

A Comparative Evaluation of Two English Textbooks: an Analysis of Teaching Evolution Through Time

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«Tell me and I forget,
teach me and I remember,
involve me and I learn».

Benjamin Franklin

Abstract

English language textbooks have undergone a transformation in recent years due to the fact that the globalised world is triggering new needs for foreign language learners. Traditionally, English language textbooks did not achieve students' expectations. The focus has always been in grammar and vocabulary. The main purpose of this academic dissertation is to examine how English language materials have changed in recent years. The study is carried out through the analysis of a textbook published in 1993, *The New Cambridge English Course*, and another one published in 2015, *Empower B2*. The findings are presented by means of a checklist and an accurate analysis of several items chosen for its quality evaluation. The fundamental aspects in which this study focuses are learning objectives, layout, structures and skills, exercises, and the implementation of technology. In addition, the results show the improvements undertaken in such a short period of time and the change in the language teaching perspective implemented in both textbooks. This study motivates further research in English language materials and promotes awareness about all the aspects that educators need to take into account when choosing the best course book for their learners.

Key words: language teaching, method, approach, skills, meaningful communication

Resumen

Los libros de texto de inglés han experimentado una especial transformación en los últimos años, ya que el mundo globalizado en el que vivimos ha provocado un cambio en las necesidades de los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras. Tradicionalmente, los libros de texto de inglés no alcanzaban las expectativas de los estudiantes, debido a que se centraban en especial en la gramática y el vocabulario. El propósito principal de este trabajo de final de grado es examinar cómo los materiales didácticos en lengua inglesa han evolucionado en los últimos años. Este estudio se ha llevado a cabo a través del análisis de un libro publicado en 1993, *The New Cambridge English Course*, y de otro publicado en 2015, *Empower B2*. Los resultados se han obtenido gracias a la utilización de una lista de verificación y el posterior análisis cualitativo de todos los ítems seleccionados para este estudio. Los aspectos fundamentales en los cuales se centra dicho análisis son los objetivos didácticos, el diseño, las estructuras lingüísticas y las

destrezas, y la aplicación de la tecnología en ambos libros de texto. Además, los resultados muestran las mejoras llevadas a cabo en este corto periodo de tiempo y el cambio de metodología didáctica que han experimentado ambos libros. Este estudio pretende incentivar futuras investigaciones relacionadas con los materiales de lengua en inglés y también pretende fomentar la concienciación por parte de los educadores de todos los aspectos que se deben tener en cuenta para la elección de los materiales de lengua que más convengan a sus estudiantes.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de lenguas, método, enfoque, competencias, comunicación significativa

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLL	Community Language Learning
CLL	Cooperative Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FCE	First Certificate in English
FLA	First Language Acquisition
L1	Mother Tongue
L2	Target Language
MIM	Multiple Intelligences Model
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLT	Situational Language Teaching
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TPR	Total Physical Response

1. INTRODUCTION

The main topic of this academic dissertation is teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), but in particular, the differences between English language course books will be evaluated to examine how English language teaching has changed in recent years through textbook materials. Moreover, this study will be carried out through the evaluation of the teaching approaches used in two English textbooks published at different times. Both publications are suitable for an upper-intermediate level (B2 CEFR). The goal of this research project is to analyse the different teaching methods, their implementation in textbooks and, thus, understand how English language teaching has changed.

Communication and a good command of foreign languages is essential since we live in a globalized world. For this reason, teachers and linguists have to think up new teaching strategies and approaches to meet their students' needs in this new technological world. Learning a language has never been easy. It is a generally accepted fact to have a good command of a language, grammar, vocabulary and other linguistic structures is vital. Nevertheless, it is generally known that nowadays there are other aspects which are more relevant to students, such as fluency, communication, and comprehension.

This brings up to the question of what is the best way to teach a foreign language. However, there are many other aspects to take into account. These aspects are varied and complex. For instance, classroom-related matters, the similarity between their mother tongue, the teacher's performance, the foreign language, and the technology used during the lesson, among other elements. Furthermore, the materials used in teaching a language constitute a remarkable factor to consider. Therefore, this project aims to focus on textbooks.

Thus, this academic dissertation seeks to evaluate previous research about teaching EFL and previous literature is going to be used to analyse two English textbooks. The analysis process is going to be undertaken by means of a checklist and the subsequent detailed analysis. Finally, we also believe that a study of this nature would help professionals or students, who are interested in teaching English, to improve their knowledge about this subject.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section is a literature review about the most relevant topics that will concern our analysis in the practical framework. The aspects examined in this theoretical framework are based on the idea that previous knowledge about language teaching, factors that influence SLA, the CEFR, and procedures to choose the best teaching materials are essential for a subsequent study focused on the evaluation of TEFL through textbooks.

2.1. Teaching language approaches

Language teaching has become progressively a more important trend since the improvement of communications, commerce, and technology. It was in the twentieth century that linguists started to develop new procedures for the design of teaching methods with the support of psychology to make their proposals more effective. Nevertheless, language teaching has its origins in ancient Greece and Rome, where Latin and Greek were the most spoken languages in fields such as commerce, religion and government. After that, the changes according to the kind of proficiency that the students need has triggered the growing of new teaching language methods and approaches.

The next three subsections present various themes of previous literature in this field. The following parts will provide an overview of different teaching language approaches and methods throughout history: from the most traditional approaches to the latest trends.

2.1.1. Traditional approaches

First and foremost, linguists such as Richards and Rodgers (2001: 3) in their research state that language teaching started when «Latin diminished from a living language to an “occasional” subject in the school curriculum». Consequently, the study of Latin through declensions, conjugations, and translation lasted from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, when modern languages became more significant and began to be taught in schools, the teaching methodology was similar to the study of Latin: «Textbooks consisted of statements of abstract grammar rules, lists of

vocabulary, and sentences for translation» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 4). There was little oral communication, but writing and reading exercises were the main teaching strategy. Textbooks were divided into two parts: isolated grammar rules and translation exercises. Moreover, cultural or communicative activities were not included in the curriculum.

This approach in language teaching is known as the Grammar-Translation Method. The goal of studying a foreign language was to read its literature and enhance the intellectual development of the student. Firstly, memorization of rules was the main skill developed by this method, rather than understanding and communicating fluently. Secondly, vocabulary was only taught through bilingual word lists. Finally, grammar was taught deductively —rules presented by the teacher and then they were practised through translation. This method was widely used in Europe from the 1840s to the 1940s. However, nowadays, it does not have advocates and it is completely obsolete.

Thenceforth, linguistics and phonetics underwent a period of development and progress, hence the study of speech was emphasized by researchers. This period was called the Reform Movement. The influence of this movement focused on pronunciation and oral skills. Additionally, it had a significant impact on certain approaches, such as the Direct Method or the Audio-lingual Method.

«It advocated the study of spoken language, phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits, the use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce conversational phrases and idioms, and inductive approach to the teaching of grammar, and teaching new meanings through establishing associations within the target language» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 9).

Consequently, the Direct Method was the first theory that was based on the principles of first language acquisition (FLA). This method was first adopted in Germany and France in the 1880s and started to decline in the 1920s. «The Direct Method was based on an instruction exclusively in the target language since the mother tongue was not permitted» (Renau, 2016: 83), it was the first time that a monolingual approach was followed to teach foreign languages. The principles were that the class was conducted in the target language, only everyday vocabulary was taught, and oral skills were based on

questions-and-answers exchanges between the teacher and the students. Besides, grammar was taught inductively, concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration using objects or pictures, and correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized. Unfortunately, this method was only successful in private schools where the use of native-speaking teachers was compulsory, as Richards and Rodgers (2001) assert in their research.

Later on, during the World War II a new approach was developed in the United States, the Audio-lingual Method, due to the need «to supply the US government with personnel who were fluent in German, French, Italian, Chinese or Japanese and could work as interpreters and translators, it was necessary to set up a special language training program» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 50). This method took some principles from the Direct Method, but added features from American linguists. This method was based on four skills when learning a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Audio-lingual lessons were based on repeated and memorised oral structural patterns — dialogues and drills. Grammar was taught inductively and there was special emphasis in correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation.

In the late 1960s, the linguistic theory changed in the United States and researchers and linguists such as Chomsky (1966: 153) claimed that «language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness»; a completely different view from the Audio-lingual approach. Nevertheless, the worst point was that «students were often found to be unable to transfer skills acquired through Audiolingualism to real communication outside the classroom» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 65).

The newest of this set of approaches is the Situational Language Teaching (SLT), developed by British linguists from the 1930s to the 1960s and whose influence continued until the 1990s. They tried to develop a more scientific foundation for an oral approach for TEFL than in the Direct Method. As a result, by using this approach all the language taught must be realistic and can be used in real-life conversations: all the words and sentences must emerge from real or imagined situations. Therefore, the principles of the SLT are centred on the idea that spoken language is primary, all

language materials are practiced orally before being presented in written form, only the target language should be used in the classroom, the most general and useful lexical items are presented, grammatical structures are graded from simple to complex, and new items are practised situationally (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

2.1.2. Innovative approaches

In the 1960s Chomsky's theory revolutionised linguistics and focused the attention of linguists and psychologists on mental properties of people in language use and language learning. Thus, a new perspective appeared among linguists, teachers and psychologists. This new perspective advocated the involvement of a meaningful language when practising exercises and that learners should be encouraged to use their innate abilities. This theory was a turning point in foreign language teaching, hence all the approaches that came after were an attempt to respond to this new point of view.

One of the innovative approaches that emerged from this theory was the Suggestopedia, developed by Lozanov in 1978. The principles of this method are «the decoration, furniture, and the arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 142). Lozanov affirmed that an optimal learning environment is essential for effective learning. He also believed that most learning takes place in a relaxed but focused environment. «The main objective of this was to make the student achieve advanced conversational proficiency» (Renau, 2016: 84). This goal has to be achieved through a comfortable environment, role-play and playful activities and avoiding focusing on linguistic form. Furthermore, the use of music is essential as rhythm and intonation is very important.

At the same time, another innovative approach named Total Physical Response (TPR) was developed in California by Asher. «Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical activity» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 73). The objective of this method is to teach communication and for this purpose, comprehension is the most important aspect of this method. TPR is based on the idea that SLA is similar to the process of FLA. Consequently, the objective of this method is accomplished by using commands in which students must answer physically before they start producing oral

answers. Unfortunately, this method only deals with the first stages of learning and «Asher stressed that TPR should be used in association with other methods and techniques» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 79).

In the 1970s, Gattegno developed the method named Silent Way. «It is based on the premise that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 81). It is an approach that involves problem-solving activities and in which the student is the centre and the principal actor of the learning process. Furthermore, the Silent Method was mainly focused on structure; from guided and repeated activities towards free communication. This method was not as revolutionary as expected because, as Richards and Rodgers (2001: 88) observed, it exemplified many of the features that characterise more traditional methods, such as Audiolingualism.

At the same time, in 1977, Terrel, a teacher of Spanish in California, proposed the Natural Approach. This approach emphasised the input rather than the practice. It is based on the idea that «a prolonged period of attention to what the language learners hear before they try to produce the language» (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 261) was successful for the students' progression. The main objective of this approach was to communicate: «Language is viewed as a vehicle for communicating meaning and messages» (Renau, 2016: 85).

The last innovative approach is the Community Language Learning (CLL), which «draws on the counselling metaphor to redefine the roles of the teacher (the counsellor) and learners (the clients) in the language classroom» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 90). It is an approach that engages the students' emotions and feelings as well as their linguistic skills. It is a method in which both the mother tongue and the foreign language are involved. Firstly, a student presents a message in L1 (mother tongue) to the teacher and he or she translates the message into L2 (foreign language); then, the student repeats the utterance to another student with whom he or she wants to communicate. The focus is on fluency, and accuracy is barely considered. Consequently, this may lead to poor control of the grammatical structures and other skills such as writing.

2.1.3. Current communicative approaches

Littlewood (1996) asserts that one of the most remarkable features of language teaching nowadays is that it is focused on functional aspects, i.e. aspects related to real communicative purposes, as well as on structural aspects of language, i.e. aspects that are intrinsic to the language itself (grammatical, syntactical, and phonological structures). Besides, all of this is combined with a communicative pedagogical perspective. Henceforth, the most recent approaches in teaching EFL will be described.

Firstly, the Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) shifted the major paradigm in language teaching in the twentieth century. This method has its origins in the 1960s in British linguistics. CLT appeared as a reaction to the Situational Language Teaching. British linguists called into question this method thanks to Chomsky's theory. «They saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures» (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 153). The main objective of this approach is to acquire communicative competence in the foreign language. The principles of this approach according to Richards and Rodgers (2014: 105), are that students learn a language when they use it to communicate, activities have to be based on meaningful communication, emphasis in fluency, communication integrates different language skills, and trial and error are considered as an important part of the learning process. In addition, its principles are still widely applied today.

Later, in 1994, the term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) was coined by Marsh and the base of this approach is that the foreign language is taught in the L1 context through subjects that are developed in the foreign language. This approach is mainly used in Europe and implemented by the European Commission, because it is thought that it will be the perfect way to create a multilingual population. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014: 119), CLIL is based on six principles: it is about the learner creating their own knowledge and understanding, and developing skills; the content is analysed to develop learning and thinking processes; language needs to be related to the learning context; interaction is fundamental along with intercultural awareness; and, finally, CLIL is embedded in an educational context, hence it must follow the goals of the overall curriculum to be effective.

Furthermore, another current approach is the Lexical Approach that is grounded in the idea that language is developed out of lexical units rather than grammatical structures. In such manner the structural aspects of language are presented as words and chunks formed by collocations and fixed phrases. This approach was described for the first time by Lewis in 1993. In this case, students learn basically through fixed expressions that occur frequently in dialogues. This approach may be integrated with other methods and approaches, because Richards and Rodgers (2014) claim that little research has been done to show how such focus can be used to develop linguistic and communicative competence.

In addition, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a development of CLT since it draws on some of the same principles. The main principle of this approach is that students are given functional tasks, in other words, meaningful and communicative activities for real-world and non-linguistic purposes. Feez (1998) argued that the focus of TBLT is on process rather than product and that tasks emphasise communication and meaning. This method also claim that students learn by interacting and engaging in the activities, tasks can suit real-life or pedagogical purposes, and they are always sequenced according to difficulty.

A different communicative approach that is also linked to CLT is Cooperative Language Learning (CLL). It is an approach that promotes peer support and coaching, which means that cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups in the classrooms are the core tasks. It is a learner-centred approach, this indicates that the teacher intervenes as little as possible; it is an approach that turns over any teacher-fronted classroom methods. In this view, teachers acquire the role of a facilitator of learning. They assist the students and give them few commands. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014: 245), there are five principles that sustain CLL: the use of interactive pair and group activities, this methodology can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings, language structures and communicative functions are learned through interactive tasks and it is important to provide the student opportunities to develop successful learning and communication strategies. Finally, a positive classroom climate enhances learner motivation and reduces the stress.

One of the newest trends in language teaching nowadays is the pedagogical approach based on the Multiple Intelligences Model.

In this model, «learners are viewed as possessing individual learning styles, preferences, and strategies, and these influence how they approach classroom learning and the kinds of learning activities they favour or learn most effectively from» (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 230).

The Multiple Intelligences Model (MIM) points out that it is a student-centred philosophy that claims that human intelligence is divided in multiple dimensions that must be acknowledged and developed in the learning process. Gardner (1993) developed this theory for the first time at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He argues that all humans have these intelligences, but they differ in their strength and combinations. Gardner also believes that all of them can be enhanced through training and practice. The intelligences that have been discussed are linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and later on Gardner also added existential intelligence. This approach to language teaching has no objective. It is only «an educational support system aimed at making the language learner a better designer of his or her own learning experience» (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 234), because he/she would be able to detect his/her strengths and weaknesses.

Besides, Project Work (also named Project-Based Learning) is a methodology that is becoming popular in EFL classroom. It is a teaching method that focuses on completing a task (wall displays, magazines, story books, etc.) and it involves a wide range of resources. Furthermore, in this method, learners interact with real-life materials. Hutchinson (1996) claims that Project Work captures the two principles of a communicative approach better than any other activity. According to Gallacher (2004) some of the advantages of this methodology are the personal motivation of the students, all four skills are integrated, autonomous work is promoted, the learning outcome is the final product they fulfil, language input is more authentic, and learners develop interpersonal relations. Therefore, it is a learner centred methodology. Nonetheless, when each group is working they might not use the L2 to communicate if the class are monolingual; if the students are given more freedom, some of them do nothing and it is

a problem for the development of the final task; and finally, groups work at different speeds.

To sum up, foreign language teaching approaches have undergone a deep transformation and, as it has been seen, many different perspectives have been considered through time. Evolution has taken over in all aspects, but the most relevant changes have been the teacher-centred perspective to a student-centred one, and the meaningful and real-life communicative view of language teaching.

2.1.4. Timeline of Language Teaching Approaches

1

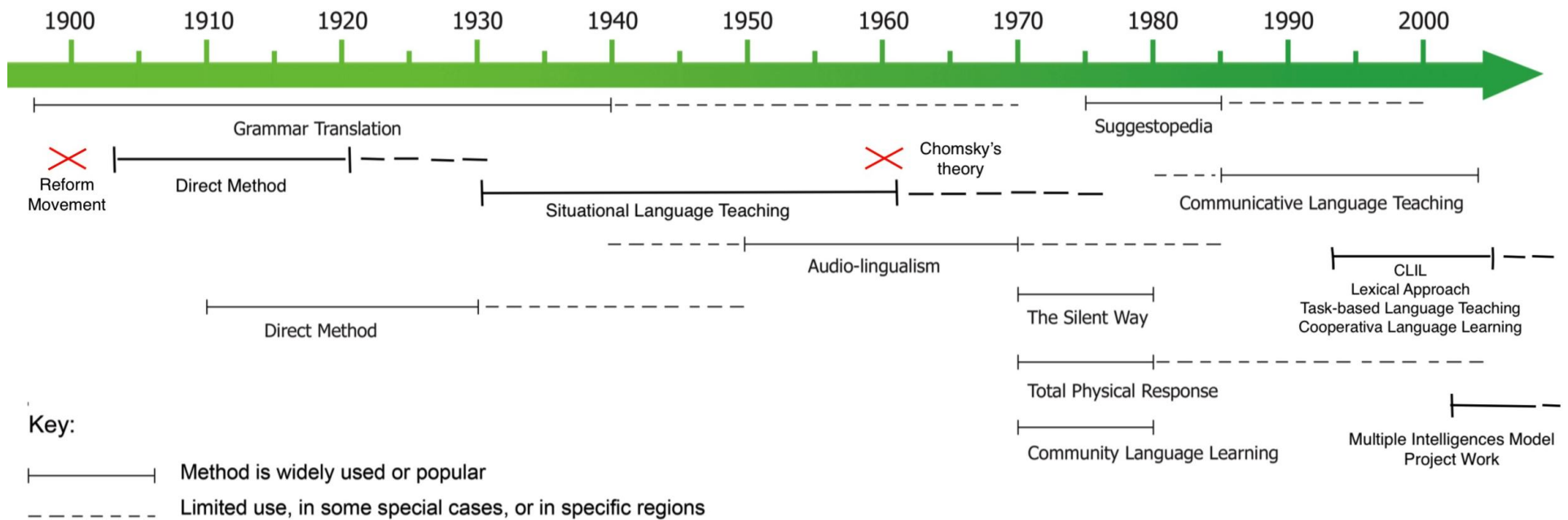


Figure 1. Timeline of Language Teaching Approaches

¹ Modified from TJ Taylor. (2016). The Humanistic Approaches to Learning. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/Mxp2C4>

2.2. Factors that influence SLA

As stated in previous sections, the learner role has changed over time and has acquired a more important position in the classroom or learning environment. More recent approaches to language teaching seek to acknowledge the differences that learners bring to the learning process, because there is a concern for motivation —how the learners relate to the task— and a concern for relevance —how the learners relate to the language.

It is a well-known fact that teachers not only have to deal with linguistic structures and how to teach them but also with other factors that influence the process of foreign language acquisition of their students. There are remarkable differences among students that challenge the teacher to achieve a successful outcome of the whole class. Therefore, teachers have to take into consideration all factors that can condition their successful performance in class. It is true that when it comes to individual factors teachers cannot customize a lesson for each student, but if they know how to deal with these factors «teachers can help learners expand their repertoire of learning strategies and thus develop greater flexibility in their ways of approaching language learning» (Lightbown and Spada, 2017: 92). These factors can be broadly classified in internal factors and external factors.

2.2.1. Internal factors

Internal factors are those that mainly affect the learner, these are all the individual characteristics that the student brings to class. Lightbown and Spada (2017) believe that individual factors are inherent in the learner and can predict success or failure in their language learning. These factors are age, intrinsic motivation, cognitive abilities, and language interference.

Firstly, second language acquisition is influenced by age, but according to Lightbown and Spada (2017) the relationship between age and success is hardly complex or controversial. Taking into account possible biological differences, there are other conditions that can differ from learning a foreign language as a child or as an adult. For

instance, adults are found in situations where complex language is demanded, whereas children are usually surrounded by everyday language and the way they learn is usually unconscious. It is also important to consider that most studies have concluded that «older learners struggle to achieve native-like proficiency» (Lightbown and Spada, 2017: 78). Therefore, teachers have to be aware of the age of the learners and produce suitable activities and learning strategies.

Intrinsic motivation is another factor that influences SLA. It manifests itself when there is an internal desire to perform a particular task. Students who enjoy language learning and participate more in the classroom or have an ambition related to the language they are more interested to achieve better results than those who have no motivation or goal in learning the language. For this reason, teachers have to try to catch their students' attention and engage them to the learning process via interesting and motivational activities.

Besides, there is the cognitive ability of each student. It means that students with stronger cognitive abilities are likely to make better and faster progress in their learning process. Nevertheless, not all the students in the same class have the same cognitive abilities or the same language learning aptitude, so «teachers may be able to ensure that their teaching activities are sufficiently varied to accommodate learners with different aptitude profiles» (Lightbown and Spada, 2017: 81).

Finally, language interference is one of the most important internal factors, because the impact of the student's native language affects to a large extent the acquisition of a foreign language. It is universally known that languages are divided by families; this means that, for instance, Spanish, French, Italian, Romanian, Catalan, Portuguese and Galician form the family of romance languages. When learners of foreign languages start to study the foreign language structures, they tend to rely on their first language: if the L2 is from the same language family or is similar to their L1, it will be easier for them to note any similarities or differences, and make their learning process easier. Therefore, it is important to be aware of our student's L1 when teaching a language, whether it is the same or different among the students. The interference of L1 may cause some persistent mistakes during the learning process: this is a reason why

teachers should have some knowledge about their students' mother tongue, so they can tackle the problems as soon as possible.

2.2.2. External factors

The external factors are those that characterise the particular language learning situation. These are the features that the students cannot control by themselves. These features are determined by the curriculum, the instruction, culture and status, communication with native speakers, and access to technology.

It is an important part of the teaching and learning process that the curriculum meets the students' needs. According to the Frankfurt International School, language learning is less likely to occur if students are immersed in a mainstream curriculum without additional assistance if they need it to or extra activities apart from the regular function of the class. Objectives during the learning process must be settled, so the students know if they have reached the degree of competence required. Moreover, the curriculum is a guide for both the students and the teachers.

Instruction is one of the basic factors when learning a language. Teachers are usually the conductors of the learning process, so they influence the students' learning experience to a great extent. The better the teachers know how to tackle the class and to communicate their ideas, the more effective the learning process will be. Teachers need to be aware that they are responsible for the learners' linguistic development. Furthermore, teachers need to put into practice the suitable teaching methods and approaches for their group of students.

Culture and status is another feature to take into account when facing a foreign language lesson. Students from the same class usually come from a similar cultural and socioeconomic background, but sometimes —as we live in a globalised world— several cultures can be found in the same class that and each individual student acquire language in a different way. Unfortunately, The Frankfurt International School reported that students in situations where their own culture has a lower status than that of the culture in which they are learning the language make slower progress.

Communication with native speakers is another factor that enhances the student progress, because native speakers are linguistic models that can provide positive feedback and advice. Moreover, the opportunity to interact with them is an important advantage to improve oral skills. The access to technology is also an important factor to take into account as it provides the students with new learning opportunities that help them «to be less dependent on classroom and teacher's approach or method» (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 339). In addition, many textbooks nowadays are accompanied with a wide range of e-sources. In brief, Richards and Rodgers (2014) affirm that technology provides access to a rich range of authentic materials and it enables collaborative work among students in different locations.

Finally, «teachers have to find ways of engaging students in their lessons, to use learning arrangements that encourage active student participation in lessons, to acknowledge the diversity of motivation and interests learners bring to the classroom, and to use strategies that enable the class to function as a cohesive group that collaborates to help may the lesson a positive learning experience» (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 244).

2.3. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

In the following section, the focus is on a significant aspect that changed the language teaching field. The aim of this section is to present a background on how content is graded, in this case, in official levels that will allow us to analyse both textbooks, considering the fact that they differ in time of publication. Hence, some differences in syllabus will be mentioned.

According to the Council of Europe (2018), «the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency».

The Council of Europe organised a symposium in 1991 with the aim to develop and scale descriptors of language proficiency. Finally, in January 2001 the official version of the CEFR was launched.

The CEFR has marked a turning point in language teaching, because it is a very useful tool for teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. To begin with, there are five skills that must be taught: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing. And, besides, three main levels: basic user (A1 and A2), independent user (B1 and B2), and proficient user (C1 and C2). The analysis brought out in the practical framework of this academic dissertation is going to consider two materials intended for independent users that at the end of the course will acquire a B2 level.

As reported by the Council of Europe (2001) students at a B2 level «can understand the main ideas of complex texts on concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. They can also interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Ultimately, they can produce clear and detailed texts about a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options».

In addition, the approach adopted by the CEFR «views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’, i.e. members of society who have tasks» (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR claims that language learners are «individuals and social agents that develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences». Thus, the CEFR advocates a communicative approach, where all the tasks involved in the learning progress are part of real-life oriented activities and teaching procedures.

All in all, the CEFR is an instrument that is used worldwide, even if it was first launched by the European Union. By the use of the CEFR guidelines, almost all languages can be taught and certified systematically.

2.4. Choosing the best material

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the most remarkable aspects that teachers need to bear in mind when choosing a textbook for their lessons. In this section, the most significant contributions of different researchers and experts will be

presented to achieve the aim of the next subsection: elaborating a sample checklist for evaluating both English textbooks.

First of all, it is of great importance to emphasize that the objective of a textbook is «to assist foreign language learners of English in improving their linguistic knowledge and/or communicative activity» (Sheldon, 1987: 2). Considering the review of the teaching approaches in section 2.1 of this project, it is clear to decide which methods and approaches will demand the use of a textbook in class. Additionally, the choice to implement a textbook in class will depend on the teacher's preferences. Therefore, this study is going to consider a teaching setting in which the textbook is a valuable tool, and for that reason it is important to make the right choice.

On the one hand, according to Tomlinson (2003: 37), material evaluation is a procedure that involves measuring the value of learning materials by means of making judgements about the effects of the materials taking into account the factors that are implied in the learning process. This procedure can measure aspects such as the appeal of the materials to the learners, the ability of the materials to motivate the students, the flexibility of the materials, etc.

«Several possible criteria and procedures for carrying out a sound selection of appropriate textbooks have been suggested. However, selecting an appropriate textbook is not a wholly objective process» (Hashemi, 2011: 62).

The value of materials for Tomlinson (2003: 38) lies in their «effectiveness in encouraging learners to make discoveries for themselves through self-investment via intellectual aesthetic and emotional engagement with authentic input along with sensitivity to learners' readiness to learn, supported by opportunities for genuine interaction and purposeful interaction».

The selection of materials necessarily takes place before classroom use, but in actual fact, selected materials can be judged, whether they were successful or not, only after implementation in the classroom and receiving feedback. Material evaluation is a multidimensional process, keeping in mind that there are different aspects that can be analysed. It is possible to divide such evaluation in two main stages. The first stage

consists of assessing the contents of the book in relation to its aims, i.e. the learning objectives during the use of a certain textbook and at the end of it. Moreover, these objectives can be classified into long-term or short-term. Long-term objectives are the ones that are expected to be achieved at the end of the learning process, i.e. end of the course. Whereas short-term objectives are those that are involved during the learning process, for instance, the objectives of a single unit, of a set of units, or even the objectives of a certain activity.

In the second stage, teachers have to take into account the effectiveness of the materials in terms of the specific needs of the target students and along with how well these materials serve the teaching-learning process. In recent years, as it is mentioned in section 2.1.3, language teaching has developed into a more student-centred perspective. Thus, when teachers are deciding which is the best course book for their students, they need to assess each material considering aspects such as motivational topics for their target students, whether it encourages linguistic self-development, and other skills such as creativity and cooperation or not. Educators have to choose a textbook that suits students interests and level, but also that enables them to achieve successful outcomes.

On the other hand, as stated by Celce-Murcia (2014: 382), teachers can consider three fundamental aspects when evaluating and selecting textbooks: fit with the curriculum, with the students, and with the teachers. The first purpose of textbook evaluation is to find a course book that follows the curriculum or, at least, to find a book that can fit as best as possible with the curriculum. However, in some teaching settings, the curriculum is not very clear, such as in private language academies with small programs, and this item could be difficult to evaluate. It is also essential to bear in mind that the textbook fits with students. «An EFL textbook must have not just English language or communication skill content demanded by the curriculum, but also fit the needs of the learners» (Byrd and Schuemann cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014: 383), because textbooks are directly designed for students. In the evaluation process, the person making the decisions needs to take into considerations aspects such as: whether the content is appropriate for the target students, whether the examples fit the explanations, whether the exercises meet the needs of different kinds of learners and whether the illustrations are appropriate for their age and level.

Finally, the selection process needs to take into account if the course book can be used effectively by the teacher.

As stated by Bryd and Schuemann, «the basic questions will always be, can our teachers handle this material, and will our teachers find that the textbook meets their needs and preferences for teaching materials» (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014: 384).

This is an important fact, given that teachers are the ones that have the skills to handle the textbook content to meet their students' needs and the curriculum objectives.

To conclude, it does not matter what type of strategy educators follow when evaluating and selecting a textbook for their lessons, but it is extremely important that they follow a systematic procedure, provided that «textbooks used in language classes strongly impact the teaching/learning experience [...]; thus, in a practical sense, their selection is one of the most important decisions made» (Byrd and Schuemann cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014: 382).

2.4.1. The use of a sample checklist as an evaluation tool

The aim of this section is to introduce the checklist that it is going to be adopted and upon which the latter analysis will be carried out. The use of a checklist to choose a suitable textbook for a class is a widespread tool in the foreign language teaching field. There have been different researchers who have designed checklists to make a systematic selection process of textbooks.

A well-known professor of Applied Linguistics and Teaching English as a Second Language at the University of California, Celce-Murcia, in 1979, elaborated a sample checklist which has become a reference tool to evaluate textbooks used in foreign language teaching. It is a complete questionnaire in which teachers can grade a wide range of elements from 0 to 4. According to this rating system, 0 means that the item is absent in the textbook, 1 means that the item is weakly found within the book, 2 means that the item is adequate, 3 means that the item is good presented or found through the book, and 4 means that a certain item is excellent. This is a rating procedure that may seem slightly subjective, but in fact people in charge of textbook selection and

evaluation need to be very accurate and to be very clear about the target students and the target teaching setting before starting grading each item.

Besides, Breen and Candlin, in 1987, offered a set of questions that teachers can apply to any language teaching material. They point out that teachers need to bear in mind their own learners at various levels and in various teaching settings. After having set all the questions, Breen and Candlin (as cited in Sheldon, 1987: 13) «suggest some criteria for the choice and use of materials in ways which are sensitive to classroom language learning». The basic criterion that Breen and Candlin advocate is that learners are the main consumers of textbooks, along with teachers, and that their perceptions of the materials are basic for textbook selection. In essence, for Breen and Candlin, students are the first target users of a textbook, hence evaluation of materials must be focused on students.

In this study, Celce-Murcia's evaluation checklist is going to be used, because it is considered to be a more systematic tool. It allows teachers to set a number of questions divided into several categories and grade each aspect with a punctuation from 0 to 4. In addition, this model has been used in many other research papers and dissertations that discuss course books evaluation and language teaching. This study has considered that the set of questions proposed by Breen and Candlin is too extensive and the answers cannot be properly measured as in Celce-Murcia's checklist, due to the fact that they are opened questions. Moreover, this fact would make the study too subjective.

The sample checklist that is going to be used for the purpose of this study is an adaptation from the evaluation checklist developed by Celce-Murcia in 1979 (see appendix I). The only aspect that is not part of the original checklist is the technology section. It is considered that a section involving technology and its implementation in the textbooks was compulsory, on the grounds that the most recent book is closely linked with online resources and online assessment.

0	Totally lacking
1	Weak
2	Adequate
3	Good
4	Excellent

Table 1. Grades with their meanings

The adapted checklist has five different sections: aims and goals/ learning objectives and course syllabus, layout and physical make-up, structures and skills, exercises, and technology. In the first section, we are evaluating whether the textbook suits the target students' needs, whether it is challenging for the students or whether the objectives of the textbook are consistent with the students' goals. In the layout and physical make-up section, the items to be scored are related with the illustrations used, the clarity of the material, and whether graphic devices are properly used or not. In the third section, the questions are related with grammar and vocabulary suitability, whether the structures are introduced in a meaningful context or whether all skills are involved in communicative practice. The exercises section rates items as whether they promote meaningful communication, whether exercises provide different types of practice activities or whether they meet the objectives in the syllabus. Finally, in the last section, the items listed rate the implementation of technology in textbooks.

This sample checklist is the basis for our following examination of both textbooks. It is a qualitative study of both publications. In addition, it is also a comparative evaluation of the evolution of English language teaching through textbooks. The results and interpretations of the sample checklist will be discussed in the following sections.

3. PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this research, as previously mentioned, is to evaluate the differences between two course books and to examine how English language teaching has changed in recent years through materials. Firstly, both English textbooks are going to be introduced, then the results in the sample checklists will be shown and, finally, each section from the checklist will be examined carefully.

3.1. Analysis of the materials

3.1.1. The two textbooks

In order to carry out this analysis, two textbooks differing in time and pedagogical approaches were examined. The first one is *The New Cambridge English Course*, published in 1993, whereas the newest book that is going to be analysed is *Empower B2*, published in 2015. Both course books were published by Cambridge University Press. The first edition of both textbooks is analysed in this study. *The New Cambridge English Course* has been printed eight times, while *Empower B2* is still in its first edition, this fact highlights the effectiveness of textbooks in classrooms. Moreover, both course books correspond to an upper-intermediate level, a B2 level according to the CEFR. Regarding the target students, both are designed for the young adult and adult general public.

These two particular books were chosen because at the beginning of our English textbooks research, we were looking for the newest course book. We searched among the most well-known publishing houses. At the end, Cambridge University Press was chosen because they have outstanding publications in terms of English language textbooks and also in term of teaching language research. In addition, *Empower B2* is the newest series of books for the general public and has many different resources. After that, *The New Cambridge English Course* was chosen because it was published by Cambridge University Press as well. Having two textbooks by the same publisher was very likely to give us a more reliable overview of how English language teaching has changed over time, provided that the same publisher house always usually follows the similar educational outlook and the same editorial line.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Sample checklist results

Items to examine in <i>Empower B2</i>	0	1	2	3	4
AIMS AND GOALS /LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE SYLLABUS					
To what extent do the specifications of the text's targeted audience match those of the students?				X	
To what extent do the aims and objectives of the text correspond to the needs and goals of the students?					X
To what extent is the textbook challenging for the students?					X
To what extent is the methodology proposed to the teachers appropriate for the teaching/learning situation and the students?				X	
To what extent are the topics up-to-date?					X
To what extent does the material promote personal work/self-development?					X
LAYOUT AND PHYSICAL MAKE-UP					
To what extent are the illustrations clear, simple and helpful for the learner?					X
To what extent is the material clearly organised?					X
To what extent are graphic devices effectively used to clarify grammatical structures and vocabulary?			X		
STRUCTURES AND SKILLS					
To what extent is the number of grammatical points appropriate for the students' level?					X
To what extent does the vocabulary load seem to be reasonable for the students' level?					X
To what extent are the linguistic items (grammar and vocabulary) introduced in meaningful contexts?					X
To what extent the presentation of structures moves gradually from the simple to the more complex?				X	
To what extent different registers and dialects are presented?			X		
To what extent pronunciation is practiced and reinforced?				X	
To what extent are the pronunciation points presented in appropriate contexts?				X	
To what extent are all skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) involved with adequate practice and communicative purposes?					X
EXERCISES					
To what extent do the exercises promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations?					X
To what extent are the instructions to the exercises and activities clear and appropriate?				X	
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of written work (sentence completion, spelling, etc.)				X	
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of oral work (debates, role plays, etc.)?				X	
To what extent do the activities meet the objectives in the syllabus?					X
TECHNOLOGY					
To what extent technological resources are implemented in the textbook?					X
To what extent technological resources offer real-life material?				X	
To what extent technology reinforces the students' practice?					X

Table 2. Sample checklist results for *Empower B2*

Items to examine in <i>The New Cambridge English Course</i>	0	1	2	3	4
AIMS AND GOALS /LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE SYLLABUS					
To what extent do the specifications of the text's targeted audience match those of the students?				X	
To what extent do the aims and objectives of the text correspond to the needs and goals of the students?				X	
To what extent is the textbook challenging for the students?			X		
To what extent is the methodology proposed to the teachers appropriate for the teaching/learning situation and the students?				X	
To what extent are the topics up-to-date?		X			
To what extent does the material promote personal work/self-development?	X				
LAYOUT AND PHYSICAL MAKE-UP					
To what extent are the illustrations clear, simple and helpful for the learner?				X	
To what extent is the material clearly organised?				X	
To what extent are graphic devices effectively used to clarify grammatical structures and vocabulary?			X		
STRUCTURES AND SKILLS					
To what extent is the number of grammatical points appropriate for the students' level?			X		
To what extent does the vocabulary load seem to be reasonable for the students' level?				X	
To what extent are the linguistic items (grammar and vocabulary) introduced in meaningful contexts?			X		
To what extent the presentation of structures moves gradually from the simple to the more complex?		X			
To what extent different registers and dialects are presented?			X		
To what extent pronunciation is practiced and reinforced?		X			
To what extent are the pronunciation points presented in appropriate contexts?		X			
To what extent are all skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) involved with adequate practice and communicative purposes?			X		
EXERCISES					
To what extent do the exercises promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations?			X		
To what extent are the instructions to the exercises and activities clear and appropriate?					X
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of written work (sentence completion, spelling, etc.)				X	
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of oral work (debates, role plays, etc.)?		X			
To what extent do the activities meet the objectives in the syllabus?				X	
TECHNOLOGY					
To what extent technological resources are implemented in the textbook?	X				
To what extent technological resources offer real-life material?	X				
To what extent technology reinforces the students' practice?	X				

Table 3. Sample checklist results for *The New Cambridge English Course*

4.1.1. Aims and goals / Learning Objectives and course syllabus

In this section, the purpose is to analyse the objectives (both long-term and short-term) of the two textbooks, and examine how the content is structured in their syllabi. In addition, it is going to be analysed if both textbooks meet the students' needs and the syllabus goals.

With reference to the long-term learning objectives proposed by both textbooks in the teacher's manual, it is apparent that they meet the learning objectives of an upper-intermediate level. In line with *The New Cambridge English Course*, the students' receptive and productive use of English, both spoken and written, is accurate and fluent over a wide range of topics and situations. Their language level will be around the level of the Cambridge First Certificate (FCE). Nonetheless, the language level of *The New Cambridge English Course* is not graded by the CEFR. In contrast, *Empower B2* does follow the CEFR and the content is validated by Cambridge English Language Assessment, so the students at the end of this course, along with *The New Cambridge English Course*, will have acquired a linguistic level as the required in FCE.

In the matter of short-term objectives, *Empower B2* sets four objectives that the student has to reach in each unit. These objectives are related with the tasks required in the unit. It is important to consider that these objectives are related with real-life situations in which the student, for instance, will have to discuss a challenge or write an article, as specified in the first unit. In addition, at the same time in each lesson, there are a couple of smaller objectives to reach, according to the ones of the whole unit. Consequently, as it is evident, *Empower B2* is the textbook that has a clear evolvement of the objectives that the students must achieve in every step they take in their learning progress.

Course syllabus is one of the most important aspects of language textbooks, because it establishes the organization of all the content that must be taught. An adequate sequence of the contents enables not only the student, but also the teacher to cope with all the subject matter. The *New Cambridge English Course* is divided into seven blocks and each one has eight different parts plus a summary, a revision and fluency practice section, and a final test of the block. Whereas, *Empower B2* is divided into ten units and

each unit has four lessons plus a review, and extension section. At the end of each unit there is planned an online progress test for the students.

If both organizations of the content are considered (see appendix IV and V), it can be concluded that *Empower B2* has a clearer arrangement of the contents. The table of contents is easier to understand, because sections, content, and skills are placed in a way that it is not difficult to understand what the students will be required to do. Additionally, in every step teachers and students take within the book, it is explicit what skills students are working on and which are the goals they need to achieve in each section. However, *The New Cambridge English Course* has two different table of contents in which first the general structure is given and then the contents and the skills are presented in more detail, but in this manner it is more difficult to check the requirements of the book. Another point to take into account is that the different sections through the book are not very clear, it can be because of the deficient layout.

In general terms, *The New Cambridge English Course* does follow the students' needs and goals, an appropriate methodology, but the topics are not up-to-date and the material does not promote personal work of self-development. In contrast, *Empower B2* is a challenging textbook, it follows perfectly the students needs and goals, its topics are recent, and it engages the students in personal work and self-development through extra material and online resources.

4.1.2. Layout and physical make-up

In this section, there are remarkable differences between both textbooks. As it is mentioned at the beginning of the analysis, the main difference between both textbooks is that they differ in the publication date. This fact can be perceived especially in the layout and the physical make-up.

As a whole, *Empower B2* is a more attractive book than *The New Cambridge English Course*. Through the book, *Empower B2* follows different patterns and designs with lots of pictures, whereas the oldest book follows the same pattern in all units—in every page the content is organized in two columns, and the design is quite straightforward. In the newest book, illustrations are clearer, simpler and more helpful for the learner than

in the oldest book. *The New Cambridge English Course* uses either photographs or coloured drawings, whilst *Empower B2* uses mainly photographs. The material is quite well organised in every unit in both textbooks, but the graphic devices are simply adequate, neither book has an excellent way to clarify grammar structures through schemes, or using arrows or any other graphic devices. This last fact is probably highly influenced by the editorial line.

In conclusion, the more visually attractive a textbook is, the easier it will be for the teachers to engage their students. It is often claimed that when educators introduce pleasing and pretty material, students are more curious about it. In some way, layout is a factor that boosts students' motivation.

4.1.3. Structures and skills

The purpose of this section is to examine whether the structures presented in the textbooks are suitable for the students and whether they are successfully introduced in meaningful contexts and communicative situations. Moreover, in this section, the aim is to examine if all skills are practiced and if they are practiced with a communicative purpose, in particular. This is the broadest section, due to the fact that these are mainly the contents of the materials. Consequently, the structures and the skills that the students must acquire by the end of the course have to be sensibly designed and presented.

In the first place, in *The New Cambridge English Course* vocabulary is the broadest section in each unit whereas, in *Empower B2*, it is listening and speaking. In *Empower B2* grammar is generally taught deductively: students first identify structures within a text, then they determine the rules, and finally they are required to go to the grammar appendix to understand the grammatical structure more accurately. In *Empower B2*, there are two grammar topics in every unit. In contrast, in *The New Cambridge English Course* grammar is taught through situations and functions, for instance, first a situation is given and then grammar is introduced to students. In this book, grammar and vocabulary are taught through two sections named «Focus on systems». According to the teacher's manual, in *The New Cambridge English Course* students have learnt basic

grammatical structures and at this level other aspects of language are more important, such as vocabulary.

Considering the grammatical items and whether the presentation of structures moves gradually, it can be said that in *Empower B2* grammatical structures are presented from simple to complex. In *The New Cambridge English Course*, structures are presented in relation to the functions and situations the students must acquire. For instance, in *Empower B2* passives are not introduced until Unit 6, whereas in *The New Cambridge English Course* passives are introduced between the first and second block.


If the vocabulary load that appears in both textbooks is considered, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that *The New Cambridge English Course* is more vocabulary-centred. In this book, vocabulary is generally presented decontextualized and it also contains a list of vocabulary and expressions at the end of each block. Therefore, it can be affirmed that in *The New Cambridge English Course* vocabulary is not usually introduced in meaningful contexts, however, there is practice related to vocabulary in which students are required to use it. In contrast, vocabulary in *Empower B2* is always contextualized. In this textbook, vocabulary is either introduced by a listening comprehension activity or a reading comprehension activity. Therefore, we can assert that vocabulary in *Empower B2* is usually introduced in meaningful contexts. In addition, *Empower B2* contains a vocabulary section at the end of the book named «Vocabulary Focus» in which students can practice vocabulary and also pronunciation in a dynamic way. It is important to keep in mind that in this textbook vocabulary is always introduced first in a particular context and then it is practiced.

1 Look at the list in the box.

1. Can you find five things that you are interested in?
2. See if anybody else has noted exactly the same things as you.
3. Which things are you not at all interested in?

antiques	art	baby-sitting	bird-watching
cars	collecting children's books	cooking	
the countryside	dancing	dogs	drawing
driving	gardening	glass	Handel
harmoniums	history	horticulture	
houses	interior design	jazz	music
opera	pool	reading	shooting
sign language	sport	swimming	theatre
travel	walking	watching cricket	
worrying about money			

Figure 2. Vocabulary exercise in *The New Cambridge English Course*

a  Complete the sentences with the words and phrases in the box. Listen and check your answers.

give up have a go at keep it up keep to
make an effort manage to successfully
try out work out

- 1 Often if we try something new, we _____ after about a week or two because our brain hasn't adapted.
- 2 So if you _____ do something new for a month, you'll probably _____ it.
- 3 Maybe you wouldn't want to _____ for your whole life, but it might be fun to do it just for 30 days.
- 4 If you're successful it's great but if it doesn't _____ it doesn't matter too much.

Figure 3. Vocabulary exercise in *Empower B2*

In the second place, it is a key point that all skills are included in both textbooks. However, there are some differences between the implementation of these skills in both books. As it was mentioned above, in *Empower B2*, listening and speaking are the broadest sections in each unit, due to the communicative approach of the textbook. In every unit there are four listening and video activities and at least three speaking activities, whereas in *The New Cambridge English Course* there are only around two or three listening activities and a couple of speaking practice.

In relation to reading and writing, it is important to mention that in *Empower B2* reading is not always taught formally. For instance, there are three reading activities in which students are required to answer questions or discuss aspects from the text, but there are some cases in which reading is also practised through grammar or vocabulary. In *Empower B2*, there are only two writing activities, and both are towards the end of the unit. It is considered that it is a sensible way of organising skills, because writing comes after having presented the vocabulary, the grammatical structures, the topic, and some examples that students will be required to emulate. In contrast, in *The New Cambridge English Course*, there is only one reading formal practice and only one writing activity related with the reading exercise. For instance, in the first block, students are required to read a text about Phoenician sailors and to answer a set of comprehension questions. At the end, they are required to write a letter as if they were Phoenician sailors telling their experience.

5 Imagine you are one of the Phoenician sailors on Necho's ships. You have landed on the west coast of Africa to take on supplies. You are afraid you will never see your home again. Write a letter about your experiences to a relative or friend (you will put it in a bottle and throw it in the sea, hoping it gets to them). Use plenty of the vocabulary from the lesson.




 An illustration showing a man in a long, dark, flowing robe and a white head covering, likely a Phoenician sailor, standing on a sandy beach. He is leaning forward, writing a letter on a scroll. To his left, a small bottle is shown floating in the water. In the background, there are palm trees and a red structure, possibly a ship's part. The scene is set on a bright, sunny day.

Figure 4. Writing practice in *The New Cambridge English Course*

Concerning registers and dialects, in both course books the presentation of different registers and dialects is adequate. British English is mainly the variety taught. However, American variety is also introduced in both textbooks. It is important to bear in mind that at this level, students do not need to identify a wide range of English varieties. According to CEFR, they are only required to understand main ideas of complex texts and to be fluent enough to carry out regular interaction with native speakers. Finally, on the subject of pronunciation practice and reinforcement, both textbooks include some pronunciation activities but at different extents. In *The New Cambridge English Course*, there are only some short exercises designed for pronunciation practice, whereas in Empower B2 there is a special section for this purpose. In Empower B2 not only pronunciation is practised, but also intonation.

7  Pronunciation. One word in each group has a different vowel sound. Which is it?

1. pulled hood push stuck
2. shop one costly watched
3. who full threw two
4. how broke snow so
5. jammed stalled grab smash
6. said friends then break
7. half hard car all
8. jail rage their space

Figure 5. Pronunciation exercise in *The New Cambridge English Course*

3 PRONUNCIATION Rapid speech



- a**  **1.1B** In rapid speech we often leave out sounds. Listen to the phrases below. Which sound is left out? Is it a consonant sound or a vowel sound?
- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1 must go | 3 got to go |
| 2 must run | 4 can't talk |
- b** Read the conversation. Put B's replies in order. Is more than one order possible?
- A** So how was your holiday?
B Got to go. / Sorry. / Can't talk now. / It was great.
A OK, well, have a nice evening.
B Bye. / See you tomorrow. / Yeah, thanks. / Must be off now.
- c**  Work in pairs. Have short conversations.
Student A: Tell Student B about what you did last weekend. Continue until he/she stops you.
Student B: You're in a hurry. Use expressions in 2b and 3b to break off the conversation.
Then swap roles.

Figure 6. Pronunciation exercises in *Empower B2*

All in all, both textbooks are quite complete in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures, but also in terms of skills. As it is observable throughout this section, *Empower B2* is more complete than *The New Cambridge English Course*.

4.1.4. Exercises

This section is evaluating to what extent the exercises in both textbooks are appropriate for our target students, whether they promote meaningful communication, and whether they provide different types of activities. Exercises are essential in a textbook, due to the fact that learners can at the same time practise and consolidate the contents of the textbook. Moreover, teachers can also check the progression of their students and whether they may find the subject matter hard to assimilate.

In *The New Cambridge English Course*, some of the written exercises do not promote meaningful communication, as it was seen in section 4.1.3, in which one of the exercises was about writing a letter pretending the student is a Phoenician sailor. Although the instructions of all the exercises are clear and appropriate, most of the written activities proposed in this student's book do not contemplate realistic activities and situations. Thus, it can be considered that this course book does not support genuine communication. In contrast, *Empower B2* promotes to a higher extent meaningful communication in its written activities. In this case, all exercises are contextualised and linked to a clear communicative purpose. For instance, the following figure is a clear

example of how *Empower B2* contextualises the activities. Moreover, it shows that the requirements of these exercises are directly linked with a communicative purpose, in this case: explaining and checking understanding. Instructions in this textbook are convenient and the wide range of different activities is also reliable for students. *Empower B2* uses multiple choice exercises, matching exercises, filling gaps exercises, and identification exercises, among many others. Therefore, it can be considered that *Empower B2* promotes meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations.


- a** Look at the expressions Sam uses to explain what to do. Put the words in italics in the correct order.
- 1 *most / thing / is, / the / important* don't touch the food.
 - 2 *to / always / remember* use these tongs.
 - 3 *is, / remember / thing / to / another* the tables are all numbered.
- b**  Listen and check your answers.
- c** Why does Sam use these expressions?
- 1 because he needs time to think
 - 2 because he's not sure
 - 3 to emphasise important points

Figure 7. Vocabulary exercises in *Empower B2*

Regarding the oral activities proposed in both textbooks to practice spoken interaction and spoken production —the two oral skills that the CEFR considers essential—, both textbooks offer a wide range of different oral activities. In *Empower B2* there is a section in each unit called «conversation skills», in which students are required to practice the spoken interaction skills. For instance, in Unit 1, students are required to use common expressions to break off a conversation, whereas in the ordinary speaking activities students are required to talk about the topic that they have practiced previously through a listening or reading comprehension activity. However, the range of different oral activities that this textbook proposes is not as varied as in the written activities.

In contrast, in *The New Cambridge English Course* there are many oral activities that require the students to practice dialogue. There is not a special section for spoken interaction, due to the fact that this textbook was published before the notion of this term was developed by the CEFR. Unlike in the written activities proposed in this course book, oral activities seem to be more communicative oriented. For instance, learners are required to create dialogues after a situation is introduced. As it is said in

section 4.1.3 , *The New Cambridge English Course* is designed to be taught through situations, thus the main goal of all oral exercises is to learn how to convey meaningful information in a certain context. For example, in the first unit learners are required to give directions and to make a telephone call. Therefore, *The New Cambridge English Course* does promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic situations regarding oral work. In this case, in contrast to *Empower B2*, the range of different oral activities is more varied than in the writing activities set.

Lastly, regarding to what extent the activities proposed meet the objectives in the syllabus, both textbooks meet the objectives to a high extent. Nevertheless, due to the fact that *The New Cambridge English Course* proposes written activities that do not promote meaningful communication, this textbook gets lower punctuation than *Empower B2*.

On the whole, both textbooks propose activities that meet the main objectives of the syllabus, but the way they are arranged and their general purposes differ greatly. *Empower B2* proposes a range of more communicative exercises than *The New Cambridge English Course*.

4.1.5. Technology

The integration of technology in language learning is a recent tendency. As it is mentioned in section 2.2.2, technology is a factor that influences second language acquisition and hence, enhances language learning. Students nowadays are more confident about using technology, which is also a way to motivate them and engage them in the learning process.

The use of technology is a different way to cope with content and to assess learning progression, as *Empower B2* does. In this book, technology is fully integrated in its syllabus. Besides the typical audio CD for listening activities, *Empower B2* includes downloadable video for students, online practice, online workbook with extra practice and online assessment. At the end of every unit there is a unit progress test that students must take on their own using of an online platform; it is automatically marked and

teachers can check their students' progression. Thus, it can be said that technology in *Empower B2* reinforces students' practice outstandingly.

As noted in section 2.2.2, we mentioned the fact that technology offers access to authentic material in the target language, something that textbooks usually lack. In *Empower B2* it can be verified that most of the documents used through e-sources are real-life materials or, at least, they pretend to offer accurate examples of authentic English. Taking the above into account, we can confirm that technological resources are implemented to a great extent in the newest book, whereas the oldest book lacks technological resources. The only technological recourse available in *The New Cambridge English Course* is a cassette set for listening activities.

All things considered, we can conclude that the emergence of new technology has marked a turning point in language teaching. Textbooks nowadays are more dynamic for both the student and the teacher. Due to the utilisation of technology, teaching approaches have been able to offer a more student-centred outlook. Students can enhance their skills through other resources apart from the book. They can assess their progression which makes the teacher more aware of the learners' needs through the learning progress.

4.1.6. Overall evaluation

After having analysed in detail both textbooks, educators also need to provide an overall evaluation. Teachers have to assess, in general, the suitability of the textbooks for their students and to take into account their teaching setting. The aim of this section is to offer an overview of both textbooks, highlighting the most remarkable differences and the strengths of each textbook.

In the first place, the fact that both textbooks differ in publication time makes *Empower B2*, published in 2015, stand out from *The New Cambridge English Course*, published in 1993. The results from the checklist and the detailed analysis of both textbooks show the major differences between both books. Firstly, technology is currently a key point in foreign languages teaching. In this study, *Empower B2* is the book that is highly linked with online resources and technological teaching strategies. Furthermore, this course

book boosts motivation due to the fact that technology is properly implemented, whereas *The New Cambridge English Course* does not contain any form of technology use at all, apart from a cassette for the listening exercises. Secondly, the skills load in both textbooks is remarkably different. In *The New Cambridge English Course*, grammar and vocabulary are the broadest sections, while in *Empower B2* listening and speaking are the main focus. Nowadays new linguistic perspectives about teaching EFL have triggered an increasingly communicative purpose. The aim of most of English learners is to communicate fluently in any type of communicative setting, hence the newest book focuses particularly on oral comprehension and oral production. Regardless of the initial communicative approach of the textbook published in 1993 and its functional and situational approach, *The New Cambridge English Course* still has its limitations as it can be seen in the analysis presented in the previous sections.

In the second place, although both textbooks differ remarkably, there are certain strengths that are important to spotlight. *Empower B2* is a very motivational learning material that fits the students and the teacher perfectly, because it contains ten units guided by the objectives of each lesson, multiple extra material and self-study activities for the students. Finally, *The New Cambridge English Course* is valuable for its situational approach in the oral practice activities and the wide range of vocabulary load that is implemented in each unit.

5. DISCUSSION

The current study deals with a comparative evaluation of two English textbooks published at different times: *The New Cambridge English Course* and *Empower B2*. The first one was published in 1993, while the second one was published in 2015. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyse the evolution of teaching materials within this period. This section is a review of the findings of this study in the context of the literature review presented at the beginning of this academic dissertation. In addition, the limitations and the implications of the study are going to be presented in this section.

The results of this study offer various observations that language teaching materials have clearly changed and improved in a short period of time. In only twenty-two years, textbooks have implemented new teaching techniques, such as the assessment through online platforms, brand new layout, and motivational content for both students and teachers. Through the analysis carried out in section 4, many of these changes can be observed via the use of the sample checklist —adapted from Celce-Murcia’s checklist— chosen to conduct this study in order to determine and classify the most important items when evaluating and choosing an English textbook. Additionally, this study stresses the fact that both textbooks differ mainly in three aspects, as it is observable in the previous sections: organization of the objectives, the technology resources used, and the importance given to the different skills.

Taking into consideration the results emerging from the checklist, it can be asserted that *Empower B2* is the course book with the highest punctuations. It is of particular importance to mention that at the beginning of this study the differences and the strengths of each book were thought to be less than the ones spotted after the completion of the analysis. Moreover, the analysis has revealed that the most striking observation from the examination of both textbooks is that they equally follow a communicative approach, but each of them tackles this teaching perspective in a different way. Taking into account that these two course books belong to the communicative language teaching approach (see section 2.1.3), it can be affirmed that they actually follow a communicative perspective but at different degrees.

On one hand, *The New Cambridge English Course* still preserves some influence from previous language teaching approaches, because during the 1990s the influence of such methods, like the Situational Language Teaching (SLT) method, remained obvious. Therefore, in this course book, it can be highlighted that the influence of SLT is strong since vocabulary is the core focus of most of the activities proposed. As Richards and Rodgers (2014: 45) argue according to this methodology, vocabulary is one of the most important elements of foreign language learning. Additionally, the most marked observation emerging from the comparison of both textbooks is that this course book does not take into account the factors that influence SLA. For instance, there is no evidence that the publisher is aware of the students’ L1. Furthermore, technology is barely implemented, and there are few motivational features.

On the other hand, this study reinforces the idea that *Empower B2* follows perfectly all the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. It is a course book that (as it can be verified in section 4.1.3 and in section 4.2.3) includes structures, skills and tasks based on meaningful communication. Tasks in this books integrate different language skills and they emphasise fluency. Besides, *Empower B2* considers most of the factors that influence SLA (see section 2.2). This textbook takes into account factors such as motivation, students' L1, and technology that all together is a significant contribution during the learning process. As set out in the previous analysis, *Empower B2* boosts motivation owing to technological resources and appealing layout. Therefore, the students that end up using this textbook in classroom will start the lesson at least relatively more motivated and with more enthusiasm than those that ended up using *The New Cambridge English Course*.

Taking into account whether both textbooks consider students' L1 or not, it is important to note that *The New Cambridge English Course* allows the use of L1 in the learning process, whereas *Empower B2* has a special series for Spanish speakers with a particular content. Unfortunately, it was not possible to investigate this issue because of the length and the means of this study. In this study, it has been considered that the scope of L1 when teaching a foreign language deserved a broader and particular investigation. Consequently, it has been decided not to examine this matter in this study. Therefore, it is important to admit that this is one of the limitations that faced this research.

Since this research was carried out by means of a sample checklist and the subsequent detailed analysis, it is plausible that this study was made on the grounds of a subjective perspective of the analysis and that certain aspects could have influenced the results obtained. For instance, perhaps different criteria for choosing the items and the sections that have been analysed or even the criteria when carrying out the detailed analysis would have changed some of the results and outcomes of this study. Therefore, it is an unavoidable limitation of this study. However, it is a limitation that all studies of the same nature typically encounter.

The last limitation of this study is that only on textbook of each period of time has been examined. The findings of this academic dissertation would have been more accurate if

several English textbooks would have been analysed. Therefore, the results would show if all the differences and strengths of the textbooks mark a common trend in each publication time.

Finally, the findings of this study could eventually lead to further research about what is the best way to compose the best English language learning materials in the market. Furthermore, this academic dissertation can serve as a guide for novice teachers or even translation students who are looking for other ways to utilize their linguistic abilities.

6. CONCLUSION

This academic dissertation has explained how English language teaching has changed in recent years through language materials. The findings of this study offer convincing evidence that English language textbooks have considerably changed in the last years. The most remarkable changes occur at different degrees and in different parts of the language teaching perspective of each book.

The evidence from this study indicates that the main improvements in English language textbooks are the implementation of technology, organization of objectives, and importance given to different skills. *Empower B2* is the textbook with better results after being analysed, whereas *The New Cambridge English Course* evidently lacks technology and organization of objectives among other features.

The study was carried out by means of a sample checklist and the subsequent detailed analysis. It is important to bear in mind that for choosing or evaluating language teaching materials educators must follow a systematic procedure, as mentioned above in the analysis section. Thus, it has been considered that the use of an adaptation of Celce-Murcia's checklist was the best choice for this study. Taking into account all the previous analysis, it can be concluded that in the current teaching setting, *Empower B2* would be chosen. This book is a clear example of all the features that an English textbook needs to be successful in a classroom: technology, clear objectives, communicative tasks, and motivational topics and layout.

Finally, it is of utmost importance to bear in mind that in foreign language teaching educators must consider many different aspects. Language learning is a way to know better a foreign culture and a new thinking perspective. Thus, educators are responsible for choosing the best materials to show their students a new perspective of life.

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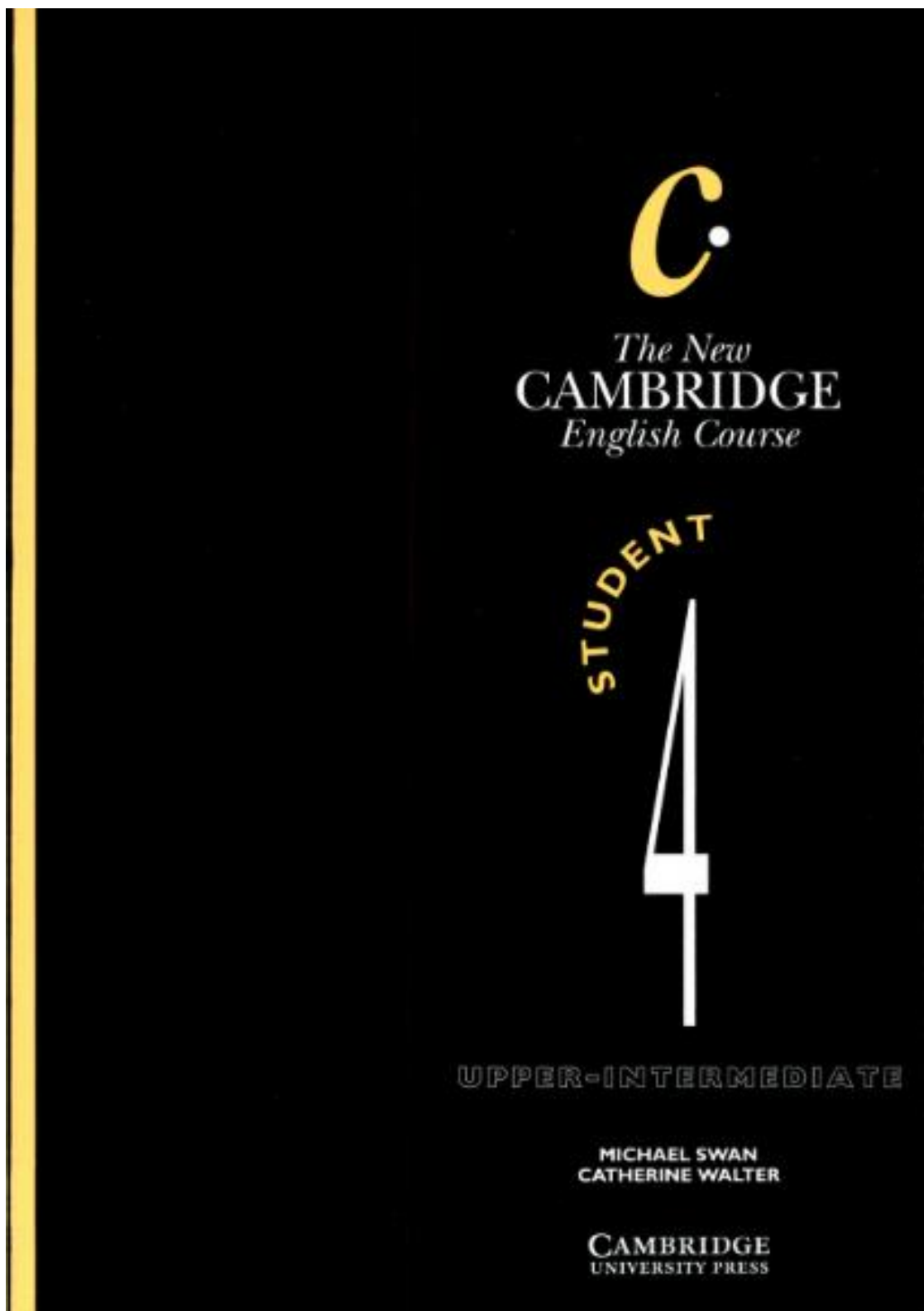
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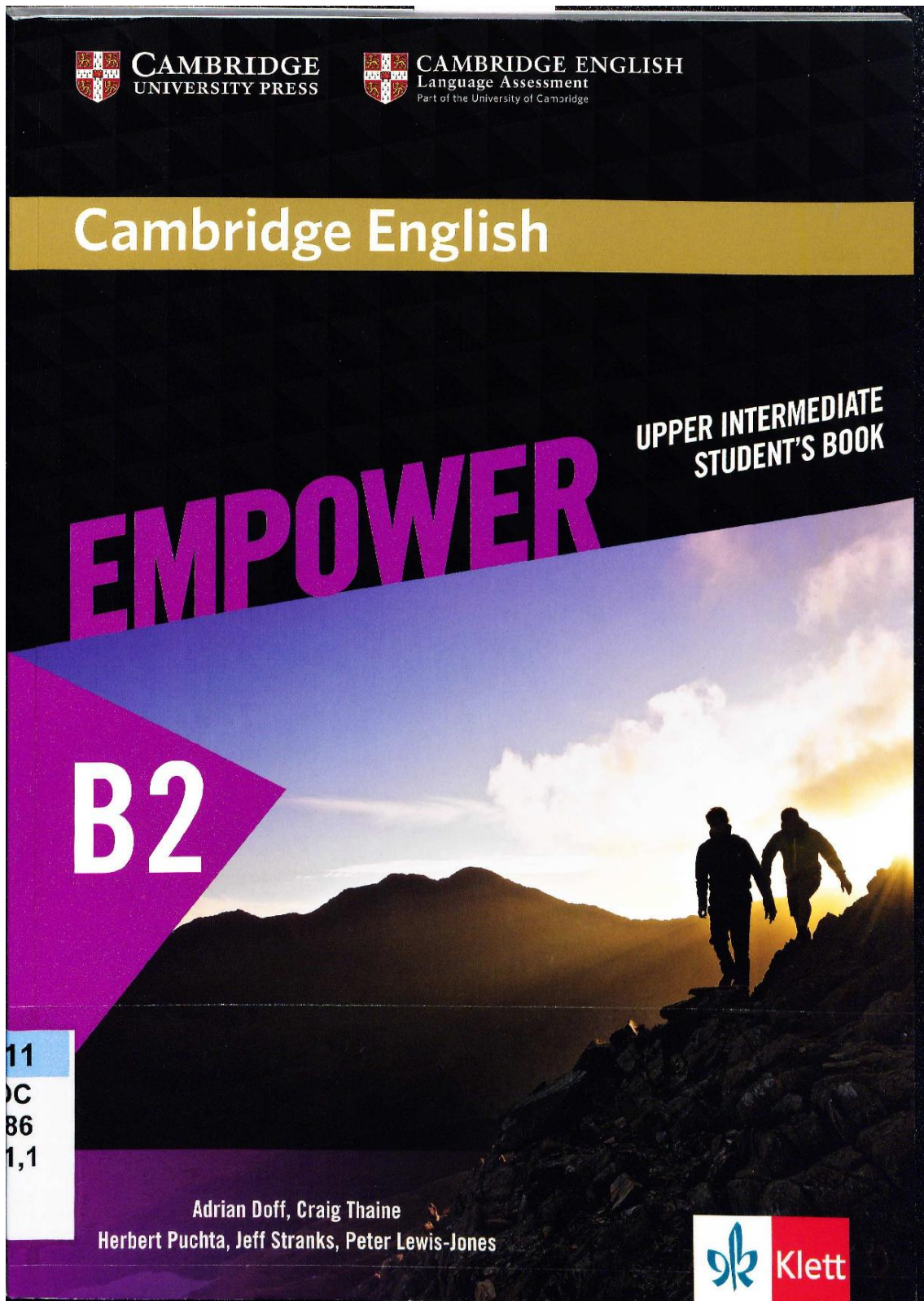
APPENDIX I: Sample checklist

Items to examine	0	1	2	3	4
AIMS AND GOALS /LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE SYLLABUS					
To what extent do the specifications of the text's targeted audience match those of the students?					
To what extent do the aims and objectives of the text correspond to the needs and goals of the students?					
To what extent is the textbook challenging for the students?					
To what extent is the methodology proposed to the teachers appropriate for the teaching/learning situation and the students?					
To what extent are the topics up-to-date?					
To what extent does the material promote personal work/self-development?					
LAYOUT AND PHYSICAL MAKE-UP					
To what extent are the illustrations clear, simple and helpful for the learner?					
To what extent is the material clearly organised?					
To what extent are graphic devices effectively used to clarify grammatical structures and vocabulary?					
STRUCTURES AND SKILLS					
To what extent is the number of grammatical points appropriate for the students' level?					
To what extent does the vocabulary load seem to be reasonable for the students' level?					
To what extent are the linguistic items (grammar and vocabulary) introduced in meaningful contexts?					
To what extent the presentation of structures moves gradually from the simple to the more complex?					
To what extent different registers and dialects are presented?					
To what extent pronunciation is practiced and reinforced?					
To what extent are the pronunciation points presented in appropriate contexts?					
To what extent are all skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) involved with adequate practice and communicative purposes?					
EXERCISES					
To what extent do the exercises promote meaningful communication by referring to realistic activities and situations?					
To what extent are the instructions to the exercises and activities clear and appropriate?					
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of written work (sentence completion, spelling, etc.)					
To what extent exercises provide practice in different types of oral work (debates, role plays, etc.)?					
To what extent do the activities meet the objectives in the syllabus?					
TECHNOLOGY					
To what extent technological resources are implemented in the textbook?					
To what extent technological resources offer real-life material?					
To what extent technology reinforces the students' practice?					

APPENDIX II: *The New Cambridge English Course* cover



APPENDIX III: *Empower B2* cover



APPENDIX IV: *The New Cambridge English Course* syllabus

Contents

	Map of Book 4	6
Block A	A1 Art, bird-watching, cars, dancing ...	8
	A2 <i>Focus on systems:</i> emphasis with <i>it</i> and <i>what</i> ; unstressed syllables; words for places and regions	10
	A3 Situations	12
	A4 <i>Skills focus:</i> The sun was in the north	14
	A5 Secret thoughts	16
	A6 <i>Focus on systems:</i> complex sentences; reported speech; contrastive stress; words for parts of things; describing relative position	18
	A7 Cruelty to cars	20
	A8 <i>Skills focus:</i> Here is the news	22
	Summary A	24
	Revision and fluency practice A	26
	Test A	28
Block B	B1 Learning a language	30
	B2 <i>Focus on systems:</i> reasons for using passives; difficult passive structures; spelling (<i>k</i> and <i>ck</i> etc.); intonation	32
	B3 I'll give you £25 for it	34
	B4 <i>Skills focus:</i> It must be true: it's in the papers	36
	B5 Work	38
	B6 <i>Focus on systems:</i> past structures with <i>would, should</i> etc; spellings of <i>so</i> ; words for personality	40
	B7 The Lonely One	42
	B8 <i>Skills focus:</i> My heart is too full for words	44
	Summary B	46
	Revision and fluency practice B	48
	Test B	50
Block C	C1 It makes me want to scream	52
	C2 <i>Focus on systems:</i> suffixes with <i>/d/</i> ; weak forms; Future Progressive and Future Perfect tenses; expressions with <i>make, take, do, have</i> and <i>get</i>	54
	C3 I'm a bit short of time	56
	C4 <i>Skills focus:</i> We regret ...	58
	C5 The voice of democracy	60
	C6 <i>Focus on systems:</i> relative clauses without pronouns; reduced relative clauses; opposites; spelling (silent <i>e</i> ; doubling); unstressed syllables	62
	C7 People going hungry	64
	C8 <i>Skills focus:</i> A lot needs doing to it	66
	Summary C	68
	Revision and fluency practice C	70
	Test C	72

Map of Book 4

Grammar

Students learn or revise these grammar points

Block A

Non-progressive verbs; reasons for choosing passives; *so is ...*, *so does ...*, etc.; emphasis with *it* and *what* ('cleft sentences'); -ing forms and past participles; complex sentences with subject and verb separated; linking with conjunctions and adverbs; prepositions and particles.

Block B

Reasons for choosing passives; Present Progressive passive; Present Perfect passive; passive of verbs with two objects; *will* in offers; *if ... would have ...*; past structures with other modal verbs.

Block C

Differences between Present Perfect and Simple Past; Future Progressive; Future Perfect; *need ... ing*; *have something done*; *make and let* + object + infinitive; *make* + object + adjective; omission of object relative pronouns; reduced relative clauses; common expressions with *make*, *take*, *do*, *have* and *get*.

Block D

Simple Past and Present Perfect Progressive; Simple Past and Past Perfect; tenses with *I wish* and *if only*; *had better*, *ought* and modal verbs; identifying uses of prepositional phrases, participle phrases and relative clauses; punctuation in identifying and non-identifying expressions; identifying and non-identifying relative clauses; relative *whose*; relative *that*, *who(m)* and *which*; omission of object relative pronouns; compound adjectives; prepositions in descriptions.

Block E

Simple Past and Past Progressive; Simple Past and Past Perfect; *shall* and *will*; Future Perfect; present tenses referring to the future; tags, short answers and reply questions; relative *what* and *which*; *everything/all/nothing that*; clauses with *although*, *whether*, *so that*, *in case* and *unless*; position of adverbs; position of prepositions in questions.

Phonology

Students work on these aspects of pronunciation

Word stress; rhythm and stress in sentences; hearing and pronouncing unstressed syllables; contrastive stress; /ə/ in unstressed syllables; 'dark' /; vowel distinctions.

Rhythm and stress; linking; intonation of questions and statements; spelling and pronunciation (long and short vowels); pronunciation and spellings of /ə/.

Word stress; rhythm and stress in sentences; hearing unstressed syllables; unstressed suffixes with /ə/; weak forms; pronunciation and spelling; 'silent e', doubling.

Rhythm and stress; hearing unstressed auxiliaries; polite and rude intonation; intonation in relative clauses; the vowels /eə/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/; spellings of /ə/; spellings of /ɪə/.

Contrastive stress; hearing unstressed syllables; pronunciation of the letter *r*; vowel distinctions.

Functions and specific skills

Students learn or revise ways of doing these things

Listening for gist; noting and learning vocabulary; scanning text for specific information; guessing words from context; writing personal letters; writing reports; distinguishing different levels of formality; using dictionaries efficiently; telephoning; giving directions; emphasising and contrasting; asking about English; using the language appropriate to various situations.

Dealing with comprehension problems in speech; listening for detail; understanding different accents; evaluating; scanning text for specific information; guessing unknown words; making spoken and written reports; writing economically; connecting sentences into text; summarising and paraphrasing; asking about English; asking for and giving opinions; bargaining; making offers.

Listening for specific information; reading for gist; using dictionaries efficiently; writing formal letters; making spoken and written reports; making dates and appointments; making, accepting and refusing invitations; giving contradictory, softened and emphatic answers; distinguishing different levels of formality; interviewing.

Talking about things without knowing the exact words; linking ideas in discussion; listening for gist; giving spoken and written physical descriptions; scanning text for specific information; reading for overall meaning; summarising; using dictionaries efficiently; expanding text from notes; defining and identifying; classifying; making suggestions.

Sustaining conversational exchanges; listening for gist; listening and note-taking; reading for gist; reading for main ideas; guessing unknown words; reacting to literary texts; summarising; using lexical and syntactic devices to improve a written draft; warning and promising.

Topics and notions

Students learn to talk about

Relative position; parts of things; time relations in narrative; similarity, differences and common ground; countries and regions; activities and interests; likes and dislikes; travel; cars.

Quality; degree; proportion; language learning and language use; money; newspapers and the treatment of news; work; wishes; personality and personal characteristics.

Time relations; emotions and reactions; charities; Third World problems; job applications and qualifications; news; buildings, repairs and alterations.

Time relations; spatial relations and position; shape; types and classification; physical appearance of people and places; wishes and regrets; school and education; personal relationships; the animal kingdom.

Past and future time relations; position relative to the speaker/hearer; concession; precautions; purpose; materials; shapes; numbers and units of measurement; degrees of probability; prediction and the future; travel and exploration; old age; coincidences; art and reactions to works of art; prehistory; geography; animals.

Vocabulary

In addition to revising vocabulary taught at earlier levels, students will learn 900 or more new words and expressions during their work on Level 4 of the course.

APPENDIX V: Empower B2 syllabus

Lesson and objective	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Everyday English
Unit 1 Outstanding people				
Getting started Discuss meeting famous people				
1A	Discuss people you admire	Review of tenses	Character adjectives	The letter e; Word stress
1B	Discuss a challenge	Questions	Trying and succeeding	
1C	Explain what to do and check understanding		Rapid speech	Breaking off a conversation; Explaining and checking understanding
1D	Write an article			
Review and extension More practice		WORDPOWER make		
Unit 2 Survival				
Getting started Discuss coping with natural disasters				
2A	Discuss dangerous situations	Narrative tenses	Expressions with <i>get</i>	Sounds and spelling: g
2B	Give advice on avoiding danger	Future time clauses and conditionals	Animals and the environment	
2C	Give and respond to compliments		Tone in question tags	Agreeing using question tags; Giving and responding to compliments
2D	Write guidelines in a leaflet			
Review and extension More practice		WORDPOWER face		
Unit 3 Talent				
Getting started Discuss what makes something a work of art				
3A	Discuss ability and achievement	Multi-word verbs	Ability and achievement	
3B	Discuss sports activities and issues	Present perfect simple and continuous	Words connected with sport	Word stress
3C	Make careful suggestions		Sounds and spelling: Consonant sounds	Keeping to the topic of the conversation; Making careful suggestions
3D	Write a description of data			
Review and extension More practice		WORDPOWER up		
Unit 4 Life lessons				
Getting started Discuss childhood experiences				
4A	Discuss events that changed your life	<i>used to</i> and <i>would</i>	Cause and result	
4B	Discuss and describe rules	Obligation and permission	Talking about difficulty	Sounds and spelling: u
4C	Describe photos		Contrastive stress	Describing photos; Expressing careful disagreement
4D	Write an email to apply for work			
Review and extension More practice		WORDPOWER as		
Unit 5 Chance				
Getting started Discuss attitudes to risk				
5A	Discuss possible future events	Future probability	Adjectives describing attitude	Sounds and spelling: th
5B	Prepare for a job interview	Future perfect and future continuous	The natural world	
5C	Discuss advantages and disadvantages		Tone groups	Responding to an idea; Discussing advantages and disadvantages
5D	Write an argument for and against an idea			
Review and extension More practice		WORDPOWER side		
Unit 6 Around the globe				

Listening and Video	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Conversation about Jocelyn Bell-Burnell	Articles: <i>Apple's design genius</i> and <i>The woman who reinvented children's TV</i>	Discussing inspiring people	
Podcast: <i>The 30-day challenge</i>	Interviews: <i>30-day challenge</i>	Asking and answering questions about challenges	
Starting a new job		Explaining a process; Checking understanding	Unit Progress Test
Conversation about technology	Article: <i>Tech free!</i>	Discussing technology	Organising an article
Conversation about a survival situation	Article: <i>Lost at sea</i>	Telling a survival story	
Interview: <i>The Tiger</i>	Leaflet: <i>How to survive ... an animal attack</i>	Giving advice; Asking questions	
Taking photos		Giving compliments and responding	Unit Progress Test
Talking about getting lost	Leaflet with guidelines for hiking	Discussing the natural environment	Organising guidelines in a leaflet
Conversation: learning experiences	Text about learning: <i>Learning to learn</i>	Talking about something you have put a lot of effort into	
Radio programme: <i>The Sports Gene</i>	Article: <i>Born to be the best?</i> ; Two articles about US baseball players	Discussing sport and ways to improve performance	
Making wedding plans		Planning a party	Unit Progress Test
Interviews about sports	Article: <i>A nation of armchair athletes?</i>	Talking about popular sports	Describing data
Interview: <i>Psychology of money</i> ; Two monologues: <i>Life-changing events</i>	Two texts about winning the lottery	Talking about how your life has changed	
Two monologues: training for a job	Article: <i>Training to be the best</i>	Discuss experiences of training and rules	
Presenting photos		Discussing photos; Disagreeing carefully	Unit Progress Test
Three monologues: living in different places	Webpage about being an international student 'buddy'	Discussing living in a different country	Giving a positive impression
Monologue: <i>What are your chances?</i>	Quiz: <i>Are you an optimist or a pessimist?</i> ; Article: <i>Why we think we're going to have a long and happy life.</i>	Discussing possible future events	
Conversation: talking about work	Quiz: <i>The unknown continent</i> ; Article: <i>Cooking in Antarctica</i>	Role play: a job interview	
Money problems		Explaining and responding to ideas for a café	Unit Progress Test
News reports: extreme weather	Essay about climate change	Giving opinions on climate change	Arguing for and against an idea