Presentation of Grammar in *English Please 2*: Evaluation of a Colombian Coursebook[1]

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of the analysis performed on the way in which grammar is presented in an English coursebook created by the Ministry of Education of Colombia (MEN) to provide contextualized material to learners in public school settings. The evaluation criteria to evaluate the grammar were developed considering elements from different frameworks. The focus of the evaluation was selected based on the role that grammar plays in the teaching and learning process in the given context. The results show that the coursebook has a noticing approach to grammar and forms-focused discovery activities are assigned to the students, in terms of the linguistic forms that are presented, it was found that the students have a lower level considering the learning outcomes that learners are intended to achieve as part of national language policies.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar los resultados del análisis de la forma en la que se presenta la gramática en un libro de texto de Inglés creado por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional para proporcionar material contextualizado a los estudiantes de instituciones educativas públicas en Colombia. Los criterios para la evaluación de la presentación de la gramática fue desarrollada a partir de los elementos presentados en diferentes marcos de evaluación, dicho enfoque fue seleccionado a partir de la importancia que se le da a la gramática en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en el contexto colombiano. Los resultados muestran que el libro de texto tiene un enfoque un enfoque de atención a la gramática y se presentan actividades de descubrimiento centradas, respecto a las estructuras lingüísticas que se presentan, se encontró que tienen un nivel más bajo considerando los resultados de aprendizaje que los estudiantes deben lograr como parte de las políticas lingüísticas nacionales.

Introduction

Materials play a fundamental role in instructed language learning contexts, they include "anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language" (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 2). Despite the many possible materials that enable language learning in an instructional setting and the many forms that materials can take, the first option that comes to someone's mind when talking about materials is coursebooks, exposing the unquestionable reliance and predominance of textbooks in English Language Teaching (Mishan, 2022; Vitta, 2021).

Despite the crucial role that has been given to coursebooks, teachers, school administrators, stakeholders, and other people involved in the teaching process do not consider the importance on selecting one. The process is overlooked and, in many cases, done only by considering how it fits in a particular syllabus or to address specific topics. The literature on textbooks analysis in different ELT contexts has revealed that the implementation of some textbooks in particular settings may bring problems such as neglecting local linguistic and cultural practices, an overemphasis on standard language models, and a lack of representation of multilingual communication (Hu & McKay, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2020; Syrbe & Rose, 2018). Vitta (2021) claims that textbooks have two main functions; the support and development of L2 English proficiency and to provide a learning experience, therefore it is essential to consider many elements related to the teaching and learning process when selecting the material that is going to be used in a context to address specific needs and achieve specific learning goals.

As part of a strategy to change current scenarios in Colombia, where results in the local standardized test "*Pruebas Saber*"[3] during the last five years have shown that the average score in English is 50.2%, placing 75.6% of the students at an A- and A1 Level (Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación, 2021). Those poor results are likely to be the consequences of using traditional approaches with an overemphasis in the teaching of grammar structures without communicative opportunities or meaningful and contextualized teaching (Macias, 2011). Many initiatives have been implemented since the "Bilingualism

Program" started in 2004, the Ministry of Education in Colombia (MEN) developed in 2016 the coursebook series *English Please* to be used in state schools with students from grade 9 to 11. This initiative aims to help students in their learning process with relatable and meaningful contents according to students` level. Moreover, the series claims to include more contextualized material with topics related to the reality of the Colombian students.

The grammar section of the coursebook is discussed in this paper to find out if its inclusion in the curriculum of public schools could provide a successful tool for foreign language teaching and provide opportunities to students to use the language in a communicate way, The criteria used was taken and adapted from McDonough and Shaw´s (1993; 2003) evaluation framework along with some elements from other authors (Dougill, 1987; Ersöz, n.d.; McCarthy & Carter, 1995; Sheldon, 1987; Tok, 2010), and complemented with other elements to address the selected aspects (Appendix 1). First, a general overview on material evaluation and different frameworks that have been developed over the years by different scholars is presented. Then, the internal and external evaluation of the coursebook with the implications in the selected context are presented along with the final conclusions. To achieve those purposes these questions are proposed:

1. *How is grammar presented in the coursebook English Please?*
2. *How does the adopted approach in the coursebook match the rationale for creating the coursebook series?*

Theoretical Framework

Materials in ELT

McGrath (2002) defines materials as elements used for learning and teaching languages which can be exploited in the classroom. All the items that are used to ease the interaction between the teacher-learners and the target language can be considered materials. They could include elements such as: posters, flashcards, pictures, worksheets, videos, songs, real objects (known as realia), and coursebooks which are the most common form of material used in most instructed settings.

Teachers around the world rely on coursebooks as a guide for their teaching process because they prefer to have a structured element for their teaching practices, however, coursebooks can make teachers depend on them as a required tool (Byrd, 2001). Sometimes, the use of coursebooks is "imposed" by school administrators or policymakers. In all cases, there can be advantages in their implementation due to the practicability. In this regard, Graves (2000) claims that they can act as "a syllabus for the course", provide "a set of visuals, activities, readings", and in some cases includes "supporting materials (e.g., teacher's guide, audios, worksheets, videos)" (p.174). These aspects can be seen as benefits and it may be thought that they could ease the teaching process. Yet, Tomlinson (2008) claims that coursebooks, especially the global ones, contribute to the failure to learn, acquire and develop abilities to use the language since they focus on teaching linguistic items rather than on opportunities for acquisition. Despite this view, coursebooks are still a common element in the classroom and every year English teachers start the search for the 'perfect coursebook', which is difficult since they all offer different elements and not all of them suit all the needs of diverse contexts. Because the presence of coursebooks in classrooms cannot be denied, it is crucial for teachers to be able to evaluate the ones they are going to use or are using and to be aware of the elements that are part of a coursebook, therefore they can make informed and wise choices.

Every single decision made during the teaching process needs a purpose and should be informed, hence it is essential to consider the reasons behind the choices teachers make to include specific items in the classroom. Mishan and Timmis (2015) argue that materials need a pedagogical purpose which is added by material developers, otherwise they can be just considered as resources. When additional materials are taken into the classroom the identification of the pedagogical purpose and the evaluation of the material that the teacher makes is easier. These materials usually have the function of introducing linguistic items, contextualizing a topic or presenting activities to develop language skills. When the material to be included is a coursebook, the evaluation process becomes more complex and the reasons behind that choice should be carefully considered.

Methods in material evaluation

Teachers are not always given the opportunity to make choices about the coursebooks they will use. Stakeholders like the Ministry of Education of their country sometimes make the decisions for them.

Sometimes school administrators are also involved in the process and the teachers, who are the ones using the material, are rarely considered for this task. The implementation of a coursebook into a particular context is usually part of language policies, which aim at using more contextualized and tailored materials for the students, and give them opportunities to explore their own culture through another language. When this is the case, some teachers may feel they are working with materials they find limiting due to their own preferences or their students' level, interests and needs or because of the tradition of using global coursebooks produced by large and well-known international publishing houses. Consequently, the promotion of material evaluation practices could be beneficial even under circumstances where local coursebooks are provided to the teachers. This process may lead to the identification of possible limitations that the materials could have and if opportunities are given, teachers can provide relevant feedback, to help to improve the coursebooks and "keep up with development" (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 60). Additionally, teachers may develop abilities to make informed decisions in their classroom and can contribute to the classroom practice if the teachers see the need to adapt and complement the material to address the specific needs of the learners. They also can have an active role in the teacher's community by challenging, proposing and making relevant contributions to language teaching in the contexts.

McDonough and Shaw (2003) state that the ability to evaluate materials is a relevant professional activity for all English as a foreign language teachers. Its importance lies in the fact that in some contexts, where coursebooks are the core of language programs, their influence in the teaching and learning process is significant, hence inappropriate choices may lead to a waste of resources, time and a negative impact on learners and teachers.

Evaluation of material has diverse methods. McGrath (2002) summarizes three methods commonly found in evaluation literature. The *Impressionistic Method*, which is commonly adopted by English teachers and administrators, involves obtaining a general impression of the material. It is usually done superficially by looking at the "blurb" on the cover, the contents and "skimming through the book looking at organization, topics, layout and visuals" (p. 25). The *Checklist Method*, includes the use of a set of criteria based on "linguistic, psychological and pedagogical principles underlying modern methods of language learning" (Tucker, 1978, p. 219). Finally, *Depth Method*s involves a close analysis of one or more extracts using predetermined questions.

To make correct choices of coursebooks, a combination of methods can be implemented considering that evaluation is a cyclical process (McGrath, 2002) that does not end after a quick revision, but continues even during the use and implementation of the material. It then requires a deeper understanding of the elements involved in the process of achieving established goals of the teaching and learning process.

Frameworks for coursebook evaluation

No textbook is perfect so evaluation is essential. It can be a subjective process and there is not a formula, grid, or system that suits all evaluation needs (Sheldon,1987). However, scholars have developed frameworks with different types of criteria to serve as a reference for evaluation processes for teachers and other scholars. What all the criteria have in common is that they do not represent a fixed formula to evaluate, and that adaptation should be done according to their purposes and reasons (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough & Shaw, 2003; Sheldon, 1987; Tomlinson, 1999). Additionally, there should be a focus to ease the process, Cunningsworth (1995) claims that it is essential to limit the criteria and the questions asked, otherwise, the data obtained from the evaluation may be difficult to manage.

Sheldon (1987) presents some criteria including what he considers "common-core factors" that stakeholders, teachers, and other users implement when selecting a coursebook, but he is aware of the differences in contexts and specific situations in the evaluation, so an adaptation of his framework is also encouraged. His evaluation sheet is divided into two parts, *Factual details* with the information that is commonly included in the book cover and *Assessment*, which includes seventeen factors such accessibility, content, layout and authenticity to be rated with a poor, fair, good and excellent scale based on given leading questions for each factor.

Similar to Sheldon´s (1987) and McDonough and Shaw´s (1993; 2003) model is also divided in two parts; the external evaluation, contains facts 'as stated explicitly by the author/publisher' (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 62), which can be found in the blurb, introduction and table of contents and describes how the book is organized. They distinguished fourteen factors including level, contexts, methodology, layout, availability, among others. The second part, the internal evaluation, goes beyond the factual details and

aims to analyze the extent to which the aforementioned factors in the external evaluation match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). This evaluation covers factors such as; skills, sequence, authenticity, learning styles and motivation. Finally, Dougill (1987) provides a framework with the main considerations that reviewers need to be aware of when evaluating a coursebook. He organizes them into five general categories: units, subject matters, form and course components, and each contains other elements with questions about integration of skills, presentation of language, format, culture, among others.

Methodology

For the purposes of the evaluation of the textbook *English Please 2* (EP2) and to limit the evaluation, as recommended by Cunningsworth (1995), the selected aspect to be explored in the coursebook is the presentation of grammar. This element was selected due to the importance that is usually given in the process of language learning, the common practices involving grammar teaching, and to evaluate if the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to improve English levels in the country can be achieved by using the proposed coursebook. The type of evaluation conducted for the purposes of this paper does not lead to decision making, but it aims to provide a critical perspective on the way in which grammar is presented in the coursebook and its implications in the Colombian context.

To develop the instrument to evaluate the coursebook, elements were selected from different frameworks (Dougill, 1987; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Sheldon, 1987; Tok, 2010). The criteria were adapted and created to meet the specific goal of the grammar presentation. This combination was necessary since most of the criteria in the literature evaluate coursebooks as a whole, some others have been created to evaluate the presentation of skills and even to evaluate tasks (Ellis, 1997), but no detailed or extensive criteria have been presented for grammar. The result is an evaluation form (Appendix 1) divided into two sections: External and Internal Evaluation. The former includes factual, contextual, physical, and methodological details while the latter includes fourteen factors, it is deep and considers methodological details like skills approaches and syllabus (McDonough & Shaw, 1993). For the purposes of this evaluation, there is more emphasis on linguistic forms. This integration of elements can provide a useful framework with the main considerations to evaluate the grammar components of a coursebook.

Results

Following McDonough and Shaw´s (1993) recommendation of examining at least two units to make an effective evaluation, I evaluated eight lessons of the three units from Module 2 of the coursebook *EP2.* Considering that most coursebooks dedicate their first units to presenting a review of the topics from the previous levels, the second module was the one I choose for the analysis. Each section of the lessons was analyzed, including the vocabulary, and all the tasks involving the language skills, since the evaluation criteria also considered the way in which those aspects were integrated with the grammar approach and presentation. However, more attention was given to the specific grammar sections in each lesson (*Focus on Language*), where each example, instruction, and task were examined considering the criteria designed for this purpose and identifying specific cases or samples of aspects such as specific linguistic forms, strategies to present them, approaches, and explanations among others. The following sections present the results of the factual analysis (External evaluation) and the grammar presentation (internal evaluation.

External evaluation

<u>Factual and physical details</u>

The coursebook was developed by members of the Minister of Education and the British Council under the editorial guidelines of the publisher Richmond. The series is composed of: Student´s book, Teacher's guide, Pacing Guides for different course load hours and Audio CD. All resources are available in printed and downloadable versions. In the coursebook, the contents are divided into four modules containing three units each (Table 1) and eight lessons. Despite the wide information about the purpose of the coursebook, it had a common feature with other coursebooks, there is no information about a needs analysis on which it was based nor of the pre- or post-publication trials undertaken (Sheldon,1987).

Each module starts with a section called "Initial exploration of topics, language skills and project", which provides a summary of what students will do in the module. Every lesson has a tag with the corresponding number at the top of the page, but the transition of units is not clearly distinguished moreover, the teacher´s book includes a "Scope and Sequence" section with the contents of each module, but not the student´s

book, where only the names and pages of the modules, units and lessons can be found (Appendix 2). The absence of this section in the student's book and the way in which the units are organized may be unclear for learners when they are studying on their own without teacher's guidelines. This is due to the repetition of sections.

Units include an adequate amount of text and graphical material, it is not dense; the pages do not contain too much information, the photographs and diagrams are real and colorful to support activities and texts, there are no drawings or abstract representations of elements in the coursebook. Photographs of different cultures in context. This eases the process for students to relate the language they are learning with aspects from their own culture and perhaps, use it to talk about them.

	Module	Units		
1	Teen culture	Unit 1 Having fun	Unit 2 Teen power	Unit 3 Spending time well
2	Money makes the world go round	Unit 1 What we spend	Unit 2 How the world works	Unit 3 Ready to change
3	We are all different	Unit 1 Different looks, different lifestyles	Unit 2 Be yourself	Unit 3 Mind your manners
4	Our natural environment	Unit 1 Eco-tourism	Unit 2 Protecting our native culture and environment	Unit 3 Colombia: A natural and cultural paradise

Table 1: Coursebook organization

General methodological details

The coursebook aims to help tenth graders from state schools in Colombia to achieve a Pre-intermediate English level (B1). It is based on the methodological and pedagogical principles of a national curriculum created in 2016 *Propuesta de Currículo Sugerido de Inglés* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016a). The organizing principle of the coursebook is a topic-based syllabus, which aims to provide all learners with a specific and meaningful context to learn language and "cross-curricular content" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016b, p. vi). The topics are considered to be educational rather than "pop culture" topics (teenagers, globalization, lifestyles and health, and the environment) which aim at developing competitive citizens able to interact with the world by using the foreign language. This is represented in the lessons, which are all aligned with the general topic of each module as well as the reading texts, listening tasks, and vocabulary.

In terms of language presentation, the coursebook developers claimed to include the "noticing approach to language development" as a key principle underlying the coursebook approach and methodology. Explicit language forms are used in graded language input to help learners internalize language rules, notice the use of the language, and to give relevance to language points so learners can recognize them in later contacts they have with the language, consequently they can be able to discover and make generalizations about its use. Recommendations to teachers are given so that students have to discover the language rules and forms by themselves with the teacher´s guidance. The teacher can provide grammar rules and explanations, but before that students are guided to notice and discover how language works drawing attention to the topics with contextualized examples in independent and group tasks (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016b).

Internal evaluation

To have a better understanding of how external factors and some methodological details are connected to address the learning goals, this internal evaluation is divided into two sections: *Skills* and *Presentation of Grammar*. The former is only revised, but the latter, which deals with the way in which grammar structures are presented, is the focus of this evaluation and is examined to see the way in which it relates to other sections.

Skills

Lessons contain activities focused on each skill, grammar and vocabulary. It is specified that it is the teacher's choice to decide how to present the activities for receptive skills (listening and reading), e.g., to pre-teach any of the vocabulary in the texts, do pre-listening and reading activities for predicting, select a writing approach. Through the lessons there are activities that combine mainly speaking with listening, speaking with reading, writing, and reading and speaking and writing. However, despite the fact that

integration of skills aims at providing opportunities for real communication some of the proposed activities do not promote this and the interaction that students can have with the language may not be realistic.

An example of an unrealistic activity is found in the second and third part of a speaking activity on Lesson 1 (Figure 1) students are encouraged to use numbers, but only by saying the numbers and repeating them, which could be a case of a unrealistic speaking activity. Learners can find the topic useful, but the tasks are not providing real use of the numbers and it is only encouraging memorization and controlled practice. There is one extra task that could be used to be more communicative, it suggests students to work in pairs and provide information about a country in terms of numbers (population, area). However, this is not related with the main topic of the module which is money, specifically shopping and numbers are not included in latter lessons or activities only addressed in Lesson 1.
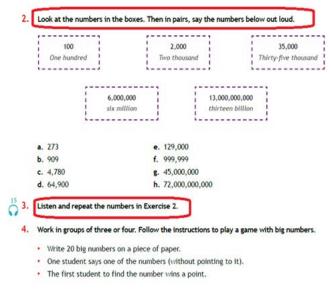
Figure 1: Unrealistic speaking activity

Presentation of grammar

To evaluate if the main principles previously presented agree with the content, eight focus on language sections from the three units in Module 2, were examined regarding the criteria presented in the evaluation form but summarized in the subsequent categories. However other lessons from the coursebook were also explored to see if the conclusions could be generalized.

Grammar structures and students' level

Many of the linguistic forms included in the coursebook are the structural features of level B1 described in the CEFR Language Profile, but in some lessons the premise that at that level, learners "are able to cope with more complex sentences" (English Profile, 2011, p.13) is not considered. The grammatical criteria included in the language profile for level B1 is not included, most of the key features of the grammar structures in the book belong to the A2 level (simple sentences, clauses with that, direct questions, simple sentences with infinitives and some modal verbs. This can be seen in the presentation of the modal *should* in two lessons. This linguistic form is presented and used to give advice (Module 1, Unit 2), but at B1 level the modal is also used to indicate probability, which is not mentioned in this lesson. Another aspect regarding the level is the absence of some structures that are considered marked in B1 level, such as indirect questions, relative clauses, and complex auxiliaries which are not included. Additionally, the length of utterances used in the input is about 8.9, so they range above the A2 level (7.9 words). This data was gathered by counting the utterances in texts, questions and sentences and calculating the average.

Grammar and skills integration

To evaluate this aspect the way in which the examples and structures in the *Focus on Language* section relate to previous sections, was examined. It was also noted how the structures were presented in the subsequent sections or if learners have opportunities to use them. In the eight lessons examined the most common integrated skill was reading, 75% of the grammar sections based their examples on previous reading texts, followed by listening with 25%. After the structures were introduced in six of the eight lessons,

there were explicit examples of how the presented language items could be used in the proposed activity, in the rest of the cases, specific language items were given in the section: *Useful Language*.

Noticing grammar structures

This is one of the key principles of the coursebook "A noticing approach to language development" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016b) to focus on language forms as they occur in the input, premise based on Schmidt´s (1990) noticing hypothesis, which claims that noticing is an essential condition of language acquisition and that grammatical features need to be noticed to be learned. The grammar sections contain two or three sample sentences that come out of previous input. To help the students notice the structures, forms are underlined, flooded in texts, repeated, or written in bold. Sometimes rubrics give explicit guidance to pay attention to certain elements. e.g., "Look at the underlined past simple affirmative and negative forms in the stories on page 27. Answer the questions" (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Noticing grammar structures Input Flooded (Lesson 4-Unit 2, 61-62)-Underlined forms (Lesson 5-Unit 2, pp.26,27).

Presentation of grammar rules

A deductive approach is evident in the coursebook, which agrees with the noticing approach used in present structures. This approach goes from examples where a rule is inferred (Thornbury, 1999) to students coming up with the rules of the target structures from previous examples, mainly based on preceding sections where the input has been flooded to help learners to notice the forms. After learners examine examples, they work on the rules by selecting the correct option, completing them with a word, matching examples with the common use of the items, and answering open questions about tense or structure (Figure 4). Learners are usually asked to go back to the input given in previous sections and identify some forms or identify similar examples. The structures are connected with the topic of the lesson and forms are not presented to the students in isolation or without any kind of contexts in all cases the examples are taken from a reading text. In seven out of eight lessons in the module, grammar rules are given. Only one lesson has no rules, only examples of the quantifiers *more* and *less,* along with an exercise to complete. (Figure 3).
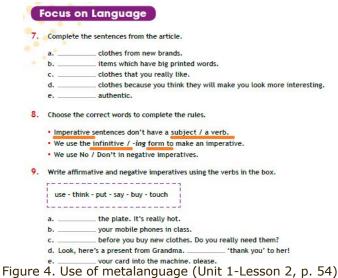
Figure 3. Completing rules (Lesson 4-Unit 2, 62)

Samples of spoken grammar

The input presented to students has been simplified to their level and used to address specific forms; it is not specified whether the samples come from a spoken corpora or any other type of authentic sources. In Lesson 3, Module 1, the focus on language section includes a box with "Useful expressions" which present the use of the modal *will* for predictions and presents some phrases that students can use with form. In all lessons these types of expression are also included but, in the speaking, writing, and vocabulary sections. Furthermore, there is no evidence of features of spoken grammar that are commonly used by many speakers (Timmis, 2005), such as ellipsis, tails, flexible word order, vague language. Forms such as *like* and *be going to/will*, which are commonly described as elements for future actions, are only presented with the phrase "we use be going to + infinitive for future plans" (Lesson 3, Module 20) but with this form, in real spoken data the choice depends "more on interpersonal stance" (McCarthy & Carter, 1995, p. 213).

Grammar explanations

The grammar explanations provided are short and comprehensible. They usually consist of some introductory samples of the target structure, three or four statements describing language use and form. There were a few cases where structures were divided into grammatical categories or charts to present negative, affirmative or interrogative forms. However, many of the activities where learners need to work on the grammar rules, use metalanguage (Figure 4), which requires learners to have previous knowledge of the grammatical categories of the language in order to understand the rules and be able to describe them, as Sheldon (1987) claims the linguistic knowledge of the learners is taken for granted.

Figure 4. Use of metalanguage (Unit 1-Lesson 2, p. 54)

Grammar and communicative activities

Grammar forms do not come from communicative activities and even after the forms are presented, there are few opportunities for students to use the forms spontaneously or in meaningful communication practice.

However, there are some opinion questions or pair or group discussion. The only section where communication is encouraged is in the project that learners create when they complete the eight lessons of a module.

Grammar presentation

EP2 includes a section to present linguistic forms in each lesson, as was previously stated. The coursebook claims to have a noticing approach to grammar. Different tools are used for this aim yet, the rules are explicit in most of the language forms presented in the lessons. Perhaps this may lead to teachers explaining the grammar in a deductive manner and including the common tradition of Presentation, Practice and Production approach, which according to Vilchis (2008) creates an illusion of language learning by simplifying the use of the language resulting in shallow processing. EP2 presents the forms and then provides a short activity to practice the forms by completing sentences, using verbs in the correct form, or completing texts, which are easily accomplished and reinforce the language learning.

The focus on the language section also presents forms that have been previously selected and included in the syllabus, which is topic-based, so the context for the presentation of the forms come from the topics presented in the units in the form of texts. Then, students discover the form and function of the given structures. These activities are "Forms-focused discovery activities" which are created pre-selecting grammatical structures, creating a series of texts or sentences designed "to help the learner make predetermined discoveries about the structure" (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 180). However, the use of the forms is still forced, and it would be necessary to engage learners with the text and experience it, rather than to study it to motivate students and help them to understand how the form can be used in real communication.

Another aspect regarding the presentation of grammar is the level of the structures. Compared with other global coursebooks, the topics included in *English Please* are similar, but some differ in the level of complexity as explained above. The grammar forms presented have prescriptive form, based on how grammar should be used, and not in how speakers actually use the language. This is supported with examples, but they do not include samples of spoken of grammar, hence students are not given choices about the use of certain grammar forms that will allow them to perform in different contexts and English is model mainly on written version of the language (McCarthy & Carter, 1995).

Coursebook approach and the connection to its rationale

The rationale to create the coursebook is to provide equal opportunities to students to have access to quality material and develop language competences to be able to interact in their contexts and with people around the world (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016b). The content of the material matches the contexts in which it is usually used since it includes topics connected to their culture. However, the development of language competences may be questioned.

The target level for learners is Pre-intermediate (B1), yet the achievements of this goal may be hindered by the lack of communicative activities. Including more activities of that type may allow learners to use the forms they have learned through the coursebook in a meaningful way, providing more opportunities to engage and exploit them with more activities. As the book series claims, the main principle underlying the book is the noticing approach to grammar, which is salient in each module; this may be the reason for the lack of more communicative activities. Accuracy is favored and that reinforces the grammar teaching tradition in the Colombian contexts. The approach can work, but it must go beyond and try to promote "deep processing" of the forms so students can engage cognitively and affectively with them, that is to use "Form-focused discovery activities" with more challenging tasks with more learning opportunities (Tomlinson, 2007). Such tasks should be opportunities where the grammar has a real purpose and can be discovered and noticed by the students after they have used them in real communicative situations.

Conclusion

The efficacy of instructional material depends on many factors including teachers, learners, contexts, etc. (Richards, 2007) and its "success or failure can only be determined after trying them in the classroom with real learners" (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 71). However, taking into account the features of the context and some teaching and learning approaches, the grammar presentation of the coursebook was analyzed to evaluate if this approach could be effective in the achievement of a pre-intermediate level. The number of language forms in the coursebook is in agreement with the number of hours that students usually have available in schools, that is the contents are not extensive and not too many forms are included. Yet, the

level of complexity of the structures is still at lower levels considering that learners using the coursebook have previously received five years of language instruction.

Grammar instruction is included in most language classrooms in the Colombian contexts. Teachers tend to include grammar in their practices and learners expect its inclusion during lessons. Nevertheless, grammar instruction is not always used to "support language acquisition" but as a classroom management tool since, it feels like 'true instruction' is taking place, (Borg, 1998; 2001). That is why common rule driven teaching practices, with deductive grammar approaches with long, decontextualized explanations, without communicative practices, are normalized in instructed settings.

The coursebook states that it is the teacher's choice how to approach speaking activities, that is, if priority is given to fluency or accuracy. Unfortunately, based on the previously described practices, the latter may become the priority. *English Please* gives the learners few opportunities to discover the forms and engage with the language. It is still necessary to promote more communicative opportunities for learners and expose them to samples of real language and more complex structures to ease communication processes in less controlled situations outside the classroom. Even though the *English Please* series is an interesting and valuable attempt to bridge the gap between international and out of context coursebooks in the Colombian setting, there is a need to provide teachers with alternative strategies to help them see the multiple choices that teaching brings. Traditional teacher-centered approaches could be changed so that teachers could get the most from this coursebook series while including complementary resources. Therefore, the teaching and learning process would not completely rely on the book and better learning opportunities could be provided. Further research is needed to explore and evaluate textbooks while they are being used. The voices of the teachers and the students should be considered since they are the ones who could provide elements to have a clear understanding of the process of implementing the coursebook series.

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Appendix 1

Evaluation Criteria

External Evaluation (McDonough & Shaw,1993; 2003)
Factual Details (Sheldon 1987, 242-245)

Title: Presentation of Grammar in English Please 2: Evaluation of a Colombian Coursebook.	
Author(s):	Publisher:
Components: SB/TB/WB/Tests/Video/CALL/Other	
Level:	Units- Lessons-sections

Contextual details	
Factor	Questions
Rationale	Why was the book written in the first place, and what gaps is it intended to fill? -Does the textbook include a description of the contents of each unit (Grammar, vocabulary, functions).
Comments: Make sure that the rationale should also have data that support the development of the book.	
User definition	Is there a clear specification of the target age range, culture, assumed background, probable learning preferences, and educational expectations? Are the target teachers described? Do the teachers need specific training to use the book?
Comments: There were few specifications; however, they should be parallel to the objectives of the textbook.	
Accessibility	Is the material clearly organized? - Are there indexes, vocabulary lists, section headings, and other methods of signposting the content that allow the student to use the material easily, especially for revision or self-study purposes?
Comments: It is not clearly organized. The margins, illustrations, and other images should be properly labeled.	
Physical Details	
Physical characteristics	-Is there space to write in the book? - Is it a book that could be used more than once, especially if it is marked by previous students?
Comments: Honestly, if this is a textbook, it should also be validated by some experts. I need to see the validation sheet.	
Layout/graphics	-Is there an optimum density and mix of text and graphical material on each page, or is the impression one of clutter? - Do the images serve a function or are they decorative? - Are they clear enough for their intended purpose? - Are there too many or too few?
Comments: The layout is not organized.	

Methodological Details	
Syllabus (Dougill, 1987)	What type of syllabus is it (e.g., structural/functional/multi-syllabus etc.)? How comprehensive is it?
Comments: Functional	
Approach	- Does the book claim to follow a specific approach?
Comments: *No*	
Use of the material	- Are the materials to be used as the main "core" course or as supplementary material. (McDonough & Shaw, 2003)
Comments: Yes	

INTERNAL EVALUATION (McDonough & Shaw, 1993)

Skills (Dougill, 1987) (McDonough and Shaw, 1993)	- Is there an integrated skills approach? - Are all language skills covered?
Comments: Little language was covered.	

Presentation of Grammar				
FEATURE	DEFINITION	YES	NO	EXAMPLE
PRESENTATION				
The grammar structures presented are appropriate to the students' level	The structures presented match the level of the students and consider their previous knowledge.	/		
Grammar is integrated with other skills	Listening _____ Reading _____ Speaking _____ Writing _____		/	

Grammar structures are presented in a way to help learners notice them (e.g., enhanced or flooded input)	Underlined_____ Bold_____ Italics_____ Capitalization _____ Color Coding___ Repetition of the structure _____	/		
Grammar rules are presented inductively. (Dougill, 1987)	Require learners to come up with the rules from: previous examples _____ Flooded input____	/		
Grammar structures are presented in isolation.	A whole section of grammar is presented, and no practice or examples are provided.		/	
Examples of grammatical forms used in spoken English are presented.	Students are provided with samples of different grammatical options. (McCarthy & Carter, 1995)	/		
Extensive and complex grammar explanations are provided.	Too many and difficult to follow grammar structures are presented.		/	
Simple grammar explanations are provided. (Tok, 2010, 514)	Grammar is presented with easy examples and explanations.	/		
Grammar arises out of communicative activities	Students – the teacher discusses something and then some grammar features are highlighted from the discussion.		/	
Emphasis is given to meaning	Students are encouraged to communicate and interact with minimal attention to grammar.	/		
Grammar is revised incidentally throughout the units	The activities are not focused on a specific linguistic form.	/		