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A Contrastive Analysis of English Textbooks for EFL Non-Departmental Learners of Medicine

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Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive and critically oriented contrastive evaluation of two major English language teaching textbooks; Oxford English for Careers: Medicine 1 (OEC), and New Headway: Advanced (NHA). These textbooks were implemented throughout English courses taught at college of medicine at University of Mosul, where former is used for practical hours, and later covers theoretical section. Being with two different pedagogical orientations, yet simultaneously used creates a form of dilemma. Study tries to answer a core question concerning which textbook is in fact suits more final educational goals of college. Grounded in framework of evaluation set by McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara's (2013), study combines external and internal evaluation with an explicitly critical perspective. Through detailed analysis supported by contrastive tables, study demonstrates that the two textbooks embrace drastically different pedagogical, and methodological orientations and assumptions. While NHA prioritizes explicit grammatical progression and structural control attributes of general English courses, OEC foregrounds professional functional competence and communication which aligns with English for specific purposes (ESP). Nearly seventy five percent of its content is listening/speaking oriented, which evidently supports its value within curriculum. Findings argue that neither textbook is universally optimal, but as medical curriculum design necessitates contextual authenticity, OEC excels here. NHA on the other hand, could still be marginally useful, for relatively small fraction of students.

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تحليل مقارنة لكتب اللغة الانكليزية للمتعلمين غير المتخصصين في اللغة الانكليزية في كلية الطب

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المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة تقييماً تقابلياً شاملاً ذا توجه نقدي لكتابين رئيسيين في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، وهما :
Oxford English for Careers: Medicine 1 (OEC) و New Headway: Advanced (NHA) حيث جرى
اعتماد هذين الكتابين في مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الطب بجامعة الموصل، إذ يُستخدم الأول في الساعات العملية،
بينما يُعتمد الثاني في الجانب النظري. وبالنظر إلى أن الكتابين ينطلقان من توجهين تربويين مختلفين، فإن استخدامهما في
الوقت نفسه يخلق نوعاً من الإشكالية التعليمية. تسعى الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن سؤال محوري يتمثل في: أي من هذين
الكتابين أكثر ملاءمة بصورة عامة للأهداف التعليمية النهائية لكلية الطب. أُستندت الدراسة إلى إطار مكدونو وشاو
وماسوهارا (2013) لتقويم المواد التعليمية، إذ تجمع بين التقييم الخارجي والتقييم الداخلي مع تبني منظور نقدي صريح،
ومن خلال تحليل منهجي مدعوم بجداول تقابلية مفصلة، تبيّن الدراسة أن الكتابين يجسدان افتراضات تربوية ومنهجية
مختلفة إلى حد كبير. ففي حين يركّز كتاب New Headway: Advanced على التدرّج النحوي الصريح والضبط البنوي
الذي يميّز مقررات اللغة الإنجليزية العامة، يركّز كتاب Oxford English for Careers: Medicine 1 على الكفاءة
الوظيفية والتواصل المهني المتوافق مع منهج اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة (ESP). كما أن ما يقارب خمسة وسبعين
في المئة من محتوى هذا الكتاب موجّه نحو مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث، الأمر الذي يدعم بوضوح قيمته ضمن المنهاج
الدراسي. تخلص نتائج الدراسة إلى أن أيّاً من الكتابين لا يمكن اعتباره مثالياً بصورة مطلقة؛ غير أنه نظراً إلى أن تصميم
المنهاج الطبي يتطلب قدراً عالياً من الأصالة السياقية، فإن كتاب Oxford English for Careers: Medicine 1
يتفوق في هذا الجانب. أما كتاب New Headway: Advanced فيمكن أن يظل ذا فائدة محدودة نسبياً، وإن كان ذلك
لقطاع صغير نسبياً من الطلبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كتب اللغة الإنجليزية الطبية، مكدونو، اللغويات التطبيقية، أكسفورد إنجلش، نيو هيدواي.

1. Introduction

Textbook evaluation is a central task within the scope of applied linguistics, and the field of English language teaching (ELT), particularly in contexts where curricula are institutionally guided, where instructional materials often function as the primary sources of daily classroom practice. Commercially published, English textbooks continue to shape pedagogical routines, classroom assessment practices, and learner's final expectations (Tomlinson, 2012). Consequently, the evaluation of teaching materials should not be viewed merely as a pure technical procedure, but rather as an academically significant task, that involves examining how language learning procedures, and educational goals are conceptualized and achieved within instructional materials.

Concerning this point, it is universally believed by researchers within the field of applied linguistics, that the process of evaluating a textbook may provide significant supportive feedback to teachers (Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997), and may provide them with important, precise, and well-arranged perceptions concerning the basic nature of the teaching material on which they are relying upon during their classroom routines (Litz, 2005; Richards, 2014). This subject becomes especially important in context involving English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where language instruction is expected to reflect specifically determined professional, academic, or occupational needs and tasks. ESP has been distinguished by its direction towards relevance, authenticity of teaching content, and a specific design of teaching courses, which is often need-based (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Within a demanding professional domain such as medicine, learners are expected to engage with a form of specialized genres, technical vocabulary, and interactional routines that substantially differ from those that come across within general English (GE) instructions. As a result, the selection of teaching materials within medical education carries important implications for future learners' communicative preparation and professional identity development. In many institutional environments, however, ESP instruction is complemented, or can even be partially "replaced" by GE textbooks, which could be evident especially at lower proficiency levels. It can be observed that GE oriented materials typically utilize a graded grammatical progression, balanced skill development, and broad communicative competence aimed at usual everyday interaction (Cunningsworth, 1995).

While such materials provide a useful basic linguistic foundation, their alignment with professional linguistic demands is often limited. For this reason, the simultaneous use of GE and ESP textbooks within a single curriculum can raise significant pedagogical issues and questions regarding coherence, relevance to students' future professional needs, and the general alignment of the language teaching materials to the specific institutional objectives.

The present study tries to shed some light on these concerns by performing a contrastive evaluation of two commonly used English language textbooks: Oxford English for Careers: Medicine 1 (OEC), a classic example of ESP textbook specifically designed for professional medical contexts, and New Headway: Advanced (NHA), a well-known GE course textbook aimed at basic and foundational language development. Both are widely internationally distributed textbook series, and both are published by Oxford University Press. These two important textbooks are currently used by the College of Medicine, University of Mosul, within its English curriculum, with the ESP textbook employed as a basic reference for practical sessions and the GE textbook within theoretical lectures. Particularly, such unique arrangement provides an important opportunity to study, analyze, and explore how different pedagogical directions are realized and embedded within different instructional materials, and how such orientations may correspond to the professional communicative standards of medical education.

Guided by McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara's (2013) materials evaluation framework, the current study implements a qualitative and critical analysis of the external and internal characteristics of both textbooks. The study does not seek to pinpoint a universally superior framework or course design, but the analysis rather aims to explore how each material could view and implement language use, and whether it can adapt itself to student's roles, professional needs, and the final communicative competence. Through placing textbook evaluation as a dynamic process within its natural academic institutional, and professional environment, the study can be considered as a contribution to the viable ongoing discussions regarding the optimal selection of English teaching material and the important role of critical awareness during English curriculum design. It is also worth mentioning here that despite the availability of ESP material worldwide, yet, contrastive evaluation of GE and medical ESP textbooks within the same institutional curriculum remains relatively unexplored, which potentially could put some additional value to the current study.

Brief Literature Review and Theoretical Orientation

Materials evaluation has long occupied an important section and role within the field of research concerning applied linguistics and English language teaching (ELT), as early frameworks, such as those proposed by Sheldon (1988) and Cunningsworth (1995), emphasized a form of checklist-based evaluation process focusing on the actual practical usability of the tested material. While these effective and commonly implemented approaches offered valuable and practically useful insights on the subject of material evaluation, they were often criticized for treating textbooks as neutral teaching tools rather than socially effective frameworks. Sheldon (1988) was among the first to argue for systematic textbook evaluation, proposing a set of criteria designed to assist teachers and institutions in making informed choices among commercially available materials. Similarly, Cunningsworth (1995) emphasized the importance of matching the teaching material to learners' needs, course objectives, and teaching contexts, highlighting usability and coherence as key considerations during evaluation. There is currently a huge body of studies in literature regarding textbook evaluation and usage (McDonough et. Al., 2013; Richards, 2014; Ellis, 1997; Tomlinson, 2013).

By observing the literature defining English teaching material, researchers find it obvious that textbooks are considered a cornerstone in the realm of English language learning and teaching. However, there is an important point which concerns the selection of the best available textbook. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) maintain that evaluation of textbook ought to be continuously exercised in order to reach a sound judgment whether the textbook under study actually fulfills the requirement of the curriculum language program, and of the actual needs of the students. In this aspect, the process of evaluating a textbook can imply an examination of every single component of the materials that are used in the process of teaching and learning such as, books, videos, DVDs or any other practical aspect. Lynch (1996) maintains that textbook evaluation is an organized method of collecting objective evidence on which rational decisions and judgements can be based.

Carter and Nunan (2001) argued that the process of evaluating a textbook includes the procedure of examining materials that are under consideration which they referred to as "predictive evaluation". McDonough et al. (2013) maintain that the need for textbook evaluation is becoming more important each

day due to the ready availability of large number of various textbooks which are readily accessible to teachers, but this raises the issue of making the best selection of available material in accordance with the specific needs of the target learners. Accordingly, there would be a waste of time and fund if a textbook was not selected properly, with possible demotivation of both teachers and students. Scholars proposed various methods involving textbook evaluation, yet evidently, no textbook can be considered as completely perfect and there is no set of universally agreed upon standards for textbook evaluation.

McDonough et al. (2013) proposed an evaluation process which includes three layers external, internal, and overall evaluation, which will be discussed later within the methodology section. Richards (2014) maintains that textbook evaluation can be achieved within two phases or steps. Step one includes the process of analysis and description, and the second step is concerned with interpretation or evaluation. During the first step there will be an examination of the content of the book, where the cover of the textbook is an easy target to collect such information. During this phase, the presentation of the book, the sequences, syllabus, and the plan of progression of the book, in addition to the contents of texts and tasks it covers should be analyzed and examined. In the second phase, the examination and assessment will focus on other sides within the process of evaluation, such as the linguistic requirements of the student or teacher, methodological needs, and what the curriculum actually focuses upon (Richards, 2014). Tomlinson (2013, p.30), on the other hand, proposes three types of textbook assessments, which were referred to as pre-use, whilst-use, and post-use stages.

These three stages cover all aspects of the teaching and learning processes starting from reviews about the textbook, up to whilst-use use which is implemented during actual teaching, and finally post-use which evaluates the final outcome on the learners (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 31). A large number of checklists were used by different scholars which were based on pinpoint questions to be answered. However, these checklists had both positive and negative considerations. Overall, most of these checklists could have potential theoretical bias. For example, Tucker's (1975) checklist focused on the usefulness of pattern practice, Williams' (1983) study explored whether a textbook was based on the contrastive component between English and the first language sound system, and Ur's (1996) framework was attentive to grammar.

Skierso's (1991) textbook evaluation checklist can be viewed as the most comprehensive, yet, it is not easy to use because of its lengthy and complex structure. In summary, textbook evaluators need to study a relatively wide range of factors while relying on a textbook evaluation checklist. McGrath (2002) maintained that textbook evaluation should move beyond simple and superficial surface level description to go more deeply considering how textbooks could shape interaction within classroom and the overall learning perspective and opportunities. From this point of view, textbook evaluation is understood as a dynamic interpretive activity which basically involves a crucial professional judgment. Such significant direction aligns with other wider developments in the field of applied linguistics that have an emphasis on the socially oriented nature of the process of language teaching and learning. While ESP textbooks often focus on linguistic authenticity, scholars have noted that they might somewhat show a form of idealized or simplified form of professional linguistic interaction (Hyland, 2006).

This idea would naturally raise an important enquiry concerning the extent to which ESP materials actually prepare the student for the expected practical realities of the targeted professional practice. Studies comparing GE and ESP textbooks have undeniably demonstrated significant differences in prioritization of skills, treatment of grammar, and roles of students. General English materials have a consistent focus on linear progression of grammar and development of balanced skill where vocabulary is gradually introduced, often adopting the scheme of presentation, practice, production (PPP) models of instruction (Littlejohn, 2011). In contrast, textbooks with ESP orientation usually have a priority upon spoken interaction, task-based learning, and professional functional use of language.

Despite these well documented issues and differences, there remains a relative scarcity of studies that evaluate and explores the potential pedagogical implications of using GE and ESP textbooks concurrently at the very same time, and within the same institutional curriculum. The present study addresses this potential gap by offering a systematic and comparative evaluation of two textbooks representing these contrasting teaching traditions.

3. Methodology

The study design which was adopted by the current research is a qualitative contrastive methodology, which is guided by McDonough et al.'s (2013) materials evaluation framework. This research strategy was preferred due to its methodological strength, as it provides fairly clear, organized and systematic stages for data selection, categorization, and subsequent interpretation, which closely aligns with the aims and objectives of the current study. The evaluation proceeds through three basic stages, starting with external evaluation, which is followed by the subsequent internal evaluation, and finally overall critical interpretation. The emphasis is on depth of analysis rather than quantification, although extensive tabulation is used to support a clear systematic comparison.

Concerning such methodology according to McDonough et al (2013, p. 50-62), external evaluation examines and explores the textbook from the outermost visible contents, starting with the analysis of the so called “blurb” on the cover of the book, the number of units, table of contents and the general orientation of the introduction, which gives an idea about the target audience, as well as the overall general orientation of the book. The stage of external evaluation is then followed by a process of internal evaluation which represents the stage of the so called “deep-dive” within the textbook, that is concerned with in depth detailed analysis and evaluation of two or more units within the targeted textbook. Based on specific unit selection, the analysis is directed towards exploration of the structure and demonstration of the linguistic contents, grading of the skills, as well as the general framework and the unique sequence of the textbook. How the textbook makes its selection of materials, context for reading and listening sections, and to what extent the content is authentic (where speaking sections ought to provide real life interaction), and to what extent the content is relevant, are the other segments that should be also examined during the aforementioned process of internal evaluation.

In addition to assessing engagement and motivation, the examination should consider whether tasks are appropriate for the target learners. The overall evaluation also includes general impressions of the material under review. Specifically, two factors are examined at this stage: usability, which refers to the possibility of integrating the textbook into a selected syllabus, and

generalizability, which concerns the extent to which findings can be applied beyond the immediate context.

According to McDonough et al. (2013, p. 60), training tasks should be linguistically suitable for most target students and must be systematically assessed. Two additional criteria are emphasized: adaptability, defined as the possibility of adding or omitting material to suit different contexts, and flexibility, which relates to the rigidity of task sequencing and the possibility of using tasks at various stages of instruction. These factors were given careful consideration in the present evaluation.

Although the study design is primarily qualitative in nature, an illustrative numerical scoring procedure was adopted in order to provide a summary of the overall evaluative tendencies throughout key research standards. The function of these scores is to give general investigative indicators concerning the direction of the results, rather than objective measurements, and thus they will serve to clarify findings that were already established through qualitative analysis. This approach is consistent with the interpretive tradition of materials evaluation and would serve to enhance the general transparency of the results.

Throughout the analysis, a critical position was adopted, recognizing that textbooks are not pedagogically neutral, but rather they promote and embrace specific assumptions concerning language learning process, and the related professional practice. As an additional analytical support to the current study, a brief student perception survey was implemented in accordance with established practice in materials evaluation research (McGrath, 2002, p. 18; Tomlinson, 2012), where a brief survey of student perception was assessed as an additional supportive tool to qualitative analysis, which would eventually serve as a form of triangulation function within the overall observed findings.

3.1 Materials

The selected textbook material for analysis are OEC and NHA. Both of these English teaching textbooks are widely used internationally and are often implemented within academic institutional framework. Their specific selection can be rationally justified due to their contrasting pedagogical orientations including ESP versus GE. Their simultaneous application at the College of Medicine, University of Mosul could be rationally justified by the existing need to enhance students' knowledge in general English, while also focusing on

another linguistic content which is more professionally oriented, where specifically in this regard, a fairly delicate educational balance is obviously needed.

3.2 Sampling Procedure

In line with the methodology proposed by McDonough et al. (2013), a sampling procedure, rather than full-text analysis, was employed in the study. Three units were selected and analyzed from each textbook, one unit from the beginning, the other from the middle, and the last one from the end of each textbook. This sampling procedure ensures a good and balanced representation of the material under study, while at the same time, maintaining analytical depth. Table (1) below shows the sampling procedure according to each book's units.

Table (1): Sampling process according to each book's units

Textbook	Units selected	Rationale
Oxford English for Careers	Unit 2 Unit 6 Unit 10	Beginning middle end
New Headway	Unit 2 Unit 7 Unit 12	Representative sampling

4. Data analysis and discussion

4.1 External Evaluation

Starting with the “blurb” as referred to by McDonough (2013 p. 54) OEC had an interesting presentation at the student's book cover: “Essential skills for doctor-patient communication” which tells a great deal about the core content of the book where it is evidently professionally oriented. NHA, on the other hand, totally lack such a core claim on front book cover, yet on the back cover, it seems to rely on status by arguing that the book is: “The world's most trusted English course”, which is a clear appeal to authority. Both books lack an introduction on

student's book, where it is found only in teacher's book. Both books contain twelve units.

Going through introduction in the teacher's books, the target audience of OEC seems to be clearly professional, it states: "Medicine is aimed at preparing trained and trainee doctors, and trained nurses, who intend to get a job in medicine". Such a claim is clearly professionally oriented, while NHA had a totally different audience: "Students at this level can feel a certain amount of justifiable pride in their achievement. They have probably been studying for many years, and should have benefited from the wisdom of a variety of teachers. They will have had the same grammatical areas explained to them over and over again". At another place it states: "However, there can also be a degree of frustration for them, because they know that their abilities are far from those of the native speaker, a goal which very few language learners achieve". It is worth noting that the use of the word "grammatical" tells a great deal about the basic orientation of the book.

Such observation indicates that we are dealing with totally different audience orientations. The proficiency level is also noticeably different, as OEC targets people with higher knowledge in English, in comparison to NHA, where NHA states: "At lower levels, progress can be rapid and discernible, but at the advanced level the opposite is the case. For some advanced students, their language production abilities have ossified. They might well acquire new vocabulary, but by and large they manage to avoid grammatical areas they are unsure of. By a process of circumlocution, they can restrict themselves to tried and tested phrases" (Soars et al., 2003). Here, the reference to language abilities as being "ossified" gives an indication that the target audience could have some acknowledged limitations of language. The context of learning in OEC includes: "who intend to get a job in medicine" evidently puts the book within the zone of ESP. NHA, on the other hand, is related to GE learners.

Concerning language presentation and although both books rely on the same number of teaching units, yet, there seems to be fundamental differences between the two books, where OEC carries considerably heavier linguistic load per unit. NHA follows more relatively simplistic strategy of presentation relying on "read and listen", "listen and repeat", "complete the conversation" and "vocabulary" sections. OEC, on the other hand, present a much more sophisticated arrangement including "checkups", "listening", "language spot", "pronunciation", "vocabulary", "speaking", "culture project", "writing", "checklists", and "keywords". This puts OEC at a totally different language presentation zone.

Going through other factors recommended by McDonough (2013, p. 57), NHA is used for the theoretical component of the curriculum at the College of Medicine, which represents the core of the teaching hours. In contrast, OEC is used for practical teaching hours and places greater emphasis on NHA. Both books include teacher's guides that are clear and easy to use, even for non-native teachers. OEC contains comprehensive grammar reference, full listening script, and speaking activity guide, while vocabulary is presented separately at each unit. NHA, on the other hand contains a clear and extensive word list with phonetic symbols. Also, it contains transcripts and grammar reference. Concerning visual content, it seems that both books do not shine in this regard. NHA relies on real life photos, which occupy significant amount of each page, and some images are overloaded which could be somewhat confusing or even distracting to the reader. OEC, on the other hand, relies on hand drawn imagery, which are smaller in size, and occupying much less portion of the paper in comparison to NHA. Also, images in OEC serve more precise targets, for example showing a site of pain, or body parts, where images seem to be more functionally oriented, though with less overall visual quality. Both books are relatively well presented concerning overall layout, with minimal cluttering.

On the same line of McDonough (2013, p. 58) concerning examination for any possible forms of cultural bias, there was not any indication of cultural orientations; on the contrary, OEC had a dedicated section (unit 12) which is named: "Diversity at work", where it effectively addresses cultural diversity in the society. NHA also had significant extent of cultural diversity within its imagery and overall content, which demonstrates that there was not any indication of cultural bias in both books.

Both books contain digital supportive material, where NHA relies on a dedicated website which contains audio and even video files, which are available for free on the internet. OEC on the other hand, relies on a dedicated audio files CD which is included with the book. Table (2) below presents a summary of the external evaluation.

Table (2): The summary results of the external evaluation

Criterion	OEC	NHA
Course type	ESP (Workplace-focused)	General English
Target learners	Adult professionals	General EFL learners
Primary aim	Functional workplace communication	Overall language proficiency
View of language	Instrumental and functional	Structural and skills-based
Methodological claims	Communicative, task	Communicative structural
Skill focus	Speaking and listening	Balanced four skills
Supplementary material	Audio online practice	Workbook audio online
Assessment orientation	Performance based	Accuracy based
Material extensibility	High (adaptive tasks)	Moderate (fixed sequencing)

The table suggests that the two textbooks are constructed for fundamentally different pedagogical ecosystems.

4.2 Internal Evaluation

Concerning skills, (McDonough, 2013, p. 59), three units were reviewed to evaluate various skills. NHA presents a relatively balanced content of skills with slightly less orientation towards writing tasks. This is probably related to the targeted audience where writing probably needs more complex content. Yet, the overall impression is fairly good with tasks such as “listen and repeat”, “complete the questions and answers”, “ask and answer questions”, and “complete the sentence”. OEC, on the other hand, is noticeably more oriented towards listening and speaking, as on average, each unit contains three listening sections, two speaking sections, two pronunciation sections, one reading section, and one writing section, which ends up with seven sections related to listening

and speaking, in comparison to only two sections related to reading and writing. By this one could say that nearly 75 percent of the content is listening and speaking oriented. This is expected, as it goes well with the claimed professional goals of the book. Also, this probably explains why it was chosen specifically within the practical side of English course at the college of medicine in university of Mosul. Concerning language grading, at both books it was very minor indeed, especially in OEC where teaching any unit regardless to book sequence is theoretically possible, as the differences between units were context and environment related, rather than exact knowledge buildup. This is not exactly the same for NHA, where at least seven out of fourteen units are sequentially connected with a form of gradual grammar and vocabulary buildup. Yet, progression was quite gradual and gentle, and in any case, this observation does not seem to undermine any of the core claims of both books.

Regarding reading/discourse skills, and although OEC is evidently more speaking oriented, yet, paradoxically, it excels in reading/discourse side, where there are much more complex reading tasks, and dedicated sections including “checkups”, “describe in your own words”, and “patient care”. NHA, on the other, side presents a relatively basic reading task, for example “letter to a newborn son” or “The man behind the mouse”, where all the reading task is related to vocabulary, rather than more complex and deep understanding of the sentence.

Concerning listening sections, NHA presents sets of audio and video files that can be freely downloaded from the official website. While the audio files generally seem to be “artificial”, the video content looks fairly “authentic”, where conversation is recorded outdoors, and involving different people at each individual section. OEC, on the other hand, presents audio files with considerably more complex content than NHA. Although the content is clearly “artificial”, yet, one could notice a fairly natural flow of conversation, without any degree of deviation from the core purpose of the material. Generally, both books provide fairly good audio content. In OEC, although the material is more likely to be “artificial”, the flow and complexity closely resemble genuine everyday interaction, making it almost “authentic”. NHA, on the other hand, contains some authentic videos, but the simplicity of the content of both audio and video media makes it more leaning towards being “artificial” than “authentic” or “natural”.

Concerning engagement and motivation of teachers and students, both books are fairly engaging. OEC teacher’s book states at the very beginning of introduction that: “Teacher’s Book assumes that a teacher of English for

medicine is unlikely to be a doctor, and information is given throughout to help with medical terminology”. This is a clear indication that the teacher needs some kind of preparation in order to attain a degree of familiarity in medical terminology, a task which could be somewhat stressing for unmotivated teacher. Yet, from a student’s prospective who is eager to job fulfillment in the medical field, one could confidently say that the content is naturally very appealing to the recipient. Therefore, concerning overall interest, in OEC the interest would be very high from the student’s side, and somewhat challenging from the teacher’s perspective. NHA, on the other side, probably shows a reversed presentation, as the simplicity of the content would be straightforward to the teacher, who will not struggle at all, while from the student’s side, the content could be somewhat uninteresting, or even borderline potentially “demotivating”, which would require some effort from the teacher to keep the students engaged. Tables (3-7) summarize the internal evaluation according to different categories

Table (3): Skills coverage and treatment.

Skill Dimension	OEC	NHA
Speaking	Dominant; role-plays and simulations	Guided discussions
Listening	Workplace dialogues	Every day/general contexts
Reading	Short professional texts	Extended informational texts
Writing	Emails and reports	Paragraphs and essays
Skill integration	Task based	Grammar led
Communicative payoff	Immediate functional use	Delayed communicative use

The table reveals how internal skill distribution reflects each textbook’s macro-level orientation. The analysis reveals a pronounced divergence in skills prioritization, OEC privileges speaking and listening through simulated workplace interactions, reflecting an action-oriented view of language. However, extended reading and writing are comparatively marginalized, resulting in a narrow construction of professional literacy. NHA, by contrast, maintains

systematic four-skill balance, but frequently subordinates communicative purpose to grammatical reinforcement.

Table (4): Grammar

Criterion	OEC	NHA
Grammar presentation	Implicit functional	Explicit rule based
Progression	Needs based	Linear structural
Practice type	Meaning focused	Controlled freer
Recycling	Contextual	Systematic
Learner noticing	Risk of under noticing	High noticing support

Grammar treatment is a core internal criterion in McDonough’s framework, it shows contrast highlights a pedagogical trade-off between communicative flow and formal accuracy.

Table (5): Vocabulary

Criterion	OEC	NHA
Vocabulary type	Job related and semitechnical	High frequency general
Register focus	Professional	Neutral general
Recycling pattern	Situational	Spiral
Lexical load	Context dependent	Gradual
Transferability	Context bound	High
Lexical autonomy	High	Moderate

Vocabulary analysis illustrates how each textbook constructs lexical competence differently.

Table (6): tasks and activities

Criterion	OEC	NHA
Task type	Communicative task	Practice activities
Authenticity	High	Moderate
Interaction pattern	Pair group work	Mostly par work
Outcome focus	Task completion	Language accuracy
Risk factor	Cognitive overload	Communicative artificiality

Task analysis is central to internal evaluation. This table shows how methodological choices shape classroom interaction and learner engagement.

Table (7): Methodology and learner role

Criterion	OEC	NHA
Learning approach	Task based	PPP oriented
Learner role	Active participant	Guided learner
Teacher role	Facilitator	Instructor
Leaner authority	High	Moderate
Scaffolding intensity	Selective	Extensive
Pedagogical control	Distributed	Centralized

Although not always explicit, learner and teacher roles emerge from task design and sequencing

4.3 Overall evaluation

Starting at usability factor, (McDonough, 2013, p. 60), it was very clear that OEC is very suitable to fill the needs of medical curriculum, and its integration within the practical side seems to be a very plausible decision. The

generalizability factor is very high, as any section of the book can, in fact, be used according to the local curricular needs of the college. Flexibility is also obviously very high, where sequencing and grading are not very rigid, where audio files can be practically used during examination or assessment of students, regardless of how much they were focused upon throughout classroom hours. NHA, on the other hand, shows a fairly different prospective. While its content could serve as a good foundation of general English, which is obviously an important side of curricular needs of the college of medicine, yet, its general content makes it more leaning towards being supplementary rather than core part of the medical syllabus. Flexibility is again much less than OEC as there is a gradual buildup of skills throughout units which makes any modification difficult to achieve. Yet, the decision to use NHA as part of the theoretical side is not without strong merits, as it takes into consideration the variation of English skills among students, where at least part of the class would clearly benefit from the classic and balanced content of the book including listening, reading, writing and speaking. Table (8) shows the overall evaluation

Table (8): Overall evaluation

Aspect	OEC	NHA
Main strength	Workplace relevance	Structural clarity
Main limitation	Narrow literacy range	Limited authenticity
Best suited context	ESP professional courses	General EFL programs
Adaptability	High	Moderate
Overall suitability	Context specific excellence	Broad applicability

4.5 Illustrative Quantitative Summary of Qualitative Evaluation:

Following McDonough and Shaw's (2003) internal and external evaluation framework, a limited and illustrative scoring procedure was employed to both textbooks. Each criterion was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very weak, 5 = very strong) to allow a simple systematic comparison. Here it is

important to emphasize that while McDonough and Shaw's (2013) framework is primarily qualitative, a limited quantitative scoring procedure was employed in this study in order to summarize evaluative tendencies across key criteria. These scores should be interpreted as general exploratory indicators, rather than hard objective measurements. Table (9) presents an illustrative numerical summary of the qualitative comparison of textbooks.

Table (9): Quantitative comparison of textbooks.

Evaluation Criterion	OEC (Maximum possible score = 5)	NHA (Maximum possible score = 5)	Justification (Summary)
Clarity of Aims	5	4	OEC states explicit professional outcomes; NOA uses broad general aims
Relevance to Learner Needs	5	3	OEC tailored to ESP; NHA limited to general English
Authenticity of language	5	4	OEC uses workplace discourse; NHA relies on pedagogic texts
Skills integration	4	3	OEC integrates skills through tasks; NHA prioritize grammar
Vocabulary selection	5	4	OEC focuses on job-related lexis; NHA on high frequency items
Methodological Consistency	4	4	Both follow coherent methodologies
Cultural and Contextual suitability	4	3	OEC contextualized professionally; NHA socially
Overall Suitability	5	3	NHA is not designed for professional purposes

The presented numerical summary could suggest a relatively clear distinction between the two analyzed textbooks, in terms of their pedagogical purpose, course adaptability, and practical applicability. It was observed that OEC consistently achieves better scores within criteria related to material's authenticity, its relevance to students' needs, and alignment to ESP, reflecting an orientation which is clearly professional. NHA, on the other hand, shows an obvious strength within the field of foundational language presentation. Yet, it shows some limitations when contrasted with ESP oriented professional needs. These findings can be considered as a reinforcement to McDonough et al.'s assertion that practical materials effectiveness is crucially dependent on its contextual alignment and to what extent it fits within its educational environment, rather than the inherent quality of the material.

4.6 Student Survey Results

As a supplementation to the performed materials based evaluation, a brief, yet focused student perception survey was performed in accordance with established concepts and practice in materials evaluation research (McGrath, 2002, p. 18; Tomlinson, 2012), where a brief, yet focused student perception survey was administrated as a supportive tool to put the materials based analysis within its realistic and practical context, which could be viewed as a form of triangulation to what has been presented within the previous analysis. The survey was directed towards second year medical students, as this group had been relatively recently exposed to both textbooks during their practical and theoretical instruction within the previous year. The questionnaire was randomly distributed among targeted students, and after exclusion of any incomplete or unclear response, a total of 40 valid replies were collected for further analysis. The survey consisted of eight items addressing different dimensions of textbook evaluation, ranging from relevance to medical studies up to recommendations for continued use. Responses of the survey were descriptively summarized and presented within a single comparative table, which could help in highlighting the general trends in student opinions and perceptions regarding the two fundamentally different textbooks. The main focus of the survey was on the students' perceived relevance, development of skill, actual learning engagement, and overall perceived usefulness. It is worth mentioning that the results are reported descriptively, and are intended to contextualize the qualitative textbook

analysis rather than to serve as independent evidence of learning outcomes. Table (10) presents the comparative results for both textbooks.

Table (10): The comparative results for both textbooks (OEC vs NHA)

Survey Item	OEC Strongly Agree/ agree	NHA Strongly Agree/ agree
Relevance to medical studies	31 (77.5%)	14 (35%)
Support for professional communication	30 (75%)	12 (30%)
Improvement of speaking and listening	33 (82.5%)	18 (45%)
Improvement of reading and writing	21 (52.5%)	26 (65%)
Engagement and motivation	27 (67.5%)	24 (60%)
Appropriateness of language level	29 (72.5%)	31 (77.5%)
Usefulness for future professional needs	32 (80%)	13 (32.5%)
Recommendation for continued use	28 (70%)	16 (40%)

Overall, the results suggest significant differences in student perceptions of the two textbooks. OEC received substantially higher levels of students' agreement in relation to medical relevance, professional communication, and future career development. Particularly strong agreement was observed for speaking and listening skills, reflecting the textbook's emphasis on practical, functional and interactional language use in real medical contexts. In contrast, NHA was perceived more positively with regard to reading and writing development, and appropriateness of language level, suggesting that the GE textbook provides a significantly more solid foundation in basic language

structures and skills, where students could be lacking important language components. These findings indicate that while the GE textbook may support foundational linguistic development, and could be an important contribution to significant portion of students, yet, the ESP textbook is generally perceived as more closely aligned with students' academic and professional needs. It should be noted that these findings reflect students' perceptions rather than direct measures of language development, and are therefore naturally interpreted as supplementary to the analysis, rather than drawing concrete results concerning the final acquired learning outcomes.

5. Critical Discussion

A critical analysis of findings indicates that neither textbook is pedagogically neutral. NHA reflects a GE form-focused orientation that privileges accuracy, sequencing, and assessment, often at the expense of contextual relevance. OEC, while being more focused towards professional background, it presents a form of relatively simplified or an "artificial" image of professional communication, which could relatively overlook or even omit important power relations, everyday conflicts, and real constraints at the institutional environment. These findings puts forward a suggestion that the choice of textbook should be guided not solely by the level of proficiency, but by actual recognition and awareness of the real social and professional assumptions, which are effectively embedded within the teaching chosen material.

6. Conclusion:

The contrastive findings of the current study can be viewed as a demonstration that observed pedagogical differences between the two studied textbooks are not due to mere chance or incident, but rather, by design, are structurally embedded within their pedagogical framework. While New Headway has an emphasis on direct and explicit grammar instruction, supports grammatical accuracy, and assessment readiness, it has a professional drawback that it has limited exposure to authentic professional communicative contexts. Conversely, on the other hand, OEC put a priority on task realism and professional functional competence, sometimes at the expense of systematic grammatical instructions and practice.

Importantly, the findings of the study do not claim or suggest absolute superiority of one textbook over the other, but rather it highlights the

fundamental need of context-sensitive materials selection and evaluation. The current study can be considered as a demonstration that McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara's (2013) framework remains a fairly useful, methodologically robust, and easily applicable model for effective contemporary English textbook evaluation. The current analysis is a conformation that GE and ESP textbooks embody fundamentally different pedagogical orientations and logic, and that effective textbook selection requires a delicate balance and a form of alignment with the actual learner needs and academic institutional goals. In this regard one could safely argue that the inclusion of GE textbook as an "addition" to ESP course book is still worthy to implement within the English curriculum at the College of Medicine, provided that constant, objective, and rigorous observation and evaluation are continuously exercised.

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