An Exploration of ESL/EFL Textbook Evaluation Checklist Criteria for Assessing Visual Elements

by

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Abstract

This paper provides an exploratory assessment of the criteria in 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists which directly address visual elements in order to deduce to what extent these criteria reflect established benefits of multimodal ELT materials and if they can be considered reliable for assessing images during the textbook evaluation process. First, an overview of the current status of image use and evaluation in ESL/EFL textbooks is discussed, followed by a review of the theoretical background of how visual elements assist different areas of language learning. Next is a literature review that addresses previous studies about image use in ESL/EFL textbooks and ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists. A mixed-method approach is used to gather quantitative data around the number of checklist criteria directly addressing the evaluation of visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks. These criteria are also qualitatively analyzed, showing four recurring and salient themes. An interpretive analysis of the results seeks to highlight disparities and concurrencies between the body of existing research on using visual elements for language acquisition and associated criteria for visual elements in textbook evaluation checklists. This analysis shows that elements directly addressing visuals make up a small percentage of the total criteria, with some checklists completely omitting the assessment of images. The majority of the criteria found for image assessment as well as the recurring themes from these criteria are judged to be overly simplistic when compared to previous research on the benefits of using visual elements to teach and learn languages. Therefore, this paper suggests reconsidering ESL/EFL textbook evaluation criteria in a way that better guides potential English textbook evaluators in appropriately assessing visual elements.

Keywords: EFL/ESL textbooks, visual elements, textbook evaluation checklists, functions of visuals

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

While images have always been an important part of language teaching materials, their current prominence is integral to virtually all ELL environments. The current standard of multimodal ESL/EFL textbooks is to include a multitude of visual resources, which reflects the broader trend of increasingly visual environments and visual culture (Tiemensma, 2009). As such, visual elements are sure to remain an integral part of textbook creation. Hill (2003) asserts that students are accustomed to being surrounded by images in all areas of their lives, and accordingly prefer textbooks with color photos over picture-free pages. Images are iconic representations of the world and can create meaning for the viewer more quickly than text (Liu & Qu, 2014). As such, visual elements such as photographs, drawings, and graphs, have always been important in teaching materials. Presently, visual elements are ubiquitous in modern ESL/EFL textbooks and play a prominent role in teaching and learning languages.

1.1.1 Visual resources and ELT publishing

Multiple variables can be attributed to the pervasive use of images in published ELT materials, and signal that the importance of visuals will continue to dominate across all ELT mediums. Aided by advances in photography, photo editing, and printing technology, large-scale ELT publishing has transformed image use in coursebooks, sometimes even moving beyond pedagogical reinforcement towards an eye to attractiveness and marketability (Goldstein, 2009). The increasing use of authentic or semi-authentic materials, along with

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), also play a prominent role in the growing use of static and animated images in language learning programs; while high-resolution projectors and interactive whiteboards provide educators with easy methods of bringing these visual resources into the classroom (Goldstein, 2009). It is a safe assumption that the use of visuals in multimodal ESL/EFL textbooks will only continue becoming more prevalent. Especially when considering advances in publishing technologies, and the competition from the growing prominence of online and digital-based materials and learning.

1.1.2 Importance of textbooks in ELT materials

Though many arguments exist in favor and against the use of ESL/EFL textbooks as the primary material in ELL contexts, the current reality remains that textbooks still dominate as the most appealing and accessible choice globally. Modern textbooks have evolved far beyond collections of readings and translations. They become more widespread each year and have developed into complex objects, sometimes being marketed as complete packages for learning resources in the language classroom (Littlejohn, 1998). Despite this complexity, using a textbook cover to cover without supplementary material may not be the most satisfactory method to meet students' needs (Mohammadia & Abdi, 2014). Garinger (2002) suggests that instructors work instead to strike balance between textbook dependency and well-organized, objective-based teaching. While CALL is a rapidly growing approach to teaching and learning languages, offering new opportunities for teacher-generated material and changing the role of textbooks, the demand for textbooks continues to grow and it is unlikely textbooks will ever disappear from ESL/EFL classrooms (Garinger, 2002).

ESL/EFL textbooks also yield a favorable return on investment when comparing their cost against lowered preparation time, and when comparing the time, cost, and quality variability of teacher-generated materials (Litz, 2005). They provide students with a concrete measure for progress and achievement (Halliwell, 1993; Haycroft, 1998; as cited in Litz, 2005). Cunningsworth (1995, as cited in Litz, 2005) and Halliwell (1993) point to the roles textbooks play in promoting learner autonomy and providing learners with an effective resource for self-directed study, reference, and revision. Both authors attribute textbooks to being a source of practical ideas for teaching, Halliwell (1993) also purports the well-organized and thorough curriculum that textbooks can provide a language learning program while Sheldon (1998, as cited in Litz, 2005) advocates from the learner's perspective that a textbook-based curriculum provides more credibility and fulfills learner expectations of the class or program. While there is a long and rich history of arguments for and against the primacy of textbooks as the basis of curriculum and main source of input in language classrooms, textbooks maintain enormous popularity (Litz, 2005) and remain the current reality in the ESL/EFL teaching and learning community (Littlejohn, 1998). Considering this reality and the complexity of modern textbooks, it is necessary that teachers and institutions are well-equipped with reliable methods and tools to evaluate their textbooks, thereby enhancing their students' language learning experience (Soori et. al, 2011).

1.1.3 Value of ELT materials evaluation

Accepting the indispensable role textbooks play in many ESL/EFL programs and classrooms, it is critical to establish and implement a variety of appropriate and relevant criteria to evaluate ESL/EFL textbooks used in teaching and learning situations. According to

Tomlinson (1996), ELT material evaluation processes like checklists can be a means of conducting action research, develop understanding about how to best use the material, and thereby contribute to language acquisition theory and pedagogical practices. Litz (2005) also asserts that textbook evaluation is a valuable practice in teacher training and development, raising awareness about important features to look for and familiarizing teachers with a variety of published material. According to Cunningsworth (1995, as cited in Litz, 2005) and Ellis (1997, as cited in Litz, 2005), textbook evaluation ought to help teachers move beyond impressionistic assessment towards "accurate, systematic and contextual insights." However, Mukundan and Ahour's (2010) review of 48 textbook evaluation checklists over the decades from the 1970s to the 2000s concluded that this type of tool is essentially subjective and affected by swings in favorability of methodological approaches. Furthermore, the authors criticize many checklists for being too time-consuming and too demanding on expertise, while their criteria can be too vague or too context-specific to result in useful answers, and lack tests of validity and reliability. Ansary and Babaii's (2002) analysis of a selection of these checklists showed a thin theoretical basis across most checklists and their individual criteria. In fact, many institutions take it upon themselves to develop their own checklist instruments, treating it as a status symbol and standard, though often hastily create a tool not tested for reliability or validity (Mukundan and Ahour, 2010). Nonetheless, these checklists often play an important role in facilitating textbook selection and can be a useful tool for teachers and ELT material writers to support development, innovation, and adaptation during the publishing, teaching, and learning process (Soori et al. 2011). Detailed evaluation of a coursebook's content is supported by many experts (Tucker, 1975; Daoud & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Williams, 1983; Cunningsworth, 1984; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Ur, 1996;

Littlejohn, 1996 for example) and has led to an abundance of evaluation checklists (Soori et. al. 2011).

1.2 Statement of problem

A large body of research has grown around the effective use, analysis, and importance of visual resources in ELT materials. These studies span diverse perspectives such as social semiotic approaches (Liu & Qu, 2014), and Appraisal Theory within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Chen, 2010). Studies on picture perception in relation to knowledge acquisition also add to this body of research by way of perceptual psychology and visual art analysis (Anglin, Vaez & Cunningham, 2004). These studies all conclude that the connection between images and learning is not intrinsic, but rather the result of careful pedagogical choices which when applied successfully can facilitate language learning, but when used inappropriately, can present a hindrance to learners. Multiple contributors (authors, artists/photographers, and editors) control image selection in ESL/EFL textbook creation, but not all may have concern for providing effective teaching and learning resources at top of mind, and instead may prioritize the visual layout or marketability, for example. Often modifications based on the latter motivations can ultimately change text-visual relationships far beyond the original pedagogical intention of the attributed author (Giaschi, 2000). As Allen (2011, as cited in Roohani & Sharifi, 2015) states, when visuals are used inappropriately they can add to the cognitive load on language learners, or conflict with the learner's existing knowledge (Ajayi, 2012), causing adverse and not facilitative effects on language learning. Despite the possible appeal of a well-marketed and visually attractive ESL/EFL textbook, the role and appropriate use of visual elements is closely tied to learning, while inappropriate visual elements can

have the opposite effect. It would therefore seem important that language textbook evaluation checklists review visual elements beyond their aesthetic appeal.

Three different types of material evaluation have been suggested by Cunningsworth (1995, as cited in Litz, 2005) and Ellis (1997, as cited in Litz, 2005) which are predictive (pre-use), in-use, and reflective (post-use) evaluation. These researchers argue that predictive evaluation is most common, but often the most problematic method due to over-reliance on subjective judgments that can often lead to disappointment. Littlejohn (1998) cautions against checklist criteria that involve generalized and impressionistic judgments instead of an in-depth examination of what the materials contain. This paper focuses on predictive modern ESL/ EFL textbook evaluation checklists created for educators and institutions, many of which seem to relegate criteria for visual element assessment into subjective judgments on general appearance, and do not hold accountable the choices of textbook publishers nor the role of images in aiding language learning. Images have always been an important part of language teaching materials, though their role is often subservient to other curricular elements (Goldstein, 2009). But considering the strong connection between images, meaning-creation, and language learning, impressionistic judgments on aesthetics would seem to be inadequate for evaluating the role visual resources in a textbook would play in English language teaching and learning. Rather, the assessment of images in ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists may need a more in-depth approach, balancing sections already given primary concern, like linguistic and pedagogical aspects (Williams, 1983). An approach to image assessment based on aesthetic preferences and perceptions does not seem to square with the depth of research that represents the theory around visual elements and language acquisition, nor can it reliably

hold accountable the use of images in the ESL/EFL textbook creation process and the subsequent use of images by teachers and students when teaching and learning a language.

1.3 Purpose of study

Considering this context, it seems increasingly vital that educators and institutions assess visual elements during their textbook selection processes with more scrutiny, approaching that with which other textbook evaluation criteria are addressed. In service of an improved perspective on developing and interpreting criteria for the evaluation of ESL/EFL textbook visual resources, the purpose of this study is to put forward an informative view on how visual elements have been and currently are assessed with textbook evaluation checklists, as well as determine whether these established visual-focused criteria represent adequate quantity and quality based on prior research around the importance and facilitative effects of images on language learning. In order to accomplish this, visual-focused criteria found in a selection of different checklists have been qualitatively and quantitatively examined, then considered within the context of previous research into visual elements in language acquisition.

1.4 Research questions & hypotheses

RQ1. Do criteria for assessing visual resources in ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists show conformity to established research findings and theories on the effects of visuals on language learning?

RQ2.   Are the criteria in ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists that directly address visual elements reliable for accurately establishing the efficacy and value of those visuals?

H1.   Criteria about visual resources in ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists do not direct evaluators to assess visuals according to established research findings on the role of visuals in language learning.

H2.   ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklist criteria for visual elements are unreliable in accurately establishing the efficacy and value of those visuals.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Importance of multimodality in ELT materials

For many decades, cognitive studies have demonstrated relationships between multimodality and learning. This relationship between multimodal materials and effective teaching and learning holds true for textbooks, too, particularly language textbooks (Liu & Qu, 2014). Visuals, together with sound and language, are some of the semiotic resources that can be "co-deployed and co-contextualized" to make meaning in diverse ways in ESL/EFL textbooks, a process defined as multimodality (Thibault, 2001, as cited in Liu & Qu, 2014). This range of semiotic resources in multimodal texts provides students with more opportunities to access and create meaning. Multimodality in ESL/EFL textbooks also provides different paths to comprehension based on individual needs, interests, and background, as well as requiring that learners engage in important tactics for learning languages like cognitive flexibility and collaborative negotiation of meaning (Ajayi, 2012).

Kress (2000, as cited by Yu & Chang, 2019) proposed that meaning is created by using different semiotic resources concurrently, which optimizes communication. In the context of ESL/EFL textbooks, one method of communication can be thought of as the different voices contained in the multimodal resources, such as editor voice, character and reader voice, and their interactions with the learner. When these voices are deployed through images and other complementary multimodal resources (i.e. labeling images, showing speech in images with dialogue balloons, jointly constructed texts and illustrations, and highlighting visual elements with layout choices), textual elements open up communication with learners and engage them

with the content (Chen, 2010). Images and text also work together in ESL/EFL textbooks to capitalize on speech functions like offer, command, statement, and question which help guide the learner to more autonomous habits and self-actualization in learning languages (Liu & Qu, 2014). Multimodal texts containing semiotic resources like images signal a more open and participatory pedagogical and social relationship between the producers of textbooks, teachers, and the language learners using them (Bezemer & Kress, 2010, as cited in Ajayi, 2012). It is, therefore, more critical than ever for teachers to understand how textbook images are interwoven with text to construct meaning so they can effectively guide English language learners to increase their skills in interpreting images and the messages conveyed by them (Ajayi, 2012).

However, the positive effects of visual elements do not necessarily apply in all learning situations, nor have all learners necessarily developed the skills and awareness necessary to take advantage of the affordances of visual elements in their textbooks. As visual elements have become pervasive in ESL/EFL textbook publishing, it is important for teachers to show students how these elements and text can be interpreted and understood (Ajayi, 2012). This necessity may require new demands on teachers to understand how images in multimodal textbooks represent and communicate knowledge (Jewitt, 2008). One approach to meeting this demand can be drawn from Tomlinson's (1996) view that materials evaluation is a means for teachers to develop their understanding of how to best use the materials, which is supported by Litz (2005) who views textbook evaluation as a valuable practice in teachers' professional development and raising awareness about textbook features. The multimodality that visuals impart on English textbooks affects several significant areas of language learning. For teachers to understand, deploy and guide learners to access these visual resources

effectively in their chosen ESL/EFL textbooks, an accurate and in-depth assessment of the images would be a crucial and beneficial first step.

2.2 Cognitive effects of visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks

In ELT material design, it is generally assumed that texts with visual elements are more thoroughly comprehended than texts without visual elements (Ametller & Pinto, 2002, as cited in Roohani & Sharifi, 2015). This assumption is supported by decades of experimental research showing that visuals help language learners to incorporate and associate materials more effectively than materials lacking images or other visual elements. Anglin, Vaez, and Cunningham (2004) conducted an extensive review of the use of static images in knowledge acquisition covering more than four decades, 90 studies representing 118 experiments, and more than 13,500 subjects from elementary-school-aged to adults. Analysis of these studies' results revealed 102 significant effects for using text supported with visuals compared to text alone. The authors do caution that a lack of connection between theoretical perspectives and functional treatments in this large sampling of studies makes it difficult to apply the results to all students and all learning situations. However, the significant effects revealed in their analysis establish that the visual aspects of multimodal textbooks can facilitate learning when images show information redundant to textual information, particularly in the context of reading to learn, but are less facilitative when learning to read. According to Angling, Vaez, and Cunningham's (2004) review, non-text-redundant imagery along with layout-related variables like size and page position do not significantly aid in language learning but can help in directing learners' attention.

Yu and Chang (2019) reviewed several studies focused on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension to show that multimodality in language learning can activate prior knowledge, help organize reading input, enhance comprehension in listening and reading, and capture attention (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kost, et all., 1999; Levie & Lentz, 1982; Royce, 2002; Choi & Yi, 2016; Arnold & Fonseca, 2004; Pan & Pan, 2009; Liu & Qu, 2014). Regarding vocabulary learning, Yu and Chang's (2019) study found that visuals enhanced learner performance in developing vocabulary and also enhanced retention and recall later. Though the authors do note that multimodality in vocabulary learning did not noticeably increase production. In regards to reading comprehension, Yu and Chang (2019) found that multimodal materials which combined visual and textual elements supported comprehension and learner's ability to decode texts. Similar benefits were noted for multimodal reading activities in textbooks with images supporting comprehension and decoding in both simple and challenging texts.

An interesting analysis of studies focusing on the inherent multimodality of comic strips and graphics novels (Liu, 2004; Early & Marshall, 2008; Connors, 2013; as cited in Yu & Chang, 2019) demonstrated benefits to not only reading comprehension but also learner appreciation and ability to construct meaning. Comic strips were specifically helpful in supporting lower-proficiency English language learners when reading more challenging texts (Liu, 2004; as cited in Yu & Chang, 2019). However, these benefits were only found when the complexity of the visual elements in the comic strips mirrored the complexity of the text. Without similar levels of visual-textual complexity, comics strips were actually shown to interfere with comprehension. This aspect of mirroring the complexity of textual input and visual input is closely related to the importance of text-image complementarity proposed by Liu and

Qu's (2014) study reviewing multimodality in Chinese EFL textbooks. Yu and Chang (2019) support the proposal of complementarity based on their analysis of student conceptions of visual elements in EFL textbooks, claiming that stronger image-text cohesion better enhances reading comprehension. These research findings not only give evidence for the central importance of visuals in ESL/EFL textbooks but can be interpreted as cautioning the alteration or inclusion of images for purely aesthetic reasons.

2.3 The influence of learner conceptions about visual elements on motivation and language learning

Visual information also has an important role in influencing the emotions and attitudes of students, not just cognitive aspects of language learning. Yu and Chang (2019) conducted an important study on utterance analysis of learner conceptions around double-page spreads in EFL textbooks with textual and visual components to show how multimodal pedagogy can motivate students from an affective perspective. There are various definitions of learner conceptions, but it is generally agreed that conceptions are "a set of intuitive beliefs that are constructed based on prior experiences and influence learners in a variety of ways" (Yu & Chang, 2019). Learner conceptions are an important aspect that visual resources in textbooks play beyond cognitive benefits to language learning as they also facilitate language learning by enabling affective motivation. Yu and Chang (2019) applied the phenomenographic method to high school students' utterances concerning the English textbook series used in their EFL classes, which allowed them to identify five categories of student conceptions. These conceptions ranged from lower-order to higher-order cognitive functions, the most basic being engagement with visual aides based on interest and preference. Higher-order

cognition shows engagement with visual elements in order to comprehend and think more critically about textual elements. In their study, it was found that both lower and higher proficiency English learners demonstrated similar distributions along this cognitive hierarchy of conceptions with lower-level functions accounting for the smallest percentage of conceptions, less than 10%. This small number of conceptions around preference and interest in visual elements may temper claims that purely decorative visuals are useful insofar as they increase interest and create a positive reaction (Lohr, 2003, as cited in Roohani & Sharifi, 2015; Harmer, 2005, as cited in Hill, 2003). More than 50% of the learner utterances evaluated in this study coincided with higher-level cognitive strategies like using visual elements while reading for comprehension and critical thinking. Materials that incorporate visuals appropriately can help learners reach a deeper understanding and sense of achievement. Learners can thus more easily express what they have learned and show an increase in self-confidence. This finding gives support to Liu and Qu's (2014) proposal of the importance of text-image coherence in language learning materials. While Yu and Chang (2019) concluded that bi-modal resources engage learners both cognitively and affectively, they also propose that learner's positive conceptions of these resources can contribute to their learning. Their conclusion about positive conceptions towards textbook images enhancing learning is also supported by previous studies (Choi & Yi, 2016; Garcia et al., 2011; as cited in Yu and Chang, 2019).

Shimada and Kitajima's (2008) study aimed at designing educational materials for adults with cognitive disabilities supports the notion that visual resources promote affective engagement, which in turn facilitates learning. Based on results from the two experiments in their study, the authors suggest the Motivation Effect and Elaboration Effect model to explain the

mechanism of how textual information comprehension is increased by illustrations. This model argues that illustrations in text significantly increase participants' motivation and that better recognition of visual elements results in higher recall of text associated with illustrations. This model is compatible with Yu and Chang's (2019) assertion that affective motivation is not the only benefit in positive conceptions around images, but that there are effects directly linked to learning and comprehension of textual information based on how learners perceive accompanying images. However, as a caution against the superficial or decorative use of visual elements, Yu and Chang's (2019) study on student conceptions of multimodal English textbooks found that the incoherence of visual and textual information was reported by some students to cause confusion or demotivation. Thus, as with the established cognitive benefits images play in aiding language learning, affective motivation is not guaranteed by the presence of attractive images unless they can be deployed to access meaning in the text. Therefore ESL/EFL textbook images must be evaluated reliably by educators beyond their perceived general aesthetic appeal.

3. Literature review

The following review includes studies that seek to evaluate images in ESL/EFL textbooks as well as studies examining textbook evaluation checklists. These two areas give insight into how close or far the use of visual elements in modern textbook design align with effective usage previously described in multimodal English language teaching and learning, as well as whether ESL/EFL textbook images and established ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists display or lack universal, generalizable features.

3.1 Evaluating the use of visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks

Hill's (2003) study evaluated three intermediate-level ESL/EFL textbooks spanning the prior decade of the 1990s. The study counted the number of color drawings and photographs, and black and white drawings and photographs. These were further broken down into picture type (portrait, place, object, interaction, action), activity types, whether the image is decorative or functional, and what functionality the image is facilitating. Hill (2003) concluded this analysis may be more revealing about textbook production processes during the 1990s than the attributed author's expectations for the image's use. However, the results did note the striking number of images used purely for decoration (40.8%). This may confirm that at that time publishers, editors, and authors may still have considered illustrations that fill space and increase attractiveness as being an important quality that would not interfere with providing multimodal resources for activities and images that are related to textual elements. In investigating the non-decorative images, three main functions were found: supporting the comprehension of the target language, stimulating a mental or

linguistic response to a text, or facilitating teaching (such as vocabulary definitions). These functions can be considered fairly low-level language practice, and very few activities leveraged images to stimulate students' creative use of language.

Moghtadi's (2013) study uses very similar evaluative categories as Hill (2003) but assesses functionality as either stimulus-response, student-generated, or illustrative. Published a decade after Hill's (2003) study, Moghtadi's (2013) data on types of images in ESL/EFL textbooks reflect changes in publishing with nearly 96% of all images in four current EFL textbooks being categorized as color photos, a noted change from the distribution of 75% color photographs to 25% color illustrations in the textbooks analyzed from Hill's (2003) study. But concurrent with Hill's findings of textbooks from earlier decades, the majority of visual elements are used to engage learners with different stimulus responses for practicing low-level language skills, meaning the visual elements are used for specific learning outcomes that require an active response from the students. No images were categorized as student-generated, which can work in giving the language learner autonomy to use the images as tools for their learning. Furthermore, nearly 30% of images were deemed illustrative, meaning their role in conjunction with the text was passive and did not require the learner to consciously respond to them. While it can be argued these passive images provide context, which may help with comprehension and motivation, previous investigations into the topic have shown that image and text coherence is a key factor in this motivation, and context that merely aims to stimulate learner interest and preference affects student conceptions far less than other cognitive functions.

3.2 Assessments of ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists

An extensive study of ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists was conducted by Mukundan and Ahour (2010) on 48 checklists over four decades from the 1970s to the 2000s. Using concordance software, the 48 checklists are evaluated for length, frequency, and consistency of common criteria and the overall structure of the checklists, as an attempt to chart their evolution over the decades. This analysis from Mukundan and Ahour's (2010) study found that the majority of the checklists are qualitative (e.g., Rahimy, 2007; Driss, 2006; McDonough and Shaw, 2003; Rubdy, 2003; Garinger, 2002; Krug, 2002; McGrath, 2002; Garinger, 2001; Richards, 2001; Zabawa, 2001; Hemsley, 1997; Cunningsworth, 1995; Griffiths, 1995; Cunningsworth and Kusel, 1991; Harmer, 1991; Sheldon, 1988; Breen & Candlin, 1987; Dougill, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Matthews, 1985; Cunningsworth, 1984; Bruder, 1978; Haycraft, 1978; Robinett, 1978). A smaller amount was determined to be quantitative (e.g., Canado & Esteban, 2005; Litz, 2005; Miekley, 2005; Harmer, 1998; Peacock, 1997; Ur, 1996; Skierso, 1991; Sheldon, 1988; Grant, 1987; Williams, 1983; Daoud & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Tucker, 1978), while the smallest group used an outline format, without providing rating scales or questions (Ansari & Babaii, 2002; Littlejohn, 1998; Roberts, 1996; Brown, 1995). From this diverse selection of checklists, Mukundan and Ahour (2010) found that similar criteria are often emphasized under different sections depending on the checklists, demonstrating little coherence or evidence of universality in how similar criteria are approached in the evaluation processes of different checklist tools. Although the majority of textbook evaluation checklists surveyed were found to be qualitative, the authors argue that qualitative checklists implementing yes/no answers and quantitative checklists using numerical ratings (Likert scales) require evaluators to employ their judgments in a more structured, formal, and systematic manner and yield more reliable

evaluation results compared to comment-based qualitative checklists which may lead to more subjective answers. From their analysis, the researchers assert that the ESL/EFL checklists spanning four decades have been an essentially subjective evaluative tool in textbook selection and are affected by swings in favorability of methodological approaches. This view is also shared by Ansary and Babaii (2002) and Ghorbani (2011) whose checklists are evaluated in this paper.

Both Ansary and Babaii (2002) and Ghorbani (2011) seek to establish universal criteria for evaluating ESL/EFL textbooks based on reviews of previous checklists. Ansary and Babaii's (2002) analysis of 10 established ESL/EFL checklists and 10 ESL/EFL textbook reviews covers the decades of the 1970s to the 1990s. The authors sought to define theory-neutral criteria while Ghorbani's (2011) assessment of the common and salient features in 15 ESL/ EFL textbook evaluation checklists from the 1980s to the 2000s worked to reach a set of universal criteria that balanced concerns of practicality and theory and did not attempt to be theory-neutral. Like Mukundan and Ahour (2010), both Ansary and Babaii (2002) and Ghorbani (2011) concluded that the key problem with previous checklists was their dependency on swings in the theoretical pendulum (Sheldon 1988, as cited in Ansary & Babaii, 2002), catering to whichever current ESL/EFL methodology is in favor at the time. They argue that there is no neat formula to definitely assess a textbook and rather support universal criteria which can be selected by evaluators to best address the realities of their unique ELL situation (Ansary & Babaii, 2000). Mukundan and Ahour (2010) share this assertion, citing Tomlinson (1999) that any ESL/EFL textbook evaluation framework ought to be determined by "the reasons, objectives, and circumstance of the evaluation". Interestingly, Mukundan and Ahour (2010) differ from Ansary and Babaii's (2002) and Ghorbani's (2011)

conclusions, by presenting a second and more critical problem with previous checklists. The authors argue that more so than universal criteria for the present norm of predictive evaluation checklists aimed at the selection process, what is truly needed is for a retrospective phase of evaluation geared toward usage to become commonplace. Mukundan and Ahour (2010) suggest a multi-instrument approach for this type of post-use assessment not fully reliant on checklist criteria. A multi-instrument retrospective phase for the evaluation of ESL/EFL textbooks can provide an alternative answer to the issue put forth by Ansary and Babaii (2002) that there is not a neat formula for definitive judgment of a textbook, for which they proposed their universal and theory-neutral set of predictive selection criteria.

4. Methodology

4.1 Materials

This exploratory study focuses on 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists over a 4 decade time span of 1981 to 2015. The checklists were chosen based on references made by previous studies covered in the literature review (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Mukundan & Ahour, 2010; Ghorbani, 2011), but for the purpose of this paper, only criteria that directly address visual resources in textbooks are analyzed. This paper seeks to specifically address ESL/EFL textbook evaluation carried out by educators or administrators during the textbook selection process, and therefore does not address any checklists or checklist sections geared toward student evaluation or post-use retrospective assessment.

Tomlinson (2001, as cited in AdbelWahab, 2013) explains that the study of material development and evaluation was often treated as a sub-category of methodology until the 1990s, with some exceptions like Cunningsworth (1984, as cited in AdbelWahab, 2013) and Sheldon (1987, as cited in AdbelWahab, 2013). According to Ghorbani (2011), the relative merits of checklists and their criteria can diminish over the years, necessitating the development of new, updated tools. Accordingly, this study includes two textbook evaluation checklists from the 1980s and two from the 1990s, to introduce a historical perspective of how visual elements were previously treated in the textbook assessment process. These lists may be of particular interest to the study not only because of their context in the preferred teaching methodologies they were developed for but also because of the realities of publishing technologies during those decades which have advanced dramatically since.

However, textbook evaluation checklists from the 2000s and the 2010s receive more representation in the selection of lists for this paper due to their higher perceived relevance to modern-day publishing practices and teaching methodologies as well as influences from the most current research findings about images and language acquisition.

4.2 Design

This study of ESL/EFL textbook evaluation criteria directly addressing visual elements implements an exploratory design with non-experimental data collection. Quantitative data on image-based checklist criteria are collected from the 12 checklists selected for this study. Qualitative data is also collected on the individual criteria selected as image-based in an attempt to establish general themes from the recurring elements in how ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists guide teachers to assess visual elements.

This study follows the checklist categorizations laid out in Mukudan and Ahour's (2010) study of quantitative, qualitative, and outline format (which does not include questions nor rating scales). While it has been shown that more previously published ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists use a qualitative approach to answering assessment questions, and this approach can provide very in-depth evaluation, Mukudan et al (2011) and Mukudan and Ahour (2010) argue that quantitative checklists are more reliable and convenient instruments. As such, more quantitative than qualitative checklists are reviewed in this paper, and one checklist using outline format is included (see Table 1. below. For a detailed breakdown of each individual checklist grouped by decade see Appendix I.)

Checklist Type		Answer Type	
Qualitative	3	Yes / No	1
		Open-ended	1
		Both	1
Quantitative	8	Likert Scale	3
		Weighted Likert Scale	5
Outline	1	None	1

Table 1. Categorization of 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists

For the purpose of this paper, in order for a criterion to qualify as directly addressing visual elements, a visual attribute must be specifically mentioned in the wording. While terms like layout, appearance, and design may connote visual elements in other multimodal media outside of ELT materials, in this field terms like layout and design are generally considered to refer to the presentation of activities and language content as well as the teaching methodology used to organize the unit, such as PPP (Mohammadia & Abdi, 2014; Litz, 2005). Criteria that could be interpreted as implying consideration of visual elements, like appearance, also do not count as direct mention since it cannot be assumed that all evaluators would be inclined to scrutinize visual aspects alongside textual ones, nor can it be assumed how heavily visual and textual aspects would be weighted by each evaluator when answering an appearance-based criterion. Therefore, criteria that only mention layout, appearance, or

design were excluded from the count and analysis for visual-based criteria (see Table 2 for examples of criteria that do not qualify as visual-based).

Examples of excluded criteria

Halliwell 1993	Does the book look interesting and fun?
Harmer 2007	Is the book attractive?
Peacock 1997	The overall appearance is attractive and will be appealing to learners.
Williams, R. 1981	Do you have any general comments on the layout and the presentation of the unit? E.G., is it attractively/ satisfactorily/unattractively set out and printed?

Table 2. Selection of criteria that do not directly reference visual textbook resources

4.3 Analysis

From the quantitative data collected on the criteria in each of the 12 checklists, an interpretive analysis is applied to compare the percentage of total criteria to image-based criteria as well as to find an average and range for checklist criteria directly addressing the analysis of visual elements. Another interpretive analysis from the qualitative assessment of all image-based criteria will seek to establish repeated and salient themes regarding how evaluators are guided to assess visual elements. These mixed-method results establishing the frequency and common themes in image-based evaluative criteria are used to argue whether or not they

relate to proven pedagogical benefits of using images for language learning and determine

how effective the image-based criteria in the 12 checklists surveyed can be for evaluating

visual resources in ESL/EFL textbooks.

5. Findings

5.1 Visual criteria percentages

Altogether, the 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists surveyed contain over 490 criteria, averaging 41 criteria per checklist, with a range of 15-140 criteria. Each list had an average of less than two (1.42) criteria which explicitly address visual element evaluation, with a range of 0-7 image-based criteria (see Table 3). Four of the 12 checklists surveyed did not have a single criterion directly tied to image evaluation (Halliwell, 1993; Garinger, 2002; Litz, 2005; Harmer, 2007). While AbdelWahab's (2013) checklist had the highest number of image-based evaluation criteria, at seven.   However, this checklist also had the highest number of total criteria, at 140, so does not contain the highest percentage of image-based criteria. Instead, Miekley's two image-based criteria out of 21 total criteria show the highest percentage in the 12 checklists surveyed at 9.5%. (see Appendix II for a detailed breakdown of criteria data for each checklist). On average, only 3.22% of criteria in any given checklist directly address the evaluation of visual elements, with a range of 0% to 9.5% across the 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists. A total of 492 checklist items were assessed from the 12 checklists chosen for this paper, and only 17 were found to directly address the evaluation of visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks, or 3.46% of the total number of criteria.

	Criteria directly addressing visual elements	Total Number of Criteria	Percentage of criteria directly addressing visual elements

Totals from checklists surveyed	17	492	3.46%
Average per checklist surveyed	1.42	41	3.22%
Range for checklists surveyed	0 - 7	15 - 140	0% - 9.5%

Table 3. Totals, averages, and ranges for criteria and image-based criteria

5.2 Common themes in evaluation of visuals

In this author's analysis of the eight out of 12 ESL/EFL textbook checklists which were found to have criteria for evaluating visual elements, four themes were created based on criteria revealed as occurring the most frequently and consistently. These four themes have been categorized as availability, efficacy, appropriacy, and quality. Availability simply asks evaluators to determine if visual elements exist or can be accessed by students and teachers. Efficacy is tied to pedagogical use in teaching and learning and whether a given image is appropriate for the teaching purpose it has been selected for by the publisher. This pedagogical appropriateness is different from the third theme of appropriacy, which specifically considers visual representations in the context of cultural and gender norms for the ELL situation. Finally, quality refers to the technical aspects of printing and images in textbook production.

All of the checklist items identified for assessing visual elements across eight out of 12 checklists surveyed have been categorized under one of these four themes (for a breakdown of the criteria assigned to each of the four categories, see Appendix III). Efficacy and quality are the most common, occurring in five out of eight of the checklists with criteria addressing image assessment. Appropriacy and availability occur least frequently, in only two of the eight checklists considered (see Table 4). Only AdbelWahab's (2013) checklist provided criteria that apply to each of the four categories, and in fact, had three separate criteria categorized under the theme of efficacy.

	Availability	Efficacy	Appropriacy	Quality
AbdelWahab, 2013	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ansary, Babaii, 2002	Y	Y	N	N
Ghorbani, 2011	N	Y	N	Y
Miekley, 2005	N	Y	N	Y
Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2015	N	Y	N	N
Peacock, 1997	N	N	N	Y

Willams D., 1983	N	N	N	Y
Williams R., 1982	N	N	Y	N

Table 4. Frequency of common themes across checklists with criteria evaluating ESL/EFL textbook's visual resources (Y: Yes, present in checklist. N: No, not present in checklist.)

6. Discussion

In quantifying the proportion of criteria that specifically and directly seek to evaluate the visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks in comparison to the total number of criteria across 12 checklists, the results of this study revealed a low average percentage of only 3.22% of criteria per checklist seeking to assess visual components of textbooks. Out of the 12 checklists surveyed, four were found to have no criteria explicitly for the assessment of visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks. A qualitative analysis of the individual criteria for image assessment revealed four salient and recurring themes under which all image-related criteria can be categorized. This author has labeled the four themes as availability (accessibility of images by teachers and learners), efficacy (if a given image is appropriate for the teaching purpose it has been selected for), appropriacy (consideration of images compatibility with cultural norms, and cultural and gender representations), and quality (a technical aspect of images and printing).

In response to the first hypothesis that checklist evaluation criteria for visual resources in ESL/EFL textbooks do not show conformity to established research findings and theories about the effects of visuals on language learning, many of the checklist items that directly addressed visual resources seemed too simplistic or superficial to accurately reflect research into the use of images in language learning. However, out of 17 total criteria found to assess visual elements, four items in three different checklists demonstrate an exception to this conclusion, showing utility in assessing visual elements according to established benefits of images' effects on language learning. These exceptions to simplicity and superficiality in

evaluating visual elements are one of Miekley's (2005) checklist items, two of AbdelWahab's (2013) checklist criteria, and one of Ansary and Babaii's (2002) criteria.

Miekley's (2005) most compelling visual-based criterion specifically addresses image-text complementarity, prompting evaluators to consider if the illustrations are "simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it". Ansary and Babaii (2002) present a similar criterion for evaluating the merit of visual elements: "graphics relevant (free from unnecessary details, colorful, etc)". The approach to visual evaluation presented by these two criteria is supported by the findings in Anglin, Vaez, and Cunningham's (2004) review, as well as Liu and Qu's (2014) and Yu and Chang's (2019) studies which state that image and text cohesion enhance comprehension, while different levels of complexity between textual elements and their associated visual elements can interfere with comprehension. AdbelWahab's (2013) two criteria that show the greatest significance to referencing previous research into the use of images for language acquisition are: "the visuals are functional" and "the visuals stimulate students to be creative". The analysis of student conceptions around visual and textual spreads in EFL textbooks by Yu and Chang (2019) revealed that very few students reported using visual resources for low-level cognitive functions based on preference or interest. Instead, over half of the students in both low and high proficiency groups reported using images for high-level tasks such as comprehension and critical thinking. AbdelWahab's (2013) criteria that approach image assessment on the grounds of functionality and inspiring creativity align with the use of images for high-level cognition proven in Yu and Chang's (2019) study.

All four of these criteria were categorized into the commonly occurring theme of efficacy, as such this theme can therefore be argued to reference previous research findings around the importance of visual elements in learning languages. Chen (2010) supports focus not only on 'how' visual resources are presented in ESL/EFL textbooks but also on 'why' the image is needed in its specific context. In the evaluation process, this could mean sampling images in different sections of different units to determine how well the materials to be learned in the associated textbook activity would function without the image. Does the image seem to support learning through textual visual coherence or activate multimodal communication to open up the text to the learner? Or does it simply serve a decorative purpose? Hill (2003) supports this consideration with the conclusion that while a picture may prove context, with a lack of linguistic purpose the activity would work just as well without it. Finally, Hill's (2003) suggestion of images being used for high-level language practice that stimulates student creativity may also be an important perspective to incorporate in future evaluation criteria around visual elements. Such criteria related to efficacy can be interpreted as guiding teacher-evaluators to consider the pedagogical affordances of the images in an ESL/EFL textbook without relying on the aesthetic preferences of any particular teacher-evaluator.

Despite these exceptions, several critical findings about how images facilitate language learning are completely absent from the body of 17 criteria for image analysis gathered across the checklists in this paper. Multimodal textbooks that incorporate images and text have been proven to increase comprehension by providing different paths to understanding and negotiating the meaning of a text. Liu and Qu (2014) state that learners are active in conceptualizing what they are learning and can be affected by the way visual and textual elements are construed. Thus, criteria that help educators understand and assess how visual

and textual elements are working to create meaning in textbooks are needed. Another important conclusion from research on the affordances of images and related visuals like image labeling, dialogue balloons, etc., is how these multimodal resources optimize the use of different voices and speech functions in the textbook (Kress, 2000, as cited by Yu & Chang, 2019; Liu & Qu, 2014). This optimization opens up communication between textual elements and the learners, engages them with the content, and promotes autonomous language learning habits (Chen, 2010; Liu & Qu, 2014). The lack of criteria addressing how images facilitate communication directly between the learners and the content seems like an oversight in ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists.

While the four previously discussed criteria offer some important guidance for incorporating research-backed benefits of images in language acquisition into textbook image analysis, the other 13 criteria may be viewed as irrelevant to prior research or too vague to properly guide teacher-evaluators in connecting their answers on the image-based criteria to any proven benefits of image use in ELT materials. Additionally, there are key findings about how images aid in language learning that are not addressed in any of the 17 criteria for image analysis gathered across the checklists in this paper. Overall, the relatively small number of 17 image-related evaluation criteria in comparison to the total number of 492 checklist criteria surveyed does not seem adequate for addressing the large and in-depth body of research that supports and informs the use of images in ESL/EFL textbooks. As such, the first hypothesis that evaluation criteria about visual resources in ESL/EFL textbooks do not show conformity to established research findings and theories about the effects of visuals on language learning is accepted as true.

Considering the second hypothesis that image-based criteria found in ESL/EFL evaluation checklists are unreliable for accurately establishing the value of visual elements, both the quantity and quality of the criteria found to directly assess images seem to confirm this assumption. Seeing as 13 out of 17 criteria offer little connection to established affordances about images in language acquisition and only 17 out of 492 criteria from the checklists surveyed address visual elements directly, it can be concluded that publishers' choices around image use are not being held fully accountable during the checklist evaluation process, nor can such a process properly equip teacher-evaluators with an adequate understanding of how images will function in their teaching practices and students' learning experiences.

The 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists surveyed span several decades, from 1981 to 2015, and as such also span the prominence of several ELT methodological approaches, as well as major advancements in publishing technology. However, the percentage of checklist criteria specifically targeted at evaluating textbook's visual elements showed no correlative change over these decades, despite the increasing prevalence of visuals and visual-facilitative technology in ELT materials, the growing body of research around their benefits in language learning, and advances in printing and imaging processes. Additionally, the approach to how evaluators are guided to assess visual elements shows little evolution across the four decades surveyed, with the same common themes of quality, appropriacy, efficacy, and availability appearing in all checklists with criteria directly addressing visual elements. A comparison of Hill's (2003) and Mogthadi's (2014) study on visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks in two different decades show changes in the types of images (color vs. black and white, illustration vs. photography) and more than 10% decrease in images used for decorative or passive purposes. However the frequency of ESL/EFL textbook evaluation criteria for assessing

these visual elements does not reflect changes from decade to decade, nor show an increase in scrutiny through the approaches by which such images are assessed.

Though it was previously established that the recurring and salient theme of efficacy has research-backed merit for assessing the value of visual elements, the themes of availability and quality seem over-simplified. The criteria categorized into the theme of quality often ask the evaluator to rely on personal preference and general aesthetic perceptions, rather than guide the evaluator to address or account for how and when visuals are most effective in learning. Furthermore, both these themes may be outdated considering the established prevalence of multimodality in the development of new ESL/EFL textbooks and the relative ease with which new publishing technology allows for an abundance of high-quality images to be included in ELT materials. Rather, such approaches to the consideration of images in checklist criteria can be seen as perpetuating problematic usage of decorative images in layouts that may conflict with learning, Availability and quality may have been more relevant approaches to criteria in earlier checklists surveyed and for usage evaluating earlier ESL/EFL publications, however, this approach has likely outgrown its utility. And currently, criteria related to these two themes might be seen as emblematic of the problematic use of subjective judgments about visual elements based on aesthetic preference without any pedagogical consideration.

Despite these failings, the final theme of appropriacy assigned to only three of the 17 criteria for assessing visual elements, presents an important topic to consider in establishing the value of visual elements in a textbook. Tomlinson (1999) asserts that any ESL/EFL textbook evaluation framework ought to be dependent on the unique circumstance of the evaluation.

This view is shared by Mukundan and Ahour (2010), Ansary and Babaii (2002) as well as Ghorbani (2011) in their efforts to establish universal evaluation checklist criteria capable of responding to and being adaptable to local situations. Additionally, in light of the strong connection between images, learner conceptions, and language learning, evaluating a textbook's visual resources for appropriacy seems critical for an accurate assessment. Therefore, criteria that ensure compatibility with the local cultural situation, promote the awareness of problematic or stereotypical representations, and address socio-political messaging presented in visual elements, as well as protect learners against offensive images, are critical aspects of any ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklist.

However, in realizing the importance of appropriacy in visual resources, three criteria across 12 checklists and 492 total checklist criteria cannot be determined to be reliable or accurate in evaluating images in the context of such an important theme. Similarly, the small number of criteria categorized under the theme of efficacy can also not be considered sufficient to reliably and accurately assess visual elements in an ESL/EFL textbook. As such, despite the stated exceptions of the small number of criteria addressing appropriacy and efficacy, the second hypothesis that image-based criteria found in ESL/EFL evaluation checklists are unreliable for accurately establishing the value of visual elements is also accepted as true.

7. Conclusion

In light of the dominance multimodal textbooks command in ELT material publishing, their obvious continued importance, and the expansive body of research assessing the proper usage of images in facilitating language learning, the most common method that teachers and institutions use to assess ESL/EFL textbooks (checklists) is largely deficient in adequately evaluating visual information and connecting it to research findings on image use in ELL. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of 12 ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists over a span of four decades in this study revealed a low percentage of criteria designed to explicitly evaluate visual elements, despite shifts in favored teaching methodologies and advances in publishing technologies. Across the 12 checklists, four salient themes were reflected in the criteria for assessing visual elements but show no divergence or evolution over the four-decade time frame. While the themes of efficacy and appropriateness were deduced to be relevant to established research findings on the importance of images in ELL, and adequate in reliably evaluating textbook images, the low number of criteria attributed to each theme undermines their value in proper assessment of ESL/EFL textbook images. Conversely, the themes of quality and availability bore little relation to research findings and did not guide teacher-evaluators to reliably assess visual resources in ESL/EFL textbooks. Additionally, such considerations seem less relevant for use in current day evaluation based on modern technologies used for publishing and printing.

Some of the most commonly cited complaints around textbook images from researchers, teachers, and learners are their lack of utility, and incoherence to textual information. When criteria for evaluating these elements are overly simplified and rely on metrics of preference,

evaluators are then pushed to assess such materials in a way that perpetuates the very issues that research into the use of visual elements in language learning and ESL/EFL textbook development have been working to ameliorate. To consider improvements to textbook evaluation criteria for visual elements in ELT publications, it can be concluded that more integration of research findings is needed, as well as more specific wording to guide evaluators in assessing visuals from a research-backed perspective. ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists may also benefit from the integration of visual element assessment into other criteria related to pedagogical assessment areas with established relations between language learning with images. This could be accomplished by explicitly wording pedagogical-based criteria to guide teachers to consider visual elements alongside the textual aspects. Such an approach would result in a higher percentage of criteria that explicitly address visual elements without increasing the overall number of criteria, which would risk making checklists less efficient or too time-consuming to be of use to teacher-evaluators. This approach would also prevent minimizing the assessment of other critically important but non-visual components of textbooks.

7.1 Limitations of study

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, both the qualitative and quantitative data collection would benefit from the establishment of inter-rater reliability in the examination of the ESL/EFL textbook evaluation checklists. Additional opinions on the 492 criteria assessed may very well change the number of criteria considered as explicitly addressing the assessment of visual elements. Additionally, the four themes assigned to all of the 17 image-based criteria can benefit from additional perspectives which could ultimately alter the titles

given to the themes, the distribution of the criteria, and even the established number of recurring and salient themes observed.

Additionally, a larger body of checklists included in the survey would favorably add to the data collected. Ideally, this expanded body of checklists would include a more historical context (i.e. checklists spanning the 1980s and 1990s) as well as an expanded representation of present day checklists up until the present-day (2020s). It is possible with a larger sample size, the resulting data could establish changes in the prevalence of image-based criteria that correlate to changes in teaching methodology and advances in publishing practices. This larger data set may also yield new insights into whether the approach to evaluating images in ESL/EFL textbooks has evolved through the salient and recurring themes presented by the criteria over the different decades.

7.2 Suggested areas for further research

Based on the results from this paper, the development of more reliable criteria for teachers and institutions evaluating visual elements in ESL/EFL textbooks is needed. According to the suggestion made by Mukundan and Ahour (2010), a more reliable approach may not necessarily be predictive checklist criteria, but rather retrospective evaluation methods using a multi-tool approach where checklist criteria are but one method used for assessing the efficacy of visual elements. While print textbooks remain the most commonly used ELT material in global classrooms, the explosive growth of CALL/MALL technologies along with increasing individual access to computers and mobile devices globally also necessitates turning the same critical eye from evaluating images in printed textbooks to digital images as

well. In fact, creating accessible and efficient tools for teachers to adequately evaluate digital

image use in language learning maybe even more critical than with print images considering

the relative ease with which images can be incorporated into digital learning environments.

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Appendix

	Checklist Type	Answer Type
Williams R., 1981	Qualitative	Open-ended
Willams, D 1983	Quantitative	Likert-Scale, Weighted
Halliwell, 1993	Quantitative	Likert-Scale
Peacock, 1997	Quantitative	Likert-Scale, Weighted
Ansary, Babaii, 2002	Outline	None
Garinger, 2002	Qualitative	Yes/No
Litz, 2005	Quantitative	Likert-Scale
Miekley, 2005	Quantitative	Likert-Scale, Weighted
Harmer, 2007	Qualitative	Open-ended and Yes/No
Ghorbani, 2011	Quantitative	Likert-Scale, Weighted
AbdelWahab, 2013	Quantitative	Likert-Scale, Weighted
Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2015	Quantitative	Likert-Scale

Appendix I. Detailed categorization for each of the 12 ESL/EFL textbook

evaluation checklists by decade

	Criteria directly addressing visual elements	Total Number of Criteria	Percentage of criteria directly addressing visual elements
Williams R., 1981	1	16	6.25%
Willams, D 1983	1	28	3.57%
Halliwell, 1993	0	16	0%
Peacock, 1997	1	60	1.67%
Ansary, Babaii, 2002	2	33	6.06%
Garinger, 2002	0	15	0%
Litz, 2005	0	40	0%
Miekley, 2005	2	21	9.5%
Harmer, 2007	0	34	0%
Ghorbani, 2011	2	50	4%
AbdelWahab, 2013	7	140	5%
Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2015	1	39	2.56%

Appendix II. Detailed comparison of criteria for each of the 12 ESL/EFL textbook

evaluation checklists by decade

Availability

Ansary, Babaii 2002	Accompanying audio-visual aids.
AdbelWahab, 2013	The pictures and diagrams required to be brought by students are available for them.

Efficacy

AdbelWahab, 2013	The textbook has a sufficient number of pictures to make the situation more life-like.
	The Visuals stimulate students to be creative.
	The Visuals are functional.
Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, 2015	It indicates efficient use of text and visuals.
Miekley 2005	Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it?
Ghorbani, 2011	Is there an appropriate mix of graphics and text?
Ansary, Babaii 2002	Graphics relevant (free from unnecessary details, colorful, etc.)

Appropriacy

Williams, 1981	Are there any diagrams or exercise items that are culturally inappropriate?
AdbelWahab, 2013	The Visuals are compatible with students' own culture.
	The content of the textbook is free from stereotypical images and information.

Quality

AdbelWahab, 2013	The Visuals are well produced ,varied and attractive.
Peacock, 1997	The printing and illustrations are of high quality and the book has an attractive layout, without densely cluttered pages. It has been well edited.
Williams, 1983	Shows quality in editing and publishing (cover, typeface, illustrations, etc.)
Ansary & Babaii, 2002	Are audio-visual aids accompanied? And are they of good quality?
Miekley, 2005	Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality?

Appendix III. Detailed breakdown of each image-based criteria for the four most common

evaluation themes