

Evaluating the Grammar Exercises of Portal to English Book for Tenth and Eleventh Grade Qatari students

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Abstract

The study aims at evaluating the grammar exercises of student's book of *Portal to English* as the main resource for teaching English as a foreign language for the tenth and eleventh grade in Qatar. The main question criterion adopted by Demir and Erats and Celce – Murcia. Therefore, the researchers used the following: First distribution of the grammar exercises, second the selection of the grammatical structure; third, the sequence of the grammar exercises in the textbook; fourth, the recycling and contextualization of the grammar exercises. Descriptive and quantitative methods are used to collect the data.

The findings revealed the following: First, the grammar exercises were not distributed in balance in both course books tenth. Moreover, in the eleventh-grade textbook, the number of grammar lessons and exercises is more than in the tenth grade; second, the grammatical structure was selected carefully in tenth grade compared to the eleventh grade as they are placed as a prerequisite for other language skills, third, the sequence of the exercises in both textbooks showed that all exercises are presented from simple to complex, and fourth, the majority of the grammar exercises textbooks are recycled and contextualized through presenting them in a different type of activity.

Keywords: Textbook evaluation, Portal to English, Grammar exercises.

Introduction:

In the last millennium, a few claims have discussed the relationship of grammar and the curriculum content among EFL and ESL practitioners (e.g., ⁽¹²⁾; ⁽¹⁶⁾; ⁽⁷⁾). Teaching grammar is the most significant ingredient of a language textbook according to ⁽¹⁴⁾ and ⁽¹³⁾. Undoubtedly, a team of practitioners acknowledges with equilibrium spotlight on grammar in a language course book but another team supposed most of the language classes are taught with a focus on other aspects of teaching is vital to advancing learners' communicative capability ⁽⁵⁾, ⁽³⁾ and ⁽¹⁷⁾. Amid this discussion questions buzzing about the method in which grammar has to be combined and taught through the textbooks resolutions concerned to the adaptation of a special professional framework for tutoring grammar are widely possible in the method grammar is prepared in course books.

Grammar is an essential component in language teaching and learning in order to increase students' language accuracy. Therefore, a textbook has a great impact on the teaching-learning process as well. Furthermore, the content of textbooks should be constantly evaluated to distinguish possible effectiveness

and shortcomings and inspect the limitations to which this content coincides with learners' interests and needs. Inevitably, textbook evaluation is a central practice that helps not only the advancement of the quality of the textbooks but also to the improvement of the learning-teaching procedure. Hence Qatar National evaluation framework ⁽¹⁵⁾ has clearly stated a systematic plan to focus on empowering students with knowledge in various fields by focusing on teaching and learning English with all its skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and sub-skills (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation).

The Problem of the Study

As 'Portal to English' is a new series that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar has adopted, a need for a thorough evaluation is a must to find out to what extent the textbook meets the needs of the policymakers and the state's vision.

The Purpose of the Study

The study evaluates the grammar exercises in the student's book in two secondary stages tenth and

eleventh-grade Qatari students.

Question of the Study

The study aims to answer the following question: To what extent do the grammar exercises meet the criteria of (distribution, sequence, selection, and recycling), based on an adapted evaluation checklist by Demir and Erats ⁽⁹⁾ and Celce – Murcia ⁽⁶⁾?

The Significance of the Study

'Portal to English' is a twelfth-level course for Qatari students from the seventh grade to the twelfth grade and "Top Stars" from 1st grade to the 6th grade. The publishers of the textbook claimed that the book focuses on an integrated approach, a well-organized, and graded syllabus. It is also claimed to have a communicative approach and present grammatical structures gradually. Moreover, it stated that the grammatical structure is contextualized, and it involves various awareness activities. 'Portal to English' series is new and is taught to students in 2018 and the tenth grade was edited 2019. Thus, a content analysis of the textbook will be beneficial for stakeholders, textbook designers, teachers, parents, and researchers who are interested in curriculum and instruction for modification.

The Criterion of the Analysis

The researchers adapted the evaluation checklist of a good textbook by Demir and Erats ⁽⁹⁾ and Celce – Murcia ⁽⁶⁾ focusing on the following criteria.

- The distribution of the grammatical structure.
- The sequence of the grammar exercises within the textbook and between different stages, moreover, the sequence of difficulty of the grammar exercises (simple to complex).
- The selection of grammar exercises.
- The recycling and contextualization of the exercises.

The Unit of Analysis

The researchers use grammar exercises in the student textbook as a unit of analysis.

Definition of Terms

Evaluation: is a process to measure the effectiveness of grammar exercises in the tenth and eleventh textbooks due to certain criteria of good English textbooks.

In this study, Demir and Erats ⁽⁹⁾ and Celce – Murcia ⁽⁶⁾ criteria were based on to evaluate the textbooks (See Appendix A).

Portal to English: is a series that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar has adopted for the students.

In this study, tenth and eleventh-grade textbooks will be evaluated.

Limitation of the Study

The results of the study are limited to the grammar exercises of the student's book of 'Portal to English' in for the academic year 2019/2020.

Literature Review

There are many studies that use content analysis and evaluation checklist in various fields as in media, history, education, etc. The following are some examples of studies that focus on content analysis and evaluation of textbook materials:

Collins (2006) ⁽⁸⁾ assessed a secondary English textbook used in Indonesia. The researcher aimed to find the presentation of grammar and the impact of the communicative approach in the textbooks. The results showed inadequacy and inaccuracy of the presentation of the grammatical structure in the textbooks.

Zawahreh (2012) ⁽¹⁷⁾ conducted a study to find out the appropriateness, clarity, accuracy, and presentation of grammatical linguistic items in 'Action Pack' textbook for seventh-grade Jordanian students. Celce-Murcia's ⁽⁶⁾ criterion was used to find out if the exercises meet the criterion. The findings of the study revealed that 'Action Pack' seven meets the criterion of Celce-Murcia ⁽⁶⁾ regarding using grammatical structure. Anjaneyulu (2014) ⁽²⁾ evaluated the Andhra Pradesh textbooks for Iranian 6th-grade students. Students' and teachers' viewpoints were collected through a questionnaire. The evaluation of the textbook revealed that the textbook was well-organized with a balanced integration of four skills. However, more focus was given to grammatical exercises out of context. The researcher suggested further improvements to the contents of the textbook to meet the students' and teachers' needs.

Hassan, Reddad, and Mohamed, (2019) ⁽¹⁰⁾ evaluated grammar lessons in three ELT textbooks in Morocco. With a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative, the researchers were able to collect data about the presentation of the lessons based on three criterion, visual presentation, gradation, and authenticity. The findings showed that although the textbooks failed to meet the criterion the study aimed to measure, they succeeded in meeting the needs of the learners regarding the challenge they provide for the learners.

Cahya, Sutarsyah, Superman (2020) ⁽⁴⁾ evaluated the eleventh and tenth grade English textbook in terms of content and presentation eligibilities. The findings revealed that the textbook succeeded in achieving the criteria of content and presentation eligibilities to some extent.

Moreover, certain skills needed to be given more emphasis since no balance has been noticed.

Kayar and Veyis (2020) ⁽¹¹⁾ analyzed a Turkish grammar teaching method. The researchers examined the teachers' attitudes and the students' achievements towards using the grammar task-based method as a newly adopted way of teaching in the Turkish curriculum. The results showed a negative attitude towards the way of teaching grammar as planned in the curriculum. Moreover, the students' achievement and attitudes were different according to the school academic level.

Alsulami (2021) ⁽¹⁾ have recently evaluated a 'Travel' fourth level English textbook used in secondary school in Riyadh city for second grade of secondary stage. The researcher examined certain qualities of the textbook as objectives, content, activities, usefulness of developing language skills, etc., two instruments were used to collect the data, a descriptive and a questionnaire. The results revealed some strengths and weakness. Recommendations were provided by the researcher to be taken into consideration for modification.

Concluding Remarks

The current study is different from other studies in terms of the criterion which were selected and the textbook understudy.

Methodology

The present study aims to evaluate the grammar exercises used in the *Portal to English* for 10th and 11th grades. The researchers adopted an evaluation checklist for the good textbook based on Dermi and Erats ⁽⁹⁾ and - Celce Murcia ⁽⁶⁾, Appendix A. A qualitative and quantitative methods are used to collect the data.

The Population of the Study

The population of the study covers all of the portal to English textbooks which are taught to students starting from 7th until 12th grade. The evaluation of the grammar exercises will focus on the grammatical structures presented in the student's book of *Portal to English* in the 10th and 11th grade for Qatari students. The sample of the study focuses only on two textbooks *Portal to English* which were chosen purposefully due to their new publications and the importance of these stages as corner stone shift to the next 12th grade.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

In order to evaluate the grammar exercises in the textbooks, the researchers adapted an evaluation checklist depending on the related literature

Celce - Murcia ⁽⁶⁾ and Derim and Ertas ⁽⁹⁾. The researchers collect the data and analyze it according to the evaluation checklist.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the inter-rater reliability was calculated. The researchers analyzed the suitability of the exercises in accordance with the evaluation checklist adapted by the researchers. After three weeks the researchers reanalyzed the textbooks once again following the same procedure. To establish reliability of the two coders, Holsti's inter-coder reliability formula was applied: $C.R. = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$ the agreement between the two analyses was 93% which indicates that the analysis was reliable.

Findings

The researchers analyze the categories of different grammatical structure exercises in two textbooks 10th and 11th. The exercises in the 11th grade textbooks are always located between vocabulary and listening in the module. Every Module includes two sections inside each one reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, and writing. At the beginning of the textbook, there is a content table then the cover of the theme module. It is noticed that after grammar listening, speaking, and writing. The order of the skills serves the grammar to use them as a prerequisite for each skill. At the end of every module, there is a review to vocabulary and grammar and self-assessment.

There are four grammar production tasks that include games, charts, tables, and summaries for grammar. At the end of the textbook, there is a summary of all grammar and structure called grammar references. An average rate of two sections is presented at the grammar section per Module. While in the 10th grade textbook the order of skills different as in 11th grade textbook that in the first section of Module 1 beginning with reading, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, intonation, listening, speaking, and writing.

In the second section of Module 1 the order includes reading, vocabulary, grammar, intonation, listening, speaking, and writing. In Module 2 the first section the order includes reading, vocabulary, grammar, vocabulary, listening, intonation, and speaking, whereas in the second section: reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, writing, review, culture page, and task. It is clear that there is a little bit difference in 10th from the 11th grade order of skills and location of grammar.

The distribution of the grammatical structures are presented in each module in 10th and 11th grade as following:

Table 1: The grammatical structure in each book

No. Modules	Tenth Grade	No of exercises	Eleventh Grade	No of Exercises
1	Present Simple vs Present Progressive	5	Present Simple vs Present Progressive Stative verbs	5
	Stative verbs	1		
	Question words	4		
	Subject- object questions	2		
2	Indirect questions	2	Present tenses, including Present Perfect Simple Comparisons	6 2
	Past Simple	1		
	used to	3		
	Past Progressive	2		
3	Past Simple vs Past Progressive	2	Past Simple vs Past Progressive used to, would, was/were going to	5 3
	Present Perfect Simple vs Past Simple	4		
	Adjectives – Adverbs of manner Comparisons	0 1		
4	Modal 1 must / have to / need /should / ought to / had better may Modal2 might / could	6	Past tenses, including Past Perfect Simple Clauses of reason, concession, result and purpose	5 9
	must / can't	4		
5	Relative pronouns: who, which, that, whose	1	Future tenses other future forms Time clauses Modal verbs	6 0 7
	Relative adverbs: where, when	3		
	Passive Voice (Present Simple - Past Simple)	4		
6	Future will	3	Defining and non-defining relative clauses Countable / Uncountable nouns Quantifiers	6 1 3
	Future be going to Conditional Sentences Types Zero, 1 and 2			
7	Past Perfect Simple vs Past Simple	5	Passive Voice I Passive Voice II	7
	Articles	3		
8	Passive Voice I	5	Subject/Object questions and Question words Full infinitive, bare infinitive, -ing form	5 3
	Passive Voice II	4		
9	Full/Bare Infinitive, -ing form	5	Reported Speech: Statements, Questions, Commands, Requests Special introductory verbs	8 4
	prefer, would prefer, would rather	5		
10	Reported Speech: Statements, Questions, Commands, Requests	8	Conditional Sentences Type Zero, 1 & 2 Question tags Subject - Object Questions and question words	6 3
total	21 topics	79	23 topics	88

Table 1 presents that two course books show nearly the same subject with a little bit difference in a systematic order that they composed of an average of two sections per Module. Present simple vs present progressive, stative verbs question words, subject-object questions, indirect questions, past simple, used to, past progressive, simple vs past progressive, present perfect simple vs past simple adjectives – adverbs of manner, comparisons Module 1: must / have to / need / should / ought to / had better / may Module 2: might / could / must / can't, relative pronouns: who, which, that, whose Relative adverbs: where, when, passive voice (Present Simple - Past Simple) future will future be going to conditional sentences types zero, 1 and 2 past perfect simple vs past simple, articles, passive voice I, passive

voice II, full/bare infinitive, -ing form prefer, would prefer, would rather, reported speech: statements, questions, commands, requests, question tags, defining and non-defining relative clauses, countable/uncountable nouns and quantifiers. The topics in both grades are the same but in eleventh, they increased in topics such as defining and non-defining relative clauses, countable/uncountable nouns, and quantifiers.

To answer the first question, “to what extent are the grammatical exercise distributed equally in the textbooks?” Through the analyses of the number of exercises and the presented grammar topic, the researchers noticed that in the 11th grade textbook the grammar topics and the number of exercises are more than in a 10th grade

textbook. The number of exercises in the 11th grade textbook is 88 different exercises while in 10th grade 97 different exercises. On the one hand, the number of grammar topics in 11th is 23 whereas in 10th grade are 21, so there is focus on certain grammar topics in 11th and 10th grade they repeated frequently for example tenses, passive voice, reported speech, questions, conditional sentences, comparisons, modals, clauses of reason, concession, result and purpose, infinitive and gerund. On the other hand, there are grammar topics with little bit focus for

instance articles, defining and non-defining relative clauses, countable/uncountable nouns relative pronouns and adverbs, quantifiers and question tag. As an example, tenses and distinguish them is a priority according to the table. The concentration is the 10th grade in grammar topics just in the first and second Modules. In Module 8 in the 10th grade textbook and Module 7 in 11th grade textbooks have the same grammar topic, which is passive voice.

10th and 11th grade exercises are presented in different types as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Types of grammar exercises in each book.

	Tenth Grade	Eleventh Grade
No. Modules	Frequency	Frequency
Look and answer	3	3
Look and complete	0	6
Read and think	1	0
Look and choose	0	1
Read and answer	12	20
Read and complete	6	2
Read and circle /choose	3	10
Read and form	1	0
Read and match	2	7
Read and find examples	1	0
Complete the sentences / question	15	6
Complete a dialogue	2	4
Write questions/sentences	6	4
Choose/circle the correct answer	11	4
Rewrite sentences	9	9
Find examples	4	0
Talk about	2	0
matching	2	8
join	0	2
do grammar production	0	6
write the correct letter	0	1
Total	80	93

Table 2 shows that the types and figures of grammar exercises recognized in two course books were analyzed. It presented that 173 grammar exercises are recognized in two textbooks. It also presents 21 various categories of exercises recognized despite the fact that no course book includes all types of exercises. Indeed, 80 types of exercises are recognized in 10th-grade textbook whereas 93 types of exercises in the 11th grade textbook. It is showed that "complete the sentences/question" exercises rule in 10th grade student's book with a total of 15 exercises while "read and answer" exercises govern in 11th grade student's book with a total of 20 exercises.

In 10th grade student's book, "read and answer" exercises is indicated 12 times, "choose/circle the correct answer" exercises is mentioned 11 times, "rewrite sentences" is indicated 9 times, "read and complete" and "Write questions/sentences" are mentioned 6 times, "read and ..." are used 7

types of exercises including "read and find examples, read and match, read and form, read and circle /choose, read and answer, read and think" used with a total of 39 exercises, "write questions/sentences and rewrite sentences" are used with a total of 15 exercises, "complete the sentences/question and complete the dialogue" are used with a total of 17 activities, "look and answer" are used with a total of 3 exercises, "find examples" are used with a total of 4 exercises, "talk about" are used with a total of 2 exercises, and also "matching" are used with a total of 2 exercises. There are some types of grammar exercises that were not used at all in exercises such as join, do grammar production, and write the correct letter.

According to the 11th grade student's book, "choose/circle the correct answer" exercises is mentioned 4 times, "read and complete" is indicated 6 times, "rewrite sentences" and "write questions/sentences" are mentioned 13 times,

"read and ..." used 7 types of exercises including "read and find examples, read and match, read and form, read and circle /choose, read and answer, read and think" are used with a total of 24 activities, "complete the sentences/question" and "complete the dialogue" are used with a total of 10 activities, "look and answer" are used with a total of 3 exercises, "Look and choose" is used only once, "find examples" are used in 4 exercises, "talk about" are used in 2 exercises, "do grammar production" are used in 6 exercises, "write the correct letter" is used once, "matching" are used in 8 exercises, "join" are used in exercises twice. There are some types of grammar exercises that were not used at all in exercises such as "talk about" and "find examples"

According to the second question, "to what extent are the grammatical exercises well-selected in textbooks" grammar topics, for example, tenses, passive voice, reported speech, questions, conditional sentences, comparisons, modals, clauses of reason, concession, result and purpose, infinitive and gerund builds a linear advancement of the components of the curriculum as it lasts to establish on the lesson that has been tutored in tenth grade. Another type of lessons such for instance articles, defining and non-defining relative clauses, clauses of reason, concession, result and purpose, countable/uncountable nouns relative pronouns and adverbs, quantifiers and questions tag are targeted to develop students' skillfulness of concepts and rules that restrain the lessons of the textbook, taking in considerations that the lessons were presented inadequately in 10th grade.

An illustration of the two textbooks contains the lesson of phrases amid grammar topic lessons instead of the fact that it is mostly related to grasping the essence of different phrases and to using them in the suitable settings. Connector words in the grammar lessons but they have to be contained within the writing section as showed in the content table. Some connector's words conveying reason, concession, result, and purpose are contained within the functions section only in a 10th grade textbook.

Based on the results for the third question, "to what extent are the grammatical exercises well-sequenced?" It was clear that the grammar section is agreeable among the two course books. In grades 10 and 11 begin the grammar in Module 1 with tenses. Similarly, in the second and third Modules in 11th and 10th grade textbooks start by the tenses. Hence, beginning the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Modules with tenses would let learners contrast and compare the learned forms previously with the recent one. Another justification why using the tenses as a starting

grammar section is that it needs the ability to distinguish between the simple past and past participle forms of irregular and regular verbs. Modal verbs are in the 4th Module 10 grade textbook while in grade 11 textbook Module 5. Future tenses are in Module 6 grade 10 course book whereas they are in Module 5 grade 11 textbook. Relative pronouns and adverbs are in Module 5 as grammar topics only in 10-grade textbook without repetition in 11th-grade textbook. Also, articles in Module is a grammar topic only in 10th-grade textbook but aren't repeated in 11th grade. Conditional sentences are in both grade textbooks but in a different order so in 11th grade course book at the last Module and in the 6th Module of 10th grade textbook.

The result of the last question, "to what extent are the grammatical exercise recycled systematically?" Indeed, some recently presented grammar topics are used in reading, listening, speaking, and writing throughout these course books; the demonstration recent items is usually enclosed to the review sections and grammar sections. For example, locating grammar sections in the middle of section A or B doesn't admit for recycling the recently presented structures of grammar section in reading scripts and distinguishing them in listening, speaking, and writing. In 10th grade textbook, the grammar placed after listening and before vocabulary gives classmates to drill the recently presented grammar sections in speaking and writing production, despite that it refuses them the opportunity to confront and identify these sections in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

It is noticed that locating passive voice after past perfect and past simple in Module 7 grade 10 textbook whereas in 11th grade it presented in 6th Module after defining and non-defining, relative clauses, countable/uncountable nouns, quantifiers supplies the learners with the distance of drilling these structures under various concentration in the passive voice grammar section. It is observed that passive voice repeated twice in 10th-grade textbooks while once in 11th grade textbook. It is also observed that conditional sentences presented after tenses but not directly. Thus conditional sentences provide an excellent chance for reviewing and recycling the past tense.

The grammar exercises in the two course books tell that they call inductively teaching grammar. It noticed that "read and answer" exercises dominate the two course books. Such exercises ask learners to read a set of sentences, texts, or dialogues to notice a certain structure. Like these exercises, capable learners notice certain

structure and increase their awareness of the use ability and form of that aim structure.

Conclusion

Grammar content analyses throughout the two textbooks recognized four major criterion. The first one is the distribution of the grammar exercises, the selection of the exercises in each module, the sequence of the grammar items, and the systematic recycling of the exercises. These textbooks contain a satisfactory number of exercises that entice learners to produce the different grammar structures in both oral and written forms in communicative and contextualized situations. Moreover, the selection, the sequence, and the recycling of the grammatical exercises were well presented in both textbooks. After a thorough analysis of the grammar exercises of *Portal to English* for 10th and 11th grade, the researchers find out that the course books in both stages have a sufficient number of grammar exercises that meet the criterion of a good textbook and come in line with Ministry of education and higher education as stated in the Qatar national evaluation framework⁽¹⁵⁾.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend the publisher and the textbook designers to take the following modifications into consideration. First, while the textbooks are relatively new series, the Ministry of Education in state of Qatar may consider leaving appropriate spaces which allow students to write clearly in the allotted spaces. Second, the themes should encourage students to express their own ideas using assigned grammar rules.

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Appendix A

English Book Evaluation Criteria Checklist

No	Evaluation criteria	Yes	No
1	Are the grammar exercises distributed well in the textbook?		
2	Are the grammar exercises well-sequenced in the textbook?		
3	Are the grammar exercise selected carefully?		
4.	Are the grammar exercises well-recycled in the textbook?		

تقييم التمارين النحوية لكتاب بوابة اللغة الإنجليزية لطلبة الصف العاشر والحادي عشر القطريين

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الملخص:

تهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للصفين العاشر والحادي عشر في دولة قطر. وقد اعتمد لتقييم الكتاب (Demir and Erats and Celce – Murcia) وقد قام الباحثان بتقييم الكتابين من حيث الآتي، أولاً: وفق توزيع التمارين النحوية، وثانياً: اختيار البنية النحوية، وثالثاً: تسلسل التدريبات النحوية في الكتاب المدرسي، ورابعاً: إعادة تدوير التدريبات النحوية ووضعها في سياقها. وقد استخدمت الأساليب الوصفية والكمية لجمع البيانات. وأظهرت النتائج الآتي: أولاً: عدم توزيع التدريبات النحوية بشكل متوازن في كلا كتابي: الصف العاشر والصف الحادي عشر. علاوة على ذلك، فإنه في كتاب الصف الحادي عشر، يزيد عدد دروس القواعد النحوية وتمارينها عن الصف العاشر. ثانياً: اختيار التركيب النحوي بعناية في الصف العاشر مقارنة بالصف الحادي عشر، حيث تم وضعها كشرط أساسي لمهارات لغوية أخرى. وثالثاً: أظهر تسلسل التمارين في كلا الكتابين أن جميع التمارين مقدمة من البسيط إلى المعقد. ورابعاً: غالبية الأنشطة والتمارين النحوية أُعيد استخدامها في السياق من خلال تقديمها بأنواع مختلفة من الأنشطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم الكتاب المدرسي، البوابة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، التدريبات النحوية.