



تقييم الطلبة لمحتوى مقرر (محاضرة 3): دراسة حالة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية  
بقسم اللغة بكلية التربية صنعاء – جامعة صنعاء

## Student-based Evaluation of Spoken English III Textbook: A Case Study of EFL Learners at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University

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## الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم محتوى مقرر (محادثة 3) الذي يدرس لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية صنعاء - جامعة صنعاء من وجهة نظر الطلبة. كما هدفت أيضا إلى معرفة العلاقة بين المحتوى وطلاقة الطلبة في اللغة. ولغرض تحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم استخدام استبانة مغلقة، وذلك لغرض استقصاء آراء الطلبة نحو محتوى مقرر (محادثة 3). كما تم استخدام اختبار شفهي لمعرفة مستوى طاقاتهم في اللغة الإنجليزية، وكذلك لمعرفة العلاقة بين مستوى طاقاتهم في اللغة ومحتوى المقرر. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن هناك مشاكل في محتوى مقرر (محادثة 3)، وذلك في أن الخلفية الثقافية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لم تعط الاهتمام الكافي في المقرر. كما أظهرت الدراسة أيضا أن وظائف اللغة لم تؤخذ في الحسبان في المحتوى. إضافة إلى أن هناك علاقة ضعيفة بين المحتوى ومستوى طلاقة الطلبة في اللغة الإنجليزية. أوصت الدراسة بإضافة وظائف لغوية كثيرة ومتنوعة في المقرر، كي تدرس للطلبة حتى يكونوا قادرين على مواجهة حاجاتهم اللغوية اليومية مستقبلا بكفاءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم ، مقرر ، تقييم ، الطلاقة، محادثة.

### Abstract:

This study aims at evaluating the content of the Spoken English III Textbook taught to the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Sana'a University from the point of view of the students. It further aims at finding out if the content correlates significantly with their fluency. A close ended questionnaire of the textbook content was developed, and given to thirty students to say their opinions towards the content of the textbook. They were also interviewed with the aim of checking their fluency level. The results show that there are some content problems in the textbook of Spoken English III from the students' point of view. Such findings show that the cultural aspects of EFL in the Department of English are not highly considered in such textbook. Besides, the language functions are not taken into account. They also show that there is a weak relationship between the content of the textbook and the students' fluency level. It was recommended to increase the incorporated functions in the current textbook.

**Keywords:** Evaluation, Textbook, Fluency, Spoken English course,

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, English obviously plays an important role not only as a language of communication, but also as a means of social development. As a result, educationalists all over the world pay a huge effort in teaching English in many different places. This needs them to think of everything that helps in improving teaching and learning of English successfully as content, methods of teaching,

teaching aids, and so on. Therefore, the demand for good ELT content is crucial.

Content is one of the most important components of a curriculum that educationalists or language designers and teachers should think of all the time. The role which curriculum designers and teachers play in this matter is essential. They are supposed to implement, adopt, and, probably, adapt

textbooks. Teachers are critical and active agents and not robots following a teacher's guide (Kiai, 2013, cited in Banegas, 2018). They need to evaluate course books according to their context, learners' needs, institutional needs, and the approach which they seek to explore (Banegas, 2018).

Thus, content evaluation is an important process for clarifying things for curriculum designers and teachers. Teachers should approach course book evaluation from a constructive and positive perspective. In other words, they need to see the extent to which a course book matches their aims and context and in what ways they can enrich it with other materials. That said, we may agree that there is no perfect course book and that we will always find something lacking or missing. In this regard we need to remind ourselves that a course book is not the solution to all our problems, but one tool to help us create our own responses (Banegas, 2018). This means that content evaluation shows teachers how such content affects learners' language skills, fluency, accuracy, and proficiency. Moreover, it helps in highlighting content problems so as they can be modified continuously. It is considered as a dynamic process that leads to improvement in the textbooks. This can be done for all the skills of a language.

Ellis (1997) claims that retrospective evaluation provides the teachers with information which they can use to decide if the materials they have used are good enough to be utilized again, which activities work well and which do not, and how to make changes on materials to be more effective for future use. Williams (1983) argues that teachers need to be acquainted with the principles of textbook evaluation. In addition, Radić-Bojanić and Topalov (2016) argue that the task of the teachers when selecting and evaluating textbooks is not an easy one, however, it is crucial. Clear guidelines and detailed criteria should enable teachers make decisions and choose textbooks that are most suitable for the requirements of their specific classroom contexts. Similarly, although Sheldon (1988) agrees that carrying out evaluation is not an easy job, he assumes that at the very least, the

use of similar evaluative parameters will help to make it, when time and circumstances allow. He goes on to mention that evaluating a task involves a series of steps.

Spoken is one of the skills that its textbooks are always in need for evaluation and improvement to check how such textbooks help in improving students' fluency, and some changes can be done as a result of such evaluation. Also, to highlight any shortcoming or problems of these courses.

The present study investigates the content problems of the Spoken English III Textbook taught to the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students in the BA programme, in an attempt to evaluate this textbook from the students' points of view. It also seeks to check the relationship between the textbook problems and students' fluency in English.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Of course, content evaluation is the best way for the improvement, not only textbooks, but also teaching and learning processes in general. Therefore, as a lecturer in the Department of English, it has been noticed that although EFL learners are exposed to four courses of Spoken English, they still find it difficult to express themselves fluently. Also, Nfissi (2016), Mohammadi and Abdi (2014), Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012), and Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) argue that evaluation of language textbooks is important and helps in highlighting problems. This matter provokes the researcher to evaluate the textbooks of one of these courses as a sample of those EFL spoken courses that they have been studied in the first four semesters of their study at the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Sana'a in order to diagnose their weaknesses and strengths and to make suitable modifications, if any. This, according to the researcher will contribute to the improvement of the fluency of the EFL learners and enable them to communicate with others effectively and successfully.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

The present study aims at: -

1. finding out the fluency level of the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University.
2. highlighting the content problems of the Spoken English III Textbook at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University.
3. discovering there any relationship between the content problems of the Spoken English III textbook and EFL students' fluency level at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University.

### 1.3. Research Questions

The present study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. What is the fluency level of the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University?
2. What are the content problems of the Spoken English III Textbook at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University?
3. Is there any relationship between the content problems of the Spoken English III textbook and EFL students' fluency level at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University?

### 1.3. Significance of the Research

This study is significant in the sense that it helps teachers and curriculum designers to understand the prototypes of the most appropriate textbooks, figure out the weaknesses and strengths of the current textbook and consequently make adequate modifications so as to maximize the benefits on the part of the students to learn and acquire the target language.

### 1.5. Research Limitations

The present research is limited to investigating the content problems of the Spoken English III Textbook taught to the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students in the BA programmed in the

academic year 2018-2019. It investigates only *content problems* of the textbook from the point of view of the students who have just finished studying it.

### 1.6 Operational Definitions of Terms: -

#### 1.6.1 Textbook Evaluation: -

Textbook evaluation is a process which involves examining and forming subjective judgments that help realizing the weaknesses and strengths of a textbook, teachers and other stakeholders. To eliminate subjectivity and operationalize textbook evaluation, it is measured via a questionnaire.

#### 1.6.2. Fluency

It is the ability to produce EFL speech that is free from false starts, repetitions, repairs, and long pauses, as measured by a fluency rating scale.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Textbook Evaluation

#### 2.1.1 Textbook

Williams (1983) defines a textbook as a tool which teachers must know how to use and how it can be useful. On his part, Sheldon (1988, p.238) views the textbook as the '*route map*' for any English language teaching (ELT) programme with shape, structure and objectives as landmarks. They provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities and explanations (AbdelWahab, 2013). Nunan (1988) believes that effective materials are vital components within the curriculum since they can be a resource of valuable language practice within the classroom. In accordance with them, Radić-Bojanić and Topalov (2016) argue that EFL textbooks grant learners with knowledge and language skills. In addition, they provide learners with the necessary cultural backgrounds of the English-speaking countries to prepare them for interaction with native speakers. Chegeni, Kamali, Noroozi, and Chegeni (2016) go further to claim that textbooks play an essential role in students' success or failure in the language classrooms. They can either attract the learners' attention and motivate them or discourage them. However, Radić-Bojanić and Topalov (2016)

assume that textbooks make teachers feel secure about what should be taught in class. Due to the difference in classroom settings and cultures, Williams (1983) asserts that textbooks should be used judiciously in order to cater equally to the requirements of every classroom setting.

### 2.1.2. Textbook Evaluation

AbdelWahab (2013) defines evaluation as a powerful means to improving the quality of education in which the reform of curriculum basically depends on a good process of evaluation. For Aftab (2011), evaluation is a process which involves examining and forming subjective judgments that help realizing the weaknesses and strengths of textbooks to arrive at more informed verdicts. He, therefore argues that "a comprehensive coursebook evaluation is of paramount importance" (p.63). Ellis (1997) distinguishes two types of materials evaluation (e. g. textbook): *predictive* evaluation and *retrospective* evaluation. A predictive evaluation is planned to make decisions regarding what materials are best suited to the determined purposes. Once the materials have been used, retrospective evaluation can be conducted to find out whether the materials have achieved these purposes or not. Ellis (1997) claims that retrospective evaluation can be impressionistic (i.e. based on the impressions and common sense) or empirical (i. e. on the basis of collecting information in a systematic manner). Predictive and retrospective evaluations attempt to make the teaching and learning environment more effective. Most teachers do impressionistic evaluations of their teaching materials while empirical evaluations, as pointed by Ellis (1997), are probably less common due to the fact that they are time-consuming. Similarly, Sheldon (1988) agrees that carrying out evaluation is not an easy job, he assumes that at the very least, the use of similar evaluative parameters will help to make it, when time and circumstances allow. He goes on to mention that evaluating a task involves a series of steps. These are:

1. Choosing a task to evaluate

2. Describing the task
3. Planning the evaluation
4. Collecting the information for the evaluation
5. Analyzing the information
6. Reaching conclusions and making recommendations
7. Writing the report

Sheldon (1988) points out that the selection of the criteria may be quite *subjective*. He points out that "no one is really certain what criteria and constraints are actually operative in ELT context, worldwide, and the textbook criteria are empathetically local" (p.241). They are local because the nature of the teaching and learning environment differs from one context to another. Furthermore, Sheldon (1988) emphasizes that "global list of criteria can never apply in most local environments, without considerable evaluation" (p. 242). Abdelwahab (2013) argues that in evaluation, certain criteria must be considered and that since every teaching setting is unique (i. e. students have different backgrounds, abilities and needs) the criteria will inevitably vary. This is why Nfissi (2016) claims that there are numerous criteria suggested by different researchers (e.g. Williams 1983, Sheldon 1988, Ellis 1997, Abdelwahab 2013, Nfissi 2016). In his model, Ellis (1997) points out that in a student-based evaluation, the students' attitudes to the textbook are examined. The assumption for such an evaluation is that a textbook can only be said to have worked if the students have found it enjoyable and/or useful. This kind of evaluation is conducted by means of short questionnaires.

### 2.1.3. Importance of Textbook Evaluation

As Sheldon (1988) clearly points out, evaluation is a crucially important step because it helps teachers or the programme developers to make good decisions about the most appropriate textbook. Evaluation will also diagnose the weaknesses and the strengths of the textbook; the thing that will encourage the teachers to make sufficient modifications to the materials in the future instruction. Furthermore, Sheldon believes that textbooks represent the visible heart of any ELT programme for both

students and teachers. Ellis (1997) calls for studies of retrospective evaluations on the basis that there are very few accounts published about them and very little information on how to conduct them.

## 2.2. Fluency

Speech fluency in second language learning, as claimed by Morrison (n.d.), has for long been viewed as an important factor in developing and assessing the knowledge, skills and ability of the language. Fluency is one of the main goals of the learning process. Ulker (2017) regards fluency as the ease and flow that exist in the speech of second language speakers in comparison with native speakers. In the same line, Gorkaltseva, Gozhin, and Nagel (2015) claim that fluency is one of the major characteristics of communicative competence. It is a specific feature which characterizes the level of speaking skills in the learner's ability to speak freely. Ozturk (2014), on his part, believes that fluency is an ambiguous term with technical and non-technical meanings. The non-technical meaning is having a good command of the target language. The technical meaning refers to the features of fluent speech which have not yet been properly defined. Fillmore, as cited in Yingjie (2014), defines four abilities of speech fluency. These are:

- A. the ability to talk at length with few pauses
- B. the ability able to produce the sentences coherently, reasoned and semantically
- C. the ability to have appropriate expressions in a wide range of contexts
- D. the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use.

Ozturk (2014) argues that the definition of Fillmore is vague due to the fact that he does not differentiate between fluency and the broad term of overall proficiency. Instead, Ozturk (2014) defines fluency in terms of some temporal variables. These are viewed as the ability to produce speech that is free from false starts, repetitions, repairs, and long pauses. He goes further to claim that "the notion of spoken fluency adopted by the CEF [the Common European Framework] is no different in this

regard. Here again temporal variables are considered the sole predictors of spoken fluency" (p. 3). It is this framework that the researchers adopt in this study to evaluate students' oral fluency.

How to improve fluency is crucial on the part of the teachers so that their students be motivated to take over and improve themselves. Brown (2003) introduces five suggestions for teachers to promote fluency of their students. These are:

- A. to encourage students to go ahead and make constructive errors,
- B. to create many opportunities for students to practice,
- C. to create activities that force students to focus on getting a message across,
- D. to assess student's fluency not their accuracy, and
- E. to talk to the students about fluency.

In addition, Ozturk (2014) mentions two prerequisites for the development of fluency of the EFL learners. Teachers should pay ample attention to the context (i. e. the situation where the speech takes place) and they should draw the learners' attention to native speaker's performance in that context.

## 2.3. Spoken English Courses at the Department of English

Spoken English Courses are a series of four consecutive courses intended to develop the students' oral-aural skills through authentic materials. Communicative language functions are an important part of these courses. Each course is supposed to present a number of language functions to be practiced through communicative events. In addition, pronunciation is an essential component of these courses. All these courses include pronunciation lessons, ranging vowel sounds in Course I to intonation and rhythm in Course IV (Undergraduate Courses Handbook, n.d.).

## 2.4. Spoken English III Textbook

This course is the third in the series of the four Spoken English Courses taught at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University. Since there was no ready-made textbook for it, the teacher teaching it for the last three years did her best to collect the

materials from different textbooks on academic listening and speaking, pronunciation and language functions. She also added some worksheets on phrasal verbs, idioms and collocations from books and different websites to help enhance the active vocabulary size of the students. The collected materials (i.e. the collection of tasks) were given to the students in the form of a handout. The teacher who taught the course in the academic year 2018-2019, however, transformed it into the form of a textbook. It is worth mentioning here that she omitted the language function's part and added some other material instead.

### 2.5.Previous Studies: -

Nfissi (2016) conducted a study to investigate Moroccan teachers' perspectives concerning the EFL textbook "*Visa to the World*" used to teach English to high school students in Morocco. The researcher intended to highlight teachers' attitudes towards the textbook and its effectiveness in the Moroccan context. The sample of the study was 50 (35 males and 15 females) English language teachers working in high schools and employing the textbook to teach students English language during the academic year 2011-2012 in Morocco. The data collection instrument used in the study was a questionnaire to assess the overall effectiveness of the textbook from the point of the view of the teachers. The results show that although the participants agree on the efficiency of many textbook features, their evaluations depict diversity for a number of textbook elements. For example, the textbook in question does not satisfy teachers' expectations regarding its content and topic appropriateness. In addition, the textbook under investigation does not satisfy teachers' expectations in terms of the exercises and activities it incorporates. However, the textbook in question satisfies teachers' expectations regarding its socio-cultural contexts, vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) conducted a study to investigate one of the textbooks, namely *Top Notch*, which is used in some of the Iranian English language institutions. Their study aimed at determining the overall

pedagogical value and suitability of the book towards students' needs. Two questionnaires were adopted for this purpose: a 40-item teacher questionnaire and a 25-item student version of the same questionnaire. These two questionnaires were given to the selected 105 students and 32 teachers. The researchers also conducted a student "needs analysis" at the same time as the textbook evaluation survey. After analyzing data, the findings indicated that although the textbook had some shortcomings, it had met students' needs and it could be a good book in the hand of a good teacher.

Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) conducted another textbook-evaluation study in Iran. It attempted to evaluate *Pacesetter Series*, an EFL course book series, in four levels of *starter*, *elementary*, *pre-intermediate*, and *intermediate*, being instructed at several language institutes in Iran. The purpose of this study was to determine the appropriateness of the series in Iranian EFL contexts. A ready-made questionnaire was adopted for this purpose. Sixty-four EFL teachers rated the series. The results of descriptive statistics indicated that there is an overall consensus among the teachers addresses the needs of the learners in a communicative curriculum. However, two salient points are still worth further addressing. The first issue is that the series does not sufficiently underscore the speaking skill. The other concern involves the incorporation of European culture in every skill and skill-related activities as it may cause frustration and bafflement on the part of Iranian adolescent foreign language learners since they are unfamiliar with certain aspects of the target language culture. One way to remedy the two aforementioned issues is that the teachers using this series can think of other substitute exercises to solve the problem.

Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) conducted a study to evaluate the three English language textbooks currently used at high schools in Iran from the high school English teachers' point of view. They developed a 46-item questionnaire about the five sections of the textbooks (vocabulary, reading, grammar, language functions, and pronunciation practice), their

physical make-up, and practical concerns. The questionnaire was then given to fifty high school teachers with more than five years of teaching experience in order to reflect on the questions by checking one of the four options included. The results indicated that the textbooks are not acceptable from the teachers' point of view considering their five sections, their physical make-up, and some practical concerns.

### 3. Methodology & Design: -

#### 3.1. Population and Sample of the Study:

Yemeni Second-Year EFL learners at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University, Sana'a are the population of this research. They are 180: (155 female students and 25 male students).

The sample of the study was 30 students (25 females and 5 males). It was selected using a systematic random sampling design, which is generally classified as a 'mixed' sampling design because it has the characteristics of both random and non-random sampling designs (Kumar, 2011). The students' attendance list of names was used for this purpose. Every sixth name was selected.

#### 3.2. Type and Method of the Study: -

This study is a quantitative correlational descriptive study in which the relationship between the two independent variables (Spoken III content problems and EFL Learners' fluency) were highlighted.

#### 3.3. Instrumentation: -

In order to answer the questions of the present study, two instruments were used to collect the data, namely a questionnaire and an interview. Below is a description of each.

##### 3.2.1. The Close Ended Questionnaire: -

Since there is no ready-made questionnaire for evaluating Spoken English textbooks, the researcher had to develop one. The *content part* of the EFL textbook checklist provided by Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, and Nimehchisalem (2011) was adapted for this purpose. The *Reading, Writing and Grammar*

categories of the content part of the checklist were omitted since they had nothing to do with spoken English textbooks. A category entitled *Language Functions* was added to the questionnaire. Its items were adapted from Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011). In addition, more items were added to the *Pronunciation* category so as to suit the elaborate nature of pronunciation in the Spoken English course. The questionnaire was then translated into Arabic by the researcher. Translation was done to ensure comprehension of the items among the students. The questionnaire has 25 items and it has a five-point Likert scale: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Do Not Know, Disagree and Strongly Disagree*. Table (2) below shows these categories of content and the number of items in each category: -

Table (2) the categories of content and the number of items in each category

	The category	Number of Items
1	General category	6 items
2	Listening	3 items
3	Speaking	2 items
4	Language Functions	4 items
5	Pronunciation	5 items
6	Vocabulary	2 items
7	Exercises	3 items

After the data were coded, the reliability analysis was done. Reliability is essential to the effectiveness of any data-gathering instrument (Best & Kahn, 2004). It is the degree of consistency that the instrument demonstrates (Baker, 1989; Best & Kahn, 2004; Wallace, 1998). Reliability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for validity. As Creswell (2009) puts it, "when one modifies an instrument or combines instruments in a study, the original validity and reliability may not hold for the new instrument, and it becomes important to reestablish validity and reliability during data analysis" (p. 150). Below is the SPSS output showing the internal consistency measure (i.e., reliability measure) of the questionnaire:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.74	25



As can be seen above, the Cronbach's Alpha value shows that the items of the questionnaire correlate, which means the questionnaire is a reliable measure and will yield similar results if administered again. After that, for the sake of data analysis, the average was calculated for every content category of the questionnaire as well as for the questionnaire in general.

In the same vein, the reliability of the other data collection instrument was checked. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), if different judges rank test takers in approximately the same order, using a rating scale that measures different aspects of proficiency, the rating scale is said to have high inter-rater reliability. After rating of students' oral productions was over, the ratings of the three co-raters were entered into SPSS in order to calculate the reliability measurement. They were found to strongly correlate (.92) with each other, which means that the ratings are reliable. Below is the SPSS output for the reliability measurement: -

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.92	3

After that, the average of the three ratings was calculated to come up with one rating to represent the fluency level of each participant. The average rating representing the students' fluency level was coded as follows: 1 for *beginning*, 2 for *early intermediate*, 3 for *intermediate*, 4 for *early advanced*, 5 for *advanced* and 6 for *proficient*.

### 3.2.2. The Interview

Richards and Schmidt (2002) say that: -

An oral proficiency interview is a type of speaking test that elicits and assesses a ratable sample of a test taker's oral language proficiency in a structured interview format where the tester and test taker are engaged interactively in oral communication tasks. The test taker's spoken language production is often tape-recorded and later rated by one or multiple raters on the basis of a predetermined rating scale. (P.377)

A semi-structured interview was used to collect data on students' level of fluency. The students were interviewed one at a time. Every one of

them was asked to say his/her name clearly and to introduce himself/herself to the researcher. S/he was then asked some questions to get him/her talk for at least 5 minutes. Every student was asked as many questions as needed to get him/her talk enough. Every student was asked at least 3 questions from that list. At some points, the interviewers, i.e. the researcher and the interviewed students diverted from those topics to discuss some other points relevant to what the students raised in their responses. All the interviews were recorded. These recordings are used later to determine the fluency level of each student.

#### 3.2.2.1. The Fluency Rating Scale: -

A rating scale is "a technique for measuring language proficiency in which aspects of a person's language use are judged using scales that go from worst to best performance in a number of steps" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002,). To measure the students' fluency level, a ready-made fluency rating scale was adopted from the *Common European Framework* (2015). The scale is divided into 6 levels of fluency: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, advanced and proficient. To avoid subjectivity and to ensure a higher reliability, the oral productions of the participants were co-rated by three raters. This is also known as *inter-coder agreement* or *cross-checking* in Creswell's (2009) terms. It is worth mentioning here that the researcher was a former teacher of Spoken English Courses at the Department. The researcher listened to the recordings and rated the students' level of fluency using the 6-point rating scale mentioned above.

#### 3.4. Administration of the Data Collection Tools: -

The 30 participants were interviewed in the last day of the first term of the academic year 2018-2019 by with the aim of finding out their fluency level in English. Every student was asked some questions in order to make him/her speak in English for at least 5 minutes. The oral productions of the students were recorded by the researcher. At the beginning of the second term of the academic year 2018-2019, the same 30 students who were interviewed were given

the 25-point questionnaire to respond to. The researcher did his best to make everything clear to the participating students. Kumar (2011) argues that *collective administration* is one of the best ways of administering a questionnaire to obtain a captive audience, e.g., students in a classroom. He adds that this ensures a very high response rate as the researcher will find few people refuse to participate in his/her study. On top of that, because of the personal contact with the sample, the researcher can explain the purpose, relevance and importance of the study and can clarify any questions that respondents may have.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaire from the participating students, data were entered into the SPSS. They were coded as follows: 5 for *Strongly Agree*, 4 for *Agree*, 3 for *I Do Not Know*, 2 for *Disagree* and 1 for *Strongly Disagree*. Descriptive statistics was used. Means and Standard Deviation were calculated.

## 4. Research Findings: -

The results of the collected data were as follows: -

### 4.1. The Answer of Question One:

The first question of this study is "What is the fluency level of the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University?" This question addresses the students' level of fluency. The collected data was collected via using and interview to highlight the fluency level of EFL learners at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University. After analyzing the collected data, the following findings were concluded as shown in table (2) below: -

**Table (2) : the results of the fluency level of the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students?**

Fluency_Mean	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	30	2.90	0.923

The mean seems to be quite low (2.90). This may be attributed to many reasons, some of

which for sure will be the inadequate number of the functions and vocabulary presented in the textbook. The fluency of the students will most probably improve if teachers intensify the number of functions and the exercises in the textbook from one angle and the number of vocabulary in each lesson from another angle.

### 4. 2. The Content Problems of Spoken English III Textbook: -

This part of results presentation shows the results of the second question of the study The second question is "What are the content problems of the Spoken English III Textbook at the Department of English, Faculty of Education- Sana'a University?"

**Table (3) the Results of the Second Question of the Study**

No	Item	No	Mean	Std. Dev.
5	Pronunciation	30	4.34	.61
1	General	30	4.03	.34
3	Speaking	30	3.97	.94
2	Listening	30	3.92	.78
7	Exercises	30	3.78	.74
6	Vocabulary	30	3.52	1.13
4	Language Functions	30	2.60	1.05

This table shows that the students are satisfied with the section of pronunciation with a mean of (4.34) and standard deviation of (0.61). The second highest mean is obtained by the general layout of the book (4.03). These two are followed by speaking skills (3.97), listening skills (3.92), exercises (3.78), and vocabulary (3.52), respectively. The mean of the vocabulary presented in this textbook is quite good, however it can be improved by teachers who will use the same textbook. From its low mean, the functions presented in this textbook seem to be unsatisfactory for the students. This result goes hand in hand with the study conducted by Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) and Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) in which teachers were not satisfied with the functions presented. On the contrary, this result goes against the results obtained by Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) where there was a problem

with the speaking skill in the textbook evaluated.

This section shows the problems of each Spoken English III textbook category as **(a. content in the general, and in the content of: b. listening, c. speaking, d. language functions, e. pronunciation, f. vocabulary, and g. exercises) of the textbook of Spoken III?"** The answer of this question is presented in the following tables:

### 1. The Content of Spoken English III Textbook in General:

The results of the second (A- the content in general) are presented in table (4) below: -

**Table (4) the Results of the Students' Views towards the Extent of the Content of Spoken English III Textbook in General**

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Task objectives are achievable	30	4.70	.466
2.	The language of the textbook is natural and real.	30	4.63	.490
3.	Most of the tasks in the textbook (i.e., handout) are interesting	30	4.20	.761
4.	Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.	30	4.03	1.299
5.	The situations created in the dialogues sound natural and real.	30	3.97	.890
6.	Tasks go from easy to difficult	30	3.93	1.258
7.	Activities are balanced between individual response, pair work and	30	3.90	1.029
8.	Cultural sensitivities have been considered.	30	2.77	1.165

Through the results related to the content of Spoken **English** III in general in table (4) above, the item related to the achievability of the objectives of tasks is viewed as the most important by learners with the highest mean (4.70). This proves that the textbook achieves the majority of the objectives of the course. It means that they think that task objectives are achievable. Similarly with the item related to naturality and reality of the language of the textbook of the content in general (No. 5), it is viewed as an important one and comes in the second rank after item No. 3 with (4.63). This indicates the students' acceptance that the textbook language is most probably natural and real. This ensures what has been by Nfissi (2016) that Spoken courses should have achievable task objectives and their language must be real and natural. On the contrary from the presented results in table (4), two items are viewed as the lowest in their availability in the current content of Spoken III in general. These two items are items No. 4 to the consideration of the cultural aspects in the content which gets (2.77) and seems to be problematic and the cultural sensitivities are not likely considered.

This goes in line with the results of the study conducted by Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012), in which they found that the European culture is incorporated in every task, the thing that may cause frustration on the part of the learners. Item No. 8 related to the balance of activities between individual response and pair work gets (3.90). Such result contrasts the results of the study of Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) where they find that the speaking skills are not improved. The quite high mean shows that the speaking activities are balanced from the students' points of view. Then comes the item No. 3 which assures that tasks are interesting with a mean of (4.20). This indicates that the general impression of students towards the textbook taught is good and reflects their satisfaction. They feel interested in studying listening tasks. Regarding the percentage of items No. 7 which assures that the activities of the textbook help in improving the speaking skills and enable them communicate meaningfully is (4.03), this one ensures that situations created in the dialogues sound natural and real No. 6 is (3.97), and item No. 2 which says that tasks go from easy to difficult

is (3.93). This means that learners view the importance of these three items as medium neither highly emphasized nor neglected in the listening content. It means that the general impression of the learners of the situations created in the dialogues seems quite good.

## 2. Listening Content in Spoken III Textbook: -

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	The book has appropriate listening tasks with well-defined goals.	30	4.33	.802
2.	Tasks are efficiently graded according to complexity.	30	3.77	1.331
3.	Tasks are authentic or close to real language situations.	30	3.67	1.241

It is noticed from the results of this part that learners' view was the highest in item (10) in which the mean of this item is (4.33). Thus, this means that, according to the learners, the spoken content has an appropriate task with well-defined goals and they feel that the listing tasks are appropriate enough to achieve the goals. This is similar to the results of both Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) and Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) in which the learners' needs to improve listening are achieved. But, the extent of their view towards the authenticity of the listening content to real language situations is the opposite in which it shows the lowest degree with a mean of (3.67). Regarding item No. (11) of the same field which is about the grading of listening tasks according to their complexity, learners' view is medium neither high nor low (3.77). This contacts what has been concluded by Kumar (2011) that any listening task must be related to real language life which may make it easy for learners to comprehend the language easily. It means that according to them the tasks are quite good

The results of the part related to the listening content in Spoken **English** III course are presented in table (5) below: -

## Table (5) the Results of the Students' Views towards the Extent of listening Content in Spoken III textbook

graded from easy to difficult. It is possible that the gradation of the listening tasks from easy to more complicated ones would probably have been more adequate if it had been a whole textbook, not a collection of tasks. This view matches what has been said by Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) and Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) who said that it would be better if listening tasks are graded according to their complexity, from easy to difficult.

## 3. Language Functions in Spoken III Textbook: -

This field is about language functions in spoken **English** course III which included four items. The results of these items are shown in table No. 5 below and ranked from the highest to the lowest in form of means and standard deviations.

## Table (6) the Students' Views towards the Language Functions in Spoken III Textbook

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
4.	The language functions introduced exemplify English in its	30	2.83	1.341
5.	The language functions introduced accompany practice of different kinds, e.g., in pairs and in groups.	30	2.73	1.230
6.	The language functions are presented in meaningful contexts.	30	2.60	1.276
7.	The number of language functions introduced in the textbooks is appropriate.	30	2.23	1.104

It is clear from table (6) above that the means of all the four items of the field of language function are medium and low in which the mean of item No. 12 related the appropriateness of the number of language functions in the textbook is low (2.23). It seems that the students are not satisfied with the amount of language functions introduced in this textbook. This is in line with the results of Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) in which teachers were not content with the language functions introduced. Items No.13 and 14 are medium with means of (2.60 and 2.73). This means that language functions are not appropriately presented in Spoken III textbook or in other words, they are quite well presented and maybe they are not enough for students. Regarding item No. 15, it seems to be the highest one here in this field thought it gets only (2.83) which is not a high mean. This means that the course doesn't

include high amount of authentic language functions. This matches what has been by Kumar (2011) that language functions in most spoken courses mostly don't include high amount of language functions and they should be supported with more of them.

#### 4. Pronunciation in Spoken III Textbook: -

In this part of analysis, the results of the third point of the second question (the pronunciation lessons in spoken III textbook) are presented in form of means and standard deviation. It included five items (16-20). The results are ranked from the highest to the lowest one as shown in the following table:

**Table (7) the Students' Views towards the Pronunciation in Spoken III Textbook**

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
16	There is sufficient practice of English vowel and consonant	30	4.60	0.81
17	There is sufficient practice in the recognition and production of English word stress.	30	4.43	.93
20	It is learner-friendly with no complex charts.	30	4.33	.92
18	There is sufficient practice of sentence stress.	30	4.00	1.11
19	Pronunciation is contextualized.	30	3.40	1.329

As noticed in the results of the extent of pronunciation in spoken textbook shown in table (7) above, it seems that learners view towards all the five items of this field above is medium and high. So, item No. 16 related to the enough practice of English vowels and consonants is viewed as the highest one (4.60). This means that the current textbook gives learners the chance to practice these sounds a lot. So, they are satisfied enough with the practice of pronunciation English vowels and consonants. Similarly with item No. 17 which has also high rank of learners' view (4.43). This means that learners are also satisfied of the quantity of recognition and production of English word stress included in the current textbook and feel that they are enough for them. Moreover, they feel that the pronunciation in the current spoken III textbook is learner-friendly and has no complex charts. This is

clear from the results of item No. 20 in table 7 above which shows high mean (4.33).

This might be because the charts presented in the current course are easy and understandable for them. So, they expressed their satisfaction towards it. Regarding item No. 18 which emphasizes the sufficiency of sentence stress, learners express their satisfaction, but not as much as the previous three ones (4.00). And the one that has the lowest rank is No. 19 which talks about that the pronunciation is contextualized (3.40).

#### 5. Vocabulary in Spoken III Textbook:-

In this part of analysis, the results of the fourth point of the second question (the extent of vocabulary in spoken III textbook) are presented in form of means and standard deviation. It included two items (21 & 22). The

results are ranked from the highest to the lowest one as shown in the following table: -

**Table (8) the Students' Views towards the Extent of Vocabulary in Spoken III Textbook**

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
21	The load (number of new words in each Fragment appropriate	30	3.80	1.34
22	There is a good distribution of vocabulary load across units and the whole textbook.	30	3.23	1.40

The mean of the first item of vocabulary (3.80) shows the students' assumption that the number of the new words in each lesson is quite good but it can be increased. To some extent, it seems from the mean (3.23) that the students assume that better distributions can be applied in this textbook for the vocabulary load. Again, this is due to the fact that it is not a ready-made textbook (i. e. it is a collection of tasks from different textbooks). This might be the reason behind the imbalanced distribution of vocabulary load across the textbook.

#### 6. The Extent of the Exercises in Spoken III Textbook: -

This field is about exercises in Spoken English III textbook which included three items (23-25). The results of these items are shown in table No. 9 below and ranked from the highest to the lowest in form of means and standard deviations.

**Table (9) the Students' Views towards the Extent of the Exercises in Spoken III Textbook**

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
23	They are learner-friendly.	30	4.20	.610
25	They help students who are under/over-achievers.	30	3.63	1.326
24	They are adequate.	30	3.50	1.306

The results related to the exercises in the current textbook of spoken English III textbook in table (9) above show that learners are to some extent and highly satisfied with them. This is reflected in the result of item No. 23 which gets the highest rank (4.20) in this field. This means that the students are happy with the level of the exercises and find them learner-friendly. This goes against the results of the study by Nfissi (2016) where he found that teachers are not satisfied with the exercises and activities presented. To some extent, the students believe that item No. 25 related to the exercises is adequate and appropriate in which the mean is (3.63). This means that the extent of exercises is not high as No. 23. The mean (3.63) is quite good to indicate that the exercises address the majority of the students (e.g. under- and over-achievers). But. Item No.

24 it's the lowest in this field in which its mean is (3.50). This reflects the medium satisfaction of learners towards the adequacy of exercises in the content of spoken III. In the three items of this field, learners show quite and high satisfaction of the quantity and suitability of exercises of the current spoken course.

#### 4.3 The Answer of Question Three: "Is There any Relationship between the Content Problems of spoken III Textbook and the Fluency Level of the Students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education-Sana'a University?"

The last question in this paper is concerned with whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between the content problems of the current textbook and the fluency level of the students. Correlational statistics was used to

answer this question. So, the results of the correlational statistics are shown in the following table: -

**Table (10) the results of the Relationship between the Content Problems of Spoken III Textbook and the Fluency Level of the Students**

Correlations			
		Fluency Mean	Overall_Textbook_Evaluation
Fluency Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	-.260-
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.164
	N	30	30
Overall_Textbook_Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	-.260-	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164	

The table shows that there is a weak and inverse relationship (-0.260) between the fluency of the students and their overall evaluation of the addressed textbook. This relationship is not statistically significant (0.164) at the (0.05) level. This shows that the fluency of the students is not significantly affected by the content problems in the textbook. It seems that what influences fluency is something else. This matches what was said by Nfissi (2016) that the lack of exercises and listening tasks does not necessarily affect learners' fluency. He added that some other factors may affect fluency as learners' shyness, confidence, and the situation itself.

### 5. Conclusion

The present study aims at evaluating the content of the Spoken English Textbook III taught to the Yemeni Second-Year EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Sana'a University from the point of view of the students themselves. It further aims to find out if the content problems correlate significantly to their fluency level. The results showed that the textbook III has some content problems from the students' point of view. The study further found out that the cultural sensitivities are not considered to a great extent in the textbook addressed in this study. Besides, the language functions are not taken care of in the textbook. The final result is that there is a weak insignificant relationship between the content of the textbook and the students' fluency. Teachers are recommended to increase the

number of the incorporated functions in the current textbook.

### 6. Recommendations and Suggestions

With regards to the findings of this study, curriculum designers and teachers are recommended to draw more attention to and increase the number of functions in the textbook with simple exercises and activities in an attempt to improve the students' fluency in English. They are also recommended to incorporate more vocabularies in each lesson in this textbook. In addition, teachers are advised to look for activities and tasks that are beneficial for learning the language and suite the Yemeni culture as well.

It is suggested that other researchers should conduct an evaluation study for other spoken courses taught in the English Department. A duplication of the same study with more participants is also suggested to ascertain whether or not there is a relationship between the evaluation of a textbook and learners' fluency in English. An evaluation study is suggested for the other courses that are taught to learn English language.

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