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NEPBE TEACHERS' OPINIONS ABOUT WORKING WITH OR
WITHOUT TEXTBOOKS IN A COMMUNICATIVE SOCIO-CULTURAL
APPROACH CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY

A thesis submitted for the degree of
LICENCIADO EN LENGUAS MODERNAS

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NEPBE Teachers' opinions about working with or without textbooks in a communicative socio-cultural approach context: A case study

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a quantitative and qualitative study concerning NEPBE (National English Program in Basic Education) teachers' opinions about working with or without textbooks in a communicative socio-cultural approach context. NEPBE is based on the social practice of the language. The communicative actions have to be accomplished in concrete situations besides the production and interpretation of oral and written texts. For that reason, there are appropriate teaching-learning methods in the socio-cultural approach; such as, the communicative method, where in most cases teachers will use authentic materials, communicative language use, real situations, among other, in order to motivate students. According to the aims of the NEPBE, teachers could feel that textbooks may restrict negatively in the teaching process.

This study was carried out in one of the biggest cities in central Mexico where the NEPBE program has been piloted in different public elementary schools. The schools' characteristics are very similar; in most cases there is a large population of students that might complicate the English learning-teaching process. The research data were collected via open-ended questionnaire and focus groups. Thus this research is qualitative because it is mainly focused on teachers' opinions. The questionnaires were administered to 19 elementary school teachers, 5 male and 14 female teachers. Teachers' experiences about working with textbooks revealed that they are not the correct level for the children because they are true beginners. In addition, time is not enough to study the whole content of the textbooks. Teachers' experiences about working without textbooks revealed that they felt free to do whatever they wanted: more activities, more exercises, songs, photocopies, among other. Nevertheless, this process implied to have more time to prepare classes.

Teachers also mentioned more advantages than disadvantages when using a textbook; however, they said it was not as necessary as I supposed. More results and implications are described within this thesis

Dedications

Thanks God for this opportunity; it is a pleasure to study and improve our knowledge!

I dedicate this thesis to my parents: Elisa Ramírez Bautista and Alberto Gutiérrez Márquez. Thanks for your support and advice during my life. In addition, this thesis is for my children: David Pascual and Gabriel Benítez Gutiérrez. I would like to tell them that it is never too late to accomplish what you want and need to do in life. Finally, it is also dedicated to my family: "*Family I finally got my bachelor's degree*".

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	8
1.0 Introduction to the problem	8
1.1 Rationale.....	8
1.2 Location of the research.....	10
1.3 Significance of the Study	11
1.4 The Context of the Research	12
1.5 Purpose of the Study	14
1.6 Aims of the Study	14
1.7 Research Questions.....	14
1.8 Hypothesis.....	15
1.9 Chapter Conclusion	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.0 Introduction	16
2.1 ELT	16
2.1.1 ESL	16
2.1.2 EFL	17
2.1.3 EFL and NEPBE.....	18
2.2 Sociocultural Approach	18
2.3 NEPBE and Public Elementary Schools.....	20
2.4 Textbooks	22
2.5 Related Studies.....	25
2.6 Chapter Conclusion	27
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	28
3.0 Introduction.....	28
3.1 Settings.....	29
3.2 Subjects	29
3.3 Research Methodology	29
3.4 Instruments	30
3.4.1 Questionnaire.....	30
3.4.2 Focus Group	31
3.5 Procedure	31

3.6 Data Analysis 3.4 Instruments	31
3.7 Chapter Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	33
4.0 Introduction.....	33
4.1 Aims and Research Questions	33
4.2 Results of the Questionnaire.....	34
4.3 Teachers experiences about working with a textbook	38
4.3.1 Textbooks are difficult for students	38
4.4 Teachers experiences about working without a textbook.....	39
4.5 Teachers opinions about the advantage of textbooks in the NEPBE program	39
4.6 Teachers opinions about the disadvantage of textbooks in the NEPBE program	42
4.7 Chapter Conclusion	43
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	44
5.0 Introduction.....	44
5.1 Findings and answers to research questions	44
5.2 Personal reflections on the research experience	46
5.3 Limitations of the study.....	47
5.4 Suggestions for further research.....	48
5.5 Final Comments.....	48
REFERENCES	49
APPENDIX A	51
APPENDIX B.....	52

List of Tables

4.1 Teachers' opinions about textbooks	34
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**NEPBE Teachers' opinions about working with or without textbooks in a
communicative socio-cultural approach context: A case study**

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction to the problem

It is widely accepted that English has become the international lingua franca, and it plays a more dominant role in people's lives ranging from politics, economics and health care to education and entertainment. This makes the provision of English language teaching and learning an important issue in education systems worldwide including countries such as Mexico, where the National Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) was implemented by the National Development Plan. The objectives outlined in the 2007-2012 Educational Sector Program (Prosedu: Programa Nacional de Educación), are based on the adoption of an educational model based on competences that corresponds to the developmental needs of Mexico in the XXI century (SEP 2007-2012). This program aims to provide English classes to children of public kindergarten and primary schools. Therefore, it is worth testing stages and phases of expansion of the syllabuses (Second Language: English in basic Education) which follow a different scheme from other subjects. It is organized by cycles and not by school grades in order to have continuity and articulation in different grades and levels in Basic Education. Thus the program for Cycle 1 comprises 3rd grade of Preschool, and 1st and 2nd grades of Elementary School; Cycle 2 includes 3rd and 4th grades of Elementary school; Cycle 3, 5th and 6th grades, while Cycle 4 includes 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of Secondary school.

This study explores and analyzes teachers' opinions in order to know if they like or dislike working with a textbook, taking into consideration that the NEPBE is based on the social practice of the language. The communicative actions have to be carried out in concrete situations besides the production and interpretation of oral and written texts. The socio-cultural approach is an approach to learning based on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory; this theory also called social constructivism emphasizes the collaborative nature learning, and it is used as a way to develop competences in the NEPBE. For that reason, this study pretends to know the points of view of teachers about working with a specific textbook besides focusing the learning- teaching process on conversational communication among the learners and the teacher. Vygotsky's theory promotes learning in context where students play an active role in learning, and the teacher's role is to collaborate with his or her students in order to facilitate the construction of meaning in students and teacher. It is also important to mention that there are appropriate teaching-learning methods in the socio-cultural approach; such as, communicative method, discovery/experimental learning method, task-based learning method, project-based learning method, cooperative learning method, and collaborative learning method. These methods promote the learning-teaching processes more actively in contrast with the traditional education; so that, this evidence suggests that in most of the cases the teachers will use authentic materials, communicative language use, real situations, etc, in order to motivate students, so I think that according to the aims of the NEPBE the teacher could feel that a textbook may restrict his or her teaching.

However, it is necessary to explore if they think a textbook is also necessary due to the fact that the materials and actions are in a phase of expansion and it is important to

know the teachers' point of view about working with a particular textbook. It is important to say that the students do not have enough knowledge of English language; in other words, they do not have an English background. Therefore, the choice of an appropriate textbook, if necessary, is paramount.

1.1 Rationale

I have been working in the NEPBE program where I realized that there are some things that need to be analyzed. This program is based on the socio-cultural learning as well as the communicative learning; in addition, the program is being implemented in Public Elementary Schools where there are many students per classroom and there is no background among them, making the learning-teaching process difficult to carry out.

Taking into consideration that the first months of classes the teachers and students work without textbooks because they are not delivered on time, the teaching-learning process has to be implemented through several ways and different dynamics in order to replace the lack of a textbook. It could be better in most cases, since this could be a reason to be creative. On the other hand, a textbook gives a complete model of an entire lesson plan; in addition, it reduces the time that the students spend trying to copy from the board misspelling words; therefore, the use of a textbook could also be necessary.

1.2 Location of research

This study was carried out in public elementary schools in one of the most important cities in Central Mexico where this program is being implemented. The reason for selecting these schools was because I was familiar with the environment and data

collection would be convenient for the study. The schools' characteristics are very similar; in most of the cases there is a large population of students which might complicate the English learning-teaching process. The program is being implemented in a non-native speaking environment in the Mexican public system where English is being taught taking into account two main categories: Social Practice of the Language and Specific Competencies with the language.

Students are given classes through ten social practices of the language distributed along five units from the syllabus for each cycle units that correspond to the five two-month periods of the school year. For each group the classes are 2.5 hours per week, and the classrooms are of about 45 students.

1.3 Significance of the study

Nowadays, with the changes in technology, the use of computers, internet, TIC, among others, it seems that the use of textbooks is situated in a second place for both students and teachers. In some cases, people could even say that a textbook could limit their creativity.

This study is different from other studies in the sense that it deals with the use of a textbook in an EFL context where it represents the students' first significant contact with English in NEPBE Elementary public school educational ladder. In addition, to my knowledge, no one has ever talked about textbooks intended to explore and analyze the teachers' opinions in order to know if they like working with or without a textbook, taking into consideration that the NEPBE is based on social practice of the language and the communicative actions.

This study intends to contribute to the understanding of the importance of a textbook for the NEPBE program and it could help teachers to understand and determine how helpful a textbook for this program can or cannot be besides other resources they could use.

1.4 The context of the research

The following areas of research are related to my study:

ELT is one of the main areas that support this study taking into consideration that English is a language which has great influence; it is taught all over the world under many different circumstances. In English-speaking countries English language teaching has essentially evolved in two broad directions: instruction for people who intend to live in an English-speaking country and for those who do not. The terminology used according to how or where English is being taught is the following: ESL and EFL. English as a second language (ESL) is the use or study of English by speakers with different native languages. Vyas and Patel (2009) mention that L2 acquisition is not a voluntary activity and usually learners do not attain full competence while they do in L1 as universal process. According to Verghese (2007), English as a second language is used as a medium of communication and government work in a country, and used at school as a lingua franca as a language of instruction; it is also known as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English. EFL usually occurs in the student's own country, either within the state school system, or privately, but only as a subject or adult level solely for the purpose of giving a foreign language competence, it is not used for any normal day-to-

day social interaction in the country it is being taught. EFL teachers may be native or non-native speakers of English. The NEBBE program is being carried out in an EFL context.

NEPBE is a program which was established in 2009 in order to achieve the articulation of English teaching in Preschool, Primary and Secondary public schools where this approach is being carried out.

The Socio-cultural approach based on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, one of the foundations of constructivism; is related to develop competences in the NEPBE and SEP's view of learning and teaching. This theory focuses on the connection between people and the socio-cultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences (Crawford, 1996).

Cunningsworth (1995 cited by Tok, 2010) identifies a textbook as a resource in presenting the material, a source for learners to practice and do the activities. They also provide the learners with a reference source on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. What is more, textbooks serve as a syllabus and a self-study source for learners. They also serve as a support for the beginning teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Thus, it can be said that the fundamental role of textbooks is to be at the service of teachers and learners but not their boss.

Classroom management is defined as the methods and strategies an educator uses to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student success and learning. Although there are many pedagogical strategies involved in managing a classroom, a common denominator is making sure that students feel they are in an environment that allows them to achieve. The teacher is responsible for establishing a community and for maintaining classroom control and he/she makes the difference between a chaotic or caring

classroom by planning and implementing teaching strategies thoroughly, keeping students actively engaged in meaningful learning, and preventing disruptions through proactive management strategies.

1.5 Purpose of the study

It is important to explore teachers' opinions about working with and without textbooks taking in consideration that NEPBE is a program based on the socio-cultural approach where the knowledge appears in the social level and individual level in response to interactions with the stimuli, and where the culture plays an important role through human experience, communication, and understanding of the reality. I think this means that the learning-teaching process must happen by the construction of experiences in a socio-cultural learning without textbooks, which give an unnatural environment. Nevertheless, textbooks could play an important role at least in order to facilitate the teaching but without losing the main goal of the program.

1.6 Aims of the study

The main objectives of this research are:

1. -To explore teachers' opinions about textbooks.
- 2.-To analyze teachers' experiences about working with and without textbooks
- 3.-To analyze the importance of textbooks for teachers in the social practice of the language.

1.7 Research Questions

Main research Question: What do NEPBE teachers think about teaching English with or without a textbook?

- 1 What are teachers' experiences about working with a text book?

2 What are teachers' experiences about working without a text book?

3 What are the teacher's opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of textbooks in the NEPBE program?

1.8 Hypothesis: Even though the NEPBE is based on the social-practice of the language and therefore a textbook is not necessary, I think the use of a textbook is needed.

1.9 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I provided background information about my research in order to analyze the teachers' opinions about working with or without a textbook taking in consideration the NEPBE program needs. In the following chapter we will see the literature review related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study did not pretend to analyze textbooks as an ELT material; its purpose was to understand NEPBE teachers' opinions about working with or without textbooks in a communicative socio-cultural approach context. In this case, textbooks and course book are taken as synonyms. This chapter focuses on reviewing the literature related to the topics. The first one is EFL in public elementary schools in Mexico; and the second is the textbooks in a socio-cultural approach context. Also, I considered the advantages and disadvantages of using a textbook. In addition, public elementary school in Mexico and the NEPBE program based on the social constructivism are described.

2.1 ELT (English Language Teaching)

English is the official language in 63 countries and unofficial second language in many others. It is the predominant language in the international commerce. Proficiency of English in job market has not become more crucial with the globalization of trade. English is an important tool in higher education, administration and mass media. Presently, it is taught in almost every country of the earth (Raman, 2004).

2.1.1 ESL (English Second Language)

“The term native language refers to the language used in raising a child; in contrast, second language, as the one learned as a later stage” (Hinkel, 2011, p. 4).

English in ESL settings is institutionalized and used in a range of domains, the ESL speaker is much larger exposed to English than the ELF speaker, as a consequence, English learners in ESL settings are users of English in everyday life in many different situations; in contrast EFL speakers have their experiences from the classrooms and English language is being taught as a subject (Mulkerhejee & Hundt, 2011).

In dual language education programs, the second language is not taught as a subject. Rather it is used as a medium of instruction in an educational setting. It is expected that students will move toward “bilingualism”. Dual education refers to programs which provide literacy and content area instruction to all students through two languages (their native language and the new language). “ESL countries are nations where the medium of instruction of education and government is English, although English may not be the native language. Students and schools have access to English models” (Verghese, 2007).

2.1.2 EFL (English Foreign Language)

English as an EFL is being taught at schools, and in no natural settings, then “the English speaker may be exposed to English through the media (pop songs, internet) but possibly only uses English actively within the classroom” (Mulkerhejee & Hundt, 2011, p. 12).

There are two main kinds of motivations in foreign language learning: instrumental and integrating. Instrumental means that English operational purpose is to read books in the new language, be able to communicate with others in that language; that is instrumentally. When anyone is learning English for integrating purposes is trying to identify much more closely with a speech community that uses that language, trying to understand the attitudes.

In most parts of the world English is taught as a foreign language in schools, but does not play an important or essential role in the national or social life (Broughton, 2003).

2.1.3 EFL and NEPBE

De Houweer and Vilton (2011) state that social construction, all perceptions, learning, action and communication is the result of individual processes of cognitive (and emotional) construction overlaid and shaped by collaboration of social groups. As a result, from the perspective of social constructivist ELT is being taught as a “lingua franca” as a medium of communication in multilingual cases where people tend to speak in English even though English is a version of their own capacity or ability enough to communicate; so that it is a cognitive and emotional process of sociocultural and communicative construction. It involves a number of factors in order to construct their English e.g. target language orientation, different pedagogical contexts, attitudes, motivation, goals, requirements, a so on. It involves creative change and development neither copying nor cloning.

As it was mentioned before, NEPBE considered English as ESL in its curricular foundations (NEPBE in basic Education, Curricular Foundations, p. 8). However, for the purpose of this study, EFL will be used instead of ESL since English is being taught inside a classroom and not in a natural setting.

2.2 Sociocultural approach

Sociocultural approach theory also called constructivism is a variety of cognitive constructivism that emphasizes the collaborative nature of much learning. Social

constructivism was developed by post-revolutionary Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky argued that all cognitive functions originate in, and must therefore be explained as products of social interactions. Learning was not simply the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; it was the process by which learners were integrated into a knowledge community. Talking about knowledge, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of language and culture in the cognitive development and in how humans perceive the worlds; therefore, those language and culture are the framework through which humans experience, communicate and understand reality.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is an essentially social and interactive process, which means an authentic appropriation of the cultural resources by learner's participation in activities with others. As a result, Vygotsky sustained that learning is a collaborative process. Learning in the socio-cultural approach perspective is based on Vygotsky's social development theory, which is the way to develop competences in NEPBE and SEP's view, this theory has three major themes: Social interaction, More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding or ability level than the learner such as a teacher, a coach or an adult, or even a computer. ZPD is the ability to perform a task under the adult, teacher, coach and computer guidance or collaboration and the student's ability to solve a problem.

Vygotsky's theory promotes then learning context where the students and teachers can have an active role, as well as they could be shifted; as a result, learning becomes a

reciprocal experience for both the students and the teacher. For NEPBE the sociocultural approach could be practiced by activities focused on specific communicative purposes linked to a particular cultural situation, so that; this social practice could be understood as what we can do with the language (SEP & ITESO, 2012, p 42).

2.3 NEPBE and public elementary schools

Nowadays elementary school in Mexico begins with kindergarten (3 years), then primary school (6 years) and later secondary school (3 years). They are valuated with one unique document called “cartilla”, and it grades 12 years of school life. This new way to evaluate comes from a framework based on attributions granted by the General Law of Education and the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) “to carry out an integral reform in basic education, focused on the adoption of an educational model based on competencies that correspond to the developmental needs of Mexico in the XXI century” (Vargas Ortega & Ban, 2011, p.11).

Mexico counts with 222.000 public elementary and also with about 25000 secondary schools with a total average of 247,000 educative centers in charge of the SEP. Public schools are usually big where there are a lot of students per classrooms; this makes a huge difference between public and private schools. It could be said that the amount of money the parents from a private school pay make those contrasts; moreover, with so crowded public schools the education is actually difficult to manage.

NEPBE program was born as the result of an initiative from the Cámara de Diputados that gave the roots of NEPBE; so that was the answer from a necessity to include English in the public education curriculum. Private education had always included the EFL

in its curriculum; therefore, that kind of education was only for a privileged class that could be able to pay for a special education. SEP could not accept the differences between students from public or private schools. In addition, it has to be mentioned that since the year 1954 English language was included as a compulsory subject in secondary school. That had no impact maybe because students were from 12 to 15 years old; and now the experience shows that earlier ages in English language learning are better. SEP pretends to have bilingual students after they finish their compulsory public education (Kinder garden, Elementary and Secondary school).

First of all, NEPBE began with a three-year-pilot program that CNI (Coordinación Nacional de Inglés) implemented for the three levels of basic education: pre-school, elementary school and secondary school. It was oriented to Mexico's necessities. The programs were oriented and elaborated from psychological, pedagogical and philosophical fundaments derived from the advances and results of socio-cultural approach.

This program started in 2009-2010 school period only for 3rd grade of pre-school and 1st and 2nd grade of primary school; those grades correspond to the cycle 1. In the period 2009-2010, all grades of pre- school and primary school grades were incorporated and those grades correspond to Cycles 1 pre-school and 1st and 2nd grades of elementary school, Cycle2 3rd and 4th grades of elementary school, and Cycle 3 5th and 6th grades of elementary school. The third year was the period 2011-2012, NEPBE pretended to include the secondary school, which is Cycle 4.

In order to measure NEPBE effects, a test was created by the University of Texas in San Antonio, this test was elaborated by experts in English language. The test and

instruments were denominated as EFLA (English as a Foreign Language). That test had the four skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

2.4 Textbooks

Tomlinson (1998) refers to the textbooks as course book and global course book. The former is defined as a textbook which provides the core materials for a course. It aims to provide as much as possible in the book and it is designed to serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such as a book about grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and develops the skills: listening, writing, reading and speaking. The latter, a global course book, is written for learners from a particular culture or country but which is intended to be used by any class of learners in the specified level and age group anywhere in the world.

Tomlinson (2001, cited in Alamri, 2008) states:

Proponents of the course book argue that it is the most convenient form of presenting materials, it helps to achieve consistency and continuation, it gives learners a sense of system, cohesion and progress and it helps teachers prepare and learners revise. Opponents counter that a course book is inevitably superficial and reductionist in its coverage of language points and in its provision of language experience, it cannot cater for the diverse needs of its users, it imposes the uniformity of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers (p.67).

Lyons (2003, cited in Tomlinson 2003) mentioned that there are two main forms to defining a textbook, as a product or as a process. The textbook as a product is not a simple textbook; it is a student's book, teacher's book, audio-cassettes, workbook; aims that constitute benefits. A textbook might aim to meet both a higher exit level of learners, and higher teaching standard for instructions. The textbook as a process "fits into other institutional processes; this will explore its impact on standards of teaching-learning as well

as the thinking time it offers an institution and how an in-house textbook might constitute a bench mark or threshold for that institution” (p.490).

Using textbooks has both advantages and disadvantages. Alamri (2008) states that through the history of second language acquisition research many studies have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using a textbook. These studies revealed that the use of textbooks has its proponents and opponents. According to Sheldon (1998 cited in Alamri 2008) using a textbook is one of the most efficient and readily available ways in which to relieve some of these pressures. They lessen preparation time, provide ready-made activities and provide concrete samples of classroom progress through which external stakeholders can be satisfied.

Advantages

According to Tok (2010) textbooks are the mostly used teaching and learning materials for both teachers and learners. He claims that they do not only provide a framework for teachers in achieving the aims and objectives of the course, but also serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting lessons. On behalf of the learners, a textbook truly affects their attitudes and performance to the lesson throughout the course. It is a fact that when learners like their textbooks, they like the course as well and become active participants to the lesson. The textbook is an important source of input and a great opportunity for EFL learners to communicate in the target language.

Richards (2001, cited by Tok, 2010) states that without textbooks, a program may have no impact; therefore, they provide structure and a syllabus. Besides, the use of a textbook in a program can guarantee that students in different classes will receive a similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way. In other words, textbooks provide

the standards in instruction. Moreover, they include a variety of learning resources such as workbooks, CDs and cassettes, videos, etc., which make the learning environment interesting and enjoyable for learners.

Alamri (2008) stated that the main reason for embarking in a study was the fact that “the contents of English textbooks or textbooks in general have a significant association with the learning of the students. The content of English textbooks must not contain errors because these errors once imbibed by the student as the correct one will have adverse effects on his/her learning” (p.1).

Cunningsworth (1995 cited by Tok, 2010) states that course books have important multiple roles in ELT, e.g. they are resources for presentation materials and activities for the learner in order to have communicative interaction and practice grammar, vocabulary, etc. They can also be a sustainable syllabus and a support for teachers without enough experience. Textbooks help to achieve consistency and continuation, give learners a sense of system, cohesion and progress and help teachers prepare and revise learner’s progress and assessment. In addition, Cunningsworth suggests that the potential, which textbooks have in serving several additional roles in ELT curriculum, is an advantage. He argues that textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective source for presentational material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who are yet to gain confidence.

Sheldon (1988, cited by Tok, 2010) suggests that textbooks do not only represent the visible heart of any ELT program, but also offer considerable advantages for both students and the teachers when they are being used in ESL/EFL classrooms. Whether one

believes that textbooks are too inflexible and biased to be used directly as instructional material or that they actually help teaching and learning, one cannot deny the fact that textbooks still maintain enormous popularity and are most definitely essential (Levis, 1999 cited by Tok, 2010).

Disadvantages

Nevertheless, using a textbook also has disadvantages that could be taken in consideration. Textbooks in some cases are not at the right level for the students; they sometimes do not have many exercises or have very few exercises. In some cases the activities are out of date or may be boring, the timetable could be unrealistic in order to complete the textbook. A course-book is inevitably superficial and reductionist in its coverage of language points and in its provision of language experience; it cannot cater for the diverse needs of its users, it imposes the uniformity of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers.

It has been argued that the scripted unauthentic language found in many textbooks does not lead itself to communicative practice, but instead can lead to show a simplification of language giving an unrealistic view of real-life situations. It can also provide additional inaccurate advice about the target language society that can be particularly dangerous for students entering the target language community or those who are expecting to engage in significant amounts of real-life interactions with native speakers (Levis, 1999 cited by Tok, 2010).

2.5. Related Studies

This brief section intends to describe two previous studies related to the use of textbooks which were of great help to carry out this project, especially the second chapter.

The first one is called *An Evaluation of the Sixth Grade English Language Textbook for Saudi Boys' Schools* written by Abdulrahman Ali M. Alamri (2008) and supervised by Dr. DoganBulut. It evaluates the quality of the sixth grade English language textbook for Saudi boys' schools which was introduced at the elementary stage by the Ministry of Education in 2004. This research project evaluates a new textbook that is considered to be the foundation stone in the English language program in Saudi Arabia. A survey questionnaire was used in this study to elicit the perspectives of 93 English languages teachers and 11 supervisors in Riyadh Educational Zone about the textbook in question. The questionnaire consisted of 64 questions grouped under 12 main categories: the general appearance, design and illustration, accompanying materials, objectives, topic appropriateness, learning components, socio-cultural contexts, skills development, teach ability, flexibility, teaching methods, and practice and testing.

The data was subjected to analysis through descriptive statistics. Three different types of computations were done: a per-item analysis, a per-category analysis, and an independent samples t-test to clarify the equality and variance of the responses of the two groups of the population (teachers and supervisors). The findings were generally in favor of the textbook except for the teaching methods and some other sub-items. Out of 64 items in the questionnaire, only 13 items had arithmetic means less than 2.50. The category that had the highest mean was the one on learning components, while the category that had the lowest mean was the one on teaching methods. The findings also revealed that there were no significant differences between the means of the two populations of the study (teachers and supervisors) except on the flexibility of the textbook and the different natures of their

jobs; it might be the reason behind this difference. The study concluded with recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the textbook.

Another study called *TEFL textbook evaluation: From teachers' perspectives* done by Hidayet Tok (2010) aimed to examine the advantages and disadvantages of one type of TEFL materials, English language textbook “Spot On”, used in state primary schools in Turkey.

Sample of the research consisted of 46 English teachers chosen randomly from state primary schools in Malatya and Adyaman city centers. A five-linked type scale was used for evaluation. In this research, the course book was evaluated in terms of layout and design, activities and tasks, language type, subject, content and skill and whole aspect. The research revealed that ‘Spot On’ textbook actually did not stand up reasonably well to a systematic in-depth analysis and that the negative attributes far out-weighed the positive characteristics.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I intended to provide the literature review that guided this research: EFL, NEPBE program, elementary school education, sociocultural approach, textbooks and studies related to this one. In the following chapter I will describe the methodology used to carry out this investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research intended to explore and analyze the teachers' opinions in order to know if they like or dislike working with a textbook, taking into consideration that the NEPBE is based on the social practice of the language. The communicative actions have to be carried out in concrete situations besides the production and interpretation of oral and written texts. The socio-cultural approach is an approach to learning based on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. For that reason, there are appropriate teaching-learning methods in the socio-cultural approach; such as, the communicative method, where in most of the cases the teachers will use authentic materials, communicative language use, real situations, etc., in order to motivate students, so I think that according to the aims of the NEPBE the teacher could feel that textbooks may restrict negatively in the teaching process.

In the following points, the process of how the data collection was carried out will be explained in order to answer the research questions. Therefore, the setting, the participants, the methodology, instruments and data procedure will be described.

3.1 Setting

This research took place in one of the biggest cities in central Mexico where the NEPBE program has been piloted in different public elementary schools. The school's

characteristics are very similar; in most of the cases there is a large population of students which might complicate the English learning-teaching process. The program is being implemented in a non-native speaking environment in the Mexican public system where English is being taught.

3.2 Subjects

The participants of this research were 19 elementary school teachers, 5 male and 14 female teachers. 10 studied Modern Languages at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 3 studied at Normal Superior del Estado, 1 studied at VW Language Center, 1 studied at Instituto Jaime Torres Bodet and at the time of the study this teacher was studying an MA at Unipuebla. 1 studied at Houston Community College, and 3 did not mention where they studied. 5 teachers were teaching 1st and 2nd grade, 10 4th 5th and 6th grades, and 4 teachers did not mention that. All the participants worked at different primary schools, except for two who were working at the same school. Although there were 19 teachers, only 5 were taken into consideration for the focus group where they described their experiences about working with or without a textbook.

3.3 Research methodology

In this research an open-ended questionnaire and a focus group were used in order to collect data. Thus, this research is mainly qualitative since it is focused on what the teachers' opinions were. The questionnaire was used in order to gather information from the 19 participants going from general to particular information.

3.4 Instruments

The instruments were a questionnaire with 7 items and a semi structured interview with 6 questions. It is important to mention that both the questionnaire and the interview

were made in Spanish and English. The questionnaire was administered in English and the interview was carried out in Spanish since the participants felt better speaking in their native language. The questionnaire helped to find out teachers' opinions about some points related to the use of textbooks as well as to understand the advantages or disadvantages they have. The focus group interview helped to get personal experiences and how they impacted on the use of textbooks.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), "the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze" (p. 265).

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and it was composed of open questions and rating scales. It had the purpose of this study in order to inform the participants the objective of this study, then there was a chart where the participants had to write their personal information and finally the questions which were designed to start getting information from general to particular (See Appendix A).

3.4.2 Focus group

Groups of discussion are used for various reasons. Pollock (1955) prefers them to single interviews because "studying the attitudes, opinions and practices of human beings in artificial isolation from context in which they occur should be avoided" (p. 34).

The focus group was carried out with 5 subjects that were randomly chosen from the 19 participants who answered the questionnaire. The focus group was made with the

support of 6 questions created by the researcher which came up from the answers given by the subjects of the open questions in the questionnaire (See Appendix B).

3.5 Procedure

The first step to get the data collection was to pilot the questionnaire with three English teachers from different Elementary Schools in order to know if the participants' answers were the required, appropriate, and useful ones. The grade and the place they taught were not taken into account. The instruments worked well so there were no changes after the piloting phase. Later, it was administered to the 19 participants who were 5 male and 14 female teachers. The focus group was reduced because it was very difficult to have all the participants together. This interview helped to discuss the different opinions that those participants had about working with or without the textbooks and the advantages or disadvantages the textbooks had. There were some questions that were formulated during the process of the interview.

3.6 Data analysis

After collecting all the data, it was analyzed. First, the information from the questionnaires was analyzed, the answers of the multiple choice questions were written in a table using Microsoft Office. The information given by the participants in the focus group was transcribed in Microsoft office and then every personal narration of each participant was analyzed and the useful information was taken to be part of the analysis for chapter 4.

3.7 Conclusion to the chapter

In this chapter, it has been described how the data collection was carried out, the selection of the sample, and the process during this research. It is important to have meaningful information and data to answer the research questions in an appropriate way.

For that reason, this chapter is going to be the beginning of a deep detailed analysis of all the data that was gathered.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings related to this project are presented and explained. All the information gathered from the instrument was transcribed in an Excel document named “Results Record.”; the transcripts used refer to this document. In addition, in order to link the data analysis to the purpose of this study, the aims and research questions are also provided.

4.1 Aims and research questions

Main Research Question: What do NEPBE teachers think about teaching English with or without a textbook?

- 1 What are teachers’ experiences about working with a text book?
- 2 What are teachers’ experiences about working without a text book?
- 3 What are the teacher’s opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of textbooks in the NEPBE program?

As it was stated before, 19 elementary school teachers participated, 5 male and 14 female teachers. 5 were teaching 1st and 2nd grade, 10 4th 5th and 6th grades, and 4 teachers did not mention that. All the participants worked at different primary schools, except for two who were working at the same school.

It is important to mention that it was not known how many textbooks were being used at the time of the study because it was supposed that the NEPBE program was being piloted; therefore, different publishing houses (mainly American, British and Mexican)

were invited to participate with their proposals. In addition, the books were given to the teachers without any kind of criteria; that means, there were a number of books of each publishing house available for teachers, and when those books were finished, the next one was given. In some cases, teachers could choose the book they wanted to work with. As a result, in each school could be working with one, two or three publishing houses; however, it was supposed that all textbooks in the program were based on the same syllabus.

The participants of this study were using 8 different textbooks; there were some participants that were teaching the same grades but using different books. Moreover, at the beginning of the classes, for about two or three months, the teachers had to work without a textbook, for that reason, teachers had enough experience about working without the textbook.

4.2 Teachers' opinions about working with a textbook

This section shows the results gathered in the questionnaire as well as some data collected during the focus group that supported some items of the questionnaire. As it was said in chapter 3, 19 teachers answered the questionnaire and only 5 participated in the focus group due to the fact that it was difficult to have them all together. In sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, the codes P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 will be used to refer to the participant teachers in the focus group.

The following table displays the number of participants that: (1) strongly disagreed, (2) disagree, (3) neither agreed nor disagreed, (4) agree and (5) strongly agreed with the statements related to this thesis topic:

Table 4.1 Teachers' opinions about textbooks

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree / Nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	Comments
1. I consider the words textbook and course book as synonyms.	2	5	1	11		
2. A textbook is essential in the ESL teaching-learning process.	2	5	1	10	1	
3. A textbook is useful for my lesson plan.		2	6	11		
4. A textbook is useful to develop the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening).		2	5	11	1	
5. A textbook is important in the socio-cultural approach context.		4	6	8	1	
6. A textbook is essential in the communicative approach.	1	10	3	4	1	
7. According to constructivism a textbook integrates the knowledge in a community		2	5	11	1	
8. A textbook always provides everyday life experiences.	1	12	2	3	1	
9. Communicative activities are very important in the ESL classroom.		1		9	9	
10. Book activities are very important in the ESL classroom.	1		6	9	3	
11. Using a textbook saves time for my planning.	1	4	4	9	1	
12. I think a textbook is the most important material.	6	4	7	2		
13. A textbook constitutes a point of reference for an institution.	2	2	10	5		

As it can be seen, 11 teachers agreed that the terms textbook or course book are synonyms while only two teachers strongly disagreed. Then the words textbook and course book are considered as synonyms by most teachers. In addition, 11 teachers agreed that a textbook is essential in the ESL teaching-learning process meanwhile 7 teachers disagreed; consequently a textbook is essential in ESL teaching- learning process. Furthermore, 11 teachers agreed about the usefulness of a textbook in order to develop the four skills; on the other hand, only two disagreed. So it means that a textbook is important to develop the four skills. 11 teachers mentioned that a textbook is useful for the lesson plan and only two disagreed so that a textbook is useful for the lesson plan. In addition, 1 teacher strongly agreed that a textbook saves times for their planning, 9 teachers agreed about this, while 5 teachers disagreed so that it could be said that for most teachers using a textbook saves time for the planning.

Finally, 7 teachers did not agree nor disagreed that the most important material is the textbook, 6 teachers strongly disagreed, and four teachers disagreed. Therefore, it could be said that a textbook is not the most important material. Similarly, according to the answers of the focus group, all participants agreed that apart from the textbook it is necessary to use other materials. P1 said “Sí, hay muchos materiales nuevos, novedosos y tenemos que utilizar las TIC, la computadora y programas software que están más novedosos para ellos”. P2 mentioned “Totalmente de acuerdo, es necesario buscar otros recursos además del libro”. P4 said “Sí, es necesario tener otro material para que ellos estén más motivados”. P5 said “Igual estoy de acuerdo, necesitamos más material, para mí el libro es una herramienta y necesitamos muchas herramientas”.

8 teachers agreed that the textbook is important for the sociocultural approach context, six neither agreed nor disagreed and 4 disagreed about it; thus the textbook is not important for the sociocultural approach. During the focus group the participants also gave important information about this point. They agreed that in a sociocultural approach context a textbook could be adapted for that kind of purposes. P1 said “Sí, se puede adaptar, sí, de acuerdo a la habilidad y adaptaciones que haces, de acuerdo en parte a tus experiencias para sacarle jugo a todas las herramientas”. All the other participants also agreed.

On the other hand, 11 participants agreed and two disagreed that according to the constructivism a textbook integrates the knowledge in a community.

5 teachers agreed that a textbook is essential in the communicative approach while 11 teachers disagreed; indeed for most teachers (11) a textbook is not essential for the communicative approach. Similarly, few teachers in the focus group said that the textbooks accomplish a communicative function, that some activities can be done, e.g. role play and some communicative exercises. P3 mentioned:

Yo opino que depende de cómo uses el libro, porque si te vas a enfocar en el libro únicamente, pues obvio que no, pero si del libro tú sacas actividades para poderte comunicar, no le veo el problema. Depende de cómo lo adaptes.

P2 said “sí, depende de cómo se adapte porque incluso en el libro vienen role plays, y si no les haces caso no te sirve”. P4 added: “No bueno, al 100% no, pero es como uno lo maneje. Pero sí te ofrece varios ejercicios y varios puntos en las unidades en los que tú puedes hacer el ejercicio comunicativo”. Therefore, it seems that for some teachers a book is an important tool in this socio-cultural and communicative context.

For the question a textbook always provides everyday life experiences, 12 teachers disagreed; consequently a textbook does not provide everyday life experiences. Finally 9

teachers agreed that book activities are important but 6 teachers did not agree nor disagreed; for this reason, book activities are not very important in an ESL classroom.

4.3 Teachers' experiences about working with a textbook

For this section, only the data collected from the focus group was used in order to find out teachers' experiences about working with and without the textbooks. The number in parenthesis after a quotation refers to the recording time of the focus group.

4.3.1 Textbooks are difficult for students

Four participants mentioned that textbooks are good but difficult for students to understand due to the content. They mentioned that students did not have the level required because they had not studied English before; therefore, in most cases they were true beginners. In addition, the content of the textbooks is too much and teachers do not have enough time to see the whole content. P2 said "...es un poquito difícil para los alumnos debido a que vienen textos extensos a veces, los cuales no se pueden cubrir y los alumnos no los entienden" (0:51). P3 mentioned:

Yo considero que el material, los libros de texto para primaria y los grados que estoy dando son muy aptos y muy buenos, en algunos temas sí siento que son un poquito complejos y tediosos porque tal vez no alcanzamos con el total de horas o las planeaciones anteriores a cubrir el vocabulario, que a lo mejor ellos lo entiendan mucho mejor, pero para mí es bueno (1.24).

P4 stated the following:

Bueno la experiencia que he llevado con los libros es buena, sólo que algunos ejercicios que vienen en el libro se les dificulta a los alumnos, porque como no han llevado inglés desde pequeños entonces uno tiene que empezar desde el principio para que ellos puedan resolverlos como ellos no tienen 'background' (1.46).

Finally, P5 added "...lo único que afecta es que los niños no tienen el nivel para esos libros..." (2:19). Although these books seem difficult for students I strongly believe that students should adapt their minds and capacity to the language.

4.4 Teachers' experiences about working without a text book

P1, said that it is better to work with the book, P3 also mentioned that the book helps; in contrast P3 stated that it was a good experience for her to work without a textbook, she gave a lot of activities, photocopies and songs, she mentioned that she was able to adapt to work without the textbook:

Yo el ciclo pasado estuve trabajando sin el libro y fue muy bueno. Pude manejar más mis actividades, ejercicios, mis canciones. Claro, el libro te ayuda muchísimo, pero mi experiencia fue muy buena trabajar sin el libro. Trabajé totalmente con libreta, daba algunos ejercicios, daba yo algunos ejercicios en copia, pero te adaptas. Es también muy interesante trabajar sin el libro, puedes meter muchísimas actividades buenas e interesantes para los niños (4:24).

P4 mentioned some advantages of working with the textbook, although she said that she could adapt to work without the textbook she needed more time and effort to prepare the class. P5 pointed out that if somebody works with the textbook the class needs to be adapted to the textbook while without the textbook the teacher has certain freedom.

4.5 Teacher's opinions about the advantages of textbooks in the NEPBE program

According to Tok (2010), textbooks are the mostly used teaching and learning materials for both teachers and the learners. He says that they do not only provide a framework for teachers in achieving the aims and objectives of the course, but also serve as a guide to the teacher when conducting lessons.

According to the results of this study, three participants mentioned this advantage. They said “it helps with the lesson plan”, “it is useful to plan”, and “the lesson plan can be done faster”. P1 mentioned that a textbook provides you with a framework of achievements and objectives “...porque ya trae una forma de trabajar el bimestre, entonces es más fácil hacer tu calendario de actividades”.

On behalf of the learners, a textbook truly affects their attitudes and performance throughout the course. It is a fact that when learners like their textbooks, they like the course and become active participants to the lesson as well. P4 said textbooks are colorful, then they help students to be motivated:

Bueno siento que el libro les ayuda a los niños porque luego traen los dibujos que son muy llamativos para ellos y de esta forma pues están más motivados. A lo mejor para leer, ellos todavía no pueden leer el inglés pero ya con los dibujos pues se van imaginando de qué trata la historia (7.21).

Richards (2001, cited by Tok, 2010) states that without textbooks, a program may have no impact; therefore, they provide structure and a syllabus. Besides, the use of a textbook in a program can guarantee that students in different classes will receive a similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way. In other words, textbooks provide the standards in instruction. Moreover, they include a variety of learning resources such as workbooks, CDs and cassettes, videos, etc., which makes the learning environment interesting and enjoyable for learners.

P1 sustains that the textbook includes the workbook, audio and more: “Definitivamente el libro de texto te ayuda muchísimo, porque la mayoría ya trae lo que es el workbook, el libro con el audio y todo eso. En el nivel secundaria siempre hemos trabajado con todo eso” (3:02).

Cunningsworth suggests that the potential, which textbooks have in serving several additional roles in ELT curriculum, is an advantage. He argues that textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective source for presentational material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and a support for less experienced teachers who are yet to gain confidence. P2 mentioned the following: “Pues yo trato de utilizar el libro, cuando se puede porque en primera te ayuda para hacer los ejercicios que tienen que realizar los alumnos, te ayuda para consultar también lo que es gramática... “(3.35). P3 said “En mi caso para mí es muy útil en cuánto a reafirmar, practicar más en casa, dejar tarea. A lo mejor empezamos la clase y hacemos un review y tenemos los ejercicios, los dibujos, y lo hacemos...” (6:57). P5 added:

Yo igual opino que el libro es una herramienta entonces si es bonito trabajar con el libro, pero no siempre. El libro, yo opino, que siempre va a ser bueno porque es una herramienta donde los niños tienen todo organizado, pueden utilizarlo para practicar (5:12).

Levis (1999, cited by Tok, 2010) stated that whether one believes that textbooks are too inflexible and biased to be used directly as instructional material or that they actually help teaching and learning, one cannot deny the fact that textbooks still maintain enormous popularity and are most definitely essential. P3 said that they are good:

Yo considero que el material, los libros de texto para primaria y los grados que estoy dando son muy aptos y muy buenos. En algunos temas si siento que son un poquito complejos y tediosos porque tal vez no alcanzamos con el total de horas o las planeaciones anteriores a cubrir el vocabulario, que a lo mejor ellos lo entiendan mucho mejor pero para mí es bueno.

P5 also mentioned the next idea:

Opino que los textos están muy bien sólo es que lo único que afecta es que los niños no tienen el nivel para esos libros pero en si yo veo que los textos trabajan con gramática, listening, writing, o sea con todas las habilidades. Lo único es que nosotros tenemos que ponernos al corriente con los alumnos pues tienen un nivel básico y los libros tienen un nivel de intermedio para arriba; son más avanzados (2.19).

As it can be seen, textbooks are essential, but sometimes they could not be appropriate for students' level, which is explained in the next part.

4.6 Teacher's opinions about the disadvantages of textbooks in the NEPBE program

Sheldon (1988, cited by Tok, 2010) argued that textbooks in some cases are not the right level for the students; also they sometimes do not have many exercises or have very few exercises. In some cases the activities are going out of date or maybe they are boring, the timetable could be unrealistic in order to complete the textbook. P4 argued that there are few exercises in the textbooks.

Algunas veces me limita porque por ejemplo el libro de 5° y 6° año, te maneja en algunos ejercicios los superlativos, pero son pocos ejercicios y necesitan copias para hacer ejercicios y tengan ejercicios que realizar. Pero a veces es el tiempo el que no ayuda a darles más (9:11).

P1 added "Tal vez yo en la intención de querer terminarlo, cubrirlo todo, cubrir las unidades, etc. no practicas demasiado con los alumnos" (7:59). P5 referred to the timetable:

Yo siento que el libro no es el que me limita sino que tengo que adaptarme o mis planeaciones las tengo que hacer de acuerdo al libro, así es como el trabajo nos los está pidiendo de acuerdo al programa entonces pues uno quiere profundizar en el tema y ya viene otra unidad. Entonces siento que en si el libro no es el problema sino es el tiempo (9:34).

Sheldon (1988, cited by Tok, 2010) said a course-book is inevitably superficial and reductionist in its coverage of language points and in its provision of language experience. It cannot cater for the diverse needs of its users, it imposes the uniformity of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers. P3 mentioned:

Es una de las desventajas para mí de cierta forma en cuanto a utilizar el libro porque tal vez yo quiero profundizar o expandirme un poquito, pero mi siguiente capítulo ya se corta y empieza otro, entonces sería lo único que siento que me corta (8:43).

The course-book or text book is a necessity for those schools where there are crowded classes and there is not enough time; even though they are difficult for students' level, the way they are going to be used would depend on the teachers' creativity and capacity.

4.7 Chapter conclusion.

After taking all the information gathered in consideration it could be said that the teachers' opinions were that working with a textbook is better than working without a textbook; moreover as it could be seen in this chapter, there are several advantages that were mentioned that help in the learning-teaching process. Nevertheless, there are disadvantages, but they are a few. For NEPBE purposes, textbooks help to save time when teachers are planning their lessons, are attractive, colorful, etc. But something that has to be taken into consideration is the students' background and the students' level because although the textbooks help, they tend to be difficult.

In the following chapter, the conclusions, the limitations and suggestion for further research are provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This study looked out the manifestation of NEPBE teacher's opinions about working with or without textbooks in a communicative sociocultural approach context. As it was already stated, this study intended to show teachers' opinions about the textbooks, analyze the importance of the textbooks for teachers in the social practice of the language, understand if a textbook is helpful or not and analyze if they like or dislike working with a textbook, taking into consideration that the NEPBE is based on social practice of the language. In Chapter IV, I showed and described the findings which I got when I analyzed the information of the instruments I used. In this final chapter, I will present the general conclusions of this research project. Therefore, I will summarize the main findings of the study emerging from the data shown in chapter four. Also, I will explain the significance of this study in depth. In this chapter is where I will answer each one of the research questions and I will give an explanation of how I accomplished my research aims. Finally, my personal reflection, limitations and directions for further research will be described here, too.

5.1 Findings and answers to research questions

Main research Question: What do NEPBE teachers think about teaching English with or without a textbook?

1 What are teachers' experiences about working with a text book?

2 What are teachers' experiences about working without a text book?

3 What are the teacher's opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of textbooks in the NEPBE program?

Some conclusions were drawn after analyzing the instruments. I noticed I could get useful and interesting information for my thesis project. Firstly, talking about teachers' experiences about working with textbooks, the participants mentioned that textbooks are not at the correct level for those kids because they are true beginners. In addition, time is not enough to study the whole content of the textbooks. Secondly, teachers' experiences about working without textbooks revealed that that it helps to increase their creativity; also they could use lots of activities and other materials; they felt free to do whatever they wanted: more activities, more exercises, songs, photocopies, etc. Nevertheless, this process implied to have more time to prepare their classes. Thirdly, I found out that teachers mentioned more advantages than disadvantages when using a textbook; however, they said it was not as necessary as I supposed. We can summarize some advantages and disadvantages of working with a textbook.

Advantages

First of all, participants mentioned that it was easier to plan their classes since a textbook provides you with a framework in achieving the objectives and helps to save time when planning. Second, some participants said that the textbooks were colorful and full of images that helped children to understand the topic better. They also gave students the way to develop the four skills because in most of the cases textbooks included the use of workbook, audio, images, etc. In addition, textbooks were an effective resource for self-

directed learning, and a reference source for students. Talking about grammar they said that textbooks were very useful; the teachers who participated in this study stated that a textbook helped students to practice, especially at home.

Disadvantages

Even though there are more advantages to be mentioned, it is necessary to take into consideration that textbooks provide some disadvantages. Some participants stated that their textbooks were not the right level for students, they had many or very few exercises, the timetable was unrealistic in order to complete the textbook, and it removed initiative and power from teachers.

In addition, most teachers mentioned that a textbook is important in the socio-cultural approach context where Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of language and culture in the cognitive development and in how humans perceive the world, then language and culture is the framework through which humans experience, communicate and understand reality; for that reason social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. However, most participants stated that a textbook is not essential in the communicative approach. They said that the textbooks could be adapted to serve as a tool of the social practice of the language in a communicative context, specifically in the NEPBE program.

5.2 Personal reflection on the research experience

During this research, I have gone through different experiences of which I would like to talk about. Therefore in this section, I will write my personal reflection about some

different points. First of all, I am going to talk about the beginnings of this research project. Then, I will explain the development period of the project and, after that, I am going to write about the ending of the same. In the end, my personal changes that I have experienced as a result of this process are described.

I finished my career exactly twenty years ago, I could not get my degree because I decided to be a mother and I did not have the time to continue. Years passed, I continued my life as a housewife. Suddenly I needed to get my degree because I got divorced, and in my work I faced the truth about the need to get my degree. But having the opportunity to obtain my degree seemed an illusion to me. I was afraid that I could not be able to do it.

So I went back to university in order to ask about how I could obtain my degree. Years had passed and I was terrified. I enrolled on this university project and I started to do my research since the last days of October, 2012. I did not have any idea about what my topic could be. Fortunately, I am working in the NEPBE program, and the idea of working with a topic related to that program seemed to be interesting; for that reason, I thought about doing my research about textbooks since the program is about communicative English in a socio-cultural context. There were lots of difficulties for me, I had a lot of work to do during my research; for example, I had to work in the morning and in the afternoon, then I got a scholarship to study on Saturdays, and for that reason I was really stressed. Moreover, my lack of experience on writing and reading in English made things worse, but finally I reached the goal. I can say that never is too late to continue academic life.

5.3 Limitations of the study

First of all, I did not have enough time to do the research, also my lack of experience with the computer, grammar, writing and reading was an obstacle to finish it before. Second, there was not enough information about NEPBE program, and the focus group was difficult because there were few teachers available; for that reason the research was limited. Finally, there are some studies about textbook evaluation but there are not enough studies about working with or without textbooks.

5.4 Suggestions for further research.

The main purpose for developing this research project was to know what NEPBE teachers' opinions were about working with or without textbooks in a communicative socio-cultural approach context. This research was focused on elementary school but it could be interesting to know about the other levels; for example, secondary school. Another interesting study could be to evaluate the NEPBE textbooks because teachers said that they were not the appropriate level for the students. It would also be interesting to do a replica of this study but administering the questionnaire to a larger sample of participants and also for the focus group in order to enrich the results.

5.5 Final Comments

Even though this is a very small research, in my personal opinion it should not be underestimated because a textbook has a very important role in ELT and it could mark the success of the learning-teaching process.

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Appendix A

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree / Nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	Comments
1. I consider the words textbook and course book as synonyms.	2	0	1			
2. A textbook is essential in the ESL teaching-learning process.						
3. A textbook is useful for my lesson plan.						
4. A textbook is useful to develop the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening).						
5. A textbook is important in the socio-cultural approach context?						
6. A textbook is essential in the communicative approach.						
7. According to the constructivism a textbook integrates the knowledge in a community						
8. A textbook always provides everyday life experiences.						
9. Communicative activities are very important in the ESL classroom.						
10. Book activities are very important in the ESL classroom.						
11. Using a textbook saves time for my planning.						
12. I think a textbook is the most important material.						
13. A textbook constitutes a point of reference for an institution.						

Appendix B

FOCUS GROUP.

1.- ¿Cuáles son sus experiencias de trabajar con un libro de texto en el programa PNIEB?

2.- ¿Cuáles son sus experiencias de trabajar sin un libro de texto en el programa PNIEB?

3.- ¿Cuándo trabajan con un libro de texto de qué manera es útil?

4.- ¿De qué manera el libro te limita o no te ayuda?

5.- ¿Crees que nuestros libros cumplen con una función comunicativa? Si / No ¿Por qué?

6.- ¿Crees que un libro de texto es importante en un enfoque socio-cultural? Si/No ¿Por qué?