EVALUATING LEXICAL COVERAGE ON COURSEBOOKS, "*AMERICAN ENGLISH FILE 1 AND 2*"

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Abstract:
The present study evaluated the lexical coverage of the series "American English File 1 and 2" textbooks to facilitate the English language development of undergraduate students. The evaluation focuses on the listening materials, vocabulary choice, and the alignment of these factors with students' expected English proficiency levels. The analysis of data was run using Vocabprofile via the Compleat Lexical Tutor (https://www.lextutor.ca/). The listening transcripts from both coursebooks were evaluated for lexical coverage at the K-3 level, which revealed a substantial lexical coverage of 98.2% for "American English File 1" and 97.4% for "American English File 2", suggesting that students would likely grasp the listening texts effectively, thereby indicating that the materials are appropriate for learners at this proficiency stage. At the K-8 level, for a more advanced proficiency, the two coursebooks illustrated greater lexical coverage, accounting for 99.7% for "American English File 1" and 99.1% for "American English File 2". These findings implied that EFL learners would demonstrate a strong comprehension of the materials, maximize these teaching resources, and experience the least errors. In conclusion, the findings suggested that the "American English File 1 and 2" coursebook series is regarded as an efficient instructional source to enhance students' English language skills, especially in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension, making them suitable for undergraduates. Discussion and recommendations for further research are put forward.

Keywords: lexical coverage, word frequency, word families

1. Introduction

The importance of instructional materials in EFL teaching and learning activities is generally acknowledged. This was corroborated by Ulla and Perales (2021), who claimed that textbooks and other teaching resources truly dictate how classes are taught. They

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also pointed out that students use textbooks to find practice exercises for the language they are learning.

Additionally, Mamac and Bangga (2022) argued that well-crafted textbooks can provide valuable linguistic input and examples. Apart from English teachers, textbooks are a primary source through which students are exposed to the language (Syairofi et al., 2022). Research on the evaluation of textbooks frequently favors a qualitative methodology (e.g., Anshar et al., 2014; Ramadhana et al. (2019), Sholihah (2016), and Winimurti & Nur (2019). This preference aligns with the findings of Gholami et al. (2017), who identified the predominant approaches and techniques utilized in the assessment of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, which encompass McGrath's impressionistic method, checklist evaluations, and comprehensive in-depth analyses. Cunningsworth's and Tomlinson's frameworks for evaluating textbooks, which encompass pre-use, in-use, and post-use checklists, alongside Bloom's taxonomy and a benchmarks-based methodology, serve as essential tools for qualitative assessment of educational materials. Considering the relatively low use of quantitative methods in assessing English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, this research presents a quantitative framework intended to support the unbiased presentation of data. This novel method seeks to improve the robustness and dependability of evaluations of textbooks within the ELT sector.

2. Literature Review

According to Creswell (2014) and Mertler (2016), employing a quantitative methodology enables researchers to reduce bias that may arise from their personal circumstances when interpreting the outcomes of data analysis. Furthermore, the application of quantitative methods can provide valuable insights in the area of textbook evaluation, particularly within the context of Indonesia. There are three prevalent methods for analyzing vocabulary within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. The initial method involves calculating the number of words required to achieve specific levels of lexical coverage. Nation (2006) argued that lexical coverage is defined as "*the percentage of running words in the text known by the learners*" (p.61, as cited in Sun & Dang, 2020). Research has established a significant correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (van-Zeeland and Schmitt, 2013). Therefore, vocabulary analysis displayed in English as a Foreign Language coursebooks through lexical coverage is beneficial as it reveals the extent to which learners are capable of comprehending the material presented in these textbooks. Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, (2011) interpreted that the relationship between lexical coverage and comprehension levels is well-documented, with research indicating that as lexical coverage rises, so does the understanding of texts. van-Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) reported that a threshold of 95% lexical coverage is recognized as the minimum necessary for achieving acceptable comprehension, while a coverage level of 98% is associated with very good understanding of the material.

According to Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010), familiarity with the most commonly used 2,000 words, together with academic vocabulary and other presumed known terms,

accounting for 95.5% of the vocabulary presented in the New Headway Student's Book Upper-Intermediate (Soars & Soars, 2005). In Hsu's (2009) investigation, university-level EFL textbooks were analyzed, and findings showed that the vocabulary size required to achieve 95% coverage varied significantly, ranging between 2,500 and 13,000 word families. Furthermore, the levels of difficulty advertised by publishers did not consistently align with the actual lexical requirements of the textbooks. A total of 5,000 word families is required to achieve 95% comprehension of reading materials found in high school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2020). A key focus in the study of EFL textbooks is measuring how often high-frequency vocabulary appears in these resources. This investigation is important because it sheds light on the vocabulary that is advantageous for EFL learners, thus evaluating how well these textbooks fulfill the linguistic requirements of students.

According to Eldridge and Neufeld (2009), 1,400 out of 2,000 word families were presented in the Success coursebook (McKinley & Hastings, 2007). In the same vein, just 1,435 out of the most common 2,000 word families were discovered by O'Loughlin (2012), which were displayed in the New English File textbooks series (Oxenden & Latham-Koenig, 2006; Oxenden, Latham-Koenig, & Seligson, 2004, 2005). Furthermore, Alsaif and Milton (2012) reported that 1,690 of the most frequently used 2,000 word families were found in EFL textbooks for Year 6 to Year 12 in Saudi Arabia. The third area of investigation focused on the frequency of word repetition within textbooks. According to Webb & Nation (2017), this research is significant as word repetition plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, increased exposure to a word correlates with a higher likelihood of its retention. In Matsuoka and Hirsh's (2010) research, the frequency of the second most common 1,000 words from West's (1953) General Service List as they appeared in the New Headway Student's Book Upper-Intermediate (Soars & Soars, 2005) were analyzed. Findings showed that while 20.1% of the coursebooks were found to appear just once, with the majority of these words occurring between one to five times, 39.7% of the analyzed words were absent.

3. Material and Methods

A series of *"American English File 1 and 2"* was selected for the present study. The content of this collection of textbooks had to be evaluated in light of the importance of the chosen texts and their ability to aid students in learning English.

3.1. Research Design

According to Alsulami (2021), to assess the appropriateness of textbooks and select coursebooks for their classes, it is necessary for instructors to be exposed to empirical evidence regarding the instructional materials. In the same vein, Yetti (2019) pointed out that teachers want to find the right books for their students because it can be hard to find reading materials that are just the right level for them. This study looked at the textbooks to see how difficult the reading is, what words are used, and if they match the English skills. Alsaif and Masrai (2019) argued that the words students learn mostly come from

the books they read in the classroom. Because of this, the researchers wanted to check the vocabulary and listening tapescripts in the selected English coursebooks to see if they fit with the English skills that undergraduates are supposed to have. To investigate it, the following research question, "*How many word families will a student need to comprehend 95% and 98% coverage of listening texts in American English File textbooks?*" guides the present study.

3.2. Data Analysis

Listening tapescripts were entered in Vocabprofile (https://www.lextutor.ca/vp/) at Compleat Lexical Tutor (https://www.lextutor.ca/, Version 8.5)

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Findings

Freq. Level	American English File 1		American English File 2	
	Families (%)	Cumul. token (%)	Families (%)	Cumul. token (%)
K-1 :	760 (74.5)	91.9	949 (66.4)	92.6
K-2 :	150 (14.7)	97.2	238 (16.6)	96.3
K-3 :	36 (3.5)	98.2	83 (5.8)	97.4
K-4 :	28 (2.7)	99.0	55 (3.8)	98.2
K-5 :	21 (2.1)	99.4	43 (3.0)	98.7
K-6 :	8 (0.8)	99.5	16 (1.1)	98.9
K-7 :	6 (0.6)	99.6	7 (0.5)	99.0
K-8 :	6 (0.6)	99.7	7 (0.5)	99.1
K-9 :	1 (0.1)	99.7	11 (0.8)	99.2
K-10 :	1 (0.1)	99.8	7 (0.5)	99.3
K-11 :	1 (0.1)	99.8	2 (0.1)	99.4
K-12 :	1 (0.1)	99.8	5 (0.3)	99.4
K-13 :	1 (0.1)	99.8		-
K-14 :		-	2 (0.1)	99.4
K-15 :		-	1 (0.1)	99.4
K-16 :		-		-
K-17 :		-		-
K-18 :		-		-
K-19 :		-	1 (0.1)	99.4
K-20 :		-		-
K-21 :		-		-
K-22 :		-	1 (0.1)	99.4
K-23 :		-	2 (0.1)	99.4
K-24 :		-		-
K-25 :		-		-
Off-List:	??	100.00	??	100.00

When it comes to the lexical coverage in *American English File 1 and 2* at a K-3 level, which typically refers to a third-grade level, a score of 98.2% and 97.4%, respectively, generally means that the students have demonstrated a very high level of understanding or performance in the subject or task being assessed. This score suggests that they answered most of the questions correctly and only made a few minor errors. It's strongly indicated that they grasp the material well.

At a K-8 level, the two respective scores of 99.7% and 99.1% on two coursebooks are still excellent, showing that the students have a very high level of understanding and skills. At this grade, the material can be more challenging, and 99.7% and 99.1% indicate that the students performed almost flawlessly on the assessment. It indicates strong academic ability and suggests that they have mastered the content with minimum errors.

5. Recommendations

Given the impressive findings recorded at both the K-3 and K-8 levels, several recommendations can be proposed to further enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and overall academic success. First and foremost, it is essential to introduce students to more advanced vocabulary. As they are already achieving commendable results, the introduction of advanced vocabulary and idiomatic expressions will facilitate the expansion of their lexical repertoire, thereby equipping them for more rigorous academic endeavors and enhancing their linguistic fluency. Additionally, the integration of contextual learning is crucial. It is vital to encourage students to apply new vocabulary in various contexts, such as through reading comprehension tasks, writing exercises, or interactive discussions, as this approach significantly contributes to their comprehension and retention of the vocabulary. Thirdly, educators should support students in the regular review and reinforcement of their vocabulary knowledge. Although their current scores indicate a solid understanding, revisiting previously learned vocabulary is essential for fostering long-term retention. Implementing review sessions that engage students through enjoyable activities, such as games or collaborative projects, can make the reinforcement process both effective and enjoyable. Fourthly, encouraging students to engage with literature beyond the prescribed curriculum is essential for their linguistic development. It is advisable to suggest reading materials that are slightly more advanced than their current grade level or that encompass a diverse array of subjects. This practice will not only broaden their vocabulary but also enhance their capacity to comprehend more intricate texts in the future. Furthermore, it is crucial for educators to facilitate the application of newly acquired knowledge. Teachers should motivate students to incorporate new vocabulary into practical scenarios, such as composing short stories, crafting dialogues, or participating in group discussions. This approach makes the learning experience more tangible and relevant. Moreover, students should be provided with opportunities to tackle challenges related to synonyms and antonyms. By collaborating, educators can help expand students' lexical knowledge and assist them in discerning the nuanced differences in meaning and usage of words they have learned. Finally, it is imperative for instructors to continuously assess students' learning progress.

Monitoring should persist even when students achieve high scores, as regular evaluations, quizzes, and constructive feedback can reveal areas that may need further attention and support. Further studies should consider lexical coverage on reading comprehension and whether its word families gain 95% and 98% of lexical coverage.

6. Conclusion

The findings highlight the high performance of students in *"American English File 1 and 2"* at two different grade levels (K-3 and K-8). At the K-3 level, scores of 98.2% and 97.4% indicate a strong grasp of the material, with only minor errors. At the K-8 level, the scores of 99.7% and 99.1% show almost flawless performance, reflecting a high level of academic ability and mastery of the content, even as the material becomes more challenging. The results suggest excellent understanding and skill, showing that the textbooks are suitable for the intended level of learners.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)
Luu Huu Tho's MA degree is in Principles and Methods in English Language Education at Can Tho University. His research interests are EFL, ELF, and Multilingualism.

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