are required to write lesson plans only when they reach third-year, second semester and fourth-year, first semester, which might have made trainers see this skill as less important in the second year. Thus, according to the statistical measures and participants' comments, despite slight variations, all three groups generally had a positive opinion regarding application of the textbook techniques.

### ***Training Techniques Used by Trainers***

To further understand the worth of the textbook, I collected information about the training techniques used by trainers. The techniques of 'explaining the input from the textbook and doing practice tasks' and 'demonstrating a sample lesson before explaining the input' scored the highest. These were followed by 'asking questions of the trainees to encourage reflection on the topic after the lesson'. Another technique chosen rather frequently was 'using different approaches which are not from the textbook, which trainers are familiar with'. The technique that scored zero was 'adding more techniques'. The participants' comments (Trainer 3) suggest that one of the reasons for this was time constraints. Trainer 3 also commented that the choice of teacher-centred (trainer-centred) techniques over learner-centred (trainee-centred) ones was due to the educational culture trainees were familiar with.

For a more rounded picture, I added an extra section in the

questionnaire for trainers which required trainers to provide sample training lesson plans on 'teaching reading'. These plans revealed a variety of the trainers' practices and principles. Trainer 1 seemed to prefer spontaneity in training lessons without rigid plans. Trainer 2, with the aid of supplementary materials, had trainees read aloud (after the trainer, and then on their own), and then answer comprehension check questions. It was interesting to note that silent reading was not mentioned. Trainer 3 followed the procedure given in the textbook and mentioned doing skimming and scanning. Trainer 4 began with asking reflective questions to link with prior knowledge, then explained and discussed the input, and finished with asking questions to reflect on the topic and giving some extra tasks.

By looking at the figures, comments and training lesson plans, it could be concluded that trainers seem to rely on the textbook to a large extent, following the procedures in the textbook for explaining the input, doing practice tasks and asking questions, making few adaptations. However, the fact that they also used techniques that they were familiar with showed that the textbook could have been added with more techniques. Overall, the textbook seems to have an influential role for trainers and their training sessions.

### ***Possible Reasons Why Teachers Do Not Use Textbook Techniques***

As some teachers had chosen responses 'Not at all' and 'Rarely' for certain textbook techniques, I investigated the reasons why they held these rather negative opinions. Interestingly, the item which scored the highest was 'using different techniques which were not from the textbook', while the item 'using techniques familiar from past learning' scored the second highest. The items for which teachers chose these techniques were Items 1, 2, 3 and 4 on skills (teaching listening, speaking, writing, and grammar). Thus, it could be concluded that though teachers have positive opinions towards the textbook in general, they would like greater variety of techniques, familiar as well as new ones.

### ***Possible Reasons Why Trainees Will Not Use Textbook Techniques***

As in the previous section, I followed the same procedures to find out why trainees said they would not use the textbook techniques. Not surprisingly, trainees showed a similar pattern of reasons to that of teachers. The item 'using different techniques which are not from the textbook' scored the highest. This was followed by the item 'using techniques taught as a student', scoring the second highest. More interestingly, all third-year trainees gave positive responses for items in the section on textbook application, while most fourth-year trainees gave negative responses for these items. Presumably, after teaching practice at schools in their hometowns at the end of the third-year, fourth-year trainees might have started to judge the usefulness of the textbook techniques. Nonetheless, it could be concluded that trainees, like teachers, held positive opinions of the textbook in general, and they would prefer to have greater variety of techniques in the textbook.

### ***Discussion***

All in all, the findings from the survey, both statistical indices and comments and lesson plans indicate that 'English Language Teaching' is well-liked among its users. The participants, even with within-group varying responses, had relatively similar inter-group opinions. Notwithstanding slight variances, the data on the extent of learning from the textbook and on the application of textbook techniques confirmed that all groups seemed to have a very optimistic opinion of the book, showing a great amount of reliance on it. This was supported by the findings from the Trainers' data – Section E, which asked about trainers' training techniques, and Section F, which elicited sample training lesson plans, showing that they followed the textbook closely without much adjustment such as supplementing or changing the procedure. However, the findings from Section E of the Teachers' and Trainees' data portrayed a different dimension of the picture,

showing that both teachers and trainees preferred to use techniques which were not from the textbook. On the whole, despite users' perceived appreciation, the textbook would benefit from revision and modification to cater better to the needs of its users.

This study had several limitations. The first relates to the question of generalizability on the basis that the sample sizes were small. Secondly, with restricted sample sizes, I did not use the t-test or ANOVA to compare variances among the groups, but I took the mean scores for each item to identify trends in the opinions of participants, and total mean, standard deviation and skewness of each group to specify the spread of opinions. Thirdly, the comments given on the questionnaire may not be fully representative of the whole group of trainers, teachers and trainees, since Trainer 3 was the only participant to make comments. Fourthly, I would have been able to validate the results if I had been able to interview participants from each group, observe trainers as well as teachers, and study their training and teaching lesson plans. Hence, further research with a larger sample size, using more elaborate statistic measures, including other data collection procedures such as observing trainers while training and teachers while teaching, collecting the lesson plans of trainers and teachers, and conducting interviews with trainers, teachers and trainees, would give a more comprehensive account of the opinions of the textbook users.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Theoretical Implications**

Regarding teacher learning constructs, having been generally conceptualized in the context of native speaker teachers, it would have been beneficial if they were reconsidered in the context of non-native speaker teachers. They could have taken into account of challenges faced by non-native speaker teachers when learning to teach English. Related to these teacher learning constructs, language learning constructs should also be revisited, particularly to make them more

context-appropriate; in other words, there should be more studies on how to make 'BANA' (British, Australia and North America) practices to be more user-friendly in 'TESEP' (Tertiary, Secondary, and Primary education) contexts (Holliday, 1994, p. 1-11).

## **Pedagogical Implications**

From the results of the document analysis and the survey, despite both the relatively positive opinions of the participants, the textbook could be improved to better meet the needs of its users and to realize the objectives of ELT in Myanmar. It is highly-respected and is the sole ELT textbook used at the institute especially given that other resources are limited. As such, it serves as a framework, a syllabus and a guide for trainers; thus, revising the textbook will definitely improve ELT training, and consequently ELT practices at the national level. However, revising the textbook alone can hardly solve all ELT training problems; this calls for support from different levels of curriculum development: policy makers, needs analysts, methodologists, material writers (both for training and teaching), trainers, teachers and learners (Johnson, 1989, p. 3). Thus, I will discuss the areas that need revising (the 'what') and means of implementing the revised version (the 'how'), considering constraints and the cooperation of all involved in the ELT curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

With the rise of this ELT enterprise and with existing literature on evaluating ELT textbooks, it is high time that ELT researchers and specialists should also start to consider frameworks for writing and evaluating ELT training materials. By doing so, enhancement of ELT would gather speed in upgrading the whole education system and thus, positively uplifting the life of people particularly from countries in transition. With this strong conviction, in this

study, I evaluated 'English Language Teaching', an ELT teacher training textbook in the context of B. Ed pre-service teacher-training at the Yangon Institute of Education, Myanmar, using document analysis and opinion surveys. As the research findings indicated, there is a pressing need for the textbook to be revised or rewritten to meet the needs of its users and to realize the ELT objectives of the curriculum. To perform this revising task, I strongly hold the view that everyone involved in the ELT curriculum should work hand in hand to reach the common goals of achieving cost-effective ELT principles and practices. This is not the time to debate the controversy of whether to teach or not to teach English, or to teach it in the eastern or western styles, but to embrace the pragmatic outlook of how English can help us with the changing world, opening doors to opportunities.

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