

MODELLING THE ACTIVITY OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK AUTHOR

**Oleksandr Pasichnyk*, PhD**

Senior Research Fellow, Department of Foreign
Languages Teaching,

Institute of Pedagogy,

National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
Kyiv, Ukraine

Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages,
Khmelnyskyi National University,

Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine

bez-nicka@ukr.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0665-2099>

Valeriy Redko (†)¹, Dr. Sc., Prof.

Head², Department of Foreign Languages Teaching,
Institute of Pedagogy,

National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine,
Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4035-4925>

Olena Pasichnyk, PhD, Assoc. Prof.

Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages,
Khmelnyskyi National University,

Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine

helen_shlapack@ukr.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0792-2406>

*Corresponding author

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Abstract. The authors of the paper offer an insight into the process of constructing a school foreign language textbook from author's perspective. The authors analyse the process of textbook publishing in Ukraine. Although the process of selecting textbooks is properly regulated and authors are provided with necessary methodological instructions, the process of constructing textbook content remains purely author's domain. According to the empirical data obtained in the survey many authors frequently rely on their own intuition in construction practices rather than scientific approach. Following imperfect strategies leads to producing flawed textbooks. Thus, a lot of effort is directed into correcting manuscripts. In this respect the authors of the article thoroughly analysed work of a typical textbook author

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²Till November 18, 2024.



and provide relevant recommendations to follow. Author's activity is properly structured and each of its components is described in detail. It is considered that thorough planning of author's construction activity is no less important than considering modern methodological trends and syllabus requirements. Furthermore, the authors raise an important issue of what type of experts are to be involved the process of constructing textbook content. The results of the paper are based on empirical data obtained in the process of surveying textbook authors, educators as well as own experience of the authors in their textbook construction activity.

Keywords: foreign language, school textbook, author activity, author's planning skills, textbook content approbation, textbook selection.

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gaining independence in 1991 was a milestone event for the whole Ukrainian nation which brought new challenges and marked considerable transformations in all aspects of life. A new educational doctrine emphasized the need to raise national awareness and proclaimed abolishment of ideological components typical for Soviet period from the learning environment (Ministerstvo osvity Ukrainy, 1991). In this respect the initiative of publishing a new type of textbooks especially in humanities for national school was supported by the Government (Ministerstvo osvity Ukrainy, 1992). Due to the fact that book publishing had numerous restrictions in the Soviet period (approved methodological concept, ideological impeccability, limited opportunities for experimenting with new approaches and methodologies etc.) in the 1990s Ukraine had very few professional author teams with experience in constructing textbooks (Pasichnyk, 2011). Nevertheless, taking into account that new educational policy encouraged methodological pursuits, very soon educators started experimenting with new approaches. Especially active were authors of foreign language (FL) textbooks. Due to their efforts new FL textbooks became available. As every team worked independently their textbooks were based on different concepts and were gradually gaining popularity. The most prominent were N. P. Basai, T. P. Bevzenko, L. V. Byrkun, O. I. Lytvyniuk, V. M. Plakhotnyk, V. H. Redko, N. I. Skliarenko etc. whose endeavours lay foundations for the new generation of FL textbooks for Ukrainian school.

In pedagogy the problem of creating a FL textbook is considered as a vital and complex one. On one hand, a textbook is the pivotal element of school practice: in conditions of contact hours and face-to-face learning process a teacher relies on it as the main tool which determines methodological guidelines, teacher-and-student interaction as well as reflects learning content and outcomes (Redko, 2017). On the other hand it requires efforts of authors to combine current methodological approaches, develop materials potentially able to keep students' interest, a system of tasks that fosters development of their communication skills and capabilities. In recent decades methodology has undergone drastic changes from audiolingual method to communicative and competence-based approach. As far as language plays more important role in all spheres of global community, high emphasis is made on providing interactivity and students' immersion in culture of the target language (Council of Europe, 2001). At the same time a FL textbook has to rely on intercultural approach i.e. the key priority is to raise intercultural awareness where students have not only to learn the other culture but also be able to act as representatives of their native culture themselves. All aspects considered, the process of constructing an up-to-date FL textbook which is able to reflect both linguistic and cultural aspects requires consideration of various aspects of didactic, age psychology, methodology, linguistics and book publishing.

Taken the importance of textbook in educational process, it became the object of scientific research at the National Academy of Educational Sciences (NAES) of Ukraine. The Institute of Pedagogy of NAES of Ukraine initiated publishing bi-annual journal "*Problems of School Textbook*" that became a platform for discussion for scientists, authors and educators. Almost all

the fellows of the NAES have experience in constructing textbooks for different school subjects.

Textbook publishing in Ukraine is the competence and responsibility of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine. As far as the NAES and its fellows have accumulated abundant experience in approaches to constructing the school textbooks the Ministry of Education of Ukraine in cooperation with the NAES have developed the procedures that regulate the process of publishing new textbooks in Ukraine.

Currently, according to the accepted rules and regulations textbooks' content is updated every five years so that it would comply with the accepted educational paradigm and methodology. Every year a special Textbook Contest is announced for authors willing to submit their manuscripts and get financial backing from the government in order to publish their books. For this purpose publishing houses and potential authors cooperate. After the manuscripts are submitted each of them is thoroughly reviewed and analysed by a board of independent experts (educators and scientists) in their subject area (*first stage of the contest*). Experts evaluate manuscripts according to the criteria in the evaluation lists which include a set of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects (language accuracy, reliability of the factual information, design, psychological relevance and gender-sensitive dimensions of the textbook etc.) and prepare their feedback with recommendations and corresponding corrections. Further the manuscripts are returned to the authors to be corrected (in case of a negative feedback the manuscript is rejected and is not a subject of further consideration). After the amendments the textbooks get a Ministerial approval to be used in school practice and are subject of public discussions and selection (*second stage of the contest*). At this stage the schools are provided with electronic fragments of the textbooks so that educators can view, compare and make a choice of books for their school to be used in the following years. Thus, the textbooks that were positively received by pedagogical community receive financial support with subsequent publishing and distribution to schools (Verkhovna rada Ukrainy, 2019).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Despite the fact that the process of selecting textbooks is properly regulated, experts as well as authors are provided with necessary methodological instructions (which are the result of common work of Ministerial and scientific community) and the overall rules are transparent for all the parties involved, what lies behind the scenes of constructing the content of a textbook remains purely author's own domain. Although there are some recommendations and guidelines for authors to follow while selecting culturally-marked information, develop tasks for activating new information in situations of communicative interaction or lay the book content out, there remains a lot of intuitive in author's activity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although constructing the content of FL textbooks has had a long history, the interest of academic community in this problem became evident only in the 1980s. Research in this field is primarily associated with the names of B. Tomlinson (2013), A. Cunningsworth (1984), D. Nunan (1988), J.C. Richards (2010), T. Hutchinson and A. Waters (1987), R. Bolitho (2003) and I. S. P. Nation (2022). Further, we provide an outline of their contributions. Tomlinson is considered to be leading figure in the field of materials development for language teaching. He edited and wrote major overviews and handbooks that define principles, processes and research in materials design, adaptation and evaluation and is the founder of MATSDA (Materials Development Association). Tomlinson transformed the field of materials development through principled, research-driven frameworks that guide textbook authors from conception to evaluation. He synthesized universal principles for effective materials including affective engagement, rich input exposure, noticing opportunities, and personalized

discovery learning etc. Furthermore, Tomlinson pioneered the text-driven approach, where authentic, engaging texts serve as the core, driving tasks that promote multi-dimensional processing contrasting with grammar-led text books. Tomlinson advocates flexible, localizable frameworks over rigid scripts, urging authors to involve teachers and learners in co-design and experimenting. His work criticizes global textbooks for cultural bias and superficial tasks, pushing for humanistic, multidimensional interaction (Tomlinson, 2013).

Cunningsworth (1984) elaborated frameworks and checklists for evaluating and selecting EFL teaching materials. Among the criteria put forward by the researchers are the following: relevance to learners' needs, balance of skills, cultural appropriateness, and clarity of guidance for teachers. His work has been adopted by educators who need a systematic way to appraise whether a particular textbook or set of materials is suitable for their context. His emphasis on matching materials to the learning context (learners, goals, environment) remains widely cited in EFL materials literature.

Like Cunningsworth, Nunan made enduring contributions to curriculum development, materials design and teacher education. Among his recommendations are the following: materials should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve; they should be authentic in terms of text and task; they should stimulate interaction; they should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of language; they should encourage development of learning skills; and they should encourage learners to apply their developing skills to the world beyond the classroom (Nunan, 1988). Along with others Richards provides a systematic introduction to the key stages of language-program design including needs analysis, syllabus design, materials development/adaptation and evaluation (Richards, 2010). The author emphasises that instructional materials are not just a 'product' but integral to curriculum implementation: they mediate input, practice, interaction and teacher support. Thus, he bridges the macro (program/curriculum) and micro (materials classroom use) levels, encouraging teachers and administrators to view materials development as part of a coherent language-teaching ecosystem.

Hutchinson and Waters made their contribution into the domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by advocating a "learning-centred" approach. They argue that materials and courses should take into account both learners' target needs i.e. what they have to do with English and their learning needs i.e. how they learn, what they already know (Hutchinson, & Waters, 1987). Also they stress that didactic materials must reflect the real purpose of learners and the context in which they will use English.

Nation is a pioneer in researching vocabulary learning and in translating that research into materials-oriented guidance for vocabulary teaching and learning. He offers a comprehensive survey of vocabulary research, and links that to materials and methods: what learners need to know (word knowledge), how vocabulary is learned (quantity of exposure and quality of processing), how to teach or design materials for vocabulary learning (e.g., strategy instruction, out-of-class learning) (Nation, 2022). His work helps materials designers integrate vocabulary components into larger courses and supports teachers in designing tasks and resources (not just lists of words) that promote efficient vocabulary growth.

Bolitho's 2000s publications on ELT coursebook architecture and design evaluate materials for structural coherence and cultural relevance in national projects. Together with others he criticizes global textbooks for lacking local context, advocating for piloting to ensure learner fit (Bolitho, 2003).

Far in the 21st century researchers still continue studying various approaches to evaluating content of FL textbooks in order to provide authors with clear understanding of what materials educators expect to obtain for their classrooms. Often their pursuits go beyond (English Language Teaching) ELT and bear a more specific nature. For example López-

Medina (2021) from Universidad Complutense de Madrid conducted several teacher surveys to elaborate on a checklist for CLIL materials. Partly the checklist was based on ELT textbook evaluation criteria, since CLIL materials inherit many of the pedagogical principles of ELT. The resulting checklist reflects a teacher-informed and context-sensitive tool that is more aligned with CLIL classroom needs. The author suggests that once validated through further empirical data, this checklist could help CLIL practitioners select, adapt, evaluate, as well as improve their textbooks.

In another empirical study, Deng and Wang (2023) go even further while examining development and implementation of locally produced ELT materials in Chinese education. The authors argue that while imported global materials offer linguistic immersion, they often carry neoliberal biases. Thus they underscore importance of political dimension in the process of elaborating content of a modern FL textbook especially for higher levels of education. As a result of their empirical and theoretical pursuits they put forward a four-dimensional evaluation framework which includes: 1) language, emphasizing authenticity, norm conformity, and clarity through native reviews; 2) content, focusing on controlled difficulty, teachability, relevance, and balanced global-local cultural representation; 3) integration of local ideological and moral elements, advocating implicit methods via cases and illustrations for acceptability; and 4) multi-dimensional construction, recommending use of comprehensive databases, AI-integrated platforms etc. for extended learning.

In recent years the study of the European experience for teaching foreign languages has been a relevant area of the research by Ukrainian scholars in the context of Ukraine's integration into the European educational area (Maksymenko, 2021; Gapon, Chymbay & Popkova, 2024).

METHODS

The paper offers an insight into the process of constructing a school FL textbook from authors' perspective. The discussion, results and conclusion are based on authors' own experience: each of the authors has been involved in the process of writing FL textbooks for schools or higher educational institutions in Ukraine as well as other types of didactic materials. Redko constructed Spanish language textbooks for Ukrainian schools since the 1980s and became the renowned author of several series of textbooks. In cooperation with Redko, Pasichnyk developed a series of elective courses in FL for high school in Ukraine i.e. "*English for Business Communication*" (Pasichnyk, 2017), "*Bienvenidos a España y América Latina*" (Redko & Basai, 2017). Besides, Pasichnyk is the author of a textbook for IT students in colleges and universities (Pasichnyk, 2019).

The article outlines guidelines for textbook authors to organize their construction activity. They are based on authors' own experience in constructing content of textbooks and didactic materials. The recommendations are supported by empirical data obtained in the results of surveys, observation of educational process and textbook approbation.

OBTAINED RESULTS

Author's flaws in textbook construction

In order to define approaches and strategies which determine patterns of author activities while constructing their textbooks we conducted a series of surveys and analysed their publications. According to the obtained data it was concluded that some of the authors heavily rely on their own approaches to constructing a FL textbook. It is difficult to distinguish any common principles shared by the authors as mostly they rely on their intuition while constructing a textbook which is predetermined by their personal and pedagogical experience. Some authors follow a straightforward approach by beginning their activity with constructing the content of the first thematic unit (or lesson) without clear vision of the overall book

concept and structure. Further they progress by increasing the number of tasks in the unit until their amount is sufficient for work in the class and at home. Thus, the main measure to determine quantitative parameters of a thematic unit (or a lesson) for them is classroom timing. Another group of authors contemplates the pattern of the first unit (lesson) and tailors other structural elements to fit the developed model. This technology is hard to describe as efficient as it is not considered valid from didactic perspective. As a result we can distinguish factors which negatively affect the quality of the final textbook:

1. Different patterns are applied to structuring units (lessons) which makes students' psychological accommodation to the textbook worse.

2. Different quantitative parameters of thematic units – different number of their sub sections (lessons).

3. Lack of systematic revision or application of the previously learned materials.

4. Lexical frequency is flawed; the same is typical of grammatical material.

5. Lack of similar approach to presenting new learning material.

6. Some thematic units lack tasks and activities which are typical for other structural components; some types of activities are used only few times in the textbook.

7. Speech activities fragmentation – some types of communicative activity are widely represented while others are underestimated (e.g. oral speech vs written tasks).

Here we have outlined the most typical structural flaws and methodological inaccuracies in the FL textbooks of Ukrainian authors. We consider them as the result of insufficient knowledge in the sphere of didactic, methodology and psychology. Moreover, none of educational institutions in Ukraine provides special training programs for future or potential textbook writers.

Planning author's construction activity

According to Tomlinson (Tomlinson, 2013), efficiency is predetermined by careful planning. By setting objectives and defining steps a plan sets a clear picture of work and its outcomes. Plan is fundamental for any initiative – if it is flawed, the final result will be flawed as well. A plan is not only a minimal prerequisite of success but also a roadmap which directs one's efforts and lets one act confidently. All this can be directly related to author's activity. Besides, the efficiency of final result is determined by professionalism, skills and ability to plan students' activity in accordance with textbook content and learning outcomes.

Work on the draft of a textbook may be organized in various ways and calls for different skills of its author. The success of authors' activity relies on their skills to design the content of a future textbook. Here we consider requirements to planning from authors' perspective:

1. Any activity connected with constructing a textbook is impossible without thorough understanding of psychological background of language acquisition processes in students. Sequence of presenting new linguistic material, correspondence between teaching methods and tasks, dynamics of psychological processes in students are the key categories which determine planning and overall author's work.

2. Planning is based on various factors which determine learning conditions. The better author's understanding of these factors, the more accurate and didactically relevant is the content of learning and its structuring in a textbook. The main factors to be considered are as follows:

- a) students' age-related features;

- b) individual capabilities of students of a particular group, their willingness to learn a FL, their general academic level;

- c) students' overall attitude to a FL, level of their motivation to master the subject of language and culture;

- d) ability of a teacher to apply a particular textbook to practice of educational process;

- e) predicting conditions where the textbook is to be used;
- f) possibility to supplement a textbook by other aids i.e. video, interactive boards, mobile applications etc.

3. Ability to plan reflects authors' prognostic qualities and expectations as for the outcomes of educational process. Educational process involves several actors i.e. students and teachers for whom the textbook is a methodological tool to organize their activity and interaction with students and achieve set educational outcomes. Thus, the authors have to differentiate which operations are to be performed by students individually and which ones are to be guided by teachers. This can be either stated in instructions for tasks directly or explicitly.

4. The author has to rely on a set of rules and approaches while designing a textbook.

a. Planning begins with setting objectives of a particular textbook and choosing its general concept.

b. Planning is to be done in **reverse mode**: primarily the final outcome of learning process is considered (e.g. level of students' language proficiency and their cultural awareness, level of competence in communicative activities etc.); further mechanisms aimed at achieving the final learning outcomes are elaborated.

c. While planning types of activities which are to be stimulated by a textbook the authors elaborate clear instructions for students and materials whose complexity requires teacher's assistance or explanation. The textbook cannot be regarded as a self-tuition manual where all the material or its overwhelming majority is easily understood by students without teacher's guidance. In this case didactic properties of a textbook fade. Thus, the textbook has to contain two types of materials: 1) materials easily comprehended by students and 2) materials which require students and teachers' common work, where the teacher provides relevant explanations or stimulates students to dive into the problem, thus developing their cognitive capabilities and challenging their logical thinking.

d. An important factor of textbook planning and design process is author's ability to define quantitative parameters of textbook content and its structural components: thematic units, sections and sub-sections (lessons). Primarily, material should not be excessive in terms of quantity and correspond to student's cognitive and age capabilities. Units should be aimed at shaping students' skills in four types of communicative activity (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). Content of each component is to be adaptive (or flexible) to different learning conditions so that teacher can transform it according to didactic situation (e.g. use fraction of available materials in case of weak students or due to lack of contact hours; rely on additional resources in order to shape particular communicative skills). Secondly, each unit or section (lesson) of a textbook has to be aimed at achieving particular didactic objectives. According to our observations a creative communicative task in written or oral form is the best logical conclusion of any structural component as it enables students to apply to practice new linguistic and factual material acquired while working with a textbook module. Such task is a final stage of work with the module; it reflects student's achievements and ability to use new skills and knowledge in communicative practice. Thirdly, every new section of a textbook has to be logically integrated with previously learned material of a unit: rely on the newly acquired skills, provide frequent application of new linguistic material in communicative situations. Implementation of such approach fosters shaping flexible skills and serves as a fundament for obtaining new knowledge and skills.

e. By collecting teachers' feedback we concluded that educators require a well-structured textbook, where each section has its own name that implicitly or explicitly reflects its content and didactic objectives, where each unit has a balanced number of tasks. Besides, educators emphasize on comprehensible layout of a book as a vital factor for transparency of a textbook and shaping a particular style of work with the book.

Author's ability to plan and contemplate the frameworks of students' learning activity is based on their knowledge, experience and intellectual capabilities for strategic planning. The fundamental aspects of these qualities are professional knowledge in theory of education, psychology, methodology, linguistics etc. which are supported by personal experience.

Authors of FL textbooks for schools of Ukraine have different professional background and level of language mastery. An efficient textbook is nearly impossible without profound scientific knowledge by the author. We consider that teaching experience is insufficient for making a good textbook. According to the obtained results of our survey, some teachers who develop didactic materials (including textbooks) for their students confirm that in the process of compiling a book (or any other didactic materials like handouts) there is a lot of intuition and choice of tasks and activities is determined by the fact that they 'work well' in their teaching practice. Such 'work-well' textbooks might be suitable for their authors and their style of work, although they can hardly be as efficient in practice of other educators and schools.

Stages of textbook development and authors' recommendations

Constructing a textbook is not a straightforward affair. Although there are numerous attempts among educators and scientists to construct a textbook, practice shows more failures than successful stories. In order to produce an efficient textbook the author has to follow certain guidelines.

Prior to constructing a textbook the author has to complete some preparation work. We have attempted to define its nature and stages which should be followed by the author. They include elaborating textbook's content and structure. Here we outline some recommendations with our comments:

1. Primarily the author has to define the number of thematic units, whose content is determined by the syllabus.

2. Tailor general model and structure of thematic units and their subsections (lessons), define didactic objectives of every structural component.

3. According to the requirements of school syllabus authors have to define students' learning outcomes in every topic and types of speech competence. It is advisable to rely on the descriptors recommended by CEFR "Student knows...", "Student can..." (Council of Europe, 2001).

4. The author defines the number of subsections (lessons) in every thematic unit. It is highly recommended to have a set number of subsections in every thematic unit, although their number can be slightly altered according to the goals of a particular unit.

5. The author contemplates types and quantity of learning activities for every subsection (lesson). It is advisable to rely on a unified system of tasks and activities.

6. Find sources of textual material (Internet, encyclopaedias, magazines) which contains linguistic material, relevant speech patterns and cultural information to shape students' cultural awareness and communicative skills.

7. Differentiate linguistic material into active and passive vocabulary and speech patterns. Active material is actively used in the tasks of the following sections (lessons) in order to shape strong and flexible skills whereas passive material does not require any further training as its application is limited to a particular text. The function of passive vocabulary is rather perceptive than productive.

8. Define subsections (lessons) where new grammatical material is presented and active. It is recommended to present it in chunks sequentially in several consecutive subsections (lessons). By gradually confronting students with a particular aspect of grammar (e.g. Present Simple in affirmative sentences, Present Perfect with for and since etc.) authors reduce intellectual load on students and help them get better understanding of a particular grammatical aspect.

9. The author elaborates a system and typology of tasks and activities that will foster better acquisition of new knowledge as well as shape students' skills. Tasks and activities are to be aimed at training various aspects of communicative activity. Nevertheless, their typology has to be unified across the whole textbook so that students could develop an algorithm of working with the textbook.

10. Instructions to all tasks and activities have to be clear and unified across the textbook.

11. The author has to bear in mind that any new material has to be actively used in at least five to six following subsections (lessons) in order to be transferred to student's long-term memory.

12. As modern textbook is impossible without abundant illustrative material. Thus, the authors have to supplement their manuscripts with relevant illustrations whose functions are as follows: 1) to represent particular cultural objects and situations in order to provide better understanding of culturally-marked texts and situations; 2) serve as a visual aid for communicative tasks in written or oral form. The illustrations mustn't have ambiguous connotations.

13. The author defines tools to check student's achievements after completing every structural module. It is considered rational to use a special self-assessment section after every thematic unit in order to provide students with tools to define their own achievements. So far the most popular approach for self-assessment is represented by "I can...", "I know ..." descriptors. Another approach is to provide a set of tasks where recently acquired linguistic knowledge and skills are tested and accordingly evaluated.

14. As book layout is critically important for creating a student-friendly learning environment in a textbook, it is highly recommended to elaborate a system of extra textual blocks (e.g. rubrics, notes, symbols, revision blocks etc.) each bearing a special meaning in order to highlight the most significant aspects of the lesson (new grammar, words, different types of tasks etc.) to draw student's attention and direct their learning activity.

15. As the main objective of language acquisition is to shape students' communicative skills, the main emphasis of author's construction activity is to elaborate a series of communicative situations for every thematic unit and make them appropriate for various situations of communicative interaction in culturally-marked environments.

We used the suggested technology as a guideline in our construction activity and achieved positive results. Therefore, the proposed scheme can serve as a guideline for potential authors although it is not to be considered in absolute terms.

Author's planning qualities

In order to perform careful planning of their construction activity the authors have to possess the following qualities:

- Ability to plan their activity in the process of constructing textbook so that its content provides achievement of learning objectives.
- Ability to establish a proper methodological base for every textbook component in order to achieve interim didactic objectives.
- Ability to support integrity and logical connection of every thematic unit with the whole concept of the textbook.
- Ability to plan the dynamics of language acquisition processes in students. For this reason the material is to correspond to students' needs and cognitive capabilities; it should be equally distributed in the content of the textbook, its methodological tools activate various mental processes and encourage students' thinking, curiosity and desire to learn.
- Ability to provide integral, balanced and parallel development of students' skills in all types of communication activity (reading, listening, speaking and writing). Besides, the author has to be aware that every type of communicative activity has various aspects and

levels of difficulty (e.g. speaking is performed in form of dialogue or monologue, reading literary texts and advertisements requires various approaches etc.). Shaping skills in all types of communicative activity is more efficient if it is done in culturally marked environment so that students could perceive their functions and be ready to apply their skills in new situations of social interaction.

- Ability to shape students' cultural awareness and have impact on their values and attitudes via textbook content.

Stages of author's construction activity

Author's activity like any other type of human activity aimed at creating a new product requires careful planning. We have outlined the main stages of author's construction activity. These are the following 1) contemplation stage, 2) the stage of modelling textbook content, 3) the stage of structural modelling and 4) correction stage. At every stage the author solves the problem of providing students with relevant linguistic tools and culturally-marked knowledge. Every stage is analysed and observed from different perspectives pertinent to foreign language learning (i.e. didactic, cognitive, developmental and axiological) (Table 1).

Table 1.

Stages of Author's Planning Activity

Contemplation stage			
<i>Didactic aspect</i>	<i>Cognitive aspect</i>	<i>Personal development aspect</i>	<i>Axiological aspect</i>
Textbook functions and role in educational process are defined in compliance with learning objectives, syllabus requirements and applied methods.	The author analyses syllabus requirements i.e. the scope of culturally-marked knowledge, defines the amount and complexity of linguistic and sociocultural information to be presented in the textbook.	The author analyses intellectual and psychological capabilities of target student group (primary, secondary or high school), level of their motivation. They serve as a reference framework for the author to choose relevant forms and types of activity for every target group.	The author evaluates potential of every thematic unit to shape students' values, attitudes and awareness while working with textbook content as well as ability of students to perceive the suggested values.
Content modelling stage			
The author elaborates linguistic, textual, illustrative and sociocultural information to be presented in the book. Also, the author elaborates the system of tasks and exercises to activate these materials in four types of communicative activity (speaking, writing, listening, and reading).	The author elaborates approaches and strategy of presenting socio-cultural and linguistic information so that it leaves an imprint in student's memory. The role of rules (instructions) is defined.	The general strategy of student's personal development is elaborated according to their intellectual and age-related capabilities.	Every textual or illustrative component as well as tasks and exercises are equipped with data that potentially has either explicit or implicit impact on shaping students' values and attitudes. Usually, this component is activated and emphasized by teachers in the process of language learning.

Continuation of Table 1.

Structure modelling stage			
The author tailors the overall structure of a textbook (structure of thematic units, lessons etc.); number of tasks and exercises and logical relations between them, frequency of assessment modules.	The author defines the amount of new material for every structural element of a textbook (number of new lexical units, amount of grammar patterns). The author provides conditions for their balanced presentation and frequency of application in the subsequent units.	The author provides equal distribution of different types of activities across the textbook. At this stage the author elaborates relevant situations of communicative activity that rely on students' own experience (also their creative and logical thinking) and prepare them for interaction in real-life situations.	According to axiological potential of every thematic unit, each of them is supplemented by materials that may have positive impact on shaping students' cultural awareness, attitudes and values.
Correction stage			
Manuscript of a textbook (or its fragments) is tested in school practice. During the tests the following aspects are verified: communicative potential of textbook content, methodological and factual accuracy of all components, and their impact on the dynamics of student's cognitive development. If necessary, relevant corrections are to be made.	Communicative and sociocultural potential of textual and illustrative materials is verified and enhanced. Student's ability to comprehend rules and instructions is evaluated.	Content of thematic units is evaluated and corrected from the perspective of its didactic potential and rational application of methods to correspond to students' intellectual and age capabilities and interests.	Axiological potential of textbook is analysed: how fast teachers can identify implicit or explicit information to shape students' values; how it affects students' emotions, attitudes and even motivation to learn the new language and culture. If necessary, value-sensitive information is enhanced to suit student's ability to properly perceive it.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Textbook approbation

To prove efficiency of the outlined guidelines for textbook authors we provide results of approbation for Spanish language textbooks, for years 2 through 11 (author – Redko) whose content was constructed in accordance with the above-mentioned recommendations.

Approbation is the process of using the textbook (or manuscript fragments) in school practice in order to verify the methodological concept and observe student's learning progress and outcomes. Prior to approbation procedure the teachers were instructed on main strategies and technologies of working with the textbook. As far as the process was supervised by authors themselves and had experimental nature, teachers' feedback was collected and corresponding corrections of content were made. Mostly educators gave recommendations about the following aspects:

- a. Volume of texts, their cognitive availability to students.
- b. Number of tasks and exercises to master certain grammatical patterns.
- c. Correcting instructions for tasks and exercises, providing relevant examples.
- d. Systematic revision of grammar structures.

e. Developing tools for teachers to easily differentiate material for student's with different level of learning capabilities.

f. Introducing rubrics that highlight important information.

After corrections of textbook content and publishing it, further monitoring of its efficiency in school practice continued on regular basis.

According to Nunnally, in any research it is vital to establish reliability threshold quotient which is to be at least 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). He further noted that for important decision-making contexts, higher reliability would be required (for example 0.90 or above). Thus, we can infer that a didactic tool is considered efficient if mean value of learning outcomes of a group of students is between 0.7 to 1.0. In our case this quotient was estimated as a mean value of learning outcomes (in all types of communicative activity and knowledge tests) of all students subject to monitoring and evaluation process. In all cases the value was between 0.78 to 0.93 which proves the efficiency of both methodological concept as well as authors' planning of their construction activity. For more details on efficiency and students' achievements see Fig. 1.

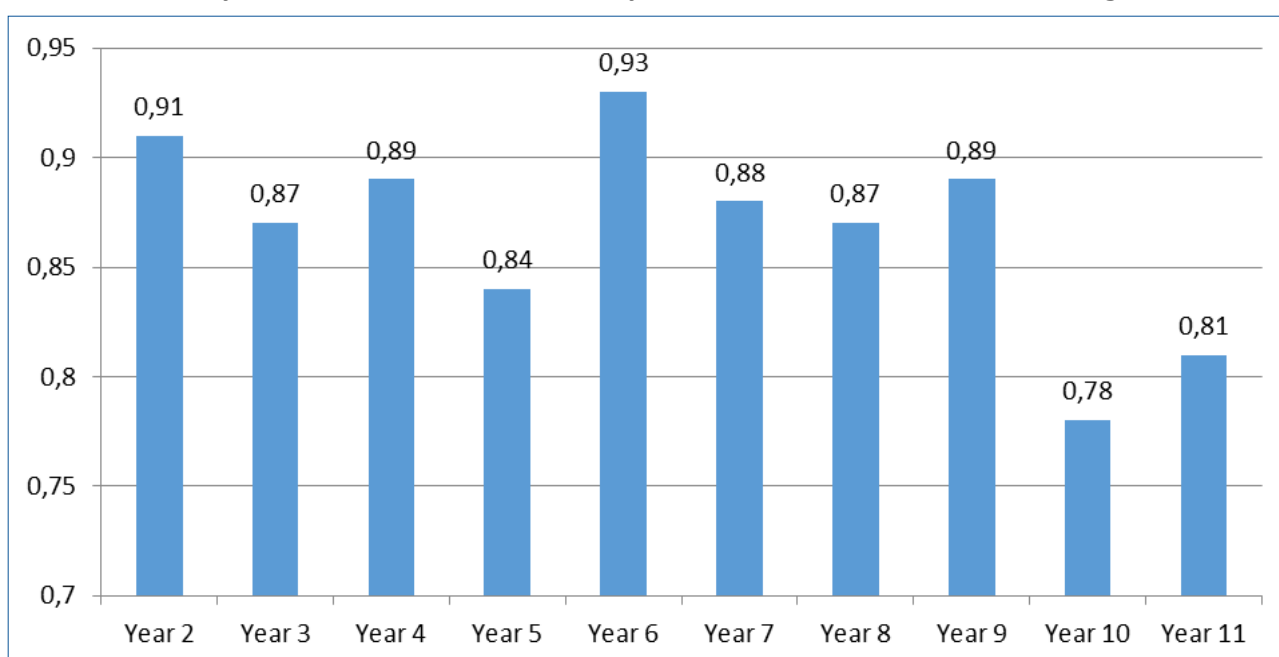


Figure 1. Level and Quality of Material Acquisition by Students

Source: Based on the authors' observations and survey data.

Discussion: single authorship vs author teams

Practice has various models of author partnering in order to construct the content of a school textbook. Traditionally the team of textbook authors involves specialists of different spheres. Mostly these are school teachers and scientists who determine the methodological concept of the whole textbook. We approve of the idea that cooperation of practicing teachers and specialists with theoretical and scientific background makes a perfect authors' team where each person's contribution is valuable either from theoretical or practical perspective.

Nevertheless, there are numerous examples when a school textbook is written by a single author (i.e. school teacher, methodologist, scientific fellow, University tutor etc.). Despite all efforts, practice proves it is impossible to create a universal and flawless FL textbook which could meet all students' expectations and teachers' requirements. Quality of a textbook is determined by didactic and methodological concept aimed at achieving particular learning outcomes (defined by syllabus). In this respect in the sphere of education there's a common belief that a professional and experienced FL teacher can easily create an efficient FL textbook due to their clear vision of syllabus goals and objectives as well as experience in tea-

ching and practicing various educational methodologies and approaches. Although this belief is shared and supported by some educators, we deem this point as faulty. There's a very little number of teachers who created a successful FL textbook, although many more did write their own textbooks which were finally rejected by educators' community.

By emphasizing importance of multi-expert teams we do not intend either to reduce or neglect the role of single-authored textbooks, which also deserve credit. Nevertheless, we consider that these textbooks could greatly benefit if author cooperated with different experts. Hereby, we do not idealize textbooks authored purely by school teachers as far as their analysis proves that even highly-qualified teachers receive a lot of negative feedback at different stages of their textbook life. Most of the criticism is that content of these textbooks doesn't reflect modern trends in FL teaching methods. This is partly due to the fact that these books are based on teacher's own lesson plans which take into consideration conditions of a particular school where the author is teaching while peculiarities of other regions of the country are neglected.

It is also deemed that problems may arise with textbooks authored by university tutors or scientists without any practical teaching experience. In this case problems may arise while writing the content of a textbook or at approbation stage. These problems are significantly reduced if the author keeps contact with teachers who assist him/her with applying his/her didactic materials to practice. By collecting feedback and observing students' work and responses the author can make relevant corrections in their didactic materials as well as the overall concept of the whole textbook. Unfortunately, according to our observations theorists rarely rely on teachers' help and feedback.

Creating a team of authors where each person performs their particular function would have beneficial effect for writing a textbook interesting for students and efficient in terms of learning outcomes. Thus, efficiency and quality of a FL textbook is greatly predetermined by proficiency of its authors.

In order to define educators' opinion on who should be involved in the process of making a FL textbook in 2018 we surveyed 377 educators in secondary schools with different work experiences from 17 regions of Ukraine. According to the survey lists respondents had to indicate which specialists have to be a part of textbook authors' team. The obtained empirical data is represented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Educators' Opinion on Members of Textbook Author Teams

#	Members of Author Team	Number of respondents	%
	Foreign language teacher	332 (309/23)	95,4
	Specialist in Didactics (with expert knowledge in a FL)	119 (108/11)	34,2
	Methodology Specialist (with expert knowledge in a FL)	343 (314/29)	98,5
	Psychologist (with expert knowledge in a FL)	107 (88/19)	30,8
	Native speaker	286 (265/21)	82,2
	Artist	93 (86/7)	26,7
	Your variant	5 (5/0)	1,3

Source: Authors' survey results.

The obtained data show that the majority of the questioned emphasize the importance of only three specialists from the list whom they consider to be the creative core of the author team. These are FL teachers (95.4 %), methodologist (98.5 %) and a native speaker (82.2 %). The rest of the experts didn't even reach the benchmark of 50 %. Notably, 17 respondents (teachers) suggested their own opinions about the experts to be included in an author team. These were a doctor, a lecturer of higher educational institution, PhD in education, and PhD in Philology (foreign language).

The obtained data mainly correlates with the position of article authors. Nevertheless, attracting a native speaker of the target language in the process of writing a textbook is not always possible or not even appropriate. It is considered advisable for a publisher to rely on the native speaker to proofread the completed manuscript of the textbook. Even high level of cultural and linguistic awareness doesn't prevent non-native authors from making mistakes which are easily noticed by representatives of the target culture and language. Usually these mistakes include linguistic or cultural inaccuracies. In this respect a native speaker can help brush up the language of the textbook without changing the book's methodological concept, edit illustrative materials. Similar approach is used by many publishers in Ukraine. Usually, those native speakers who are attracted to the proofreading and editing process are representatives of exchange programmes (e.g. Peace Corps. Alliance Francaise etc.), embassies or international cultural centres.

CONCLUSIONS

The obtained results provide textbook authors with guidelines to be taken into consideration while planning their construction activity. Thorough planning of author's construction activity is not less important than staying aware of transformations in modern methods and approaches to language learning or considering syllabus requirements.

A modern FL textbook has many dimensions: linguistic, communicative, sociocultural, problem solving, axiological etc. All of them are vital for developing a versatile person who possesses a high level of cultural awareness and is ready for taking part in real-life communicative situations. Each of these dimensions is to be activated in the process of learning and represents a particular learning outcome. Undoubtedly, a single author is unable to include all these aspects in their textbook. Thus, we recommend that textbook is a collective product of authors' team which includes experts from different spheres (philology, psychologist, artist, native speaker etc.).

We insist that fundamentals of author's construction activity become an integral part of training programs and courses for future teachers and educators. Even if one does not develop textbooks, this knowledge and skills will be useful while developing didactic materials for their students (handouts). Besides, understanding the logics of author's construction activity will help future educators to properly analyse available textbooks, choose the best ones and handle a textbook in their teaching practice more efficiently.

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