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An Empirical Evaluation of Jolly Phonics Series Being Taught in Iran's Baby College Institutes

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ABSTRACT

With growth of EFL in Iran, based on context requirements, textbook evaluation has received substantial attention. Teachers' experiences and perceptions play vital roles in the process of book evaluation. The study is based on the Jolly Phonics series (Lloyd & Wernham, 1995) used by number of institutes and colleges in teaching in Iran. The main objective of the study was to find out whether this teaching material follows the essential objectives for teaching English as a foreign language to children or not. Considering the point that teachers have an indispensable role in analyzing and making an applicable and practical decision on evaluating and choosing the best possible material to be taught, the study focused on the teachers' perceptions. The series were evaluated against Nokelainen's (2006) checklist. To this end, 72 female experienced teachers of Baby College institutes in Tehran and Gorgan branches, Iran, were randomly selected and given the Pedagogically Meaningful Learning Questionnaire (PMLQ) of 40 questions to fill in. The findings showed that teachers mostly believe Jolly Phonics series and the teaching method can stand as a capable and trustable material for young EFL learners. However, in order to make it more profitable it may involve using decisions in adapting textual materials to the needs and interests of pupils as the learners' requirements are changing regarding the adventures of their environment. It is suggested that being a teacher's guide to educate the teachers how to adapt and teach the materials on the base of learners' needs would be much better than just knowing or learning how to teach it. The textbook will continue to play an important role in helping teachers in teaching process, but it should not be a dictator (Williams, 1983), and the investigated material is respectful to this idea as it can well cover the flexibility, motivation, applicability, learner control and learner activity objectives since most of the teachers agreed on this fact.

Keywords: citations, Lesotho, academic writing, research projects, undergraduate students

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1. Introduction

Nevola's (2002) personal reply to the article, "An evaluation of the NLS (National Literacy Strategy) from a teacher's perspective" by Hepplewhite (2002), declares that we as teachers must be open to the new methodologies and teaching tools that are available to us, and through us, to the children we teach. There are some factors that have impacts on the implementation of any probable change in the curriculum such as social factors, teacher factors, learner factors, and adoption factors (Richards, 2011). Teachers can have a role in managing, evaluating, and administering the education schedule especially teaching Textbooks (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2014). We are teachers because we want to teach some things to those who do not know them. If a teaching tool is not working well, then we must stop using it. We must also stop blaming the children for having 'learning difficulties'. It is not their fault; it is ours. It is time to switch the focus to our own teaching difficulties (Nevola, 2002). Teachers and learners are responsible to recognize and point out the deficiencies in the existing materials and indicate how they would be overcome with the new one (Dudley-Evans & John, 2005). "With the advent of communicative language teaching, textbook evaluation has received a considerable attention over the last two decades" (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2015, p. 37). Materials are one of our foremost tools of trade, so it is vital to find out their nature (Tomlinson, 2011). Cunningsworth (1995) announces that the evaluation of the textbooks needs the most successful and effective procedures to discuss the textbook users' views. Since the major users of the textbooks are the students and teachers,

their opinions toward textbooks should be gathered and analyzed.

A large percentage of children are still failing to learn to read, or to read well, and this cannot be blamed on the backgrounds or special educational needs of the children. Whilst the RRF (Reading, Reform, Foundation) recognizes the need to change the National Literacy Strategy (NLS)'s advice on reading instruction because of its massive impact and influence; nevertheless, the schools and teachers could choose to change overnight (Hepplewhite, 2002). English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks play a very important role in language classrooms. Immanuel (as cited in Keban, Muhtar & Zen, 2012, p. 1) states that textbooks are a key component in most language programs. In some situations, they serve as the basis for many language inputs that learners receive and language practices that occur in the classroom. They may provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills being taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in. Materials should make students learn. They should also be the resource books for ideas and instructional activities as well as giving teachers criteria for what they do. In addition, materials also should be suitable with students' needs.

However, the textbooks for kids being used in Iran for English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in particular, must go along with the EFL learners' needs. In EFL contexts, students rarely have chances to use English outside the classroom, so the textbook seems to be the only source through which students receive input. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate how much "Jolly Phonics" (Lloyd & Wernham, 1995), a textbook used in Baby College Institutes in Iran, could

meet the criteria of good EFL textbook. After all, only a few studies have been conducted on the evaluation of Jolly Phonics teaching series used for kids. Furthermore, there seems to be no study on this case in Iran.

There are many descriptions of evaluation. Fundamentally, evaluation is asking some organized questions and acting on the base of responses. It is believed that evaluation must be more than just collecting and analyzing. This process involves judging which means that we certainly need to have conditions for comparative aims. What the conditions are will be dependent on which aspect of work is going to be evaluated and why, and are likely to relate to the course aims and objectives (Dudley-Evans & John, 2005). Hutchinson and Waters (1993) describe evaluation as a fundamentally matching procedure: matching needs to available way outs. To fully evaluate the material, we should decide on the pedagogic worth related to the proposed context of use (Tomlinson, 2011). Evaluation is a process of judging something's fitness for a specific purpose. In each kind of evaluation, the final decision is likely to be better for being based on a systematic check of all the vital variables (Hutchinson & Waters, 1993). How to evaluate a material depends on what you consider to be important (Hutchinson & Waters, 1993).

Cunningsworth (1995) informs that there are three types of materials evaluation: Pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation is when there is no actual experience of using the book for teachers to draw on. In-use evaluation refers to textbook evaluation whilst the materials are in use. Post-use evaluation provides retrospective assessment of a textbook's performance and can be useful for identifying strengths and

weaknesses which emerge over a period of continuous use. The evaluation type of the present study consists of in-use and post-use evaluation which is done by the experienced teachers.

2. Literature Review

A textbook can be referred to as a published book especially designed to help language learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities (Sheldon, 1987). In addition to be a learning instrument, textbooks are also used as a supporting learning instrument (O'Neil, 1982; Ur, 1996). McGrath (2002) intends that course books are a central element in teaching-learning encounters, and they tend to dictate what is taught, in what order and how as well as what learners learn. The student's book usually comes with other materials such as a work book, a teacher's book or even additional multimodal texts for reference as a textbook package (Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2008). "They are designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students (Mares, 2003) and foster effective and quick learning of the language (Cunningsworth, 1995). Alternatively, the wide spread use of textbooks in different ELT contexts requires little further explanation. It continues to play an essential role in ELT classrooms all over the world (Dendrinos, 1992; Lee, 1997; Williams, 1983).

Tomlinson (as cited in Lawrence, 2011, p. 9) announces that a number of studies have suggested that most current global, local ELT textbooks are developed for commercial purposes but are not based on principles of language acquisitions and development recommended by scholars and educators. Financial success has become the primary goal of textbook publishing



(Sheldon, 1988; Litz 2005; & Tomlinson, 2003). Evaluating the current materials can provide a worthy source of concepts and techniques. It can also save a lot of repetition of trying by possible revealing current material that can afford at least a part or even of our material needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1993). In developing material objectives and goals will have to be examined and studied in order to find out what skills and knowledge does each activity imply (Richards, 2001). Catering to the needs of the second-language learner can be a complex task in a multilingual setting (Williams, 1983). On the basis of teachers' perceptions, Golpour (2012) believes that the subject and content of the textbook should attract the students' interest, needs, and concerns. The exercises and activities in the textbook must involve and encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. Similarly, Cunningsworth (1995) considers that teachers in all language classrooms are required to use textbook to support their teaching. Using or adapting textbooks is an important part of teachers' professional knowledge

Azizifar, Koosha, and Lotfi (2010) evaluated two series of ELT textbooks used for teaching English in Iranian high schools from 1965 to the present. To do so, Tucker's (1975) textbook evaluation model was employed and the findings suggested that one of the main factors for the students' achievement in English is the ELT textbooks. They suggested that in the textbooks, there should be enough opportunity for the learners to practice the language they are learning communicatively.

Furthermore, the textbook should be provided mainly to match the teachers' instruction; evaluation of textbooks shows problems with the teaching materials,

leading to the fact that textbooks should be taken into consideration (Cunningsworth, 1995). The evaluation of materials will help the evaluator to set out the aspects that are appropriate (Tomlinson, 2011). Normally, a range of questions get set to evaluate a material. Evaluation questions may be asked for different purposes. Some may evaluate the current situations, others may draw information for the next edited versions, while the others might be a support for a longer-term modification (Dudley-Evans & John, 2005). The main problem of this study is to see whether this teaching material follows the necessary objectives for teaching English as a foreign language to children or not. The necessary objectives considered in this research, according to Nokelainen (2006), are as follows:

2.1 Learner Control

The learners' memory should be burdened to an optimal level while learning a new topic (Miller, 1956; Shneiderman, 1998). It is problematic to define a generally optimal level (commonly people can have 5 to 9 items in their short term work memory), but it is undoubtedly helpful to break down the material into meaningful units to be learned with less problems (Wilson & Myers, 2000). In so-called structured learning materials, the learned material has already been broken down into meaningful units by the teacher from the students' view point.

2.2 Learner Activity

A teacher's "didactic role" in a learning situation may strongly skeleton the learners' own activity, however, when the teacher stays in the background, as a "facilitator", the learners' independent activity may be amplified (Reeves, 1994). Learners' activity is determined in large measure by the characteristics of the learners themselves, but the learning material can affect it

through assignments that support students' activity by being fascinating and authentic (Nokelainen, 2006).

2.3 Cooperative/Collaborative Learning

Cooperative and collaborative learning means to cooperate with other learners to reach a common learning goal (Nokelainen, 2006). Learners are moving away from acquisition metaphor (acquiring knowledge that is constituted of symbolic mental representations) to participation metaphor (knowledge that is considered fundamentally situated in practice) (Barab & Duffy, 2000). Learners construct knowledge as members of communities in practice instead of acquiring personal knowledge, (Lave & Wenger, 1991). To be more definite, cooperative learning is more structured than collaborative learning, since the teacher has the control. Learning takes place in groups in which the members gather and structure information and the system or learning material should offer the learner instruments that can be used in communicating and negotiating different approaches to a learning problem (Jonassen, 1995).

2.4 Goal Orientation

As learning is a goal-oriented activity, goals and intentions must be clear to the learners (Quinn, 1996). When the goals of the learning material, teacher and students are closely aligned, the best results are attained. If the learners themselves do not regular the goals, their meaningfulness should be warranted from the motivation view point. They should have a chance to pursue their own interests in relation to the learning goals. Based on the instructivist learning theory, learners should be introduced to only a few, clearly specified goals at any time. Hence, the goals should be clearly defined, but they have to be originated, as much as possible, by the

learners themselves (Wilson & Myers, 2000).

2.5 Applicability

The approach taken in learning material ought to resemble to the skills that the learners will later need in authentic life (Jonassen, Peck & Wilson, 1999; Quinn, 1996). The learned knowledge or skills should be transferable and capable of using in other contexts (Quinn, 1996; Reeves, 1994). Learning something new is most effectively accomplished by doing techniques that involve practical tasks. Learning material would always better to be at an appropriate level from the point of view of learners' learning procedure (Wilson & Myers, 2000). For instance, students in the early grades of comprehensive school have limited ability to adopt abstract concepts, but it becomes far easier for fifth and sixth graders. It is possible to adapt learning material to meet the needs of a student (Chalmers, 2003).

2.6 Added Value

A formal learning situation, planned by a teacher, can be carried out in many ways, such as cooperative or individual learning approaches, directed by a teacher or as group work or individual practice. The learning material or system ought to offer the students instruments that are suited to control the contents of the learning material and that make the use of the material more effective (Nokelainen, 2006).

2.7 Motivation

Motivation (rooted in Latin: *Movere*, to move) makes people behave the way they do and it affects all learning procedure. Behaviourists explain the motivation to do things by reference to instincts, desires and reinforcement (Wilson & Myers, 2000). Motivations, which can be either consciously or subconsciously goal-oriented, support the direction of an individual's general behaviour (Ruohotie,



1996). Major concepts of motivation include performance or learning goals, expectations, self-regulation, attributions of failure and success incentives, as well as intrinsic or extrinsic goal orientation (Reeves, 1994; Ruohotie & Nokelainen, 2003).

2.8 Valuation of Previous Knowledge

Learning material that supposes previous knowledge from the learner, expect the learners to already possess some skills or knowledge that have been presented. Learning material that respects the learners' previous knowledge bears in mind the individual differences in knowledge and skills and encourages them to take benefit of it during studies. This approach errands learners' elaboration, contemplation or new issues and the analysis of their relationship with the constructs of learners' earlier knowledge (Wilson & Myers, 2000).

2.9 Flexibility

Flexible learning material considers learners' individual differences (Hannafin & Peck, 1988; Wilson & Myers, 2000). The learner must have a chance to freely sail across the learning material. Flexibility in the contents means that the material contains varied assignments (Quinn, 1996). The more the assignments get adaptable, flexible and broadly, the easier it is to combine them to feed the student's individual requires (Leflore, 2000). Collis and Moonen as cited in Nokelainen (2006) "address the need for social organization of learning (face-to-face, group, individual), language to be used during the learning situations, modality and origin of the learning resources (teacher, student, library, Internet) and instructional organization of learning (assignments, monitoring). They further suggest that students should share the responsibility of identifying appropriate additional learning resources and even

contribute to the learning resources" (p. 186).

2.10 Feedback

The learning material should provide the student with reassuring and encouraging and immediate feedback (Albion, 1999; Quinn, 1996). Immediate feedback helps the learners to understand the problematic parts in their learning. Encouraging feedback increases learning motivation; immediate feedback is also particularly important in learning materials (Wilson & Myers, 2000).

With this background, the study attempted to answer the following research questions-

1. What are the pedagogical objectives of the Jolly phonics' books and methods?
2. What positive features do Jolly Phonics series have?
3. To what extent is Jolly Phonics series able to fulfill the learners' needs?

3. Methodology

The research design is descriptive-evaluative.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 72 female experienced teachers of Baby College institutes of Gorgan and different branches of Tehran who have been teaching the Jolly Phonics' books for at least 3 years. Teachers were selected randomly and given the questionnaire of 40 questions to fill out. The convenient selection of these teachers was based on their existence at institutes at the time the researchers went to give them the forms, and they had the required experience to work with the mentioned books.

3.2 Materials

Evaluating a material can be both qualitative and quantitative. Objective tests and questionnaires provide numbers and percentages for individual items to be quantitative (Dudley-Evans & John, 2005). To conduct the evaluation in the present

study, a questionnaire was used in order to gather the information (see Appendix A). It was prepared on the basis of guidelines and concepts relating to the materials and design of the intended textbook, rehearsed by Nokelainen (2006). A PMLQ (Pedagogically Meaningful Learning Questionnaire) research instrument was developed on the basis of the aforementioned technical and pedagogical usability criteria (Nokelainen, 2006). The five-point Likert scale was utilized ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

The questionnaire consisted of 40 multiple-choice items covering 10 pedagogical aspects of learning materials which include the following components according to Nokelainen (2006). Table 1 shows the detailed description and classification of all constructs and questions.

Table 1: Description and classification of the questions

Pedagogical aspects	Related questions' No.
1. Learner control	3, 11, 13, 16, 18, 26, 38. (7 qus.)
2. Learner activity	2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 35, 39 (11 qus.)
3. Cooperative/Collaborative learning	4, 7, 9, 13, 20, 24, 25, 33 (8 qus.)
4. Goal orientation	1, 8, 16, 23, 31, 39 (6 qus.)
5. Applicability	15, 17, 18, 22, 30, 31, 32 (7 qus.)
6. Added value	27, 34, 36, 37, 40 (5 qus.)
7. Motivation	5, 10, 24, 25, 29, 33 (6 qus.)
8. Valuation of previous knowledge	6, 19, 28, 30 (4 qus.)
9. Flexibility	2, 3, 14, 22, 23, 24, 26, 32 (8 qus.)
10. Feed back	12, 19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37 (9 qus.)

It should be mentioned that some questions may be classified in more than one group.

3.3 Procedure

In this research, the questionnaire was distributed to 72 English teachers who had enough experience of teaching English to children using Phonics series developed by Lloyd and Wernham (1995), to collect their points of view. The main focus of this questionnaire was to see whether the teaching materials follow the necessary objectives for teaching English as a foreign language to children or not.

3.4 Data Analysis

After the required data were collected, the researchers applied the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19.0 to analyze the quantitative data for this study. The master data file was checked to ensure that each of the variable values is within its potential range, and that no outliers existed, as it is informed by Pallant (2007). Then, frequency counts and percentage indexes were reported for each single question in the questionnaire, and also for each of 10 components of pedagogical aspects of the learning material developed by Nokelainen (2006).

4. Results & Discussion

According to the data analysis, the answer sheet of questionnaires was analyzed in two sections; one which is based on the 10 necessary objectives for teaching English as a foreign language considered in this research, according to Nokelainen (2006), and another section covers some important issues which are involved in the questionnaire and researchers believe that they need more and separate elaboration apart from their grouping objectives by Nokelainen (2006). The frequency tables and histograms are as below:

4.1 Frequency Table and Histograms for Each Learning Objectives

There are ten major objectives according to Nokelainen (2006) that an EFL material should have:

Table 2: Frequency Table



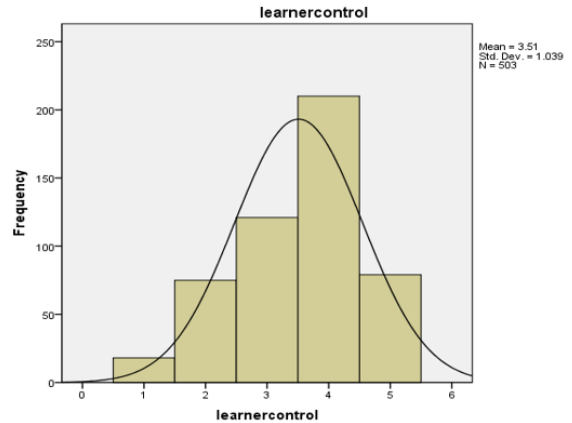
Factor	Choice		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total														
	F	VP																				
Learner Control	F	VP	18	3.6	75	14.9	121	24.1	210	41.7	79	15.7	503	100								
	F	VP	56	3.3	103	13.1	170	21.5	329	41.7	161	20.4	789	100								
Learner Activity	F	VP	17	3.0	65	11.3	31	7.2	2	0.5	2	0.4	10	2.8	4	0.9	10	3.5	4	0.7	20	3.1
	F	VP	30	3.5	46	16.0	106	18.4	93	14.4	202	35.1	236	36.5	647	100						
Cooperative/ Collaborative Learning	F	VP	2	0.5	76	17.6	89	17.7	60	16.7	54	12.5	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4
	F	VP	38	7.5	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Goal Orientation	F	VP	10	2.8	4	0.9	10	3.5	4	0.7	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Applicability	F	VP	10	2.8	4	0.9	10	3.5	4	0.7	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Added Value	F	VP	4	0.9	10	3.5	4	0.7	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Motivation	F	VP	10	3.5	4	0.7	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Valuation of Previous Knowledge	F	VP	4	0.7	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Flexibility	F	VP	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Feed Back	F	VP	20	3.1	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100	288	100
	F	VP	49	13.6	21	4.9	30	10.4	40	6.9	70	10.8	108	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4

F: Frequency VP: Valid Percent

4.2 Learner Control

From the output shown above, the total number of responses given to “Learner Control” questions is 503 (100%), among which 18 respondents (3.6%) have strongly disagreed, 75 respondents (14.9%) have selected the second option, 121 respondents (24.2%) were undecided about the case, 210 individuals (41.7%) –the highest range- have agreed, and 79 people (15.7%) have strongly agreed on the fifth option. Below is the Learner Control analyzed histogram:

Figure 1: Learner control agreement histogram

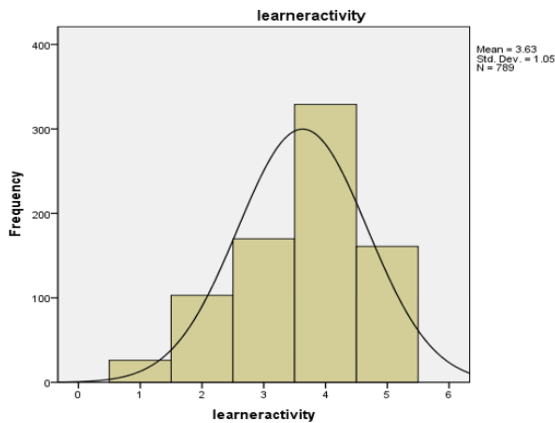


According to Figure 1 and its curved line, it seems that most experienced teachers of Phonics believe that the named books and methods provide the learner controlling atmosphere. In other words, the learned material is capable of being broken down into meaningful units from the point of view of the students in order to be easier for them to learn the consistence.

4.3 Learner Activity

From the output shown above, we can see that the total number of responses given to “Learner Activity” questions is 789 (100%), among which 26 respondents (3.3%) have chosen “Strongly disagree”, 103 respondents (13.1%) have disagreed, 170 respondents (21.5%) were undecided about the case, 329 individuals (41.7%) – the highest range- have agreed, and 161 people (20.4%) have strongly agreed on the fifth option that is clearly shown in figure 2.

Figure 2. Learner activity agreement histogram

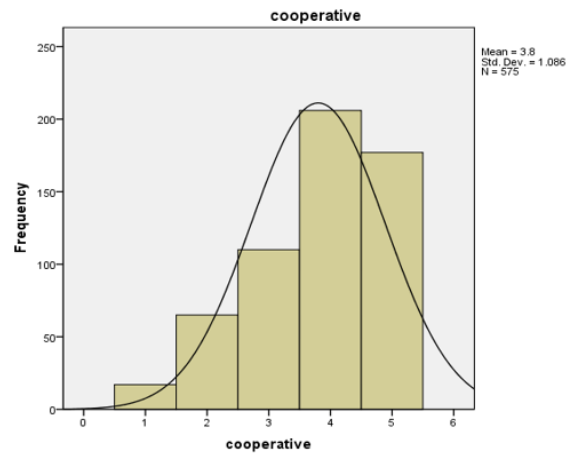


As it is displayed in figure 2, it appears that most experienced teachers of Phonics believe that in the named books and method, Learners' activity is determined in large measure and the learning material can affect it through assignments that support students' activity by being interesting and authentic.

4.4 Cooperative/Collaborative Learning

According to the outputs, it is seen that the total number of answers given to cooperative/collaborative learning questions is 789 (100%), among which 26 respondents (3.3%) have chosen the first option, 103 respondents (13.1%) have selected the second option, 170 respondents (21.5%) were undecided about the case, 329 individuals (41.7%) –the highest range– have selected the fourth choice, and 161 people (20.4%) have strongly agreed on the fifth option. The analyzed histogram is shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Cooperative/collaborative agreement histogram

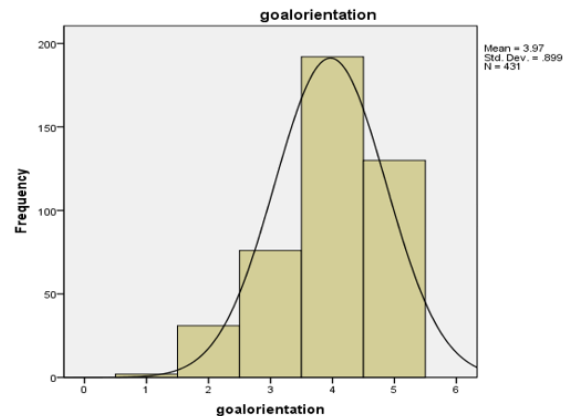


The figure 3 and its curved line shows that it looks as if most experienced teachers of Phonics believe that in working with the named books and method, Instead of acquiring personal knowledge, learners construct knowledge as members of communities in practice.

4.5 Goal Orientation

From the outputs shown in the table, it is concluded that most teachers do agree and strongly agree with the covering the goal orientation purpose by Phonics books and methods. It means that the students have a chance to pursue their own interests in relation to the learning goals. Here is the analyzed graph in figure 4.

Figure 4: Goal orientation agreement histogram



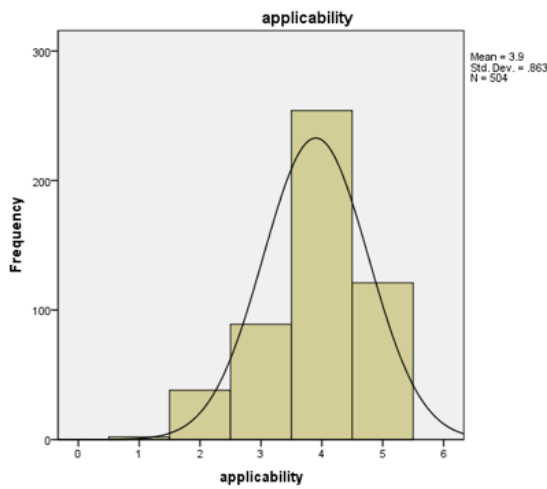
According to figure 4 and based on percentage shown in the related table, we can say, with more certainty, that this book

almost well follows the goal orientation object. In other words, the best results are attained because most teachers believe that the goals of the learning material, teacher and student are closely aligned.

4.6 Applicability

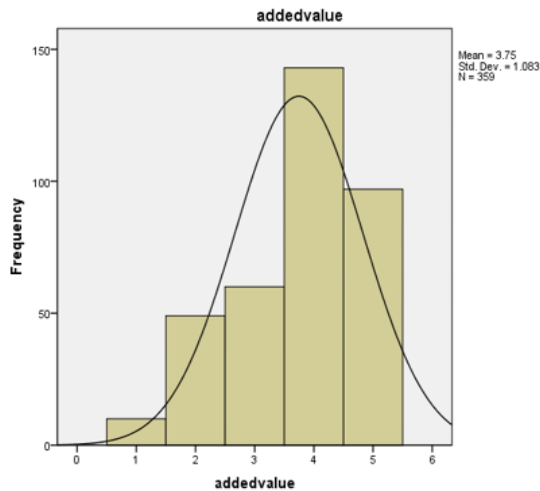
The above outputs show that most teachers agree and strongly agree with the applicability of the Phonics series. It revenues that the skills or learned knowledge are transferable to other contexts. Figure 5 shows a better view of this factor.

Figure 5: Applicability agreement histogram



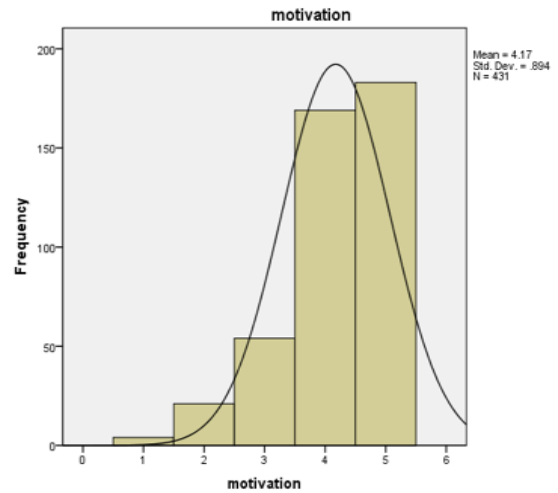
4.7 Added Value

Figure 6: Added value agreement histogram.



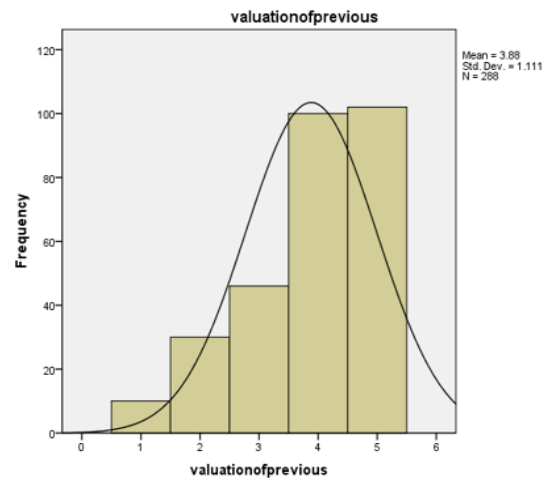
4.8 Motivation

Figure 7: Motivation agreement histogram.



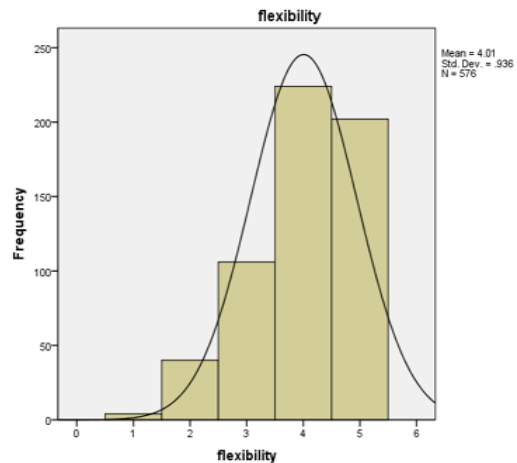
4.9 Valuation of Previous Knowledge

Figure 8. Valuation of previous knowledge agreement histogram



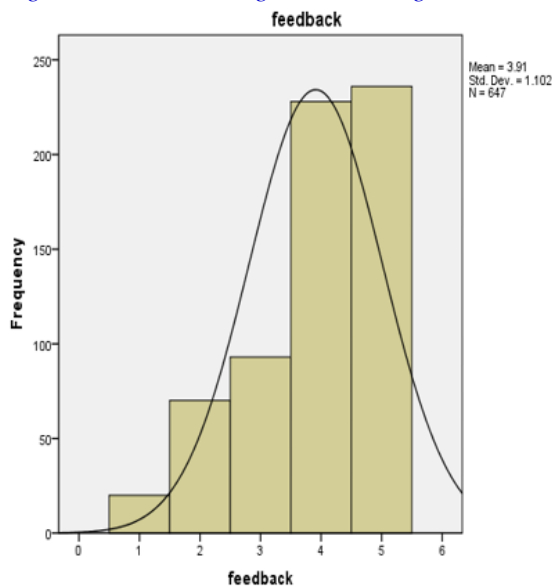
4.10 Flexibility

Figure 9: Flexibility agreement histogram



4.11 Feedback

Figure 10: Feedback agreement histogram



Based on the first research question and reviewing the related literatures, ten pedagogical objectives were defined to study the Jolly Phonics method and material, mostly on the base of Nokelainen (2006). The outlined objectives investigated by the teachers' attitude through the questionnaire and the results revealed in ten separate figures.

In accord with the second research question and having a look at the teachers' agreement on the ten defined objectives of the Jolly Phonics method and material, the features of the phonics method could be clearly seen during the whole paper especially in figures whereas most teachers have agreed or strongly agreed on the positive features that a material is proposed to have. Hence, the positivity of the Jolly Phonics method and materials can be seen in nearly all ten objectives observed and studied in this study.

To be brief and to the point, in a total view, the Jolly Phonics material and system has shown beneficial effects on children's EFL learning process in Iran. And, on the base of the results gained in the present

study, most participants agreed or strongly agreed on the efficacy of the objectives that were chosen based on the learners' needs.

4.12 Discussion

Having analyzed different parts of the material in detail, we are now in a position to have a look at the whole teaching material and system.

Many studies and newsletters have published on the usefulness of phonics system in EFL and ESL learning especially in children field. However, most of them have coverage its effect on reading ability, which are in line with some of the objectives of the present study such as motivation (in which kids get motivated to absorb new things to be learned), feedback (in which we could prove a positive feedback on children's learning process), added value and valuation of previous knowledge (that gradually adds new lessons and sound and their blendings; which help learners to carve the rules of blending and reading the new sounds in their mind), and compatibility (which shows that the skills or learned knowledge are transferable to other contexts). In line with the materials of this study, Nopprapun and Halloway (2014) have focused on the efficacy of fluency training (FT) and discrete trial instruction (DTI) to teach phonic reading to learners with particular emphasis on the acquisition of correct letter-sound correspondence and the learning outcomes of behavioural fluency instruction and they concluded the good effects of acquisition of correct letter-sound correspondence. Similarly, with similar material, Tallal (1980) has studied on the effects of the ability to learn to use phonics skills adequately in EFL classrooms. Rymes (2003) as well, looks at the notion of future shock as it becomes instantiated in language and interaction in a reading procedure with second language learners through the phonics system.



McGeown, Johnston and Medford (2012) in keeping with a part of the present study, have worked on a synthetic phonics approach, where children were taught solely to sound and blend letters to read unfamiliar words. The results demonstrated differences in the skills supporting children's word reading based on their method of reading instruction; as alike the present study based on the questionnaires, teachers had the same idea in case of being capable of reading. Nishanimut, Johnston, Joshi, Thomas and Padakannaya (2013) stated the metalinguistic knowledge of the letter sounds seems to have been beneficial in developing literacy skills in English. They have concluded that phonics approach performed significantly effective on the reading, spelling, and graphophonological tasks. Equally, according to the questionnaires, teachers had the same opinion.

According to Rymes (2003), bringing the concepts of communicative competence and language socialization to a Vygotskian realization of development, may lead the current educational policy to encourage teachers and learners both to retreat to conflicting comfort zones, and that a policy which encourages them to depart from those retreats, by taking advantage of learners' multiple communicative competencies, which could more adequately prepare students to take active roles in the current world. In line with that statement, in the present study, we came to this fact that this material has positive feedback and prepare fine motivation for children while learning a foreign language. Similarly, in the present study, we came to this conclusion that teachers have positive attitudes towards the cooperative-collaborative features of Jolly Phonics material.

Although, there seems to be few or no study on the evaluation of Jolly Phonics

teaching material and system through the teachers view, the fact that is the most important difference between this study and others. Almost in all of 10 objectives of the present study, teachers significantly agreed on the usefulness of the material. Furthermore, in some other factors such as learner control, learner activity and goal orientation it is proved that Jolly Phonics teaching material and system can positively cover the learners' needs and pursue what teachers expect from a material and system to teach EFL to children.

In addition, it should be mentioned that there were some factors in the questionnaire which the perception behind the answers to them got hidden among other questions in their objective group. Like the songs and pictures which seems to be not clear and enough to the point to get the exact mean behind them or it may provide less help and effect on learners' learning process; and also, the responsibility for the answers that students give to the assignments is not considered in the material, according to teachers' point of view.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Based on the gained results from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that Jolly Phonics teaching series are satisfactorily considered as a good EFL material for children, from teachers' point of view.

The textbook is a tool, and the teacher must know not only how to use it, but also how useful it can be. Just as Jolly Phonics series which need to be taught according to the pre-prepared schedules, as well as its need to be followed by some creativity and inspiration from the teachers. Finding out will involve distinguishing between method in the use of printed materials, and method in face-to-face teaching. It will involve using decisions in adapting textual materials to the needs and interests of pupils, choosing only those materials and

methods which are based on sound linguistic and pedagogical principles (Williams, 1983). In line with the present study, Golpour (2012) believed that it would be better to be a teacher's guide to educate the teachers how to teach the materials. Not all local education authorities are reluctant to investigate and promote synthetic phonics teaching and programs. There is clearly reluctance, however, to either undertake objective comparisons of reading instruction in the first place, or to inform practitioners of any comparative results in a transparent manner. The National Literacy Strategy appears to be a vehicle for reading reform but signals are that it is proving to be a barrier to open evaluation and scientific testing. In some authorities leading literacy teachers are encouraged to offer training in synthetic phonics programs (Lloyd, 2002). The textbook will continue to play an important role, but it will not be a dictator (Williams, 1983), and this material is respectful to this idea as it can well cover the flexibility, motivation, applicability, learner control and learner activity objectives since most of the teachers agreed on this fact.

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Appendix: A

Please kindly answer the questions according to your agreement degree. Option (1) is the lowest degree of agreement and option (5) is the highest degree of agreement.

- Does the book go forward through an applicable steps?
1 2 3 4 5
- Are the students given a chance to navigate freely through the learning material?
1 2 3 4 5
- Are you as a teacher allowed to feed the students individual needs?
1 2 3 4 5



4. Do the students share the responsibility of identifying appropriate additional learning resources and even contribute to the learning resources?
1 2 3 4 5
5. Are the students encouraged during the learning process?
1 2 3 4 5
6. Does the book provide information about previous knowledge?
1 2 3 4 5
7. Does the book provide any active participation atmosphere for the students?
1 2 3 4 5
8. Do most of the students feel the concept of the book?
1 2 3 4 5
9. Does the book develop interaction among students and teacher?
1 2 3 4 5
10. Are the content interesting to students? Do they like to read the book?
1 2 3 4 5
11. Can the learning process be controlled by the students?
1 2 3 4 5
12. Does immediate feedback happen while teaching this book?
1 2 3 4 5
13. Does any interaction happen within peer groups?
1 2 3 4 5
14. Do the assignments make the students think, and make a different solution for each one?
1 2 3 4 5
15. Does this book provide students with the right kind of support when they need it?
1 2 3 4 5
16. Does the book carry the responsibility for the solution of an assignment?
1 2 3 4 5
17. Does the book give first an example of the correct solution?
1 2 3 4 5
18. Do the assignments need concentration to be solved?
1 2 3 4 5
19. Do the types of exercises used in the tests are familiar to your students?
1 2 3 4 5
20. How would you grade your level of satisfaction of your relationship with your colleagues?
1 2 3 4 5
21. How often are the students given homework in English?
1 2 3 4 5
22. How often activities are employed for pupils to use English in real situations?
1 2 3 4 5
23. Do you follow the progression of the textbook?
1 2 3 4 5
24. Do you use role-plays and simulations to create almost authentic communicative situations in the classroom?
1 2 3 4 5
25. Do you encourage your pupils to communicate in English when they speak about their own learning, school work and other personal matters?
1 2 3 4 5
26. Do you take into account your pupils' likes and opinions in order to prepare the activities that are going to be developed in class?
1 2 3 4 5
27. Does this book have any significant advantages towards others (you have taught) for kids?
1 2 3 4 5
28. Does this learning material provide learning problems without a pre-defined model for the solution?
1 2 3 4 5
29. Do the learners try to achieve high scores in this material?
1 2 3 4 5
30. Does this learning material makes it quick and easy for learners to learn a new topic or recap an earlier topic?
1 2 3 4 5
31. Is the information presented in meaningful, interconnected entities, and not in separate pieces that are hard to understand?
1 2 3 4 5
32. Do the Students have time to learn a unit and work on it before they go to the new unit?
1 2 3 4 5
33. Does the program give a friendly note when Students are mistaken?
1 2 3 4 5
34. Does the system give Students all the advices they need?
1 2 3 4 5
35. Are the Students given the chance to find their own solution for some assignments without the teachers' help?
1 2 3 4 5
36. Do the pictures of this material help Students to learn better?
1 2 3 4 5
37. Do the songs of this material help students to learn better?
1 2 3 4 5
38. Does the material consider Students as too smart or too dumb?
1 2 3 4 5

- 1 2 3 4 5
39. Are the assignments in the material similar to the assignments that usually exist in tests?
1 2 3 4 5
40. Does this material teach Students what they need?
1 2 3 4 5